

Mahabharata Series

About birth(s) & Death (s)

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PREFACE

I have extracted these contents from my other comprehensive & unique work on Mahabharata called **Mahabharata-Spectroscope**. (See <http://www.ghvisweswara.com/mahabharata-2/mahabharata-spectroscope-a-unique-resource/>). The material in that is in the order in which it appears in the original epic and segregated across different broader topics.

This is a brief compilation of the contents appearing in the great epic Mahabharata on the topics of Birth, Rebirth and Death including birth & death of certain important characters in the epic. The topic covers both philosophical aspects and to a limited extent the story aspect. However it cannot be said that I have included every passage related to these topics. Particularly deep philosophic discussions on these topics are not completely included here in the interest of limiting size & scope of this document. Interested readers can read the second PDF under Spectroscope called MB-Mokshadharma for more detailed and additional content.

The main '**Headings** & Sub-headings' under which passages are compiled are:

- **Creation & Destruction of Universe**
- **Birth:** General, Birth & fate, Karmas & birth, Character & birth time, Status at birth and qualities.
- **Rebirth:** Opinion/Views on rebirth, Effect of karmas done on rebirth, Innumerable birth cycles, Role of karmas in obtaining the four varnas, Story of Vyasa, insect and its rebirths, Conduct/nature & rebirth.
- **Specific cases of birth:** Arjuna, Bhishma, Draupadi, Kauravas, Karna, Parikshita, Shikhandi & Vyasa
- **Death:** Opinion/Views on death, What is *mrityu*, Types of death, Death as punishment, State of *jeeva* after death, Post-death states/*lokas*, Illustrative stories about death.
- **Specific cases of death:** Abhimanyu, Bhishma, Drona, Duryodhana, Dushasana, Ghatotkacha, Karna, Pandavas & Vidura
- **Overcoming death & rebirth**
- **On existence of *jeeva***
- **Vyasa reveals secret of all characters**

I hope the readers will find the document of some use in their study on this subject.

Please see <http://www.ghvisweswara.com/mahabharata-2> for my other topic based compilations based on Mahabharata.

Those who are not familiar with Sanskrit words used here can refer to this online dictionary:

<http://www.spokensanskrit.de/index.php?tinput=satta&link=m>

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About birth(s) & death(s) in Mahabharata

Creation & Destruction of Universe

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 102) *Sanatana-brahma* is without beginning, middle or end. It is devoid of dualities having opposite characteristics. It is the cause for the creation. It is eternal. Scholars call this *kootastha & nitya*. (Shl 103) All the changes in the form of creation or dissolution take birth from that *sanatana-brahma* alone. It is this *Parabrahma* that has been praised in *shastras*. Great *yatis* talk about this. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 301**)
- (Extracts)
Sauthi: At the end of the *yuga* when there was only darkness, an egg which was the seed of all living & non-living things was born. It is called '*Mahadivya*'. It is also called eternal *parabrahma-vastu*'. That egg was amazing and unthinkable. It was completely uniform. ..From it first *pitamaha Brahma*, the *praja-palaka*, *Prabhu*, *Devaguru* appeared.....At the end of the *yuga*, all these living and non-living things will again compress to an atomic size (*anu-praya*) and merge into that wonderful egg.....In this way, the endless wheel of time continuously rotates and causes creation & annihilation. This wheel has neither birth nor death. (**Adi; Anukramanika; 1**)
- Sri Krishna's *sthuti* of Parameshwara when he appears before him after six months of *tapas*: (Shl 407) Oh Parameshwara who is the eternal cause of everything! My salutations to you. *Rishis* say that you are the master of even *Brahma*. *Sadhu*, *satpurushas* say that you are yourself *tapas*, *sattva-guna*, *rajo-guna*, *tamo-guna* and *satya-swaroopa*. (Shl 408) You are yourself *Brahma*, *Rudra*, *Varuna*, *Agni*, *Manu*, *Shiva*, *dhatru*, *vidhatru*, *tvashtru*, *prabhu* and *sarvato-mukha*. (Shl 409) All the moving & umoving beings are born from you. All three *lokas* have been created by you. (Shl 410) All the *indriyas*, full *manas*, the seven *vayus*, *saptagnis* (*dakshinagni*, *garhapatya*, *ahavaniya*, *sabhya*, *aavasathya* are the five *shrautagnis*. Sixth is *smartagni*. Seventh is *laukikagni*), *devatas* who are worthy of being praised in the group of *devatas* – all these are born from you. *Rishis* say that you are *param* (greatest, highest). (**Anushasana; Daandharma; 14**)
- Tandi *muni's sthuti*: (extracts)
(Shl 17) It is you who are called by the three names of *Kaal*, *Purusha* & *Brahma*. *Devarshis* who know *puranas* say that these three are your bodies. (Shl 18) You are yourself *adhi-paurusha*, *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhi-daivata*, *adhi-loka*, *adhi-vijnana* and *adhi-yajna*. (Shl 19) Parameshwara! Scholars understand you who are difficult to be known even by *devatas*, as one who resides within the body and become liberated from the bondages of *samsara*, become free of diseases & grief and attain *parama-bhava*. (Shl 20) Oh Prabhu! **In case you did not wish to uplift the jeevas, these jeevas would be stuck in the vortex of birth and death and will be reborn forever in several types of births.** You are the gateway to both *swarga* & *moksha*. You are capable of granting or stopping to any *jeeva* the entry to either of these gates. (**Anushasana; Daandharma; 16**)
- Bhishma replied: (extracts) Yudhishtira! Scholars quote the conversation between Bhardwaja who questioned Bhrgu *maharshi* in this same matter. I will retell the same to you.
Maharshi Bhrgu's reply: Bharadwaja! Even before *maharshis* there was a *deva* called *Manasa*. He was *anadi*, *anantha*, *abhedy*, *ajara* and *amara*. Famous as *avyakta*, *Manasa* was also *shashwata*, *akshaya* and *avinashi*. All beings created by him take birth and die. This *Manasa deva* first created a *mahat-tattva* called *Mahanta*. Then he created *Ahankara*. *Deva* who is of the form of *Ahankara* and bears all living beings created *Akasha* which is a form of *shabda-tanmatras*. From *akasha* was born water (*apah*). From water were born *agni* & *vayu*. From the union of *agni* & *vayu* was born *prithvi*. (In Taittiriya Upanishad the sequence of creation is given as: *Akasha*, *vayu*, *agni*, *apah*, *prithvi*, *oshadhi*). (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 182**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 34) All the moving and unmoving life forms in the three *lokas* grow because of *anna*. Therefore the wise should donate *anna*. (Shl 35) Those who donate food will find that their might, *ojas* (vigour, energy), *yashas* (honour) & *keerti* (fame, reputation) will increase all the time. (Shl 36) *Vayu* who is the master of *prana* (life) is above the clouds. *Indra* causes the water in clouds to pour as rains on earth. (Shl 37) Sun absorbs all the *rasas* on earth through his rays. *Vayu deva* gathers all these *rasas* from Sun and again pours them on earth. (Shl 38) In this way when the water pours the earth becomes soft. (Shl 39) By sowing seeds in such

soft earth, plants grow. The food produced from such plants sustains life on earth. It is from *anna* that muscles, bones and semen are strengthened in the body. (Shl 40) From semen are born lives. *Agni* & *Soma* generate and nourish that semen (*virya*). (Shl 41) Thus Sun, *Vayu* and *virya* belong to the same group and are born from *anna*. Later all life forms are born from them. (Shl 42) The person who donates *anna* (food) to those who come home and ask for it, would in effect, donate life and *tejas* to all living beings. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 63**)

- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 12) The physical body consists of the five gross *bhutas*, *ten indriyas*, and *manas*. Because it provides shelter to these the body is called *sharira* (bodily frame). **Soon after the body is born, the subtle *mahabhutas* along with the *karma* baggage of *jeevas* enter the body.** (Shl 13) Brahma, the original creator, along with all the subtle *bhutas*, enters all the bodies in order to do *tapas*. That is why *munis* call him *Prajapati*. (Shl 14, 15) It is that Brahma who creates the moving and unmoving living beings. He creates *devatas*, *rishis*, *pitrus*, human beings, variety of *lokas*, rivers & seas, directions, mountains, vegetation, *nara*, *kinnara* & *rakshasas*, animals, birds and serpents etc. It is he who creates *akash* etc which do not get destroyed, as well as the destructible animals. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232**)

Birth-general

Types of births

- Brahma to *maharshis*: (Shl 32) **The three places available for living beings to reside are *sthala* (land), *jala* (water) & *akash* (space/sky). There is no fourth place.** There are four types of births for beings: *andaja* (born from eggs), *udbhijja* (those which emerge out of land), *svedaja* (born from sweat) and *jarayuja* (born from womb). Only these four ways of birth are seen for beings (*bhuta gramasya*). (Shl 34) It should be understood that all living beings which move in the skies and all those which crawl on the ground are born from eggs. (Shl 35) Living beings born from sweat are called *krimi* (insects?) & *jantu* (worms?). **In the matter of rebirth, it is said that the birth as *jantu* is much lower than that of *krimi*.** (Shl 36) Those which pierce land and come out when the time is ripe are called *udbhijja* (trees, plants, creepers etc). (Shl 37) Great among brahmanas! Two-legged, many-legged, those having crooked walk, those having crooked thinking and those having ugly/scary appearances are all said to be *jarayujas*. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 42**)
- The great Vyasa said to Kunthi: (Shl 20) Daughter! .. *Devatas* have *siddhis*. Therefore they can enter other's bodies. (Shl 22) **There are many groups of *devatas* who can cause children in five ways – mental resolve, speech (grace), sight, touch and union.** (Shl 23) Kunthi! **Understand that *daiva-dharma* does not defile/corrupt *manushya-dharma* (*manushya-dharmo daivena dharmena hi na dushyati*).** (**Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; 30**)

Process of birth

- Vidura: (Shl 2, 3) *Maharaja!* From the time of union of sperm and egg the action of developing life starts. After one night of the union of these, the foetus gets the name *kalila* (*jeeva* resides in *kalila*). After five nights it is called *budbuda*. Continuing to develop like this by the time five months elapse it takes the shape of a *pinda* (a lump). *Chaitanya* (consciousness, Universal soul) resides in that *pinda*. After five months all the organs start developing and eventually the child becomes fully developed. (Shl 4, 5, 6) At that time it will have flesh and blood and lives in the middle of impurities (*amedhya*) in the womb. As the time for delivery nears due to the forces of air the baby makes its head down and legs up. As it comes through the vagina it suffers many difficulties and finally emerges out freed from it, but faces several difficulties in this world. (**Stree; Jalapradanika; 4**)
- Ashtaka: (Shl 12-13) When the *jeeva* in *sookshma roopa* enters the womb & comes out in birth, will it take the same form as in previous birth or a different form? How do the various organs dormant in the *retas* (seminal fluid/semen) become clear and how do the physical *indriyas* acquire their respective capabilities for sight, smell etc?
Yayati: (Shl 14-16) *Vayu* pulls the *retas* into the womb. Then the same *Vayu* gradually develops the *retas*. Then it gets all the organs & acquires the power of smell, sight etc., in the respective organs. The *retas* which is the subtle form of the *jeeva* joins in animals or humans according to its past karmas. (**A detailed explanation from Niruktha is given here by commentators**) (**Adi-Parva; Sambhava Parva; 90**)

- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 27) Oh worship worthy! You have told me how dharma follows the *jeeva*. Now I wish to know about generation of semen.

Brihaspati: (Shl 28, 29) *Devatas* of *prithvi*, *jala*, *agni*, *vayu*, *akash* and *manas* (*yaddevata sharirastha*) eat the food we consume. When these *devatas* of *pancha-bhutas* along with *manas* eat food and are satisfied, the semen (*retas*) is produced. (Shl 30) Then, when man and woman mate, that semen causes pregnancy. Now what else do you wish to know.

Yudhishtira: (Shl 31) You have told how the pregnancy occurs. Tell me how the man born from that pregnancy gets bound.

Brihaspati: (Shl 32) After the act of mating and soon after the semen enters the womb (*garbha*), **the *pancha-bhutas* in the body of the woman turn into the body of that *jeeva* and bind it in that body.** When that *jeeva* liberates itself from that body at the end, it gets another state. (Shl 33) That *jeeva* associated with all the *bhutas* experiences happiness or unhappiness. That is why the *devatas* of *pancha-bhutas* will be observing all the good and bad karmas of the *jeeva*. Yudhishtira! What else do you wish to ask? (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 111**)

- Vandī: (Shl 10) *Jeeva* falls on earth as rain. It enters into plants & when humans or animals eat it, it converts into semen & results in birth of life. (**Vana; Tirthayatra; 134**)

Jeeva's entry into womb

- *Siddha purusha* said: (Shl 4) I will tell you how man bound in the net of karma done under the influence of *kaam* & *krodh* will take a birth decided by the fruits of his karmas. (Shl 5) *Jeeva* first enters the semen of the male. Then joining with the fluids (*shonita*: blood) in woman, it enters the womb. Whether the *kshetra* (field: womb) that the *jeeva* gets is auspicious or inauspicious depends on its karmas. (Shl 6) **Since *jeeva* is very subtle and is a form of Parabrahma, when it merges with Parabrahma, it will lose interest in taking on more bodies.** That is why Parabrahma is permanent. (Shl 7, 8) This *jeevatma* is the root cause for the existence of all living beings. Living beings live because of *jeevatma*. This *jeevatma* pervades all parts of the foetus partially, stays in *prana-sthana* (vital location) and through sentience soon bears everything. Then that foetus which has been infused with sentience throbs/pulsates (*spandayate*) all parts. (Shl 9) Just as molten metal enters the hollow mould and takes the shape of the idol, in the same way the subtle & unseen *jeevatma* enters the womb through semen and takes a form decided by the womb it has entered. (Shl 10) Just as fire enters a ball of iron and makes the whole ball hot, in the same way *jeeva* enters the foetus and provides it sentience. (Shl 11) Just as a lighted lamp lights up the house, the *chetana* lights up the bodies. (Shl 12) Whatever is the nature of deeds done in past births, whether virtuous or wicked deeds, the fruits of all of them will necessarily be experienced. (Shl 13) **As the fruits are experienced, whether of sinful or auspicious deeds, they decay. But the fruits of karmas done in this birth also get keep getting accumulated. Therefore as long as man does not take up the dharma for attaining *moksha*, there is no hope of exiting from this wheel of karma.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18**)

Birth & fate

- Yudhishtira to Markandeya just after Jayadratha's episode (considering the difficulties Draupadi is undergoing) Therefore, I have come to this conclusion: 'Time is God'. Fortune & misfortune are created by *vidhi* (fate). The troubles & happiness that obtain in life cannot be avoided. Man must experience the good & bad things that come upon him. The unpleasant/unwanted results of fate cannot be changed by being a noble person or by being born in noble family. They have to be experienced without fail. (**Vana; Ramopakhyana; 273**)
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: In truth, man is driven only due to the 'unseen hand' (*adrishta*). It is my opinion that only the unseen forces drive him to act. All *arthas* are experienced/obtained only due to *adrishta*.
Man is born accompanied by *adrishta*. But it does not take us where we want to go. It drags us wherever it wishes to go. (**Drona; Samshaptakavadha; 24**)
- Arishtishena *rishi* to Yudhishtira: (Shl 12-13) Our fore-fathers in *pitru-loka* laugh and cry when a son or grandson is born. They think both ways—will this child accrue sins by its wicked deeds which we have to share or will he do only noble deeds and will we get a part of his *punya-phala*? (**Vana; Yakshayuddha; 159**)

Karmas & birth

- Dharma vyadha: I believe that I am born as a hunter due to my past karmas.
Karmas of previous births will never leave the *jeeva*. In determining the *janma* (birth) & karma of any living being, Brahma mainly takes into consideration its karmas of past births. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 208)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 20) Everyone wants to give up this *loka* and wants to go to higher *lokas*. They even try for it continuously. But can it ever happen so? **That is why humans are always subject to the fruits of their past karmas and experience both happiness & grief.** I will tell you another peculiarity, listen. (Shl 21) **Many are born in the same *lagna* (ascendant), same *nakshatra* (star), same *rashi* (zodiac sign), and same day. But there will be vast difference in the fruits they experience. Even the karmas they practice will be quite unrelated. That is why no human can change his past karmas.** (Shl 22) Because, the karmas of his past births will be yielding their effects. **His *buddhi* is also driven to good or bad deeds according to the karmas of previous births.** Even the *shrutis* support the same. (Shl 23) *Jeeva* is eternal. The bodies of all living beings are impermanent. (Shl 24) That is why when a living being dies only its body is destroyed. But its *jeeva* is bound by the ropes of *karma-phala* and takes birth somewhere in some form. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)
- Mahamuni Vyasa to Pandavas: (Shl 18) The following are holy qualities for the virtuous: Truthfulness, absence of crookedness, not getting angry under any circumstance, sharing own money with others, restraint on senses, peacefulness, absence of jealousy, not hurting any and internal & external purity. (Shl 19) **The above said qualities will not be palatable to the ignorant. They have a taste only for *adharmic* activities.** They are always interested in walking the wicked path. **As a result of their wicked deeds they are born as birds & animals in subsequent births.** True happiness will elude them over several births. **They do not think even once that the fruits of their wicked deeds are behind them all the time.** (Shl 20) **Whatever acts we do in this birth, they will certainly yield their fruits in next birth.** Therefore this body should be engaged in *tapas* and other restrictions. (Shl 22) One who is truthful obtains the fruits of having no worries, honesty and long life. One who has conquered anger and has no jealousy will obtain the greatest happiness of *moksha*. (Shl 23) One who has conquered his *indriyas* and is always calm will not have any kind of anguish. One who has control over *indriyas* will certainly not feel agonised looking at other's wealth. (Shl 24) One who donates food and who donates money to the deserving will enjoy all kinds of happiness on earth. One who practices non-violence will enjoy good health. (Shl 25, 26) **One who honours those who are worthy of it will take birth in noble lineage.** No addictions will touch the *jitendriya*. **Those who are engaged in virtuous deeds will be reborn to enjoy the fruits of their karmas.** Even in this birth his mind will have auspicious thoughts. (Vana; Vrihidraunika; 259)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 24) Man obtains his *guna-karmas* according to his karmas in the past. The *karma-phalas* are responsible for birth in *sadvamsha* (noble lineage), among *satpurushas* (noble/virtuous persons), in *dushkula* (wicked lineage), among *dushtas* (wicked persons) and as birds & animals. This is one theory. Even when born as a virtuous person, many kinds of difficulties have to be suffered. Rise & fall are transient. Even when born in *sadvamsha* as a *satpurusha* why does he suffer with problems? It is very difficult to find an answer to this issue. Many are born as wicked persons in *dur-vamsha*. Still they live happily. **King Bali also could not unravel this secret and decided that at all times *daiva* alone is the cause and nothing else.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 32)
- Bhima to Yudhishtira: (Shl 26) **Mountains, trees and animals are not *karma-yonis*** (life forms which perform karmas). **They are just experiencing the fruits of past *karmas*.** But we are born in *karma-yoni*. We have to attain eternal *paramapada* only by self-efforts. **We have to do our *karma* and obtain our fortune; someone else's attainments do not improve our fortunes.** Therefore, for whatever we want to accomplish now (*siddhi*), doing our *karmas* is the main duty. **One who gives up all attachments and all *karmas* (*sarva-sanga, sarva-karma*) achieves nothing.** (Shl 28) Brother! You can yourself see how this whole world and all animals in this world are bound by the *karmas* ordained for them. Any animal or human being is constantly doing its *karmas*. The whole universe is pervaded by *karma*. There is no world without *karma*. Examine this aspect carefully. **Nothing is achieved by one who does no *karma*.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 10)

- Vyasa said: (Shl 1) Oh insect! Did you not say that even though you are born as an insect you are not deluded in respect of karmas in previous birth and that you have memory of past birth due to your good deeds? But these have happened to you by my grace. (Shl 2) I can uplift you from this birth of an insect by virtue of my *tapo-bala* by merely looking at you. There is no strength greater than that of *tapo-bala*. (Shl 3) Oh insect! I know that you have got this birth because of your sins in past birth. If you think that dharma can uplift you, you will get such dharma again. (Shl 4) **The fruits of karma done on *karma-bhumi* will be experienced by *devatas* as well as animals & birds.** Just like man can find accomplishment of *kaam* & *artha* by virtuous qualities (*sadguna*), they can also be accomplished by dharma. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 118**)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 15) We see that actions happen in three ways. Those which are controlled by *Ishwara* (such as drought etc), those directed by Parameshwara (*daivika*) and those which happen due to our will (Man is free to do actions which bring *punya* or *paapa*. Which acts will result in *punya* and which in *paapa* are indicated by *shruthi* & *smriti*. Understanding these, using discrimination and then acting suitably is left to the human). **For some acts of man, results are obtained immediately. For some others the results are obtained in later *janmas* (births).** That is why some of the acts of humans (the third type) happen according to past *karmas*. You are trapped in this grief and agony perhaps due to some acts of your past and therefore make your mind steady. (**Udyoga; Sainya-nirvana; 159**)
- Sanatsujata to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 8) The *jeeva* which has tendency to move around, collects *karma-phala* (honey), and enjoys/suffers half of it in this birth. **Whatever karma is done, results in *karma-phalas* both for this world and for other world (*paraloka*).** The *karmas* of the *jeeva* do not yield the complete *phalas* in one birth itself. Half is experienced now and the other half is attached to the *jeeva* and gives results in other worlds. It is this *karma-phala* which is responsible for births in different forms. (**Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 46**)
- Vulture to relatives of dead boy: (Shl 37) All animals get happiness and grief according to their *karma-phalas*. **The *jeeva* takes birth bringing with it happiness and grief according to its past *karmas*.** (Shl 38) Son is not influenced by the *karmas* of the father. Neither is father influenced by the *karmas* of the son. Even though they are born as father & son, all things in life will occur only according to their respective *karmas*. Their behaviour, nature and actions will all be different. Bound by their individual *punya* & *paap* they walk their own paths. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 153**)
- *Siddha purusha* said: (Shl 1) Kaashyapa! **One must experience the fruits of good and bad deeds done here. Those fruits will not get destroyed just like that. Those *karma-phalas* will make the *jeeva* take birth in appropriate form, take it under their control and cook it.** (Editors comments: *Jeeva* is always under control of *karmas*. It is these *karma-phalas* which cause him to be born in good or bad births. After birth, it is these *karma-phalas* that become the cause for his nature, mind/intelligence/thinking, wealth etc. Whether *jeeva* is subservient to *karmas/karma-phalas* or whether *karmas* are subservient to *jeeva* is difficult to decide. Because, scholars say that even to do virtuous deeds there must be *purva-punya* (virtue accumulated earlier). But since *jeeva* has certain independence of its own, he is capable of freeing itself from *karma-phalas*. Gita has said *uddharet atmanatmanam*. Therefore *jeeva* and *karma* are two inseparable entities. It can be said in summary that the mutual combination of these two keep the creation moving/progressing). (Shl 2) **Just as a fruit yielding tree gives plenty of fruits when the right season comes, in the same way virtuous deeds done with pure heart will give excellent fruits when the proper time comes.** (Shl 3) **Similarly sinful deeds done with blemished heart give excessive bad results when the time comes.** With mind as the leader, *jeevatma* engages in good or bad deeds. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18**)
- **All births have a seed**
Grandfather Brahma said: (Shl 5) Child! Vasishta! **Nothing takes birth without seed. There can be no fruit without seed. From one seed is born another seed. Therefore it has been said that fruits come only from seed.** (Shl 6) **Whatever type of seed is sown by the farmer in the field, he gets corresponding crop. In the same way man obtains *punya* by doing virtuous deeds and *paap* by doing wicked deeds.** (Shl 7) **Just as the seed would be wasted if there**

is no fertile field, in the same way favourable *daiva* will be wasted without human effort. (Shl 8) It has been said that preparing the field well is *Purusha prayatna* and seed is *daiva*. Only when the two combine can there be good crop. (Shl 9) Man who does karmas will himself experience fruits according to the good or bad karmas done by him. This can be seen practically in the world. (Shl 10) Man enjoys happiness & comforts by doing good deeds. He suffers grief by doing *paap* karmas. Fruits have to be experienced for the karmas done. **Whoever he may be, if he does no work, he cannot obtain any fruits in return. (Anushasana; Daandharma; 6)**

- Yayiti to Ashtaka: (Shl 10-11) ...**Take any seed as example.** It does not have any smell. But once planted in earth it grows & flowers. It emits the smell which was present in subtle form (*sookshma roopa*) in the seed. One cannot say that the smell was acquired purely due to its contact with earth. After all, each flower does not have the same type of fragrance. This means that the specific smell was already present in a *sookshma* form (subtle form) in the seed. **In the same way the karmas are always attached to the jeeva which is in the sookshma form. According to the law of karma the jeeva will be born as human, four-legged, two-legged, six-legged, eight-legged, many-legged etc creature.** All life-forms take birth & die accordingly. (Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 90)
- Vritra said to Shukracharya: (Shl 16) Great Brahmana! I have understood the secret of birth and death of living beings without any doubts by virtue of my dedication to truth and *tapas*. That is why I neither rejoice nor grieve for any thing. (Shl 17) Scholars say that *jeevas* who have committed sins prompted by time, are dragged by the fruits of their sins and drown helplessly in *narak*. Those who have done *punyas* go to *swarga* due to the resultant fruits and experience joy. (Shl 18) **According to the quantum of *paap* or *punyas* done by them, they spend specified amount of time in *narak* or *swarg* and prompted by remnant *paap* or *punya-phalas* take birth on earth again & again.** (*Swarga* is obtained by those who have done much *punyas* and *narak* for those who have done much *paap*. Those who have done more *punyas* than *paap* will be get auspicious births. Those who have done more *paap* than *punyas* will be born in lower forms of life. Even those who go to *swarga* will be born with auspicious births once the *punyas* are nearly exhausted. Some *punya* will remain. Those who go to *narak* will experience the torture & pains of *narak* upto a specified time and then with remnant *paap* will be born as lower forms of life. No one remains in either of these places forever). (Shl 19) Tied with the bondage of desires and without any freedom, thousands of living beings take birth in *tiryag-yonis* such as animals, birds, worms, water resident animals etc, go to *narak* for a specified period of time and again exit from there. (Shl 20) I who have special vision (guided by *jnana*) am seeing this cycle in which *jeevas* are caught and struggle relentlessly. **It is the doctrine of *shastras* that the fruits will have an exact correspondence with the karmas done.** (Shl 21) All animals first experience happiness, grief, liked and disliked and **then according to the karmas done in that birth** go to *naraka* or *swarga* or are born in *tiryag-yoni* or as human beings. Those states are gained according to their *karma-phalas*. (Shl 22) Entire world (consisting of all the moving & unmoving animals) is tied with the rules of fate/destiny (*kranta*) and experiences happiness or grief. All animals at all times take the path followed by all others. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 279)

Character & birth time

Indra in the guise of a fox to brahmana Kashyapa: (Shl 45) Those who are born in good *nakshatra*, good day (*thithi*), and good *muhurta* (time) try their best to perform *yajnas*, to give to charity and to beget good children. (Shl 46) Those who are born in *asuri nakshatra*, blemished *thithi* and inauspicious *muhurta* do not perform *yajnas*, do not beget children and after death are born as *asuras*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 180)

Status at birth & qualities

- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: All kinds of calamities & difficulties will surround/overtake the following: One deficient in intelligence, **born in low *kula***, cruel, who nurtures vengeance till death, who has no courage in art of war demanded of a *kshatriya*, has no virtuous practices (*shishtachara*) and is lacking in valour.

A person endowed with following qualities will get all kinds of wealth with the assistance of gods: **born in noble family**, mighty, famed, highly learned, lives happily, has control over the senses, has **ability to discriminate between *dharma* & *adharma* which are intricately woven together.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 32)

- Kahoda: That's why people do many efforts to get a child. My son has done what I could not do (defeating Vandi). In this world valorous & mighty children are born to weak parents; highly knowledgeable children are born to those with poor or no knowledge; highly scholarly & skilful children are born to the illiterate. (**Vana; Tirthayatra; 134**)

Rebirth

Opinions/Views on rebirth

- Manu to Devaguru: (Shl 19) Child is born, grows up, becomes a youth and then also grows old. Even though the born child goes through these various states he is called by the same name. **No one considers him as a different person due to the change in states of the body.** In the same way, when Moon grows and then vanishes and reappears it is still identified as Moon. Not as a different object. **In the same way, it should be realised that even though one body is destroyed the same jeeva takes shelter in another body.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 203)
- Maharshi Devala to Narada: (Shl 34) Just as a man moves to another house from the old one he was living in, in the same way prompted by *kaal*, *jeeva* sequentially takes on new bodies created according to its past karmas. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 275**)
- Narada to Shuka: (Shl 22) **Just as a replacement boat will be ready to take on people when one boat breaks**, in the same way when the body is destroyed and the *jeeva* comes out of it, another body chosen according to its *karma phalas* will be ready. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 331**)
- Parashara rishi to king Janaka: (Shl 17) This body which is combined with the fruits of karmas takes birth in some place and dies somewhere. We can see such rebirth driven by fruits of karmas in animals. (Shl 18) King Janaka! **Just as a big cloud roams around in the sky everywhere, jeeva after relinquishing a body will be roaming around for some time. It does not obtain rebirth immediately.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 297)
- Markandeya rishi to Yudhishtira: **Man accumulates all good-bad karma phalas through this physical body.** Immediately upon death, the *jeeva* bound to the *sookshma sharira* joins another body according to the accumulated karma *phas* (which is properly suited for enjoying & suffering the *karmaphalas*). (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 183**)
- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 4) **Rebirth cannot be avoided as long as you have ego (*aham-bhava*).** If you act with the feeling, 'I am earning, I will earn *punya* by performing *yajna*', then even the *punya* earned will be spent just like money. In this world, whoever does noble or evil deeds (*punya* or *paap*) with ego (*aham-bhava*) certainly cannot escape the cycle of birth & death. Those who do *punya* will live in *punya-lokas* until their *punya* is spent and will come back to this earth. They will fall into this hell (*naraka*) called Bhowma. They will go on acquiring different physical bodies which are food for the vultures, foxes, crows etc. (**Adi; Sambhava; 90**)
- Sanatsujata: (Shl 9) **Once karma takes birth, it becomes natural to expect fruits of karma. As soon as fruits are desired Jeeva is bound by it.** (It does not matter whether they are good or bad karma). *Jeeva* will have to obey the consequences arising from fruits of karma. Therefore he cannot transcend death. (Good karma *phas* may take the *jeeva* to good *lokas* & bad *phas* to bad *lokas*. But after exhausting the *phas*, the cycle resumes). *Jeeva* gets bound to *karma phalas* due to ignorance of the truth of Parabrahma. It enjoys pleasures (*bhogayoga*) and remains in the cycle of birth & death. (**Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42**)
- Highly pleased with Kaashyapa, that Siddha *purusha* preached to him about *para-siddhi*. (Shl 29) Child! Kaashyapa! Human beings obtain best fruits in this *loka* and good places in *Devaloka* due to the *punya* accumulated by doing auspicious deeds. (Shl 30) **Jeeva does not get unending happiness anywhere. Jeeva cannot stay permanently in any loka. Jeeva keeps falling down from even the highest of places obtained after performing tapas with great severity.** (Shl 31) Because I was full of *kaam* & *krodh*, was deluded with desires and was engaged in sinful deeds I obtained very inauspicious & difficult states. (Shl 32) **Because of such bad states, I was repeatedly going through births & deaths.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 16)

- Shaunaka's reply to Yudhishtira: (Shl 71) *Jeeva* takes several kinds of births repeatedly due to *avidya* (ignorance), karma and desires just as a rotating wheel. (Shl 72) **Jeeva takes births all the way from that of Brahma to a blade of grass.** It spends many many births on land, water and sky. This is the fate of *ajnanis* (ignorant). I will tell you how the wise will be. They will always be interested in dharma & auspicious ways and will always be engaged in matters connected with *moksha*. (Shl 74) Vedas ordain karmas. But they also say repeatedly that it should be done without desire for fruits of karmas. All karmas should be done purely as offering to *deva* and not with ego/attachment to self. (**Vana; Aranya; 2**)
- Vyasa to his son Shukadeva: ...(Shl 31, 32) A fool wishing to perform *dharma-karya* ends up doing *adharma-karya*. Or due to lack of appropriate intelligence, due to indiscrimination or out of grief, engages in dharma which is like *adharma*. Not being able to distinguish between dharma & *adharma-karmas* he does *adharma-karmas* while believing that he is doing *dharma-karya*. Or actually desiring *adharma* will engage in *dharma-karyas*. In this way the person who cannot understand the nature of dharma & *adharma* will repeat the cycle of birth & death. There is no *moksha* for such person. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 235**)
- Brahmana to Brahmani (Ambarisha Gita) (Shl 9) Man prompted by greed does things that he just should not. One who cuts asunder such defect of *lobha* with the sword of *jnana* will attain great happiness. (Shl 10) From greed is born craving and from craving is born worry. The greedy who desire too much of things, vehicles and money etc wealth first develop excessive *rajas guna*. After obtaining all that he wants he gains excessive *tamas guna*. (Shl 11) **It is because of these gunas that man gets bound to body and takes birth repeatedly. He keeps on doing variety of works. After completion of one birth, even though his body is scattered to all places, again that jeeva takes birth according to the karmas and after some time dies. He keeps revolving in this wheel of birth & death.** (Shl 12) Therefore the nature of greed should be thoroughly understood, it should be destroyed with courage and one should desire to have authority over the kingdom of *atma*. Kingdom is not anything else. One who has correctly understood *atma* is the real king. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 31**)
- Vidura's extensive philosophical exposition to console Dhritarashtra: (Shl 20) In this world we have all had thousands of *janmas* (births) and by virtue of it have had thousands of parents, children, wives etc. But now how are they all related and to whom? To who are we related? (**Stree parva; Jalapradanika upa-parva; Adhyaya 2**)
- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 28) **Only two types of persons have happiness in this world: the fool and the one who has had atma-darshan.** Those who are at neither of these ends and fall in between will always suffer grief. (Shl 29) One who remains sad due to a grief he has experienced will never be happy. There is no end to the grief brought upon due to unquenchable thirst (of desires). They will keep taking birth one after the other. (Shl 31) Happiness-grief, profit-loss, **birth-death**, creation-destruction—**man will face these in cycles continually.** Therefore man should neither exult nor grieve about these dualities. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25**)

Effect of karmas done on rebirth

- Brihaspati: Yudhishtira! Next I will tell you by which states of mind and which karmas which horrible states human being obtains.
(Shl 46) Even a brahmana who has studied Vedas, if out of delusion he accepts *daan* from a fallen person, in the subsequent births he will be born as a donkey. (Shl 47) He lives as a donkey for 15 years. After this he will be born as an ox and live for seven years. (Shl 48) After completing this he will again be born as *brahma-rakshasa*. After completing three months in this form he will again be born as a brahmana.
(A long list of offences/wicked deeds and corresponding cycle of rebirths is described at this stage. Interested readers may please read the original).
(Shl 126) Men commit several kinds of sins and are born as animals & birds. **When in these births, they do not know who they are. They will not even know the dharma of uplifting the self.** (Shl 127, 128) People under the influence of greed and delusion keep committing sins. They

will try to wash these sins by observing *vrats* etc. Such persons will experience both happiness and grief and remain worried without finding peace. Such people after death will be born as nomads & *mlecchas*. (Shl 129) The person who does not commit any sins from the time of birth will be disease free, attractive to look at and wealthy. (Shl 130) Even women upon committing such sins will obtain similar births. They will be the wives of the corresponding animals.

Yudhishtira! After hearing all this, you should also keep your mind firmly fixed in dharma. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 111)

- Fox to brahmana: (Shl 47) **In the previous birth I was a *pandita*. I was abusing Vedas based on fallacious arguments. I had greater attachment to useless logic based purely on physical evidences.** (Shl 48) I would go to the assembly of scholars and present reasonable looking arguments very logically. When other brahmanas were discussing Vedas with faith, I used to condemn their logic and used to abuse those brahmanas. (Shl 49) Oh *vipra*! **I was an atheist. I used to see everything with suspicion. Though in reality I was a fool, I had arrogance that I was a great scholar.** As a result of it, now I have got this birth of a fox. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 180)
- Yudhishtira to Nahusha: (Shl 8) Oh serpent king! As soon as man dies, his body is burnt. When the body itself is burnt how can *karma-phalas* survive? How can one go to *Swarga*? How to experience pleasures there without a body? Tell me all these.

Yudhishtira! Just because the physical body is burnt, the *jeeva* is not destroyed. (Shl 9) **The *jeeva* enveloped with good and bad *karma-phalas* of each birth can transform in three ways:** Gaining *Swarga*, birth as human and birth in *tiryag yoni* (lower forms like animals, birds, worms etc). (These are also known as *urdhva-gati*, *madhya-gati* and *adho-gati*).

(Shl 10) The person who has practiced *daan*, non-violence and truthfulness without lethargy will be able to go to *swarga*. (Shl 11) If the sinful & virtuous deeds are equal, he will gain be born as human being. One who has practices opposed to these will be born in *tiryag yonis*. Not just this. (Shl 12) One who is a refuge to *kaam*, *krodh*, *mada*, *matsarya* etc will lose his human birth and will be born in *tiryag yonis*. (Shl 13) In the same way, *tiryag* births can obtain birth as human being by virtue of their karmas. It is possible for some animals like horse & cow to be born in higher births and go to *Swarga* also. (Shl 15) But a *dvija* does not desire either karmas or their fruits and tries to merge the *jeevatma* in Paramatma. Except a *jnani* all others identify themselves with the body, experience the fruits of karmas and keep on taking variety of births. But one who does *nishkaam karma*, knowing this cycle of births & deaths attempts to get off this revolving wheel. (Vana; Ajagara; 181)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! They say that *bhudaan* exceeds all other kinds of *daan*. This earth is immovable and inexhaustible. It gives all kinds of enjoyments. (Shl 3) It is earth that gives clothes, gems, cattle, paddy, grains etc. One who donates land will gain more prosperity than others. (Shl 4) As long as earth exists one who donated land will find prosperity birth after birth. There is no *daan* superior to that of *bhudaan*. (Shl 7) **One who donates this inexhaustible land as *dakshina* will be born as human being in next birth and will be a land lord.** (Shl 8) It is the doctrine of *dharma shastras* that one would enjoy luxuries and comforts in proportion as one donates. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 62)

Karmas persist even after dissolution

- Sanatkumara to Shukracharya & Vritrasura: (Shl 51) Those *jnanis* who have burnt the *sookshma*, *sthoola* & *kaarana shariras* will attain Parabrahma Paramatma at the time of *pralaya* (dissolution). In the same way, those who are in lower *lokas* than Brahma-loka and are dedicated to *sadhana* & have rich *daivi-prakriti* will attain Parabrahma at the time of dissolution. (Shl 52) **If *pralaya* occurs when the *jeevas* that have attained *deva-bhava* have not yet exhausted their *karma-phalas*, they will again attain *deva-bhava* when the creation is again done and experience the remnant *karma-phala*. All *devatas* who have not yet experienced their *karma-phalas* completely at the end of *kalpa* will again be born as human beings on *bhu-loka* when the creation is redone.** (Even though everything is destroyed in *pralaya*, *karma-phala* does not get destroyed. The *karmas-phalas* of *punya* & *apunya* can be destroyed only by *tattva-jnana*. Till then the *jeeva* is caught in the cycle of birth & death). (Shl 53) The place vacated by the yogis who take birth in the mortal world after their *karma-phalas* are exhausted and fall from the *siddha-loka*

will be taken up by other yogis or *jeevas* who have acquired that level of *tejas* & power. In this manner, *jeevas* obtain their places based on the differences in the experience of fruits. (Shl 54) Till such time as the *siddha-purusha* enriched with highly purified state **restrains the five *indriyas* and experiences the balance *prarabdha-karmas*, *prajas* (the *adhi-devatas* of *indriyas*), and the two goddesses of *para-vidya* & *apara-vidya* will reside in him. (Shl 55) **The *sadhak* who constantly practices the highly purified *param-gati* with purified mind will surely attain that ultimate state. Then he will be firmly established in the unchanging, very difficult to gain & eternal *brahma-pada*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 280)****

- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 16) Whatever karma baggage the individual living beings had in the previous *kalpa* (an aeon), they will have the same baggage when they take birth in the next *kalpa*. (Shl 17) A person in his next birth will be influenced by whatever qualities like violence, non-violence, soft-nature, cruel nature, dharma, adharma, truth, lies etc that he had in the past birth and will again get interested in the same good qualities or blemishes. **(Shanti; Mokshadharma; 232)**

Innumerable (evolutionary) rebirth cycles

- In spite of Indra's telling him to give up, Matanga continued his intense *tapas*. He performed *tapas* by standing on one leg for a hundred years. Again Shakra (Indra) came to him and tried to dissuade him: You cannot gain *brahmanya* however much you pray for it. (Shl 3) You will be destroyed even as you are praying for such great status. Do not try as it will be a waste. This is not even the *dharma marga* prescribed for you. (Shl 6) If all animals which are born as birds & animals have to, at some time take birth as human beings, they would first be born as *pulkasa* or *chandala*. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 7) The *pulkasas* or any other lower births we see today will all be taking rebirths in the same level for a very long time. (Shl 8) After a thousand years they obtain *shudratva*. Then they repeat it for several births. (Shl 9) Upon completing thirty cycles of *shudra* birth they gain *vysyatva*. (Shl 10) After completing 60 rebirths as *vysya* he will be born as *rajanya* (a regal personage, military caste or *kshatriya*). After 60 cycles in this he takes birth as *brahmabandhu* (an unworthy or merely nominal brahmana). (Shl 11) After 200 same rebirths he takes birth as *kaandaprishta* (One who lives by selling weapons; brahmana who lives by making arrows and other weapons). (Shl 12) After 300 rebirths in this level, he obtains *dvijatva* (twice born). (Shl 13) After completing 400 rebirths in this level he will be born in the family of a *shrotriya brahmana* (conversant with sacred knowledge like Vedas). Then he will be taking several rebirths at this level. (Shl 14) Even after being born in *shrotriya brahmana* family, grief & joy, *kaam* & hatred, arrogance & abusiveness/insulting language will be entering him. (Shl 15) That *dvija* who conquers the six enemies of *kaam*, *krodh*, *lobh*, *moha*, *mada* & *matsarya* will gain *sadgati* (good state). In case these six enemies gain victory over him, he will fall to lower levels just like the fruit which falls from the palm tree. **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 28)**

• Millions of cycles of birth & death

Sanatkumaras to Shukracharya & Vritrasura: (Shl 33) **The six colours of *jeevas* are the ultimate evidence of their states. Of these black & grey indicate lowest state. Blue & red indicate middle state consisting of happiness & grief. Yellow indicates a better state than this, having more tolerable happiness. White indicates most pure happiness.** (Shl 34) *Danaveshwara!* Of these, white colour is the greatest. It is pure & without grief. Since it does not have the tendencies of *pravritti*, it also leads to *moksha*. After taking birth in thousands of forms of life, *jeeva* is born as human being and achieves this state of purity. (Shl 35) *Danavendra!* Whatever *devaraja* Indra has said after gaining auspicious *tattva-jnana* about *atma-jnana* which is close to us is the ultimate state that white coloured *jeevas* obtain. Higher, middle or lower states are obtained according to the colour. Such *varnas* (colours) are called *kaal-krita*.

(Shl 36) *Daityashreshtha!* It is said that the possible states (*gati*) of the *jeevas* is fourteen lakhs (1.4 million). (Five *janedriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahankar*—these fourteen are *kaaranas*—causes. Due to differences in these, fourteen states are generated. Again because there will be *vritti-bheda* due to *vishaya-bheda* fourteen lakh *gatis* are generated). Even the *urdhwa-loka-gamana* (travel to upward *lokas*) happens due to these fourteen *kaaranas*.

(Shl 37) The *gati* of black colour is said to be the lowest. It obtains *narak*. It creates interest in forbidden activities. **People of this colour will be boiled in fire in *narak* due to their wicked**

deeds. He will be driven in wicked ways. *Rishi, munis* say that because he will continue to engage in sinful deeds due to the fourteen causes mentioned earlier, he will live in *narak* for several *kalpas*. (Shl 38) That *jeeva* will suffer in *narak* for one lakh (100,000) years and then obtain grey colour and take birth as birds & animals. Even here the *jeeva* will be living helplessly with much grief. After a *yuga*, it becomes safer due to the effects of *tapas* or past *punyas* or *viveka* and becomes blue coloured. (Shl 39) Once *jeeva* acquires some *sattwa-guna* then through its *buddhi* it tries to push away the tendencies of *tamo-guna* and tries for its auspiciousness. Then *jeeva* gives up its blue colour and gains red colour and moves in the world of humans in cycles of birth & death. (Shl 40) Then that *jeeva* will be in the *manushya-loka* for one *kalpa* (a fabulous period of time, at the end of a *kalpa* the world is annihilated) and tied by the bondages generated by *swadharma* and suffering its grief, it slowly increases its *tapas*. Then that *jeeva* will acquire yellow colour & attains *devata-bhava*. After spending hundreds of *kalpas* in *devata-bhava*, it loses its *punyas* and again obtains *manushyatva* (blue-red color). (Shl 41) *Daityeshwara*! **Even if the *jeeva* moves in the form of a *devata* for a thousand *kalpas* it does not get liberated from the desire for pleasure of the senses.** *Jeeva* that is suffering in *naraka* due to the inauspicious deeds done by it in each *kalpa* obtains 19000 different states. (Ten *indriyas*, five *pranas*, *buddhi*, *manas*, *chitta* & *ahankara*—these 19 are tools or means of enjoyment. Due to the differences in *vishaya* & *vritti* these become 19000). Then the *jeeva* finds liberation from *narak*. **Except birth as human being all other births are fit only to experience happiness or grief.** (Shl 43) That *jeeva* will obtain *deva-roopa* and will be in *devaloka* continuously. Once the *punya* decays it falls from *swarga* and obtains human birth with blue-red colour. That *jeeva* will undergo cycles of birth & death for 800 *kalpas* in *manushya-loka*. During that time it will gather fruits of auspicious deeds and attain immortality. (Shl 44) **Even if the *jeeva* gathers *punya-phala* over *kalpas* and obtains *devatva*, once the *punya-phala* decays it falls from *deva-loka*.** That *jeeva* directed by *kaal* does inauspicious or sinful deeds and falls lower than *manushya-loka*. It obtains the lowest black colour. **I will tell you how the *jeeva* which is caught in this cycle of upward rise and downward fall attains *siddhi*.** (*Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 280*)

Role of karmas in obtaining the four *varnas* at birth

Maheshwara's answers to Umadevi: (Shl 6) *Devi!* *Brahmanatva* is very difficult to get. It is my opinion that the four *varnas* (*brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vysya* & *shudra*) are based on nature. (Shl 7) By doing bad deeds *brahmana* falls from his high position. Therefore he who is born in the highest *varna* should maintain his honour. (Shl 8) **Whether a *kshatriya* or a *vysya*, if he follows the *brahmana dharma*, in the next birth he will be born a *brahmana*.**

Fall from a *varna*

(Shl 9) That *brahmana* who gives up the dharmas of his own *varna* and practices the dharma meant for *kshatriyas* will lapse from his *varna* and after death will be born a *kshatriya*. (Shl 10, 11) The *brahmana* who after getting the difficult to get *brahmana* birth, practices the dharmas of *vysya* attracted by desire & greed will be born as *vysya* after death. If a *vysya* follows the dharma of a *shudra* after death he will be born a *shudra*. In this way a *brahmana* who has fallen from his own dharma will eventually be born a *shudra*. (Shl 12) A *brahmana* by doing karmas meant for *shudras* will fall from *brahmanatva*. He will be excommunicated by own *varna* people. After death he will fall into *naraka*. After experiencing *naraka* for a specified time he will be born a *shudra*. (Shl 13, 14) Whether a *kshatriya* or *vysya*, if they give up their own dharmas and practice the dharma of a *shudra*, they will also fall from their *varnas* and obtain change of *varnas*. (Shl 15) **Among the four *varnas* whoever practices his own dharma of birth and remains pure, is enriched with *jnana* & *vijnana*, is holy, has knowledge of dharma and is committed to dharma will enjoy the fruits of dharma.**

(Shl 16) *Brahma* has made a statement in this matter, '*Satpurushas* who desire dharma take shelter in strict practices and in *adhyatma* all their life' (*adhyatmam naishtikam*). (Shl 17) Eating in the house of a person with *ugra* (fierce, cruel) nature is disapproved. Food served in a community group, food of *shraaddha*, in a house where there is impurity due to new birth or death or in a wicked person's house should not be eaten. *Shudraanna* (food in *shudra's* house or prepared by *shudras*) should not be eaten for any reason. (Shl 18) *Mahatmas* & *devatas* have censured *shudraanna*. This has been said by *Pitamaha Brahma* himself (?!!). Therefore I take this as reference. (Shl 19) **The *brahmana* who dies with *shudraanna* in his stomach – whether he**

was an *agnihotri* or *yajnika* – will be born a *shudra* in next birth. (Shl 21) The *varna* to which the remnants of food in a *brahmana*'s stomach belong when he dies or depending on food from whichever *varna* he lives, he will be born in that *varna* in next birth. (Shl 22) Even after obtaining the difficult to get birth of a *brahmana*, the person who deprecates his own birth and eats food that is not worthy of eating will fall from *brahmanatva*. (Shl 23, 24) Even after getting the most difficult to get and auspicious birth of *brahmana*, the person who drinks *sura*, commits *brahma hatya*, is mean, is a thief, does not practice a *vrata* he resolves to do, is impure, has given up study of Vedas, is sinner, is greedy, is a fraud, is haughty, is husband of a *shudra* woman, eats in the same vessel in which food was cooked, sells *somalata* and serves the lowly & mean will fall from *brahmanatva*. (Shl 25) He will fall from *brahmanatva* even if dedicated to the study of Vedas, if he mates with wife of guru, commits treachery and always censures the guru.

Rising in *varna* hierarchy

(Shl 26) *Dev!* I am going to describe next that by following auspicious karmas and virtuous practices a *shudra* can eventually obtain *brahmanatva*. (Shl 27-29) A *shudra* should do all his works in a just manner and as prescribed in *shastras*. He should serve persons who are elder to him with a conscious effort. He should never lose interest/focus in discharging his duties. He should worship *devatas*, should show hospitality to *dvijas*, should take up the *vrata* of showing hospitality to guests, should mate with wife only during periods of fertility and should be disciplined and eat in regulated manner. He should himself be pure and look for *satpurushas*. Should eat after guests and family members have eaten & should not eat meat unnecessarily. **By practicing such rules/regulations he will be born a *vysya* in next birth.**

(Shl 30-34) After taking birth as *vysya* he should be truthful, have no ego, should become free of dualities, should be calm, should be engaged in study of Vedas, should be *jitendriya* and perform *yajnas*. Should honour *brahmanas* and wish for the upliftment of people of all *varnas*. Should practice *grihastha vrata* and should have only two meals a day. He should eat the leftovers of offerings in *yajna*, should consume limited amounts of food, should give up all desires and should give up the feeling of 'I & mine'. Should perform *agnihotra* and give offerings to *agni* according to procedures. Should show hospitality towards all guests and eat only after they have eaten. He should worship *garhapatya* etc *agnis* with formal *mantras*. **If he leads such a life after death he will be born in pure & great family of *kshatriyas*.**

(Shl 35-37) After taking birth as *kshatriya* he should be purified with various *sanskaras* (purification rites) and after *upanayana* (thread ceremony) should be dedicated to the life of a *brahmachari* and be felicitated/respected by all as *dvija*. With the three karmas of *yajana*, *adhyayana* & *daan*, he will worship gods with *yajnas* consisting of plentiful and adequate *dakshina*. He will study Vedas and desiring *Swarga* he will depend on *tretagnis*. He will extend a hand of protection to the needy. He will govern people everyday adhering to dharma and will be truthful in all dealings. His mere sight will make people happy. (Shl 38) A good *kshatriya* should punish offenders according to dharma. He should not give up punishing (*danda*). He should order citizens to perform acts of dharma. He should be engaged in *rajakarya* with dharma and *rajaneeti*. He should collect one sixth of citizens' income. (Shl 39) A skilled *kshatriya* who is *dharmatma* should not indulge in sex freely. He should mate only with wife during periods of fertility. (Shl 40) Should eat regularly and in controlled manner only twice a day and not eat anything in between. He should be engaged in the study of Vedas, should sleep on a mat of *darbhe* (kind of dry grass) everyday in *agni-griha*. (Shl 41) A *kshatriya* should with pleasantness show hospitality to the people of three *varnas* in every way. To the *shudras* who desire food, he should inform that food is ready and have it served to them. (Shl 42) **The *kshatriya* who strives hard to please *pitrus*, *devatas* and guests should not do anything that is against dharma even while being interested in *artha* & *kaam*.** (Shl 43) He should eat in his house in a just manner, should bathe at three times (morning, afternoon, evening) & should perform *agnihotra* according to *shastras*. (Shl 44) **If a *kshatriya* so purified dies in a war fighting for the welfare of cattle and *brahmanas* he will be born a *brahmana* in next birth.** (Shl 45) He will become a *brahmana* enriched in *jnana* & *vijnana* and will be an expert in Vedas & Vedangas.

(Shl 46) **Thus by the power of auspicious deeds even a *shudra* can eventually become purified and become a highly learned *brahmana*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 142)**

Story of Vyasa & insect and its rebirths

- Vyasa said: (Shl 1) Oh insect! Did you not say that even though you are born as an insect you are not deluded in respect of karmas in previous birth and that you have memory of past birth due to your good deeds? But these have happened to you by my grace. (Shl 2) I can uplift you from this birth of an insect by virtue of my *tapo-bala* by merely looking at you. There is no strength greater than that of *tapo-bala*. (Shl 3) **Oh insect! I know that you have got this birth because of your sins in past birth.** If you think that dharma can uplift you, you will get such dharma again. (Shl 4) **The fruits of karma done on *karma-bhumi* will be experienced by *devatas* as well as animals & birds.** Just like man can find accomplishment of *kaam* & *artha* by virtuous qualities (*sadguna*), they can also be accomplished by dharma. (Shl 5) Whether man is a scholar or a dimwit, if he has speech, intelligence and limbs, what can destroy him when he is alive? (Shl 6) In a certain place on earth there is a great brahmana who has been worshipping Sun & Moon daily and has been narrating holy stories to people. You will be born as his son. (Shl 6) **There you will realise that objects of senses are mere transformations of *pancha-bhutas* and will experience them with detachment/disinterest.** At that time I will again come to you, will preach *brahma-tattva* and send you to the *lokas* you wish to go.

The insect accepted Vyasa's statement and remained in the path of cart. It was crushed to pieces when the cart came and died. **Then it was sequentially born as porcupine, a water animal, pig, animal, bird, *chandala*, *shudra*, *vysya* etc different forms and finally due to the grace of Vyasa was born in the family of a *kshatriya*.** After he became an adult, by virtue of memory of past births he came to Vyasa to see him.

(He prostrated to Vyasa and described how he was leading a royal & luxurious life)

Then he said: Oh great wise man! I bow to you. What should I do next? I have got this position of king only because of your *tapo-bala*.

Vyasa said: Prince! You have praised me with many good words. Now you have recollected the disgust you had developed in your insect birth. **The sins you had built up as a cruel and greedy *shudra* will not be destroyed. Even though you were born as an insect because of those sins,** you were fortunate enough to see me. By virtue of that you are born as a prince. Now you have also honoured me with your praise. As a result of this, after death you will be born as a *brahmana*. (Shl 23) Prince! In this birth you will enjoy many luxuries, perform many *yajnas* with adequate *dakshinas* and you will fight to protect cattle & brahmanas, sacrifice your life in that fight and then enjoy in *Swarga*. (Shl 24) **When the *jeeva* which was born as birds and animals starts obtaining higher states, it will first be born as *shudra*, as *vysya* after losing that state and after that as *kshatriya*. A *kshatriya* with virtuous practices gets the birth of a *brahmana*. Then by having *sadachara* & *sadvrtti* (virtuous practices and conduct), he gets auspicious *Swarga* upon death. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 118)**

Bhishma said: (Shl 1) Yudhishtira! In this manner that *jeeva* which gave up its life as an insect obtained many other births and was then born as a *kshatriya*. In that birth, recollecting its past birth, it did plenty of *tapas*. Seeing his severe *tapas*, Krishna Dwaipayana went to him and said: 'Oh prince who was an insect! Protecting all living beings is the *vrata* of *devatas* also. It is also the dharma of *kshatriyas*. Govern the people thinking about such *deva-vrata* & *kshaatra-dharma*. You will get *brahmanatva* in next birth. Oh prince! **Govern all your citizens well. Become a *jitendriya* and understand which karmas are auspicious and which are not. Donate your wealth to *satpurushas* with auspicious desires. Give up inauspicious karmas. Become an *atma jnani*. Be always content. Always be engaged in *swadharma*.** Give up this body while living like this. In the next birth you will be a *brahmana*.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! The prince obeyed Vyasa and governed his people well. Then he went to the forest and was engaged in *tapas*. In a short while he died and obtained *vipratva*. Seeing this, Krishna Dwaipayana went to him and said: Great brahmana! Do not grieve from now on for any reason. **Those who do *punya* will be born in higher births and sinners will be born in lower births.** Man experiences fruits corresponding to the sins he has committed. Oh *jeeva* which was an insect! Do not grieve out of any fear for any reason. **Always have the one fear that carelessness can result in lapsing from dharma. With this fear in mind, practice dharma with care.**

The brahmana said: Worship worthy! By your grace I have obtained higher places of happiness from previous places. In this birth **possessed with wealth rooted in dharma I am free of all sins.**

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! That *jeeva* which had become a brahmana performed a hundred *yajnas* as suggested by Vyasa. Then that brahmana became great among *brahmanas* and after death attained residence with Brahma (*Brahma – salokya*). **As advised by Vyasa that insect practiced the dharma of whatever varna or birth it obtained. As a result that jeeva which was an insect attained Brahma salokya.**

All the *kshatriyas* who fought with you have fought powerfully according to their *swadharma* and have obtained *sadgati* after death. Therefore you need not grieve about them.

(Foot note by Editors: It is said in Vishnu Purana that the person who obtained *brahmanatva* from an insect became well known as *maharshi Maitreya*) (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 119**)

Conduct/nature & rebirth

- Maheshwara said to Umadevi: *Devi* ! I will gladly tell you about these effects of karma. I will tell you how all the people in this world that is subject to death experience karmas. (Shl 49, 50) *Devi*! The cruel person who always holds a weapon in his hand with the intention of killing others and has a fearsome appearance, who kills animals everyday with a weapon, who is cruel towards living beings, who causes anxiety & agitation in all beings, who does not provide shelter even to insects, worms and ants will fall into *naraka*. (Shl 51, 52) One who has a nature opposite to this will be born as a good looking person. One who is interested only in inflicting violence on animals will be born in next birth as someone disliked by all, will be short lived and will be killed by others. (Shl 53) One who does not show cruelty to living beings will go to *Swarga*. One who does will go to *naraka*. There he will undergo extremely agonising time. (Shl 54) Among those who fall into *naraka* due to this reason, even if someone were to come back as human being he will be short lived. (Shl 56-58) As against this, one who is of noble lineage, has rejected violence towards living beings, has given up weapons and tools of hurting, who does not cause violence to beings for any reason whatsoever, does not order others to kill, he also does not kill, does not encourage any killer, is friendly towards all beings, considers others as himself, such great man will attain *devatva*. He will enjoy all the happiness provided in *devaloka*. (Shl 59) If such a person were to be born as human being here, he will live long and enjoy happiness here also. (Shl 60) This is the secret of those who have virtuous conduct and are long lived. Brahma himself has preached this path. This path is obtained by giving up violence to living beings. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 144**)
- Brahma to Maharshis: (Shl 20-22) Persons with following characteristics are said to be ***tamasic***: talking too much, not having forbearance/endurance, envy, ego and lack of faith. **It is clear what kind of birth such sinners with dominance of *tamoguna* will have in next births. Some of these will fall into lowly *Naraka* and some others will be born in *tiryag yonis* (animals, birds, insects etc).** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 36**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 29) Those people who live by deceit and fraud like crows and vultures also live. After death they will all be born as crows and vultures. (**Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 109**)

Specific cases of births

Arjuna

(Shl 17, 18) Durvasa (pleased with her service and care during a month long stay) grants a *mantra* to Kunthi. The power of the *mantra* is: '*akamo va sakamo va sa sameshyati thae vashe*'; 'the deity you think of will come to you & be under your control for some time like a polite servant **whether he wants it or not**'. (**Vana; Kundalaharana; 305**)

Even after getting two sons, king Pandu was not satisfied. Desire to have another son arose in his mind. Of the two sons he had obtained one was extremely *dharmic* (Yudhishtira) and another was very mighty (Bhima). He might have thought that he will be fulfilled if he gets another son who is both

highly *dharmic* and very mighty. Pandu started to think how to get such a son. (Shl 21) 'Every action in this world is a combination of *purusha-prayatna* (human initiative) and *vidhi* (fate, destiny). If efforts are done in a timely manner what will destiny do? I have heard that the lord of *devas* Indra is very mighty, powerful and is *maha-tejaswi*. I will please him with my *tapas* and get a son who is both exceptionally *dharmic* and valorous.

Having thus decided, Pandu consulted the *rishis* & *maharshis* about the methods, rules & regulations of performing *tapas*; then he told Kunthi also to commit herself to *vrats* for one year; then he started a severe *tapas* by being in *Samadhi yoga* from day break to day end and by while standing on one leg.

After a long time, Indra was pleased with his *tapas* and appeared before him and said: (Shl 28, 29) King Pandu! I will grace you with a son. I will grace you a son who will be famous in all three *lokas*. I will grant you a son who will always be dedicated to the welfare of brahmanas, cows and the virtuous. That son who will be born from my grace will bring grief to enemies and the wicked. He will cause joy to relatives with his virtuous deeds. I will grant you a son who will destroy all enemies.

Hearing the nectar like words, Pandu got up and prostrated to Devaraja. Pandu's eyes were brimming with tears of joy. At that time Indra vanished.

A joyous Pandu went to Kunthi and said to her: 'Princess! Your *vrats* have yielded fruits. Indra is pleased. Indra has agreed to grant us a son with superhuman powers and of great fame. He has told me that that son will be destroyer of enemies, will have radiance like that of Sun, will be highly ethical and be very handsome. Kunthi! Right now invoke the *mantra* given to you by the *maharshi* (see about Karna here) and invite Indra.'

Hearing this Kunthi immediately sat in Padmasana and with a pure heart invited Indra with the *mantra*. Indra came smilingly as he had promised king Pandu and joined (mated?) her. Soon the great man Arjuna was born.

Day of Birth of Arjuna: Phalguna masa, when Poorva-phalguni *nakshatra* was about to end and Uttara-phalguni was about to begin. Therefore he was also called Phalguna. (Later in (**Virata; Goharana parva; 44**, (Shl 17) he says: I was born at the base of Himalayas in day time in the Uttara Phalguni *nakshatra*).

There was an *asharira vani* (literal: bodyless voice/ unseen voice) when he was born. It was rumbling like thunder in all directions. All heard it. 'Kunthi devi! You who have got this gem of a son are truly great! He will be known as being equal to kartaviryarjuna. He will have valour equal to that of Parashiva. He will be equal to Vishnu and make you very happy. He will conquer Madras, Kurus, Chedis, Somaka-Kashi-Karushas and will increase the fame of Kuru lineage. Agni will consume Khandava with his help and will feel contented. He will conquer all the kings in the world and will perform three famous *yajnas* with his brothers. Among the mighty he will be equal to Parashurama and in valour will equal Maha Vishnu himself. He will display exceptional valour in a fight with Mahadeva, will earn his appreciation and obtain a *mahastra* called Pashupata. Upon being ordered by Indra, he will decimate Nivatakavachas who are enemies of Indra and thus pleasing him will obtain all the divine *astras*. It is he who will safeguard the fame of Kuru lineage which will be on the brink of being lost. (**Adi; Sambhava; 123**)

- **Sanjaya on greatness of Arjuna & Shri Krishna**

Ordered by Vyasa to tell all the answers truthfully & to the best of his knowledge, Sanjaya tells Dhritarashtra: **Arjuna and Sri Krishna are always together. They behave as if they are one body.** They are born as separate individuals of their own accord. They have not taken birth due to the *karma-phalas* of previous births. They are veritable *brahma-swaroopas*. (**Udyoga; Yanasandhi; 68**)

- **Kunthi sends her message to other sons & Draupadi through Sri Krishna**

When Arjuna was born, I heard an *asharira vani* (voice without a body-- considered voice of gods & infallible) from the skies which had said: (Shl 2-5) "Kunthi! This son of yours will be as valorous as Indra himself. He, along with Bhima, will conquer all the Kurus. He will cause grief to the enemies. He will conquer the whole earth. His fame will reach the *swarga* also. **With the assistance of Vasudeva, he will kill all the soldiers of Kurus and regain the ancestral kingdom.** Along with his brothers he will perform three *Ashwamedha yaagas*". The time has come to make the sayings of *asharira-vani* true. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 137**)

Bhishma

Then Shri Krishna said to her consolingly: (Shl 30) Oh Gangadevi! Please console yourself. Do not grieve. Your son has gone to the best of *lokas*. There is no doubt in this. (Shl 31) Bhishma who was born as your son is the great *tejaswi Vasu* (one among the *Ashta-vasus*). He took birth as human due to a curse of Vasishta. It is not fit for you to grieve about him. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 167**)

Draupadi

(Drupada humiliated by Drona resolves to get a son who will eventually kill Drona. After much struggle he manages to please Upayaya and makes him agree to perform a *yaaga* which will result in his begetting such a son)

All arrangements were made for the *yaaga*. *Yaaga* was started and it reached the final stage of *poornahuti* (sacrifice). After this, Upayaya called Drupada's wife and said to her: 'Oh Queen! Come here. You will beget a son and a daughter. Accept this *havis* right now.'

Hearing this, the queen said: 'Maharshi! My mouth is smeared with *tambula* and my body is smeared with perfumed cosmetics. Therefore at this time I do not deserve to accept (drink) the *havis* before washing my face and taking bath. You may have to wait for a short while in order to do something good to me.'

Upayaya did not agree to give any time. He told her harshly: 'Oh queen! If you wish to partake the *havis* come and have it right now! If not, I have the powers to fulfil the intended result of this *yaaga* without you. Once I have prepared this *havis* I have absolutely no doubts about its results.'

The queen did not come in time. Upayaya offered the *havis* into fire. Next instant there arose from the sacrificial fire a boy who already was adorned with a crown, *kavach* & *karnakundalas* (armour & ear ornaments), had bow, arrows and sword in his hands. Soon after emerging from the fire he climbed a chariot and prepared to leave for conquering. Seeing this miracle, the people assembled said, '*sadhu! sadhu!*' ... At that time an unseen voice was heard saying, 'This son is born to destroy Drona. He will also bring success to the citizens of Panchala kingdom. This son will remove all the fear and grief of the king.'

After a few moments, a girl called Panchali also came out from the centre of the sacrificial fire. Her eyes were black & wide like the lotus leaf. Her complexion was dark and her hair was long and curly. Her finger nails were the colour of copper. Her eye-brows were beautiful. Her breasts were attractive and she was looking as if a *devata* among the humans. The fragrance emanating from her body was reaching quite some distance. There were none equal to her in beauty in the world. She was so beautiful that *devas*, *danavas* and *yakshas* would also have desired to marry her.

When she was born also there was a unseen voice which proclaimed: 'This beautiful woman will be known as the best among women in this world. Her name is Krishna. She will be the cause for the destruction of *Kshatriyas*. She will fulfil the desires of *devatas* and the kings of *kuru-vamsha* will face great danger because of her.'

The public were immensely pleased. ... The queen requested Yaya that these children should not consider anyone other than her as mother. Yaya consented to her request.

Kauravas

(Summary)

- Preserving Gandhari's ball of flesh from womb: Gandhari decided to abort the foetus & by applying force/hitting on the abdomen, aborted it. Even though two years had elapsed the foetus was hard as a ball of metal & was merely a ball of flesh and had no shape of a human being...

Maharshi Vyasa asked for 100 pots with tight covers and filled with ghee to be brought immediately. He asked her to immediately bring cold water & sprinkle on the foetus. When it was sprinkled, the foetus broke into 100 pieces. Each piece was of the size of the *phalange* of the thumb. When each piece was placed in the ghee-pot, 101 pots were required. The pots were preserved in a secret location. Proper arrangements were made for its protection. Vyasa said: "Gandhari! These pots have to be protected carefully. The covers should be opened only after completion of two years. Till then they should not even be touched." (**Adi; Sambhava; 115**)

Just as Vyasa had said, after two years, Duryodhana was born from the first such pot. Prince Yudhistira became the eldest and Duryodhana was the second. The news of his birth was conveyed to Dhritarashtra, Bhishma & Vidura. **Same day Bhima was also born.** Children cry soon after birth, isn't it? But Duryodhana started to bray loudly like a donkey. Hearing this, the donkeys around also started to bray. Foxes, vultures and crows echoed the sound. There were minor tornadoes in some places. Fire was seen in all directions quite unexpectedly.

Scared and perplexed by this king Dhritarashtra called brahmins, Vidura & specialists in omens to know the significance. Seeing these bad omens they and Vidura said to him: (Shl 35-38) Oh King! It is clear from these omens that your son will be destroyer of the entire lineage. These omens can be nullified only by abandoning this child. If you retain him out of affection for son, your whole lineage will be destroyed. Even if you abandon him, you will be left with 99 children. Therefore if you truly wish the welfare of the lineage you must abandon this child. Elders say that: for the benefit of lineage one person can be abandoned; for the sake of a village, one family/clan can be abandoned; one village can be sacrificed for the sake of a country; the whole world can be given up for one's own 'liberation' (*atmoddhara*).

But Dhritarashtra did not abandon the child as suggested by them; instead he dismissed the meeting.

- Bhima to Krishna: This mean, sinful Duryodhana, a blot on Kurukula, **is born towards the last phase of Dwapara yuga** and prompted by 'time' is likely to be the destroyer of Kuru *vamsha*. You have to speak very softly with him. And you should tell slowly. You have to tell only that which is based on dharma & *artha*. .. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; 74**)

Karna

Conception & birth of Karna

(Summary)

- (Shl 17, 18) Durvasa (pleased with her service and care during a month long stay) grants a *mantra* to Kunthi. The power of the *mantra* is: '*akamo va sakamo va sa sameshyati thae vashe*'; 'the deity you think of will come to you & be under your control for some time like a polite servant **whether he wants it or not**'. (**Vana; Kundalaharana; 305**)
- Kunthi one day staring at rising Sun visualises him with *kundalas*. Curious to check the power of the *mantra*, she uses it with Sun in mind. The Sun god comes by his *yoga shakti*. There is a very interesting conversation between them. Having come, Sun insists that he should mate with her as she intended a child in her mind. He even threatens with dire consequences if refused. He does not accept her repeated imploring, explanations etc & insists; gives various reasons. Finally Kunthi agrees & yields. But the final *shloka* 23 clarifies that Surya implanted a child by his *yoga shakti* while she had lost her consciousness unable to withstand his *tejas* & did not deflower her in the flesh. (**Vana; Kundalaharana; 306**)

(**Karna was born immediately without any 9 months wait according to Adi; Sambhava; 67**)

- Kunthi went through her pregnancy normally for nine months. She kept the secret admirably & it was known only to one close servant. She managed it carefully & successfully as she lived in the *antahpura*. She got a box with the help of her servant. Closed several holes it had with wax. Attached a material which helps float to the bottom of the box. There was provision for airflow from the top. The box was secured. Then with the help of her servant maid, in the middle of the night she let it go in the river 'Ashwaa' with tears flooding from her eyes. Her prayers & wishes while sending the child are beautiful & touching. With great difficulty she could hide pregnancy but had no way of hiding the child. Ashwaa was a tributary of Charmanvati which was a tributary of Yamuna. After reaching Yamuna, the box reached Ganga after travelling some distance. Then the box reached the shores of a town called Champa which was ruled by '*soothas*'. The box & the child remained safe through this journey. This extraordinary news spread throughout the country & Kunthi also heard it. This town was in Anga desha. He grew up there & Kunthi came to know of it through her spies also. (**Vana; Kundalaharana; 307, 308**)

Kunthi's secret meeting with Karna

Karna to Kunthi after she reveals to him that she is his mother & Surya confirms it to him and asks him to obey his mother: "I have no faith in what you have told me. I do not even believe that if I obey you, it will help in my *atmonnathi* by *dharma*."

Mother! The sin you committed in my regard has caused destruction of my identity. Your act of abandoning me soon after birth has destroyed my success & fame. Though I was born in *Kshatriya-kula*, because of you I did not get any *samskaras* of the *kshatriyas*. Even my worst enemy would not have displayed so much ill-will towards me. Mother! At the time when you should have shown maximum kindness towards me, you did not show even an iota of it. When the time is well past for my *kshatriya samskara*, you are asking me to behave like a *kshatriya*. You are now telling me that I am a *kshatriya*. In the past you have not done any good to me as mother. You have not done a single duty of a mother. You did not behave as a mother. Now you are saying, 'you are my son', 'I am your mother' etc. Now also you have not come to me with love & affection. You have come to satisfy your selfish intentions. Therefore you are preaching me.

Then he explains/justifies why it would not be possible for him to switch sides. Finally promises that he will not try to kill his brothers except Arjuna. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 146**)

Secret meeting of Karna with Bhishma

A secret meeting takes place between Bhishma & Karna when he comes to see Bhishma when no one is around. He comes to him with tears in his eyes and with a sobbing voice.

Bhishma receives him with much affection and tells him that he knows the facts of his birth and that they were revealed to him by both Narada & Vyasa *maharshi*. He advises him on establishing peace (extracts):

"(Shl 13) You were born of *dharma-lopa* (born to Kunthi when she was unmarried). Therefore your mind runs like this. Secondly, you have taken refuge with the wicked. Hence you are also afflicted with jealousy and you hate virtuous persons. That is why I was always condemning you. (**Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; 122**)

Sri Krishna takes Karna alone with him

Speaking to Karna he said, 'Anyone may be responsible for the birth of *kaaneena* or *sahoda*. But whoever marries such a mother by following formal procedures becomes the father of the *kaaneena* or *sahoda* child as per the *dharma shastras*.

You are a *kaaneena*, born to a *kanya* (unmarried woman). That *kanya* married king Pandu formally after your birth. Therefore, as per *dharma shastra* you become Pandu's son. Therefore you will become the king. Come with me. We will coronate you. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 140**)

Duryodhana on Karna's birth

Then Duryodhana narrated to him the story of Parashurama....."Then Bhargava taught entire archery to Karna with a happy mind. If Karna had even small defects he would not have taught him and given all the divine *astras*. (Shl 160) **I do not consider in any way that Karna is born in sootha-kula. It is my belief that he must have been born in kshatriya-kula.** With the intention that he should become famous in another *kula*, someone might have relinquished him. (Shl 161) Shalyaraja! Karna was certainly not born in *sootha-kula*. **How can a sootha-stree give birth to a person with kundalas, kavacha, long powerful arms, a maharatha, who has tejas like Sun?** Can a tiger be born to a deer?..Vykarthana Karna is not an ordinary person. He is a *mahatma*. He is very mighty & valorous. Above all, he is the dear *shishya* of Bhargava Rama." (**Karna; 34**)

Kunthi's confession; Vyasa's explanation & consolation

Paarikshita! Kunthi said: (Shl 1-17) **She briefly tells the way in which Karna was born. It is essentially same as it has appeared earlier.**

(Shl 18) Worshipworthy! I do not know if this act of mine is holy or sinful; I have told you the secret. Be kind enough to clear this anguish that is burning me. (Shl 19) You also know the desire of Dhritarashtra. Please show the kindness so that he fulfils it.

The great Vyasa said: (Shl 20) Daughter! Whatever you said is correct. **It had to happen that way.** (Shl 21) There is no mistake of yours in this. At that time you were still a young virgin (*kanya*).

Devatas have siddhis. Therefore they can enter other's bodies. (Shl 22) There are many groups of devatas who can cause children in five ways – mental resolve, speech (grace), sight, touch and union. (Shl 23) Kunthi! Understand that *daiva-dharma* does not defile/corrupt *manushya-dharma* (*manushya-dharmo daivena dharmena hi na dushyati*). Therefore let your worries be set to rest. (Shl 24) All the acts (which are compliant with dharma) of the mighty are for the welfare only. All acts of the mighty will be sacred. All acts of the mighty will be *dharma-karyas*. All the things belong to mighty (*sarvam balavatam pathyam sarvam balavatam shuchi sarvam balavatam dharmah sarvam balavatam svakam*). (Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; 30)

Narada about Karna's birth & death

Narada narrating the secret of Karna and the curse of brahmana:But *devatas* did not want Karna and Arjuna to be together. This is a secret of *devatas* (*deva-guhya*). I will tell you that secret. Once in the past the *devatas* started discussing how the *kshatriyas* could go to *swarga* killed/wounded by weapons. Death by weapons is possible only if there is fight among them. Thinking like this, *devatas* placed in Kunthi's womb a child capable of causing it. **Karna born to her became the cause for a great conflict among *ksatriyas*.....**Both by nature and due to the promptings of *devatas* he always hated you brothers.....

..Once he asked Dronacharya to teach him *Brahmastra* so as to be complete in knowledge of *astras*. But Dronacharya who had a natural partiality towards Arjuna, understood the evil feeling Karna had towards Arjuna and said to him, "(Shl 13) A brahmana who has practiced *brahmacharya* as prescribed can learn *Brahmastra*. Or a *kshatriya* who is a *tapasvi* can learn it. None other can learn it for any reason." Yudhishtira! Then Karna took his permission and quickly went to Parashurama who was at Mahendra parvata. He bowed to him and told him, 'I am a brahmana from Bhrgu *vamsha*' and took refuge under him.....

Once, Karna thinking a cow to be a wild animal, killed it with his arrow. The *tapasvi* brahmana who became very angry at this cursed him, "(Shl 24) You wicked minded! You deserve to be killed for the sinful deed you have done. You deserve to be killed and not pardoned. You will suffer the appropriate fruits of this karma. You sinner! When fighting with the person with whom you are constantly competing, for eliminating whom you are working hard day and night, the earth will swallow a wheel of your chariot. (Shl 25) When this happens and you are confused and perplexed, your enemy will fell your head with valour. You worst among men! Do not be here even for a moment. Go away. (Shl 26) Just as you killed my *homa-dhenu* when you were inattentive (*pramatta*), in the same way when you are inattentive your enemy will cut off your head." **The brahmana refused to change his mind inspite of the pleas of Karna and he had to go back very depressed. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 2)**

Parikshita, Abhimanyu's son

Kunthi begs Sri Krishna

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! At that time Shri Krishna with all the important *Vrshinis* came to Hastinapura.....

When they were living in Hastinapura, your father Parikshita was born. That child which was hurt by Ashwatthama's *Brahmastra* became like an inert dead body soon after birth. This caused both joy & great grief to all. ... At that time Shri Krishna with agitated *indriyas* & mind rushed into the *antahpura*. Kunthi was repeatedly telling him, '*abhidava*' (run). Kunthi came to Krishna and with tears rolling down cried to him: (Shl 15) Vasudeva! Devaki became a mother because of you. You are our refuge and supporter. Protecting/saving this *kula* is under your control. (Shl 16) This is child of your dear relative. It is still born due to Ashwatthama's *Brahmastra*. Keshava! Give it life. (Shl 17) ... You had promised to make the child live.....

All the other women also grieved inconsolably and prayed to Shri Krishna. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 66**)

Subhadra begs Krishna to give life to the child

Vaishampayana said: Subhadra saw Shri Krishna and said to him: (Shl 2) Pundarikaksha! See this unfortunate grandson of Arjuna who is born dead when all in *Kuru-vamsha* are decaying (*parikshineshu kurushu pariksheenam gatayusham*). ... (Shl 5, 6) What will Yudhishtira say when he hears that Abhimanyu's son died soon after being born? What will Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula & Sahadeva say? To tell the truth Ashwatthama, the son of Drona, has looted everything from Pandavas.... (Shl 10) Madhava! When Drona's son Ashwatthama tried to destroy the womb (future generation) of

Pandavas, you had angrily said to him: (Shl 11) 'You lowliest among men! I will see that your intention is not fulfilled. I will give life to Arjuna's grandson....' (Shl 14) **In spite of your being alive if Abhimanyu's son cannot live, of what use are you to me?** (Shl 16) Madhava! If you so wish, you can give life to all the three worlds when they are in the jaws of death. You have such power. This being so, can you not give life to this child who is your close relative? (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 67**)

Uttare begs Krishna to give life to her child

Vaishampayana said: (Shl 1) After Subhadra had said this to Shri Krishna, Keshava proclaimed loudly so as to make all present there joyous, **'Sister! In accordance with my vow I will make your grandson live'**. With this one sentence he made all of them happy just as water does to someone who is very thirsty. Then very quickly he entered the decorated delivery room.....

Shri Krishna was happy to see the arrangements in the hall where your father's birth took place. Draupadi rushed to Uttare and told her, 'Look! *Achintya, aparajita, puratana maharshi, puja* Madhusudana is coming to you....

Uttare spoke to Krishna sobbing and crying: (Shl 12) Oh Lotus eyed! Janardana! See how both I & my husband have become childless. Both Abhimanyu & I have been killed (I am as good as dead due to grief of a dead son). (Shl 13) Madhusudana! I bow to you and beg you. Give life back to my son who is dead due to Drona's son's *Ishikaashtra*. (Shl 17) Govinda! I bow to you and beg you, who are capable of destroying enemies. Kindly make this child come alive. In case you cannot do this, I will also certainly not live. I will also die.... (Shl 21) Madhusudana! Was not my beautiful eyed husband very dear to you? See how such a person's son is lying dead due to *Brahmastra*. (Shl 22) **This child is also ungrateful like his father. Because, just like his father he has also rejected the kingdom of Pandavas and has gone away to yamaloka....** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 68**)

Shri Krishna gives life to the child

Crying uncontrollably, Uttare fell on the ground. Seeing this Kunthi and other women of Bharata *vamsha* present there also broke down and started wailing. The scene was difficult to look at. Uttare was lying unconscious for a few minutes. Then she woke up and with the child in her lap she started saying:

Shri Krishna again promised to make the child come alive. He said: (Shl 18) Uttare! I never tell lies. Whatever I say will turn out to be true. I will make this dead child get back life even as all these people are watching. (Shl 19) **Even when playing freely I have not told a lie even for fun. I have never reverted from a war. Due to these two great dharmas practiced by me, may this child be alive.** (Shl 20) **Dharma is very dear to me. Even there, brahmanas are very close to my heart.** Let this child be alive by the power of this truth. (Shl 21) I have never expressed opposition in respect of Partha. Let this child become alive by virtue of that truth. (Shl 22) **Truth & dharma reside in me for ever.** Let this child of Abhimanyu become alive by the power of that *satya & dharma*. (Shl 23) If it is true that I have killed Kamsa & Keshi in accordance with *kshatriya dharma* let this child regain life by the power of that truth. (Shl 24) **If I practice brahmacharya**, if *satya* is established in me, if my *aishwarya* is unimpeded let this child regain life by the power of these.

Vaishampayana said: (Shl 26) Janamejaya! **Having said this Pundarikaksha touched the child from toes to head with his lotus like foot** which has been worshipped by Brahma & Rudra etc. **When Vasudeva did this, that dead child regained life and started to move its limbs.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 69**)

Shri Krishna names the child Parikshit

Vaishampayana said: (Shl 1) Janamejaya! Once Shri Krishna doused the *Brahmastra*, the delivery room started to glow with the *tejas* of your father. All *rakshasas* who could destroy your father left that place. That brilliantly glowing *Brahmastra* also went back to Brahma. The child started to play and all the women were overjoyed.....

Janardana then did the *namakarana* (naming the child) of your father. (Shl 11) He said, because this child is born when the *Kuru vamsha* was decaying, let this child be named '*Parikshit*' (*pariksheene kule yasmāt jatoyam abhimanyujah, parikshit iti namasya bhavati iti abravittada*). (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 70**)

Shikhandi

Bhishma to Duryodhana: **..But I will not fight Panchala prince Shikhandi even if he faces me and starts fighting me by aiming his arrows at me...**(In the next *adhyaya* he clarifies in response to Duryodhana's questions that even if Shikhandi comes with clear intent of killing him with arrows ready on the bow & aimed at him).... **I will never kill a woman. I will not kill even someone who was earlier a woman & is now a man.** You may or may not know this fact. The person who is now famous as Shikhandi was earlier a woman. He was born as a girl and later became a man. Therefore I will certainly not fight with him. I will tell you one more thing also right now. (**Udyoga; Rathathiratha-sankhya; 172**)

Shikhandi's gender change

For various reasons Bhishma agrees and a fight breaks out between him & Parashurama which extends to about 25 days. Parashurama is unable to defeat Bhishma. The *devatas* & Narada intervene & stop the fight. Parashurama goes away. Ambe takes up *tapas* in a very intense way. She gets a boon from Mahadeva that she will kill Bhishma. **Mahadeva clarifies that in next birth she will be born as a daughter of Drupada and later become a man & then kill Bhishma.** Drupada also performs *tapas* for a child & pleases Shankara. Shankara gives him the corresponding boon that he will get a daughter and assures that she will later convert to a man. She is reborn as Shikhandini but this fact is completely hidden by Drupada & his wife; they publicise that they have got a son. When she grows up she is married to a princess. The secret is exposed and her father-in-law comes with his allies for a war on Drupada. Humiliated & confused, she goes away to the forest & takes refuge in the house of a *yaksha* called Sthunaakarna. Then under strange circumstances she exchanges her gender with that yaksha for a limited period. (See point 68 in Table: Strange Statements/Stories: Others: My Mahabharata Spectroscope) Kubera comes unexpectedly to Sthunaakarna's abode and having come to know of the incident & not bothering to check all the details, curses that he should permanently be a woman and Shikhandini a man. Later he corrects saying upon death of Shikhandi, Sthunaakarna will again become a man. This is the reason why Bhishma would not kill her. (**Udyoga; Ambopakhya; 173-192**)

Vyasa

Satyavati to Bhishma: My father was a *dharmatma* and was truth loving person. He had a boat to help travellers cross the river Yamuna. He was not charging them anything for this service. He did it only for the sake of *dharma*. When he was busy otherwise, I was doing this job. One day, after I had reached puberty, *maharshi* Parashara got into the boat to cross the river Yamuna. The boat reached the middle of the river. *Maharshi's* mind also flowed towards me. He indicated his desire to mate with me in sweet words. He also told me about his birth (lineage) & *kula*. I also introduced myself to him as daughter of a *nishada*. Even though I was 'mature', I was afraid of yielding to him as I was dependent on my father. But I was also afraid if the *maharshi* would curse me in anger. Having obtained a great boon from him I could not go against his wishes. He took me under his control by virtue of his divine *tejas*. He made a mist cover our surroundings in the midst of the river and fulfilled his desire. Due to the boon he gave me the smell of fish that emanated from my body since birth vanished. I got a son brilliant with *tejas* without going through the nine months pregnancy. The *maharshi* graced me such that even after delivering a baby my virginity would not be affected. Because my son was born in an island in the middle of the river he was called 'Dwaipayana'. (Shl 15) Because he organised the Vedas into four parts called *Rig, Yajur, Sama & Atharvana* he was called Vyasa by *maharshis* and since he was dark complexioned he was also called Krishna. (Shl 16) He who was committed to truth, was without attachments and was dedicated to *tapas*, soon after birth went away with his father for *tapas*. (**Adi; Sambhava; 105**)

Death

Opinions/Views on death

Inevitability of death

- Sri Krishna to Yudhishtira: Once born as mortals some day for some reason one has to die. (**Sabha; Sabhakriya; 14**)
- *Maharshi* Parashara to king Janaka: (Shl 19) **It is said that death is already embedded in birth. Birth is dependent on death.** One who does not know *moksha-dharma* will be trapped in the vortex of birth & death and will be rotating all the time. But to those who have learnt *moksha-*

dharma and have taken to the path of *dharma*, there is happiness both in this world & in *para-loka*. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 298**)

- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: (Shl 44) One cannot overcome death by always practicing *brahmacharya-vrata*; it cannot be done by always studying Vedas either; it cannot be achieved by any kind of religious practices; it cannot be defeated by any weapons. **To one who is born, death is unavoidable.** (**Drona; Dronabhisheka; 11**)
- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 29) **The coming together of all beings that are born ends in separation.** This is certain. This is the rule of nature. **Animals and humans are like bubbles on water. They are born and die.** (Shl 30) **All accumulated wealth finally ends in their destruction. Excessive rise in life ends in downfall. Coming together ends in separation. Life ends in death.** (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 27**)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: *Maharaja!* Hearing the words of a very sad Ashwatthama, your son wiping his copious tears repeatedly with his hands, addressed all three and said, “(Shl 23) Brave warriors! **The dharma of *martya-loka* (the world of death) is like this only. They say this rule is made by Brahma himself. Therefore eventually all animals in this world will be destroyed. The destruction which is assured for all animals one day has come to me also.**” (**Shalya; Gada; 65**)
- After the fall of Bhishma: ..Then Karna addressing the other *rathikas* said: “(Shl 11) However much I think I only see uncertainty in this world which is impermanent and is constantly galloping towards death .. (**Drona; Dronabhisheka; 2**)
- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: Yudhishtira! We do not know when death will come. We do not know if it will come in day time or night. We have never heard that by not going to war man will become immortal. **Therefore death is anyway a certainty.** There is no reason to fear that by going to war death will be imminent. No one needs to give up punishing the wicked and protecting the virtuous which are the duties of *swadharma*. After duly examining *rajaneeti*, and time, place & circumstances, the enemy must be attacked. (**Sabha; Sabhakriya; 17**)
- Dhritarashtra upon coming to know of Bhishma being felled by Shikhandi: (Shl 59) It is not possible to escape from the jaws of death whether by skills in using weapons or by valour or by *tapas* or by intelligence or by courage or by renouncing everything. (**Bhishma; Bhagavadgita; 14**)
- Vyasa *maharshi* to Yudhishtira: Death is same to all living beings. Only wealth and money are varying entities. These will be found in one & not in the other. (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 71**)
- Statement in the Story told by Bharadwaja to son Yavakreeta: **For no reason can man ever become ‘amara’ (having no death). Your son may live for crores of years, but after that he has to die one day.** (**Vana; Tirthayatra; 135**)
- Kanva *Maharshi*: (Shl 4, 5) The Moon, Sun, Earth, Water, Air, Fire, *Akasha* (space/sky), Planets, all the stars—all these are subject to death due to some reason at some point in time. Once Moon, Sun, Planets & Stars are all destroyed, except for the three *lokas* everything is annihilated. Again everything is recreated at the time of creation. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 97**)
- Karna to Shalya: (Shl 17) Drona had all these qualities—unmatched training in archery, vigilance, might, courage, *mahastraas* and humbleness. If such a *mahatma* died, I think death for all the remaining is imminent. (Shl 18) **Because *karma* has no permanence, however much I think, I feel nothing in this world can survive infinitely.** (Shl 19) When *acharya* Drona who was almost immortal could die, who can say with certainty that by sunrise tomorrow he will be alive? (Shl 19) **Astras, might, good deeds, good ethics & morals, great weapons—none of these can assure happiness to man.** Because, even though *acharya* had all these he was killed by enemies. (Shl 25) Whether a scholar or idiot, once his longevity is exhausted he will get appropriate hospitality by *Yamaraja*. No one can escape this. **No one has freedom from death.** I, who have

understood this principle clearly, am going to fight Kunthi's sons. Whatever is in destiny will only happen. **No one can avoid *daiva-niyama*. (Karna; 37)**

- *Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 29) The coming together of all animals that are born ends in separation. This is certain. This is the rule of nature. Animals and humans are like bubbles on water. They are born and die. (Shl 30) All wealth accumulated finally end in their destruction. Excessive rise in life ends in downfall. Coming together ends in separation. Life ends in death. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 27)*
- *Vidura: (Shl 12, 13, 14) Our body is like a clay pot. It can get destroyed at any stage from the stage of being made to the stage of being in use. The pot may break even as the potter has just started it on his wheel. It may break after half the shape is formed. It may break after the complete shape has appeared. It may break when it is being lifted off the potter's wheel. It may break after it is dried. It may happen so while baking it. It may also break after baking when it is being picked up. Finally it can break when it is in use. Similar is the fate of bodies. (Shl 15, 16) It may get aborted or miscarried when in the womb. It can die as soon as it is born. It can happen so after a few days. Or after about half-a-month; or after completing a month; or after completing a year; or after two years. It can die after reaching youth; or at middle age; or after reaching old age. Overall this body, like the pot, has the quality of being destroyed at some stage and has no quality of permanency. (Stree; Jalapradanika; 3)*

Accepting death honourably

- *Duryodhana to his warriors: (Shl 9) Soldiers who are fighting will generally get killed. For a warrior fighting in a war either there will be victory or death. What is strange about this? Or why should this be feared? Face the enemy and fight with courage and enthusiasm. (Karna; 3)*
- *Bhishma on how to motivate soldiers: (Shl 40) Brave warriors! Understand that victory is the foundation of dharma and all pleasures. That debility/depression which causes weakening of mind for the enemy will cause great happiness to the brave. The cowards are afraid of death. The valorous invite it bravely. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 100)*
- *Shri Krishna to Sanjaya: (Shl 20) Pandavas have been following the *swadharma* to the best of their abilities. They are always engaged in *satkarmas*. If fate brings them death, it will be auspicious only. It is certainly better to die while performing all *karmas* as per *swadharma* than to save one's life & live while indulging in all unacceptable *karmas*. If you die in a war fighting according to *swadharma*, it is certainly auspicious. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 29)*
- *Shri Krishna to Yudhishtira: To one born in noble lineage, between blame & death, death is the more virtuous choice...Living with blame is a life of humiliation. Death is better than that. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 73)*
- *Sauthi: Let your minds always be firm in dharma. For one who wishes to go to the *paraloka* dharma will be the only relative. No one can escape death. Whether a pauper or a rich, one day he has to go to *paraloka*. When living on earth, the clever may earn money; may enjoy with women freely. But when leaving this body, neither money nor women will come with you. Those who are very dear when living will not remain so after death. The truly dear one of man is dharma. This will always remain firm. Even after the end of the body, it stays with the *jeeva* and goes with it to *paraloka* and helps enjoy the fruits. Therefore the mind should always be absorbed in dharma. (Adi; Poushya; 3)*
- *Vidura: (Shl 13) Dharma is eternal. Happiness & grief are not. Jeeva is ever present. The body which is support for the *jeeva* is not eternal. Therefore do not bother about the impermanent happiness & grief. Remove *avidya*. Be established in eternal dharma. Be always satisfied. Being in a state of 'always satisfied' is the best gain. (Shl 14) However grand & luxurious the life may be, everyone has to die in the end. All the kings & monarchs in the past were mighty, great men. They ruled this earth, rich in grains & wealth, for many years. But they had to leave behind all their great luxuries & die. Remember such kings again & again. (Shl 18) Even if the closest relatives part upon death, the *karmaphalas* of the person do not leave him. The *karmaphalas**

shadow the man even though the body is burnt in fire. Therefore man should make a conscious effort to accumulate *dharma* even if bit by bit. (**Udyoga; Prajaagara; 40**)

Kaal & Karma as factors of death

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 44) **When the end of all life forms becomes imminent, this same Shri Krishna who is protector of dharma & is *sanatana* becomes veritable death.** We do not know what happened in this creation in the past or what will happen in future. But understand that all these happen only from Vishvaksena. (Shl 45) Whatever is best, sacred, auspicious and inauspicious are all this incomprehensible Shri Krishna himself. Thinking that something exists which is other than Shri Krishna is itself contrary or false thought (*viparita mata*). (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 158**)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 22) Just as mechanism made by a carpenter (puppet) behaves as he directs it with the string, **this world created by Brahma is under the control of *kaal* and acts as he directs** (Commentary: All this is the play of *kaal*. We are all under its control. We are incapable of finding an answer as to why it happened this way....Therefore, there is no reason to grieve thinking 'I have killed them all'). (Shl 23) **We do not know the reason for birth of man.** (Commentary: We do not know why and how we are born. We do not know why Duryodhana was born). **The destruction of the born also happens according the will of *kaal*.** No one dies at their will when they want. Birth and death of animals are subtle matters under the control of *kaal*. Therefore it is a waste to feel joyous or sad about the birth or death of animals. (Shl 24) For these reasons it is incorrect to think that you have killed Duryodhana & others. **They have all died according to their karmas. But the thought that 'I have killed them' is troubling your mind deeply.** Hence you are very agitated. Many remedial measures have been stated for overcoming sins. You can also perform them and clear your mind. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 33**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 28) **Sinners are killed by their own deeds. Others kill them only as a pretext.** Therefore by killing sinners no sin attaches to you. One who takes an oath to kill such 'pre-killed' (*hata-buddhi*) sinners is a *dharmatma*. (**Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 109**)
- Dharma Vyadha: Fate is very powerful; no one can change the law of fate; fate drives us in accordance with the paap & *punyas* we have done in the past; Death of living beings is already determined by fate; hunters, butchers etc are only a pretext. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 208**)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: This *vidhi* cannot be transgressed. No one can overcome *vidhi*. *Mrityu* (death) takes away even *deva*, *danava* & Gandharvas. (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 52**)
- Brahmana Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 35) Medicines, *mantras*, *japa-homa* etc cannot protect the person who is in the grip of old age or death. (Shl 36) **In the large ocean two pieces of wood come floating from somewhere and come together. For a short while they will be floating together. Then they separate and go there ways. The coming together of living beings is also similarly fleeting.** (Shl 37) *Kaal* (time) treats the rich who enjoys music and dance in the company of women and the poor/orphan who eats food given by others equally. (Shl 38) All of us have had thousands of births and have had thousands of parents, hundreds of children and hundreds of wives. But today who are they related to? Who are we related to? (Shl 39) In this world a man belongs to none. None is truly related to him. These relationships are transient. **Just as travellers meet at a point for some time and go there separate ways, in this world (*jeevas* in the form of) wife, relative and friends come together and separate later.** (Shl 40) Therefore the wise should question in his mind, 'Where am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Why have I come here? For whom and why am I worrying?' and make his mind firm. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)
- Until the time of death comes, the body does not get 'destroyed' for any reason. For this reason in the gruesome war many were lying injured/maimed badly all-over the body but were not dead. (**Drona; Dronavadha; 187**)
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: (Shl 47) For one whose time is ripe for death, even a blade of grass does the job of *vajrayudha*. (**Drona; Dronabhisheka; 11**)

- Yudhishtira to Bhishma: (Shl 10) If death is not imminent, even if hit with a hundred arrows the person does not die. But if it is imminent, even a blade of grass can kill him. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 162**)
- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: Yudhishtira! People talk of an old history of king Senajit and his song. (Shl 14) This wheel of time which is difficult to withstand keeps influencing all men. **All kings caught in this wheel of time, when the time is ripe, die.** (Shl 15) Some people kill some others. Those who killed are killed by others. It is only a social/transactional symbolism to say that one killed the other. **If you examine the essence/principle, neither does one kill the other nor does one get killed by another. As soon as time is ripe, all men die due to one reason or the other.** (Shl 16) A person may feel that 'that person will kill him; this person will kill him'. Another person does not think so. **Overall, the death and birth of all animals is regulated by nature.** (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25**)
- Rishi Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 14) **Old age and death** are like two wolves which gobble up animals. **They make no distinction.** They eat all—the mighty, the weak, the small and the big. (Shl 16) Whether happiness or grief, they are obtained due to the combination of time and karma, and have to be borne with patience. There is no remedy to this. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)
- Rishi Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 25) Diseases, fire, water, weapons, hunger, danger (accident), poison, fever, fall from a height—these are the main causes for the death of animals. These are like bridges to the other world. **Whatever is destined as the bridge for him for him at the time of birth, he will go to para-loka through that bridge only.** (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)
- Rishi Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 44) The whole world is sunk in this large ocean of 'time' (*kaal*) which has two crocodiles viz old age and death. But no one understands this. (Shl 45, 46) We have seen that many doctors who have studied *ayurveda* have been afflicted by many diseases along with their family members. They keep drinking a variety of medicines. But just as the sea does not cross its shores, they are unable to overcome death. (Shl 48) Those who are engaged in *tapas*, those who have studied *vedas-shaastras*, who are great donors and who perform many *yajnas*, like the doctors cannot avoid old age and death. (Shl 46) **For none of the animals born in this world, the past days or nights or fortnights or months or years will come back.** (Shl 50) Man who is unsteady (transient), controlled will attain death as soon his time is up just as all other animals. (Shl 51) **Whether body is a creation of jeeva as held by believers or jeeva is the creation of body as held by the atheists, men come together to live like travellers for a short while and separate.** (The doctrine you hold has no influence on the system of life. Both suffer old age and death) (Shl 52) No man can live with any other man for ever in a single place. **When the jeeva cannot stay in its own body which is the most loved place, what to speak of being with others?** (Shl 53) Oh Janaka! Where is your father now? Where are your grandfathers now? You cannot see them. They also cannot see you. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)
- Yudhishtira said, "...The reason for my grief is that I have killed many who did not deserve to be killed purely for the sake of kingdom. Those acts of killing are now burning me." Vyasa replied: (Shl 12) Did you not say that, 'I killed many who did not deserve to be killed?' **It is not that easy to determine the causes of death. The causes for effects can be divided into four groups:** It could be Ishwara himself who prompts good and bad deeds. It could be man who believes he does everything. Nature and accidents could be a cause. It could be the *karma-phalas* of the past births. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 32**)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 17) Suppose you believe that man himself is responsible for all acts, good or bad, and not *daiva*, you have indeed done a good deed by destroying those who were indulging in evil deeds. Therefore you have no reason to grieve. (Shl 18) **Whoever or wherever it may be, the rule of vidhi cannot be violated.** Therefore just as the sin of cutting the tree does not attach to the axe or the maker of the axe, if one dies according to the decisions of fate, then the sin of his death does not attach to one who killed him in the war. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 32**)

- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: *Maharaja!* Recollect *kshatra-dharma* and stop grieving. All these *kshatriyas* have died in accordance with *swadharma*. Giving up life in a war is their *swadharma*. As soon as the time came for them to go under the control of god of death (Yama) they died. **You are not the killer of those kings.** Bhima-Arjuna-Nakula-Sahadeva also did not kill them. **It was *kaal* ('Time') who in his cycle of rotation took away their lives.** (Shl 17) *Kaal* has no father or mother. He does not favour any. That same *kaal*, who is the witness to all actions of people, has killed your enemies also. (Shl 18) **This Great War was only a pretext for *kaal*. That *mahakaal* uses animals to kill animals. This is the Ishwara-form of *kaal*.** (Shl 19) ***Kaal* is the witness to the *punya-paap* of animals. He is like the controlling string for the karmas done by animals; he is the cause for the emergence of happiness & grief in future and for giving timely fruits for the karmas.** (Shl 20) You can yourself think analytically about the good and bad deeds of Duryodhana etc who died in the war. They had all done wicked deeds that made them worthy of being destroyed. Therefore they were 'taken away by *kaal*' (*kaal-vasham*). (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 33**)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 23) We do not know the reason for birth of man. (Commentary: We do not know why and how we are born. We do not know why Duryodhana was born). **The destruction of the born also happens according to the will of *kaal*. No one dies at their will when they want. Birth and death of animals are subtle matters under the control of *kaal*.** Therefore it is a waste to feel joyous or sad about the birth or death of animals. (Shl 24) For these reasons it is incorrect to think that you have killed Duryodhana & others. They have all died according to their karmas. But the thought that 'I have killed them' is troubling your mind deeply. Hence you are very agitated. Many remedial measures have been stated for overcoming sins. You can also perform them and clear your mind. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 33**)
- Maharshi Parashara to king Janaka: (Shl 45) All beings experience the fruits of their good & bad karmas right from the time they are conceived. Just as the saw-dust generated while cutting a tree with saw is blown away by the wind, in the same way inevitable death joining with destructive *kaal* blows away the man. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 298**)
- Upon being questioned thus, Panchashikha said to king Janaka: (Shl 6) Janaka! **It is not possible to escape old age & death. But it should not be thought that they cannot be avoided by any method whatsoever.** (Shl 7) Days, nights and months are always moving forward. None of them will come back. They are impermanent. **But after a very long time has elapsed, sometimes this man who is subject to *marana-dharma* (system of death) and is impermanent, takes refuge in the permanent *moksha-marga*.** (Shl 8) Just as flood water in river takes away things in it, *kaal* who destroys all animals keeps on taking away everyone with the speed of a flood. No one can help the *jeeva* which is drowning without a boat in the ocean of *kaal* which has crocodiles in the form of old age & death to cross it. (Shl 9, 10) **There is nothing that the *jeeva* can consider its own. Nor does it belong to anyone else.** Just as travellers meet at a point, *jeeva* joins with wife and others. **But so far no one has had any companionship forever with any one person.** (Shl 11) Just as wind scatters the thundering clouds repeatedly, in the same way *kaal* traps living beings in its wheel, cooks them and throws them randomly somewhere. **Living beings are born & die only because of *kaal*.** (Shl 12) Whether strong or weak or dwarf or tall – all animals are eaten up by wolf like old age & death. (Shl 13) **Thus, when all living beings are impermanent, why should the permanent *atma* rejoice if animals are born? Why should he grieve if they die?** (Shl 14) Why do you grieve and for whom do you grieve even after thoroughly examining issues of 'who am I'? From where have I come? Where am I going? To whom am I related? Where am I now? Where will I be born again? (Shl 15) Who others (other than *jnanis*) have seen *swarga* or *naraka*? Therefore those who do not have such indirect knowledge should give charity (*daan*) to the deserving without violating the rules of *shastras*. They should perform *yajnas* etc virtuous deeds at the right times. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 319**)
- Brahmadatta to bird Poojani: (Shl 50) Birth and death always go together. Again time is the cause of these. All living beings die with time as the pretext (*nimitta*). (Shl 51) Sometimes people die in groups. At some other time they die singly. Many do not die for a long time. Just as fire gradually burns the firewood it is time that gradually kills all living beings.

Poojani to Brahmadata: ... (Shl 55) If it were true that, 'death happens due to time. All experience happiness and grief due to time. Birth and death is only the influence of time' then why did *devatas* and *asuras* fight each other fiercely in the past? (Shl 56) Why do doctors wish to treat the sick? They could have kept quiet saying that diseases have come according to 'time'. There was no need for doctors. If everything is brought about by time, what is the use of medicines? (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 139**)

- Yudhishtira: **Krishna, there are two types of deaths.** First is abject poverty. In this there is no rule that he has to breathe his last. Even if alive, he belongs effectively to the group of the dead. The second is death which comes due to biological reasons--death which comes naturally after ageing. This is permanent. **Such death becomes a route to his journey to other worlds depending on his karmas.** No living being can escape from this death. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; 72**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 4) It is from *lobha* that anger is born. It also gives rise to *kaama* (desires). **It is from greed that blemishes** like deceit, error, arrogance, haughtiness and **death** are born. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 158**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 26) Yudhishtira! You should make an effort to tell this to the wicked: "**Loss of life causes greater grief than loss of money. Therefore give up your craving for money. Let this *sanatana dharma* be palatable to you.**" (Shl 27) **It will be the decision of sinners that there is nothing called dharma. One who kills such sinners will not earn any sin.** (Shl 28) **The sinners are killed by their own deeds.** Others kill them only as a pretext. Therefore by killing sinners no sin attaches to you. One who takes an oath to kill such 'pre-killed' (*hata-buddhi*) sinners is a *dharmatma*. (**Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 109**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 4) It is from *lobha* that anger is born. It also gives rise to *kaama* (desires). **It is from greed** that blemishes like deceit, error, arrogance, haughtiness and **death** are born. ... (Shl 8, 9, 10) The following are all the consequence of greed: snatching other's money, illegitimate relationship with other's wife, impetuosity in speech, in mind, in blaming others, rush in sexual organs, haste in eating, **speeding towards horrible death** (accidents), intense jealousy, uncontrollable rush for telling lies, unavoidable rush for taste glands, uncontrollable rush for hearing, blaming others, self-praise, envy, sins, tendency towards wicked deeds, doing acts that should not be done and tendency for risky deeds. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 158**)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 4) **Crookedness is the place of death. Honesty is the means to attain Brahma. This is all one has to understand.** What will useless talk accomplish? (**Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 11**)
- Sanatsujata to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 1) The following twelve are **death-causing doshas**: *shoka* (grief), *kopa* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *kaama* (desire), *maana* (pride), *bahu nidra* (excessive sleep), *Irshya* (jealousy), *moha* (attachment), *dhanadaaha* (greed/thirst for money), *athisneha* (too much friendliness), finding fault in virtue, and *paraninda* (blaming/abusing others). (Shl 2) These *doshas* overwhelm the man one by one. The man who loses his courage against these will lose his thinking/intelligence and starts committing sins. (**Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 45**)

What happens at /upon death

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 3-11) *Pancha-bhutas* are *Akasha* (Space), *Vayu* (Air), *Agni* (fire), *Jala* (water) & *Bhumi* (earth) in that order. The qualities in that order are *Shabda*, *Sparsha*, *Roopa*, *Rasa* and *Gandha*. Earth has all five, Water has first four, *Agni* the first three, *Vayu* has first two & *Akasha* has only the first quality. This combination of element & its qualities totalling to 15 (5+4+3+2+1) exists in *Pancha-bhutas* which form the basis for all *Lokas* (worlds). These exist harmoniously & integrally with each other. **When disharmony develops among these, then the *jeeva* prompted by *kaal* (time) (in the fullness of time) leaves one body & occupies another.** It arises & perishes in due order. All the mobile & immobile things in this world are composed of these five elements. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 211**)
- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 56) There is no doubt that the *antaratma* in every animal is indestructible/cannot be killed. How is it meaningful to say that one killed the other when this is

the truth? (Shl 57) Just as human being moves to new houses to live, in the same way the *jeeva* in us keeps donning new bodies. It discards old and dilapidated body and gets new bodies. People who are *tattva-darshis* call this itself as the face of death. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 15**)

- (Shl 24-27) Dharma vyadha: When death occurs, the body alone is destroyed. But the *jeeva* bound by the accumulated karmas of that birth will be roaming around somewhere (till next birth). The *jeeva* is not destroyed by death of body. Karma or karma-*phalas* are not destroyed by death. Everyone has to experience the results of karmas himself/herself. No one can share this, however close he may be as a relative or friend. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209**)
- **About suicide**
Maharshi Parashara to king Janaka: (Shl 11) A living being dies as soon as its longevity is exhausted. Just like this death due to no reason, death can also occur due to various reasons such as disease etc. (Shl 12) **The person who releases himself from the body by a voluntary effort (suicide) will change from one body to another midway** (and will not get the state he should have obtained according to his karmas). (Shl 13) Suicide is the reason to get such intermediate body. Not anything else. That body which consists of the impressions of the remaining part of longevity will also be made of *pancha-bhutas*.

(Shl 31) **Even if deprived of happiness & luxury, one should not commit suicide. Even if born as a *chandala* (outcaste) human birth is always the highest.** (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 297**)

Ahimsa (non-violence) & death

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 19) **Just as one's own life is very dear all animals also value their own lives.** (Shl 20, 21) Intelligent persons and *punyatmas* should treat all living beings like themselves. All those who desire their own welfare will surely have fear of death. This being so, will not the animals which also wish to live, are disease free, and have done no sins not have fear of death? (Shl 22) **Maharaja! Therefore understand that giving up meat is the foundation for dharma, Swarga and happiness.** (Shl 23) **Ahimsa is the ultimate dharma. Ahimsa vrat is the best tapas. Ahimsa is great truth. It is by ahimsa that dharma exists.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115**)
- The insect said to Vyasa: (Shl 10-12) Oh highly intelligent! I am highly scared due to the sound of the cart that is coming at a distance. I hear the scary sound of its wheels. I am running away from the path of the cart so that it would not kill me. I am hearing the sound of long breathing of the ox carrying heavy load and being beaten by whip. I am also hearing the various sounds the men in the cart are making. (Shl 13) I, who am born as an insect, am not capable of hearing this fearsome sound. Therefore I am escaping from this fearsome and horrible path. (Shl 14) **Death is a very sad matter for living beings.** Life is very precious for all. I am running away so that I, who was happy all this time, should not get death. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 117**)

Process of death

- (Shl 5) Varshneya! Thus having been questioned by Kaashyapa, the *Siddha purusha* started to answer the questions. I will tell you the same. Listen. (Shl 6, 7) Kaashyapa! **Whatever auspicious karmas man does in this world for gaining long life and fame will result in obtaining another body.** After getting another body, such auspicious karmas yield their fruits and decay. Then his longevity also starts declining. In such state, he does many unbecoming deeds. **When the time of destruction approaches, his intelligence also undergoes change (becomes illogical/develops self destructive tendencies)** (*buddhir vyavartate chasya vinashe pratyupasthite*).

(Shl 8) Even though he knows his essence, strength and time context, not having restraint/control on mind, he consumes food beyond limits that is against his nature. (Shl 9) One without restraint on mind consumes all foods harmful to his body. Sometimes he eats too much and sometimes eats nothing. (Shl 10) Sometimes he eats defective food & drink. Sometimes he eats things which are opposed to each other. Some times he eats heavy items (difficult to digest) excessively.

Sometimes he eats before the previous meal has been digested. (Shl 11) He exercises beyond limits. He enjoys excessive sexual pleasures. Due to the greed of wanting to work continuously, he withholds certain natural urges (like urinating, defecating etc). (Shl 12) He eats very juicy food. He sleeps in daytime. He eats at all odd times food that is not properly cooked and aggravates the defects in the body (like *vata*, *pitta* etc: wind, bile etc as in Ayurveda). (Shl 13) By eating bad and wrong food he aggravates the defects/problems and becomes a victim of diseases leading to death. Or by adopting methods such as hanging, drowning etc that are not approved in *shastras* he commits suicide. (Shl 14) Due to many such reasons the body donned of *jeeva* is destroyed. Understand well this, which has been said to be the life of *jeeva*. (Shl 15) **Prompted by intense *vayu* (*vaata*), the *pitta* (bile, bilious liquid) gets aggravated. Such aggravated *pitta* spreads throughout the body and obstructs the functioning of the body and its actions. (Shl 15) **This *pitta* which has a strong role to play, when aggravated, damages the sensitive/critical organs. Understands this correctly.** (Shl 17, 18) Great *dvija*! Once the sensitive/critical organs are seriously damaged by the aggravated *pitta* the agonised *jeeva* gives up the body completely. **Understand well that *jeeva* will be suffering due to pain/agony at the time of death.** In this manner all beings in this *loka* at all times will be agitated due to the grief of birth and death. (Shl 19, 20) It is seen that all *jeevas* experience the same kind of agony when leaving this body, when entering the womb and when coming out of womb. At the time of death pain, like breaking of joints, will be experienced. At the time of birth it is troubled by the water in the womb.**

(Shl 21, 22) Triggered by **another type of intense *vayu*** and aggravated by phlegm (*shaitya*: cold) the *prana-vayu* (vital air) obstructs the 'being together' of *pancha-bhutas*. Later that same *prana-vayu* with great difficulty leaves the body and goes away in an upward movement. (Shl 23) Once the *jeeva* relinquishes the body, the body will not have breathing. Then the body loses heat, breathing, lustre and sentience (*chetana*). **Thus, the body given up by the *jeevatma* is called as dead body by people.** (Shl 25) *Jeeva* who dons a body experiences the objects of senses through the *indriyas*. **But he does not know about the *prana* which gets satisfied by the food consumed through the same *indriyas*.** That which performs karmas living in such body is the eternal *jeeva*. (Shl 26) **Consider certain junction points where organs have joined as sensitive/critical points for those organs. This characteristic of junction points can be found in *shastras*.** (Shl 27) Once these junctions are separated (or damaged), *vayu* starts rising up, enters the heart and soon stops the functioning of the very essences (*sattvam chaashu runaddhi vai*). (Shl 28) When the time of death is imminent, even though the body is associated with sentience (*chetana*) that sentience will not know anything because, the cognisance of the sentience will be covered by *tamas* (*tamasa samvrita jnana*). The sensitive places will have been closed. The *jeeva* which comes out of the body in such state will have no support and gains movement through *vayu*. (Shl 29) Then *jeevatma* will be exhaling forcibly and loudly and will be coming out of the body. That really shakes the body which has no sentience. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 17**)

What is *mrityu* (death or Goddess of death)?

Story of Brahma creating *mrityu devathe* narrated by Vyasa *maharshi* to Yudhishtira when he laments the death of Abhimanyu and questions Vyasa on what is *mrityu* or death.

(GHV: It has hidden meanings though externally a difficult to believe story. The story should be read in full in the original).

Extracts:

Yudhishtira to Vyasa: *Kshatriyas* who live on war desire to fight with those who are equal to them and who are equally equipped to fight. The war our enemies fought with Abhimanyu is surely unequal fight. Great warriors got together and killed a lone boy. I am very grieved by this. I have no peace as I think about this repeatedly.

Yudhishtira to Vyasa: if this word *mritya*—'are dead' instead of being *sangyaa* (indicative/symbolic/a designation) has any meaning, then perhaps it would mean mighty kings 'died; were taken over by death'. Does 'dead' apply to the state of being non-independent, becoming controlled by others? ...**Where did this *sangyaa* 'mritya' come from? Who is *mrityu*? From where did he come? For what reason does *mrityu* snatch away the lives?** Please tell me about this matter.

Vyasa: When creation was done at the very beginning, Brahma created animals (life-forms). At that time there was no mechanism for death. Therefore the whole world got filled with life-forms. Seeing these deathless forms continually increasing, Brahma started thinking about their death.....

Brahma quelled the *agni* within himself and created the paths of *Pravaritti* & *Nivritti*. At the time he quelled his fire like rage, a woman was born from his *indriya-samoocha* (group of *indriyas*).

He ordered her to kill all life-forms without any discrimination. But Mrityu was very worried at this and started sobbing with tears flowing. Brahma caught the tears in his palm without allowing it to fall down. **She refused to kill people saying that she cannot do it as the grieving persons would curse her in various ways.** She also said she is afraid of the tears of the grieving. **Brahma then told her that as she is born only for that purpose she would not acquire any *adharma* or blame and that she has no choice as it is her duty.** Then she performed *tapas* for thousands of years & when pleased Brahma offered a boon she prayed: "(Shl 30) **I will not kill those who are healthy and are crying and screaming.**"

Brahma to Mrityu (a woman born when Brahma withdrew his anger): You kill all life forms of four types—*Udbhijja*, *Swedaja*, *Andaja* and *Jarayuja*...*Lokapala* Yama, several types of diseases, me and *devatas* will assist you in this.

Mrityu prayed to Brahma: **Let the following also decrepit the human being in various ways—jealousy, treachery, *moha* (delusion), shamelessness and speaking harshly to others (GHV: Mental afflictions also reduce longevity).**

Brahma also tells her that the tears that had dropped into his palms when she first cried will become the diseases that will attack the body. **After their longevity comes to an end, these diseases will kill them.** (GHV: Physical afflictions will also bring an end to the life-forms. With tears as the seed, the result is also tears!!)

Brahma to Mrityu: **The *adharma* in *mithyacharis* (acting falsely or hypocritically) will itself kill them.**

After the life term ends, all the *indriyas* will go with the life-forms to other *lokas* and stay there for some time. Again they will come back here with the *indriyas*. Similarly all animals will go there and be there in the form of *devatas* for some time and return here. **Even *devatas* will come here after their *punya-phalas* (fruits of virtuous deeds) are exhausted.**

..All animals will kill themselves. Mrityu does not kill anyone with a *danda* (staff) in its hand. (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 52-54)

Types of death

- Bhishma: (Shl 23, 24) Dying while lying in the bed is *adharma* for a *kshatriya*. That *kshatriya* who dies spitting phlegm frequently, discharging everything on the bed, whimpering with misery on the bed and with a body which has no injuries of war is not appreciated by those who know the dharma of a *kshatriya*. Such death does not befit a *kshatriya*...(Shl 28) Dying while surrounded by cousins and relatives after killing several enemy warriors and being wounded by many weapons is highly praised death for a *kshatriya*. (Shl 31) A valorous *kshatriya* will fight without caring for his life. He will not show his back to the enemy under any circumstances. Such a fighter will attain *indra-loka* after death. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 97)
- Duryodhana to Kripa: (Shl 31) In this world happiness and comforts are not permanent. This being so how can kingdom and success (gained by valour) be permanent? The important duty in this world is to gain fame. For a *kshatriya* this can only come through war and by nothing else. (Shl 32) **For a *kshatriya* death at home is the worst. Not just this; a *kshatriya* dying at home lying on the bed is major *adharma*.** (Shl 33) **That *kshatriya* who dies in war or in forest performing great *yaagas* gains much importance.** (Shl 34) **That person who dies amidst crying relatives with an aged & weak body, tormented by diseases, wailing pitifully is not a man at all.** (Shl 35) Because of this *dharma-yuddha* I have already attained the same *punya-lokas* which are attained by relinquishing variety of pleasures and *tapas*. (Shl 36) For all those who have very good *achara-vyavahara* (practices and behaviour), who do not turn their backs on the battlefield, the brave who are steadfast on the path of truth, who perform *yajna-yaagas*, who have been bathed with the sharp edge of a weapon, living in *swarga* is assured.
- Bhurishravas had no reply. He gave up Satyaki and decided **to sit in fasting unto death** wherever he was. (Drona; Jayadrathavadha; 143)
- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 18) If someone unable to withstand the grief due to death of near or dear ones, **attempts to die (suicide)** either

by fasting unto death or by weapon and fails in the attempt, he is subject to *dosh* (blemish). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 36)

Death as punishment

- Draupadi: One who kidnaps other's wife, and enemy who usurps kingdom & wealth by cheating should not be forgiven even if he surrenders. Death is the only punishment for them. They are never eligible for pardon. (Vana; Draupadiharana; 271)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 21) If someone walking the path of dharma falls from it and takes refuge in sinful ways, he should be punished by death. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 109)
- Kayavya to robbers: (Shl 20) **Danda has been prescribed only for punishing the wicked. It is not meant for increasing one's own wealth.** It is said that death penalty is the right punishment for those who harass the virtuous. (Shanti parva; Aapadharna; 135)
- (Shl 5) One who poses hurdles or problems to the seven wings of a kingdom viz *swamy* (master), *amatya* (minister), *suhrit* (ally, friend), *kosha* (treasury), *rashtra* (nation), *Durga* (fort) and *bala* (might, military), even if he is a guru, deserves to be punished with death. (Shanti Parva, Rajanushasana upa-parva; 57)
- Kalakavrikshiya *Muni* to king Kshemadarshi: (Shl 61) ...Dismiss the corrupt officers from their positions and weaken them. (Once they lose positions they become weak) Then investigate them and find out the reason for their crime from them only and punish each one for their crimes. (Shl 62) **People with same type of defect (offence) can gang together and pulverise a heap of thorns. They will overcome all obstacles to them.** In haste if you declare all as guilty, they will all join together and destroy you. **Therefore dismiss one by one and award death sentence to each.** I am telling you this out of fear that our secret consultations may be revealed. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 82)
- Conversation between ancient king Maandhata and Rajarshi Vasuhoma:(Shl 40) **Danda** should be used only after thinking carefully about *nyaya-anyaya* (just, unjust) according to dharma. It should not be used as you please. **The main purpose of danda is to suppress the wicked & the evil.** Filling the treasury with gold coins is an auxiliary *karma*. Not the main karma. (Main karma or purpose is to keep the citizens under control and ensure that they live according to dharma). (Shl 41) For minor offences, they should not be punished by maiming the body parts. **They should not be awarded death sentence**, should not be subjected to variety of agonies or torture, should not be permitted to commit suicide and should not be banished from the country also. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 122)
- Kamandaka replied: (Shl 15) *Maharaja!* (Shl 17) When the king does not control the wicked and the bad elements by awarding suitable punishments, then people of the country become very anxious and concerned, just as people in a house into which a serpent has entered. (Shl 18) People will not obey a king who does not punish the wicked. Brahmanas and other *satpuruṣas* will not obey or follow him. Then the king will face many troubles. **In the end the citizens themselves will kill such a king.** (Shl 19) Even if the people do not kill him, removed from his position and humiliated, that king will lead a life full of grief. If he continues to live after being dethroned, such a life will practically be like death for him. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 123)
- Brihaspati to *Devatas*: Brahma has said: "One who hands over to the enemy a person who with great fear has come to him seeking refuge faces following consequences: the seeds he sows will not sprout, there will be no rains for him at the right time, he will not have protectors in times of troubles. The food he eats will be wasted, whatever work he starts will be unsuccessful / wasted, it will yield no fruits & he will fall from *swarga*. (How did he go to *swarga*?!). **His children will die untimely death**, his forefathers will always remain in *naraka* & **he will be destroyed by vajrayudha when time comes.**" (Udyoga; Senodyoga; 12)

State of jeeva after death

- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 7) **Jeeva is not destroyed by the destruction of the body.** Just as you throw a torn cloth & wear a new one, the *Jeeva* relinquishes this body according to the law of time. **Just as the destruction of a dress does not mean the destruction of the wearer, the disintegration of the body does not mean the destruction of the Jeeva.** The *Jeeva* who is attached with & enveloped in the fruits of his actions (*karma-phalas*) does not wish to leave this earth even though it becomes body-less. It will be moving around on the earth and particularly around the place where it was born & lived its life.

After leaving the body, according to the karmas done, *jeevas* can live for 60,000 years or 80,000 years in *swarga* etc *lokas*. Once the *punyaphala* is used up they will descend to the *naraka* called *Bhowma*. Even as you are falling to this *naraka*, terrifying, cruel demons start harassing you. (Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 90)

- Ashtaka: (Shl 17) **Once a person dies the body is destroyed in one way or the other. After leaving the body, doesn't the jeeva have any kind of body/form? If yes, what form is it? If it has a different type of body, how does it enter another body? What happens to that body it had in the interval of entering another body?**

Yayati: (Shl 18-20) We cannot say what body we have in our dream state. In our dreams we fly, we dance, fall down, drown and even enjoy sexual pleasures. But we cannot answer which is that body. **After death, just like the dream-state body (*swapna-sharira*) Jeeva gets a body.** Just as he is alive in *swapna-sharira*, it remains alive in that body. The *jeeva* goes to other *lokas* (worlds) with life. But it will be in a subtle body. That body has only fruits of *paap* & *punyas*. It will be moving about in the air. According to the fruits of karma acquired it will get a place in the appropriate *loka*. Until it gets a place there it will be floating in the air. **Just as a calf finds its mother among thousands of cows in a herd, the jeeva with its burden of *paap* & *punya* goes & joins the exact place assigned to it.**

Those with *punya* are born in *punya-births*. Those with *paap* are born in *paap-births*. Highly sinful take birth as worms, moths, and four-legged, two legged, six-legged animals etc. (Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 90)

- Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 34) It is correct that *jeeva* constituted with *pancha-bhutas* experiences happiness and unhappiness. It is also correct that the *devatas* of *pancha-bhutas* watch all his karmas. But upon death, *jeeva* gives up skin, bone and flesh and goes away. **The *pancha-bhutas* which constituted the body leave him. Thus, when there is no contact of *pancha-bhutas* where does *jeeva* reside and experience happiness & unhappiness?**

Brihaspati: (Shl 35) *Bharata*! Even though the *jeeva* is in subtle form, it consists of *karma-phalas*. It is due to the promptings of these *karma-phalas* that it soon gets transformed to *retas* (semen). It joins the 'flower' in women (*strinam pushpam samasadya*) and takes birth at appropriate time. (Shl 36) Before being transformed into semen, **Jeeva in the subtle body experiences** several agonies through the messengers of Yama for the wicked deeds it had done. *Jeeva* keeps on experiencing the wheel of *samsara* and the resulting grief and difficulties. (Shl 37, 38) When life is born in this *loka* **based on the fruits of dharmas it did in past births** it experiences the results of good deeds. In case that *jeeva* keeps doing acts of dharma to the best of its abilities since birth, then in the next birth it will be born as human being and will enjoy happiness everyday. (Shl 39) **If the jeeva does some acts of *adharma* between acts of dharma, then after experiencing happiness on account of good deeds it will also suffer grief on account of bad deeds.** (Shl 40) The person who has done mostly acts of *adharma* will, after death, go to *Yamaloka* with the subtle body. There he will experience great grief for a long time and then be born as animal or bird. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 111)

- Siddha purusha's answers to Kaashaypa: (Shl 30) Once the *jeeva* is separated from the body, it will be enveloped in its own karmas. It will be enveloped with auspicious karmas and/or inauspicious karmas. (Shl 31) **A brahmana who has studied the doctrines in Vedas & shastras properly can, by observing the signs at the time of death, know who is *punyatma jeeva* & who is *papatma jeeva*.** (Shl 32, 33) **Just as a man can see where the fireflies goes & sits in darkness, similarly *siddhas* who have *jnana drishti* can with their divine vision see a *jeeva* coming out of a body, taking birth and entering the womb.** (Shl 34) According to *shastras*, a *jeeva* has three places – *Swarga*, *martya* & *naraka*. **This *martya-loka* (*loka* with death) where all living beings reside is called *karma-bhumi*.** (Shl 35) This being the

karma-bhumi, all bodies perform good or bad karmas here and experience fruits according to those karmas here. (Shl 36) Those who have done sinful deeds will go to *Naraka* according to their karmas. This state of downward fall obtained by sinful deeds is very difficult to bear. Sinners are boiled/cooked in *Naraka*. Therefore *moksha* is extremely difficult to get. **Man should safeguard himself with great care so that he does not suffer this downward fall.** (Shl 37) I will tell you correctly the places like *swarga* to which *jeevas* with upward rise go to. Keep this in your mind properly. (Shl 38, 39) By hearing these you will understand the clear results of karmas and you will develop a strong & clear mind in virtuous conduct. Where Moon, stars and Sun shine brilliantly are the places obtained by *punya karmis*. *Punyatmas* go to such places and experience the fruits of their auspicious deeds. (Shl 40) As soon as the fruits of auspicious deeds (*punya phala*) are exhausted, they fall from these *punya lokas*. In this manner, *jeeva* is repeatedly subject to coming & going. **Even in *Swarga* everyone does not get equal place. According to their *punya phala* there are higher, middle and lower places.** (Shl 41) **Even there the *jeeva* may not feel happy looking at better places occupied by other *jeevas*.** It may feel sad there also that it does not have such better place. (*Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 17*)

- Bhṛigu answered: (Shl 1) Bharadwaja! Even though the body gets destroyed *jeeva* is not destroyed. The charity/donation given and fruits of karmas are never destroyed. Only the body is destroyed. **The *prani* (living being) undergoes a change of body.** (Shl 2) Just as even if the *samits* (small twigs/branches of a tree used for *yajnas* & *homas*) burn out the fire which is embedded in any fuel continues to be visible, even though the body is destroyed the *jeeva* that had taken shelter in the body does not get destroyed (and remains as a special form of *chaitanya*).

Bharadwaja said: (Shl 3) Bhagawan! If you say so, then from the simile of *agni* it is equivalent to saying that *jeeva* is destroyed. Because, if the firewood burns out completely to ash, there will be no fire in it. (Shl 4) Just as the fire is completely calmed when the firewood burns out, I feel *jeeva* is also destroyed once the body is destroyed. **Because, there is no proof/evidence that *jeeva* exists. It does not have a state or a motion.**

Bhṛigu said: (Shl 5) Child Bharadwaja! Just because fire cannot be seen after destruction of firewood it cannot be concluded that there is no fire. There is no destruction for fire. **It remains in *akash* in invisible form. Because it does not have an *ashraya* (a shelter, refuge) it cannot be grasped by the *indriyas*.** (*The *agni-tattva* is never destroyed. Its manifestation in a physical medium ends as the medium itself burns out.*) (Shl 6) In the same way, even after giving up the body, *jeeva* continues to exist like the *akash*. **Because *jeeva* is in a very subtle form it cannot be grasped just as a very minute light cannot be grasped.** (Shl 7) *Agni* bears *pranas*. You can consider that *agni* itself as *jeeva*. That *agni* or *jeeva* is borne inside the body by *vayu*. Due to the stoppage of breathing, along with *vayu*, *jeeva* which is form of *agni* also becomes invisible. (Shl 8, 9) After the *agni* in the body is lost, the body falls on the ground and attains an earthy state. Earth is the refuge for all insentient things. The *pranavayu* of all beings goes to the *akash*. *Agni* follows *vayu*. **In this manner when *akash*, *vayu* and *agni* meet at one place, the *jala-tattva* & *prithvi-tattva* which were components of the body remain in the form of dead body on earth.** (Shl 10) **Where there is *akash* there will be *vayu*. Where there is *vayu*, there will be *agni*. These three which have no intrinsic form or shape take the form of the body.** When they are in the bodies of living beings, they appear to have forms of the living beings. (*Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 187*)

- Maharshi markandeya to Yudhistira: **Man accumulates all good-bad karma *phalas* through this physical body.** Immediately upon death, the *jeeva* bound to the *sookshma sharira* joins another body according to the accumulated karma *phalas* (which is properly suited for enjoying & suffering the *karmaphalas*). (*Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 183*)
- As suggested by Bhishma, Yudhishtira questioned Brihaspati who came to see Bhishma and others: (Shl 9, 10) Among mother, father, son, guru, cousins, relatives and friends who are the true helpers of man? Who will follow him when he dies and leaves behind this body that is equivalent to a lump of mud or piece of wood?

Brihaspati said: (Shl 11) *Maharaja!* **Man is born alone. He dies alone.** He overcomes great difficulties alone and obtains bad states also alone. (Shl 12) None of the people you mentioned

can help him when he leaves this world and goes to *paraloka*. (Shl 13) Relatives will dispose the useless body in the graveyard, grieve for a while and then go away. (Shl 14) Family members also will leave the body and go away. **But only dharma follows the *jeevatma* which goes to *paraloka*. Only dharma is true help. Therefore human being should always serve dharma.** (Shl 15) **A life with dharma leads to *Swarga*. Similarly one who lived with *adharma* goes to *Naraka*.** (Shl 16) Therefore a wise & learned person **should practice/implement dharma in his life with money earned by just means.** It is only dharma that helps a man in *paraloka*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 111)

- Yudhishtira questioned: Now I wish to know about the state of the body. (Shl 20) After death the body will be lying inert like a lump of mud or piece of log. But his subtle body becomes invisible. In that state how does dharma follow it closely?

Brihaspati said: (Shl 21) Yudhishtira! *Prithvi, vayu, akash, jala, agni, manas, yama, buddhi and atma* – all these together and at the same time will be observing the dharma practiced by human being. (Shl 22) All these are witnesses to all the karmas of living beings. Along with these, dharma also follows the *jeeva*. (Shl 23) Oh the highly wise! Skin, bones, flesh, semen and blood – all these components leave the body left behind by the *jeeva*. **Only dharma goes with the subtle body of *jeeva*.** (Shl 24, 25) Therefore, only a life with dharma gives ultimate state. When the *jeeva* finishes experiencing the fruits of its karma in *paraloka* and when it has to take on another body, the *devatas* in the *pancha-bhutas* examine his good and bad deeds. Then the *jeeva* which has lived with dharma will happily live both in this world and the one beyond. What else do you wish to know? (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 111)

Post-death states/*lokas*

- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 40) Man does sinful deeds; he also does virtuous deeds (*punya-karmas*); The *Pancha-bhutas* are witness for his acts. **After death, man obtains the auspicious and inauspicious fruits for the karmas.** If in this birth he has done more sinful deeds and a few virtuous deeds, he will accrue more sins only. Similarly for more virtuous deeds. If he has done very little virtuous deeds, only to that extent it reduces the sins accrued. He has to experience the fruits of balance sinful deeds. Similarly if he has done more virtuous deeds & less sinful deeds. He can enjoy the good results of the excess virtuous deeds. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 35)
- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! After death will all *punyatmas* go to the same *loka* or do they get different *lokas*? Tell me about this.
Bhishma said: (Shl 2) **Human beings will go to different *lokas* according to their karmas. Those who have done *punya karmas* (virtuous karmas) will go to different *punya lokas*. Those who have done *paap karmas* (sinful deeds) will go to different *narakas*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 102)
- Markandeya *rishi*'s answers to Yudhistira: **No inference can be made about what a person will get after death based on his apparent life here.** Some may enjoy here but suffer in after-death, some may struggle now but enjoy in after-death worlds and some may not enjoy both. But there is a way by which one can enjoy both here & there: Study Vedas, become *grihastha*, do karmas of your *varna*, earn wealth by dharma, do good deeds, *yaagas*, *yajnas*, in the end take to *vanaprastha* & *Sanyasa*. .. **Those who have neither education nor perform *tapas* nor give *daan* nor get married & try to get children enjoy neither now nor after-death.** (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 183)
- Devaduta to Mudgala: (Shl 28-29) **You can only enjoy the fruits of good karmas done on earth in *swarga*. You cannot perform any karmas which results in fruits.** Hence you can only expend the fruits of good karmas earned but cannot earn any fruits of karma, good or bad. **Therefore having to fall from *swarga* to earth after completing the fruits of good karmas is the only defect of *swarga*.** Just as people on earth do not know when their death will come, those in *swarga* lose track of the eventual end of their term & are fully absorbed in just enjoying the great pleasures. This defect that eventually makes them fall to earth is present for all higher *lokas* up to that of *Brahmaloka*. They are born to humans after falling from *swarga* & live with comforts here also. .. If man had indulged in only bad deeds he will suffer in *naraka* the fruits of

his karmas & will be born as an animal. **Therefore Earth is called the *karma bhumi* & other lokas as *phala bhumi*. (Vana; Vrihidraunika; 261)**

- Aila: (Shl 24) Respected Kashyapa! This earth bears both *satpurushas* and the wicked. The Sun gives heat to both. Air flows on both. Water purifies both.

Kashyapa replied. (Shl 25) **This happens only in this *loka*. It is not so in *paraloka*. Though both sinners and virtuous experience same things in this world, after death there will be lot of difference between them. They will not have same type of experience in *paraloka*.** (Shl 26) The *lokas* that *punyatmas* obtain will be filled with sweet comforts. There *ghee* lamps will be giving out golden glow similar to the light of *Brahma-jnana*. That *loka* will be the centre of *amrita*. A brahmachari who was devoted to Brahma will enjoy *Ananda* (bliss) there. There will be no fear of death or of old age there. There will be no sadness or grief. (Shl 27) Sinners will go to *naraka*. It is filled with darkness. There is grief everyday. That *naraka* will be filled with sadness. Sinners will suffer there for many years, unable to stand in one place and will be crying for upliftment (self-improvement, repenting for his deeds). **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 73)**

Obtaining good *lokas* / states

- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 33) A king who overcomes *ahankara-mamakara* (feeling of I & mine) and using his intelligence and wise *neetis* (*suneeti*) governs the kingdom, performs *yajnas* and with the intent of protecting dharma travels to all countries will enjoy bliss in *Devaloka* after death. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25)**
- Vidula to her son Sanjaya: (Shl 45) That person who lives a great life by virtue of his valour & might will attain fame in this world & good *lokas* after death. **(Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; 133)**
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: (Shl 31) One who has desire to always tread the path of dharma will enjoy happiness everywhere. He will have a delighted mind and will attain *uttama-lokas* after death also. **(Drona; Jayadrathavadha; 85)**
- Rishi Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 42) ***Paraloka* cannot be seen physically. Scholars are aware that there is none who says I have seen *paraloka*.** But one who wishes auspicious results should not violate the directives of Vedas and should repose full faith in *Veda-vakya*. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28)**
- Sri Krishna to Jarasandha: Studying Vedas, doing *tapas* are all ways to attain *swarga*. But these three ways of studying Vedas, earning fame and doing *tapas* may not result in attaining *swarga* under some conditions (Commentators: Not pronouncing the Vedas properly, uttering *apaswara* etc). **But gaining *swarga* is assured by death in battle-field.** There is no doubt in this. **(Sabha; Jarasandha; 22)**
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 22) That person who is friendly towards all, who has impeccable character, is always joyous, is free from various attractions, who is *atma-jnani*, **will attain the fruits of *moksha* (liberation) after death.** (Shl 31) Such an *atmavid* whose practices and thoughts are pure, *antahkarana* is clear, has pure intentions, has withdrawn from sensual pleasures & luxuries, will be honoured by all in this world and will attain *swarga* after death. **(Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 160)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 21) Brahmana is a great *jeevi*. If food is given to him either with desire for fruits or without it when he comes voluntarily and asks for food, the donor will gain great amounts of *punya*. (Shl 22, 23) Brahmana deserves to be a guest to all living beings and has the right to eat before all others. When brahmanas go for begging, then from whichever house they return fulfilled, that house will prosper very well. The master of that house will take birth in a very fortunate family after his death. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 63)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 14) One who does not eat till brahmanas have eaten will win *swarga* itself with his *abhojana vrat*. (Shl 15, 16) One who eats his meals after it has been offered to *devatas* & *pitrus* and after his dependents have all eaten becomes *vighasashi*. They get un-decaying *lokas* in *Brahma-bhavan*. In that *loka* *apsaras* along with Gandharvas will be serving them. (Shl 17) One

who eats his meals after offering the *havirbhagas* to *devatas* and after all the guests have eaten will be happy with children and grandchildren. They will also get good *gati* after death. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 93**)

- Bhishma: (Shl 17) Those who recount the names of the *tirthas* (holy/sacred/pilgrim places), who bathe in it and offer *tarpana* to *pitrus* will wash away their sins in them and after death, will go happily to *Swarga*. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 108**)
- Bhishma: Yudhishtira! Therefore, this dharma of non-violence is greater than all other dharmas. Those who practice *ahimsa dharma* will reside in *Swarga* after death. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115**)
- Vyasa to insect: (Shl 24) When the *jeeva* which was born as birds and animals starts obtaining higher states, it will first be born as *shudra*, after losing that state as *vysya* and after that as *kshatriya*. A *kshatriya* with virtuous practices gets the birth of a brahmana. **Then by having *sadachara & sadvrtti* (virtuous practices and conduct), upon death he gets auspicious *Swarga*.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 118**)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 6, 7, 8) The following are the functions of *sattva guna*: Trust, modesty, tolerance, purity, not having torpor, kindness, not having *moha*, kindness towards living beings, not carrying tales, joy, contentment, no ego, humbleness, virtuous conduct, acting with pure mind in peaceful karmas, very good attitude, desire to get liberated from the world, disinterest in worldly affairs, *brahmacharya*, complete unselfishness, no desires and carrying out works of dharma without discontinuation. (Shl 9, 10) Those brahmanas who consider *daan, yajna, adhyayan, vrat, parigraha, dharma & tapas* associated with desires to be fulfilled as waste, do only acts of *sattva guna* like modesty, tolerance etc, completely depend only on *sattva guna* and have dedication only to Parabrahma Paramatma are brave and *sadhu darshis* (well discerning). (Shl 11) Such brave brahmanas will clear all their sins and become free of sorrows. After death they will go to *Swarga* and **take on several bodies to enjoy the pleasures there.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 38**)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 17) **Kings wish to practice dharma.** Brahmanas are like bridges to dharma. Therefore kings should constantly try to protect brahmanas. (Shl 18) That king in whose kingdom *satpurushas* face detruccion will lose all qualities befitting a king and will get bad states after death. (Shl 19) Great brahmanas! **Understand that that king in whose kingdom *satpurushas* are protected will be joyous in this *loka* and will also get good states after death.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 43**)
- Vaishampayana to Janamejaya: (Shl 32) Many *maharshis* have gone to *Swarga* by giving *daan* of -- grains collected after harvesting, roots, fruits, vessels for carrying water etc. (Shl 33, 34) This alone is dharma. It is *maha yoga*. ***Daan, kindness to animals, brahmacharya, truthfulness, kindness/mercy, courage, forgiveness – these are the roots of sanatana dharma.*** We have heard that Vishwamitra etc kings gained accomplishment by these. **Among *brahmana, kshatriya and shudras*, any one who depends on *tapas* and becomes pure by the fire of *daan dharma* will go to *Swarga*.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 91**)
- Markandeya: (Shl 40) Those who construct lakes & wells to help the travellers to overcome their thirst, places to stay for the tired travellers, give food to those who come hungry, those who console persons who are in grief with sweet words, will not hear any harsh words from Yama, the god of death. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 200**)
- **Greatness of Ganga, the sacred river**
(In this *adhyaya* there are one hundred verses in which the greatness of river Ganga has been praised. Even today the river Ganga remains the most sacred river for Hindus. A few *shlokas* which reflect some practices even today are translated here)

(Shl 28) Even if any of the organs of the human beings touch river Ganga, it is enough. Even if the body is disposed in Ganga after death it is enough. Even they will never fall from *swarga*. (Shl 29) Those persons who do all their work with waters of Ganga will, after death, find residence in *swarga* permanently. (Shl 30) Even if a person has committed several sins in the past in young

age, if he serves Ganga in his old age he will attain very good states after death. (Shl 32) As long as the bones of the person remain in the river Ganga, meaning several thousand years, that person will remain in *swarga*. (Shl 33) Just as Sun destroys utter darkness and shines in the morning, in the same way those who bathe in Ganga will lose all their sins and shine. (Shl 37) If *tarpan* is given in the river Ganga for any living being **which dies in any of the three lokas**, then whatever be the state in which it was, it will experience great contentment. .. (Shl 46) If even those who have committed many sins and will fall in *naraka* seek refuge in mother Ganga towards the end of their lives, that great mother will rescue them from *naraka* after death. ... (Shl 70) If a person who has been acceptable to the virtuous and has had control over his mind, remembers Ganga with humility at the time of death, then the person will attain great *sadgati*. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 26**)

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 11) The builder of that lake in which water is filled in autumn (*sharat kaal*) will, after death, get the same great fruits of having donated a thousand cows. ... (Shl 18) The builder of that lake in which water is used by people to take bath, to drink water and to rest near it, will get the *punyas* of all those people and will enjoy great happiness after death. .. (Shl 20) Pandavas! Donate sesame, water, and light (lamps). Always be alert and do only acts of dharma and thus be happy with relatives. By doing these virtuous deeds, you will get very difficult to get fruits after death in *paraloka*. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 58**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 62) One who donates *anna* in the *Shukla paksha* of *Karthk masa* will overcome great difficulties. And after death he will enjoy inexhaustible happiness. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 66**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 51) One who donates lamps will shine brightly in *Swarga* like a garland of lamps. .. (Shl 54) One who donates lamps will brighten his lineage, will be purified, will have lustre and after death will go to the *lokas* of bright lights. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 98**)
- Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 1) King of serpents! You are an expert in Vedas & Vedangas. Kindly tell me by practice of which karmas does one attain *sadgati* (good state)? The serpent (Nahusha) said: (Shl 2) It is my opinion that by giving *daan* to the worthy, speaking likeably, being truthful and practicing non-violence a human being gets *Swarga* after death. (**Vana; Ajagara; 181**)
- Dharma Vyadha: (Shl 42) One who does not feel jealous about other's prosperity or wealth, one who remembers gratefully those who have caused benefit to him and who is always engaged in virtuous deeds like helping others and being kind to animals, will enjoy happiness on this earth. He will succeed in both dharma & *artha* and will enter *swarga* after death. (Shl 43) One who has been sanctified with 16 types of *sanskaras*, who is *jitendriya*, who has gained victory over his mind, who is regulated in food and exercise/relaxation and is wise and discriminative, will have happiness both here and in the other worlds. .. (Shl 47) **A dharmatma will have a clear & happy mind both in happiness and unhappiness.** A *dharmatma* lives happily with his relatives and friends and after death obtains higher *lokas* and will be happy there also. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209**)
- Those who perform rites in *Sannihathi kshetra/brahmani kshetra* will go to Brahma *loka* in a **lotus coloured vimana** after death. (**Vana; Tirthayatra; 84**)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 21) Those who, without lethargy, perform *sakaam karmas* (karmas towards fulfilling a desire) with faith and **with ahankar & mamakar** will go to the Prajapati *loka*. (Shl 22) Such *mahatmas* who are engaged in in *dhyana yoga* **without ahankar & mamakar** will obtain superior and great *lokas*. (Shl 23) *Jnanis* who are great among *atmavids* who have realised *atma* by depending on *dhyana yoga* will merge into *avyakta* Paramatma who is a heap of happiness. (Shl 24) **Achievers (sadhaks) who have no ahankar & mamakar and practice dhyana yoga will enter avyakta atma in this loka itself.** After death they will go to the superior *lokas* of *mahapurushas*. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 51**)

Obtaining bad *lokas* / states

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 29) People who live by deceit and fraud like crows and vultures also live. After death they will all be born as crows and vultures. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 109)**
- Brihaspati said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! Man comes under control of *adharma* by doing sinful deeds. As a consequence his mind also moves in directions opposed to dharma. **That is why he goes to *naraka* (hell) after death. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 112)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 43) **That lowly fool who under the pretext of *yajna* – *yaaga* & such *vaidic karmas* kills animals will go to *Naraka* after his death. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115)**
- Vyasa to Maitreya: (Shl 26) Those who snatch others wealth will be subjected to grief and will fall into *naraka* after death. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 120)**
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 17) **Kings wish to practice dharma.** Brahmanas are like bridges to dharma. Therefore kings should constantly try to protect brahmanas. (Shl 18) **That king in whose kingdom *satpurushas* face destruction will lose all qualities befitting a king and will get bad states after death.** (Shl 19) Great brahmanas! Understand that that king in whose kingdom *satpurushas* are protected will be joyous in this *loka* and will also get good states after death. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 43)**
- Brahmana to his wife: (Shl 48) That person who does not consider it his duty to protect his wife or is incapable of protecting her will get great infamy. He will fall into *Naraka* after death. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 90)**
- Vaishampayana to Janamejaya: (Shl 29) That brahmana who is given to libertine ways and is under control of *raga* & *moha*, will in the end get bad states. (Shl 30) The person who is under control of greed and *moha* has the intent of earning money in whatever ways. He causes agitation and anxiety to living beings with his sinful and impure intents and acts. (Shl 31) Thus the person who under delusion earns money in illegal/immoral/unethical ways and gives it to charity or performs *yajna* will not get their fruits after death. Accumulating money in sinful ways is the reason for this. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 91)**
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 51) One who steals lamps will become blind. He will become a *tamasi* and lustreless. He will go to *Naraka* after death. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 98)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 12) Those who are characterless exceed the bounds of dharma and those who mate with women of *varna* different from their own are short lived and after death go to *Naraka*. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 104)**
- Maheshwara to Umadevi: (Shl 10) Some are very miserly when it comes to charity. When they come begging these dim-witted persons do not give to brahmanas, even though they have money (Shl 11) These misers walk away from that place without speaking a word when they see poor, indigent, blind, distressed, beggars and guests due to the greed of wanting to eat everything themselves. (Shl 12) Such misers never give to charity money, clothes, things of comfort, gold, cattle, varieties of food items etc. (Shl 13) These people who have no tendency to do virtuous/auspicious deeds, are atheists and stay away from giving & dharma, will fall into *naraka*. (Shl 14) These fools, even if they are born as humans in the cycle of time, will be born in poor families and will remain poor. (Shl 15) Born thus as poor, they will be troubled by hunger and thirst; will be excommunicated by all; will be deprived of all kinds of enjoyments. Will live a life of sins. (Shl 16) Due to the sin of atheism they will be born in families with limited enjoyments, will live with very limited comforts and will spend their lives having no money. (Shl 17) Apart from these, there are some who will be quite egoistic and arrogant. They will always be engaged in sinful deeds. Being of poor wisdom, they do not even offer seats to others due to their arrogance. (Shl 18) When elders come from other direction, way should be made for them by moving aside. This is good conduct. But the arrogant do not do so. They expect the *mahatma* who came from the opposite side to give them right of way. Being foolish they do not

offer water for washing their feet which they are worthy of being offered. (Shl 19) They do not properly worship even those who deserve to be worshipped with *madhu-parka*. They do not give them *arghya* or *achamana*. (Shl 20, 21) These persons who are enveloped in greed born out of arrogance do not even honour the *guru* who comes to them out of affection. They humiliate those who deserve to be honoured and who have to be honoured. They disregard the aged. All such people will go to *naraka* after death. (Shl 22, 23) After several years even if they come out of *naraka*, they will be born in contemptible family. Those who offend elders & gurus will be born in such contemptible and foolish families like *Chandala* and *Pulkasa*. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 145**)

Many other lokas

- (This is from a conversation that occurred between Indra in disguise of king Dhritarashtra (not of Kaurava-Pandava story) and a *tapasvi* Brahmana called Gautama. Indra forcibly snatches a grown elephant which Gautama would have adopted as a baby elephant and would have brought it up with lot of love and affection. Only verses relevant to the *lokas* are given here)

Gautama (Shl 14) *Mahatma!* I will snatch & bring back my elephant from Yama's abode where a *punya karmi* goes and enjoys happiness and a *paap karmi* suffers grief (Even if you go to such *loka*, I will follow you and bring back my elephant from there).

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 15) Only those who are *nishkriyas* (action-less; who do not take up virtuous deeds and remain idle), atheists, have no faith in karmas, are sinners and are only interested in objects of senses will go to **Yamaloka** and suffer the agonies of *Naraka*. Dhritarashtra will never go there.

Gautama: (Shl 16) That place where no one lies, all always speak the truth, and where a weak opponent stands up against an unjust mighty one to correct the injustice, that place of Yama which controls such people is known as **Samyamini**. Even if you go there I will bring back my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 17) *Maharshi!* That *loka* of Yamaraja exists for the sake of such people who out of arrogance treat their elder sister, father and mother as enemies. Dhritarashtra will never go to such place.

Gautama: (Shl 18) The highly fortunate river **Mandakini** adorns the town of **Kubera**. Only *bhogis* (devoted to enjoyments) can enter that river and enjoy there. Gandharvas, *yakshas* and *apsaras* frequent that river. Even if you take the elephant there I will not let you go.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 19) Those who are always dedicated to hospitality of guests, practice best of *vrats*, have provided refuge to brahmanas, and who eat their meal after making it available to all their dependents adorn the banks of river Mandakini. But Dhritarashtra will never go there.

Gautama: (Shl 20) On the **peak of Meru mountain** there is a beautiful garden. That will always be filled with flowers. It will also be filled with the music of *kinnaris*. There exists a beautiful and large tree of rose apple fruit (*jambu phala*). I will not let you go free even if you go there.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 21, 22) The *loka* you mentioned is reserved for those brahmanas who are soft natured, are truthful, are scholars in several *shastras*, have love towards all beings, have studied all *puranas* & *itihasas*, and provide delicious food to brahmanas. But Dhritarashtra does not go to such *lokas*. Describe all the *lokas* you know and I will go to them quickly.

Gautama: (Shl 23) There is a garden called **Nandana vana** which has charming flowers, is served by the king of *kinnaras*, is very much liked by Narada, Gandharvas & *apsaras*. Even if you go to that place I will chase you and bring back my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 24) That *loka* containing Nandana *vana* is reserved for those who are experts in dance & music, who never beg others and who always are in the company of *satpurushas*. But Dhritarashtra will never go there.

Gautama: (Shl 25, 26) *Narendra!* I will not stop chasing you even if you go to that place where beautiful residents of Uttarakuru shine with their lustre, where they enjoy along with *devatas*, where divine human beings born in *agni*, *jala* and mountains reside, where Indra fulfils all desires, where all women are *kaamcharins* (act unrestrainedly), and where men & women have no jealousy at all. I will come there also and bring back my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 27, 28) **Uttarakuru lokas** are reserved only to those who have no desires from any beings, who do not eat meat, who do not hurt or punish any one including men, birds & animals, for whom all beings are like their own selves, those who are free of desires, sense of 'mine' and attachments, and who remain equanimous in profit or loss and blame or appreciation. But Dhritarashtra will not go there.

Gautama: (Shl 29) In the *loka* of *mahatma Soma* there are many other *lokas* which are *sanatana*, enveloped in sacred fragrance, are dustless (without *rajoguna: viraja*), and are without grief. I will not stop chasing you even if you go there. I will come after you and bring back my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 30, 31) The *sanatana lokas of Soma* are reserved for those who have quality of giving/donating, who never accept from others, who do not wish to benefit from others, who do not feel that there is anything which should not be given to the deserving, who show hospitality to all guests, are considerate towards all, are forgiving, who do not speak harshly about others, are *satribhutas* and who always do virtuous deeds. But Dhritarashtra does not go there also.

Gautama: (Shl 32) Above the *Soma lokas* there are other bright & griefless *sanatana lokas* which do not have *rajoguna & tamoguna* (*virajaso, vitamaska*: also means dustless and without darkness). That is the place of *mahatma Surya*. I will not stop chasing you even if you go there. I will come after you and bring back my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 33, 34) *Maharshi!* The ***Surya lokas*** are reserved for those who are dedicated to study of Vedas, dedicated to serving the guru, are *tapasvis*, practice best *vrats*, are truthful, do not speak unfavourably to the teacher, are engaged in work everyday, are engaged in serving the guru without being told, are of pure heart, have restraint on speech, have faith in truthfulness and are knowledgeable about Vedas. But Dhritarashtra will not go to such places.

Gautama: (Shl 35) Above *Surya's loka* there is ***Varuna loka*** which shines brightly with *lokas* having no *rajoguna* (dust) or grief. Even if you take my elephant there I will chase you.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 36, 37) Such *dharmatmas* go to *Varuna loka* who perform *chaturmasya yaaga*, perform a thousand *ishtis*, who perform *agnihotra* for three years with faith and as prescribed in Vedas, who bear the burden of dharma properly and are firmly established in the paths of *shastra*. But Dhritarashtra will not go to such *lokas*. (Will go to *lokas* which are more auspicious than these).

Gautama: (Shl 38) ***Indra's lokas*** are without *rajoguna & grief*. They are obtained with much difficulty. All wish to go there. Even if you go to those *lokas* of *maha-tejasvi Indra* I will chase you there.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 39) A valorous man who has lived to the age of hundred years, one who has studied Vedas and one who has performed *yaagas* carefully will all go to the *Indra loka* you have described. But Dhritarashtra will not go there.

Gautama: (Shl 40) *Maharaja!* Above *swarga* there are ***mahalokas of Prajapati*** which are enriched with everything, are without grief and to which people in all *lokas* desire to go. Even if you take my elephant there I will chase you and get it back.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 41) *Prajapatya lokas* are meant for those who have been crowned as *chakravartis* after performing *Rajasuya yaaga*, are *dharmatmas*, are protectors of citizens and whose entire body has been washed in the *avabhrita* of *Ashwamedha yaaga*. But Dhritarashtra will not go there.

Gautama: (Shl 42) Above *Prajapatya lokas* there are *sanatana Go-lokas* filled with divine fragrance, have no dust (*rajoguna*) and grief. Even if you go to these very difficult to obtain *go-lokas* I will chase you and retrieve my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 43, 44) One who is owner of a thousand cows and donates a hundred of them every year, who is owner of a hundred cows and donates ten every year, who is owner of ten cows and donates one every year, or is owner of five cows and donates one every year, those brahmanas who remain *brahmacharis* all their life, who protect the Vedas by learning and teaching them and those brahmanas with a good heart who are engaged in pilgrimages will all go to *go-lokas*.

Gautama: (Shl 49, 50, 51) Even if you go to the fully auspicious ***Brahma loka*** where there is no fear of cold or heat, where there is no hunger or thirst, there is no exhaustion, no happiness or

grief, none who hate or love, no relative or enemy, no ageing or death, no sin or virtue, which is devoid of *rajoguna*, is rich in everything, is enriched with *prajnana* & *sattva guna*, I will chase you and retrieve my elephant.

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 52, 53) *Mahamuni!* Those who have given up all attachments, have their mind under control, practice *vratas* strictly, who are rich in the knowledge of *adhyatma* and *ashtanga-yoga*, and are eligible even for *Swarga loka* only such *sattviks* go to the *Brahma loka*. But you cannot see Dhritarashtra there.

Gautama: (Shl 54) I will chase you and retrieve my elephant from such *punya bhumi* where *rathantara sama* & *brihat sama* are being sung, where *yajniks* decorate the *yajna vedis* with lotus flowers, and where those who have drunk *somarasa* come riding horse. (Shl 54) I know that you are not Dhritarashtra and are Shatakrtu and are travelling to see the entire universe. I hope I have not offended you with my words in my aggression in any way!

Uttama loka and ordinary world

(This is very interesting as a geographic region near Himalaya Mountains has been described as *uttama loka*. The powerful implication is that persons who live a virtuous life and do *punya-karmas* would be born in next birth in one of the regions—countries--on earth which have qualities of *uttama-loka*.)

Bharadwaja asked: (Shl 7) I have heard that there is a greater *loka* than this one. But it is not possible to see it. I want to know about that *loka*. Kindly tell me.

Bhrigu replied: (Shl 8) **On one side of Himavat parvata** (Himalaya mountains) **in the North there is an area which is full of punya and all good qualities. That is said to be the best among all lokas.** That region is very sacred, auspicious and desired by all. (Note by authors of the Kannada publication: Some commentators have argued that in this *shloka* what has been stated is about Paramatma and not about a region near Himalaya Mountains. But the interpretation of some of the words looks very unnatural. Earlier a description of Uttara Kurus has appeared. There is scope to guess that this may be that region. The summary of spiritual interpretation is: Golden Meru *parvata* is between the eyebrows. On the side of such Meru *danda* at the centre of the eyebrows there exists *Paramatma* who is *punyatama* and *kshemya*). (Shl 9) There live human beings who are free of all sinful deeds, who are sacred, who are very pure, who have no *moha* or *lobh* and who face no misfortunes. (Spiritual interpretation: When you have union with *atma* in *Samadhi*, *andha* (blind, darkness) becomes *anandha* (opposite of *andha*). One who has misfortunes/troubles becomes free of them). (Shl 10) **That country is equal to swarga.** It is said that all auspicious qualities are present permanently there. Over a period of time people die there also (no untimely deaths). **Mental & physical diseases do not even touch anyone there** (Another interpretation: For those who have realised Paramatama there will be no fear of mental & physical diseases or untimely death). (Shl 11) No one living in this region develops greedy/lustful interest in other women (*parastree*). All will be in love with their wives only. They do not cause pain to others for reasons of money nor are they arrested for this reason. **They are not surprised by anything.** You will not even hear of *adharma* there. **No one has doubts in any matter.** (This *shloka* has certain words which cannot be interpreted differently. Hence some commentators have distorted the words & meaning to extract other interpretations). (Shl 12, 13) In that region the fruits of the *karmas* done will become available directly/visibly. Some in that *loka* live in huge mansions. They sit in very comfortable seats; eat best foods; drink best drinks. They are possessed of all desirable things and are decked up with golden jewellery. But some there get food only enough to survive. Some remain alive with great difficulty.

(Shl 14) **But in this human world** some are dedicated to the practice of dharma; some are cheats; Some are happy & some are unhappy; some are wealthy and some are poor. (Shl 15) In this world there is effort, fear, *moha* and of course hunger. Men are very greedy about money. For this reason the ignorant become confused in the mind. (Shl 16) In this world you hear many different things about those who follow dharma & adharma. **Those scholars who know the nature of dharma & adharma and its consequences do not get smeared with sins.** (Shl 17, 18) One who practices cheating, crookedness, thieving, blaming others, jealousy, causing harm to others, violence, carrying tales and lying will suffer loss of all his *tapas*. The *tapas* of that scholar who does not practice these wicked qualities will grow. (Shl 19) In this world there will be a lot of discussion & thinking about *punya-karmas* & *paap-karmas*. This is *karma-bhumi*. In this world the person gets auspicious and inauspicious fruits corresponding to such *karmas*.

(Shl 20) In the past in this *Himvat-parvat* Prajapati Brahma & *devatas* along with *rishis* performed *yajna* and *tapas* and attained *Brahma-loka*. (Shl 21) The northern part of earth (Himalaya Mountains) is more sacred & auspicious than all other parts of earth. **Those who do *punya-karmas* here will be born in the side region of Himalayas in the north in their subsequent birth.** (Shl 22) Those who commit sins will be born as birds & animals. Some others will be destroyed on earth. (Shl 23) Those who under the influence of *lobh* & *moha* keep trying to swallow each other will be going through cycles of birth & death here itself. They will never go to that great region near Himalayas. (Shl 24) **Those who keep their mind and *indriyas* under control, practice *brahmacharya-vrata* and serve their guru will know the way to all *punya-lokas*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 192)

Illustrative stories about death

1. Conversation between *mrityu* (death), *brahmani*, *kaal*, hunter and serpent

Vaishampayana started the discourse with *pranava* (OM). Janamejaya! Yudhishtira said: (Shl 1) Grandfather! You have told me several episodes and given discourses to help me gain peace of mind. But in spite of listening to many of these I have not reached a peaceful state of mind. My mind is still agitated. (Shl 2) In spite of listening to calming discourses, what is the calming measure for offences I have committed? (Shl 3) Oh Valorous! Seeing you lying on the bed of arrows and with so many severe wounds, I keep thinking of my wicked deeds and am unable to gain peace of mind. (Shl 7) We and children of Dhritarashtra did these despicable acts under the control of *kaal* and wrath. What kind of bad state (*durgati*) will we get because of this?! (Shl 8) I feel that whatever happened to Duryodhana was for his good because, he did not have to see this miserable state of yours. (Shl 9) **It is I who killed you. Similarly I have killed many friends.** I am unable to find peace seeing you lying in this state. ... (Shl 13, 14) Surely we have been created by Brahma only to perform sinful deeds. Grandfather Bhishma! If you wish to make me happy, order what I should do so that we can be free of this sin in other *lokas*.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! **How do you consider yourself who are controlled by karmas as the cause of all this?** This karma *phala* is very subtle and beyond the perception of senses. In this matter scholars give example of conversation between *mrityu* (death), *brahmani*, *kaal*, hunter and serpent. I will tell you the same. Listen.

There was an old lady by name Gautami who had a calm demeanour. One day she saw her son who was bitten by a serpent and was dead. At that time a hunter by name Arjunaka became very angry and caught that serpent, tied it up and brought it near her and said: '*Mahabhage!* It is this wicked serpent that bit & killed your son. Tell me quickly how I should kill this serpent'. (Shl 20) Shall I burn it? Shall I cut it to pieces? This serpent which has killed your son certainly does not deserve to live.

Gautami said: (Shl 21) Arjunaka! Release this serpent. You are a fool. This serpent should certainly not be killed. **Whatever has to happen will happen exactly in that way.** Who will burden himself with sins by ignoring this fact of life? (Shl 22) Those who perform acts of dharma and lighten their burden of sins will cross this ocean of *samsara* like boats in the ocean. Those who are heavy due to burden of sins will sink into the ocean of *narak* like a weapon which falls into water. (Shl 23) Hunter! If you kill this serpent my son will not come back to life again. What is the loss to you if it lives? Who will go to the endless world of death by allowing this serpent to live? (No one will. But if killed, we both will acquire sins).

Vyadha (hunter) said: (Shl 24) Oh one who knows good & bad quality! *Devi!* I know that all those in difficulty or grief will have a heavy heart due to grief. Such preaching is palatable only to those with stable mind. They are not acceptable for those in trouble. (You, who are grieving due to your son's death, should neither preach like this nor practice it). I will kill this mean serpent only to remedy your grief of losing your son. (Shl 25) **Those who desire peace say that *kaal gati* (progress of time) is responsible for everything. But those who know how to revenge will immediately destroy their enemies and then give up grief.** Others keep thinking of the event after having lost their *shreyas* and keep grieving. Therefore, after killing this serpent, which is like your enemy, you can give up your grief due to son's death.

Gautami said: (Shl 26) Arjunaka! Persons like me never suffer agony for any reason. **Those who are dedicated to dharma always remain virtuous. My son was always in the mouth of death.** Therefore I am unable to approve killing of this snake. (Shl 27) **Brahmanas never get angry** (should not get angry). This being so, why would they get angry and hurt others? *Sadhupurusha!* Take a soft stand, forgive this snake and release it.

Hunter said: (Shl 28) *Devi!* Killing this enemy snake will only result in auspiciousness. Such gains obtained by mighty are valuable. You may say that by releasing it, in due course we will truly earn *punya*. But by showing mercy to this mean animal we will not earn any auspiciousness. This animal does not deserve kindness.

Gautami said: (Shl 29) Arjunaka! What is gained by capturing and killing the enemy? What desires will be fulfilled by capturing him and not releasing him? Oh *Saumya!* For what reason can I not forgive this serpent? Why should I not try for its release?

Arjuna said: (Shl 30) Gautami! I have to save many lives being destroyed by this one serpent. **When several lives have to be saved, one offender should not be protected. Dharmatmas reject offenders.** Therefore you should also reject this sinner serpent.

Tapasi said: (Shl 31) *Lubdhaka* (hunter)! If this serpent is killed, will my son come back to life? That will never happen. I do not see any other benefit by killing it. Therefore release it immediately.

Lubdhaka said: (Shl 32) *Devi!* Indra killed Vritrasura and gained a high position. Parashiva with his *trishul* destroyed Daksha's *yajna* and got his portion of *havis*. You should also behave like these *devatas*. Kill the serpent quickly. Let there be no doubt in your mind in this matter.

Discussion on Cause & Effect

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! Thus though the hunter told Gautami in several ways to kill the serpent she did not agree to the sinful deed. By that time the serpent slowly loosened itself from the binds and started speaking in a low and slow voice. (Shl 35) You fool! Arjunaka! What is my fault in biting Gautami's son? **It is *mrityu* (death) which prompted me, who have no independence and was careless, to bite him.** (Shl 36) I bit him only due to the prompting of death. I did not do so out of any kind of anger or desire. Hunter! If there is any offence in this event, it is only of death and not mine.

Hunter said: (Shl 37) Serpent! **Even if you have done this offence under someone else's control, you are also a cause for it. Therefore you are an offender.** (Shl 38) When making a pot the axle and the wheel are all said to be causes. Similarly you are also a cause for the death of this boy. (Shl 39) *Bhujangama* (serpent)! Whoever be the offender, I will kill him. You are an offender. Whoever might be the prompter, you have yourself accepted that you were responsible for the boy's death.

Serpent said: (Shl 40) Hunter! **Even though the axle and wheel are causes for making a pot, they are dependent. They cannot do anything by themselves. They turn as turned by the potter. Similarly, I am also dependent. I am controlled by death. I have done my job as prompted by it. It is your opinion that I am offender. But because of the reasons I have stated, there is no mistake on my part.** (Shl 41) Or if you were to say that axle & wheel are mutually helpful and therefore causes, then since there is mutual prompting in my act, which is the act and which is the cause? What is the dominant reason for this act? This becomes doubtful. (Shl 42) This being the fact, there is no blemish ascribable to me for the death of this boy. There is no offence either. Therefore I do not deserve to be killed. **If by chance it is considered that causing the boy's death is an offence, then it is not done by any one alone. It is collective responsibility.**

The hunter said: (Shl 43) Oh serpent! You may not be the only cause for this. You may say that prompting was the main reason. You may not be the independent doer also. You may say that it was death which snatched him. **But you are directly responsible for his death. Therefore in my opinion you deserved to be killed.** (Shl 44) **If according to your view, the doer does not get smeared with the offence even after committing an offence, no one will be the cause of any offence.** (It will be said that it happened due to promptings of fate. He cannot be punished by the king also. Sin & punishment will all be meaningless & waste. Can this ever happen?). Why talk too much? You are the offender. You deserve to be killed.

Serpent said: (Shl 45, 46) Hunter! **Whether there is a cause or not, the act (*karya*) will happen. Otherwise certain actions would not have occurred at all.** Picking up the axe, lifting it up & slashing it down – all these are causes for the splitting of wood. Meaning, the act happens if there is cause. **An act can occur even if there is no cause.** When two branches rub each other, fire is produced and the entire forest burns down. Here, even though there is no cause, the action has occurred. **You may say that the invisible wind is the doer of the rubbing of branches. But it is a useless doer-ship.** In this case I also have a similar useless doer-ship. **The wind did not have the task of having to set the branches on fire. It did not have that purpose or intention either. I too did not have the task or intention of biting the boy. I & wind are equivalent.** Therefore, it cannot be said that I am particularly responsible for his death.

Hunter said: (Shl 47) You wicked minded evil serpent! You are the one who killed the boy. You are cruel. You surely deserve to be killed by me. You are talking too much to establish that you are innocent even though you deserve to be killed.

Serpent said: (Shl 48) Oh hunter! **It is my duty to establish that I am innocent.** In *yajnas ritwijas* perform *homa* with *havis*. But the fruits of such *homa* do not accrue to them. It goes to the *yajamana*. Just as the fruits go to the *yajamana* even though *ritwijas* do the *homa*, in this case even though it may appear that I am the killer of the boy, its fruits or punishments do not belong to me. It belongs to *mrityu* who was the prompter.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! When the serpent was saying thus, ***mrityu* itself came there** and said to the serpent: (Shl 50) Oh serpent! I, who was prompted by *kaal*, instigated you to bite the boy. **Therefore, neither I nor you are the causes for the death of this boy. It is *kaal* who is responsible.** (Shl 51) **Just as wind pushes around the cloud here and there, *kaal* drags me around as he wishes. Just as clouds are controlled by wind, I am controlled by *kaal*.** (Shl 52) **All living beings consisting of *sattva*, *tamas* & *rajas* act/behave under the control of *kaal*.** (Shl 53) All moving and unmoving beings on *bhumi* or *swarga* are controlled by *kaal*. Oh serpent! What more can I say? **This *jagat* itself is form of *kaal* (*kaalmtikam idam jagat*).** (Shl 54) **Whatever number of *pravritti margas* are there in this *jagat*, similarly whatever *nivritti margas* are there, all their *vikritis* (fruits, *phalas*) are said to be forms of *kaal* (*yaashcha sarvam kaalmtakam smritam*).** (Shl 55, 56) Oh serpent! *Surya*, *Chandra*, *Vishnu*, *jala*, *vayu*, *Indra*, *agni*, *akash*, *prithvi*, *mitra*, *parjanya*, *vasus*, *Aditi*, rivers, oceans, presence & absences (creation & dissolution) – **are all created by *kaal*. They are all again withdrawn by him alone.** (Shl 57) Serpent! Even though you know all this, how do you consider me to be the offender? In spite of this you consider me as being guilty, then you too are guilty along with me.

Serpent said: (Shl 58) *Mrityudeva* (god of death)! I am not saying that you are guilty or innocent. I am just saying that I was prompted by you to bite the boy. (Shl 59) **In this matter there may be guilt with the *kaal* or he may be innocent too. That is not something that concerns me. I am not trying to examine who is guilty. I do not have any such authority also.** (Shl 60) I have to somehow clear myself of this accusation. If you say that there is no fault even with *mrityu*, then after all, it helps me.

Bhishma said: (Shl 61) Dharmaja! After saying this to *mrityu* the serpent said to the hunter: Arjunaka! You have also heard what *mrityu* said. You now know clearly that I am innocent. Now at least it is not fair to bind me and agonise me.

The hunter said: (Shl 62) Serpent! I heard what *mrityu* said; I also heard you. But just by this it does not get established that there is no fault with you. (Shl 63) Both of you are causes for the boy's death. I treat both of you as offenders. I do not consider one of you guilty and the other innocent. **I am not considering that which is not a cause as the cause.** (Shl 64) My condemnation to this cruel *mrityu* who causes grief even to virtuous persons! Oh serpent! You are the main reason for this death. I will certainly kill you, who are a sinner.

Mrityu purusha said: (Shl 65) We are both dependents. We are controlled by *kaal*. We work according to his orders. If you examine this matter properly, you will not consider either of us as offenders.

The Hunter said: (Shl 66) *Mrityu & pannaga*! **If you were both under the control of *kaal*, then why do people love me who am helpful and neutral and have anger against you who harm?** If everything is considered to be controlled by *kaal*, then there would be no opportunity for love and hatred in this *loka*. I wish to know about this from you both.

Mrityu said: (Shl 67) Oh hunter! **Whatever happens in this *jagat*, it is only due to prompting of *kaal*.** I have already told you about this thing that all events are controlled by *kaal*. (Shl 68) We are both under control of *kaal*. We act in accordance with his orders. Therefore for no reason should you consider us offenders.

Bhishma said: (Shl 69) Yudhishtira! At that time when a doubt about dharma had arisen, *kaal* himself came there, addressed all of them and said: (Shl 70) *Lubdhaka*! **Neither I nor *mrityu* nor this serpent is offender in the death of this boy. We are not even mutual prompters in this act.** (Shl 71) Arjunaka! **It is the karmas done by this boy which prompts all of us. No one else is responsible for this boy's death. He has been killed by his own karmas.** (Shl 72) He died in accordance with the karmas he had done. His *karma phalas* are responsible for his death. **We are all**

under control of *karma phalas*. (Shl 73) In this *loka*, karmas follow the doer just as children & grand children. **It is karma which indicates the relationship with happiness & grief. Just as people prompt each other for their works, in the same way karmas prompt each one of us. We are all prompted by the karmas done by living beings.** (Shl 74) **Just as a potter makes whatever he wants from a lump of clay, in the same way man gets everything according to his karmas.** (Shl 75) **Just as sunlight & shadow are always attached to each other, karma & the doer are inseparable. Man gets the fruits according to the karmas he does.** (Shl 76) In this way neither I nor serpent nor *mrityu* nor you nor this *brahmani* are causes for this boy's death. The karmas of this boy in past births alone are the causes of his death now.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! Hearing this from *kaal*, Gautami the *brahmani* said to Arjunaka: (Shl 78) Oh hunter! None of them are responsible for my son's death. This son of mine has died prompted only by his past karmas. (Shl 79) Arjunaka! **Because even I have done such wicked deeds, my son died now.** Therefore no others are responsible for his death. Let them all go. Release the serpent also.

Bhishma said: Dharmaja! Then they all returned to wherever they had come from. Arjunaka also overcame his grief. Gautami also overcame her grief. Yudhishtira! At least after listening to this episode you should calm down. Do not grieve. **All people in the world go to *lokas* obtained according to their karmas.** (Shl 82) **This act of killing has not been done by you, nor by Duryodhana. Understand that *kaal* has done all this according to everyone's karmas. All kings have been killed by this *kaal*.**

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! After hearing these words of Bhishma, Yudhishtira became free of worries. Again he started asking Bhishma further questions. (**Anushasana; Daandharma; 1**)

2. Conquering death by hospitality (*atithi satkar*)

Yudhishtira said: (Shl 2) Which *grihastha* has conquered death by taking refuge in *atithi satkara* alone? Tell me all about this.

Bhishma said: (Extracts only)

..King Sudarshana married king Oghavanta's daughter Oghavati. Sudarshana lived in Kurukshetra practicing *Grihastha dharma*... **He made a vow that he would remain a *grihastha* and still conquer death.** He told his wife Oghavati: (Shl 43) Dear! **You should never do any thing unfavourable to a guest. You should provide whatever makes the guest contented as a part of hospitality. If by chance you have to submit yourself also to the guest, you should do it and show our hospitality. There is no need for you to think even under such circumstance.** (Shl 44) Oh beautiful! This *vrata* that I should always be doing *atithi satkar* has taken firm roots in my heart. There is no dharma higher than this for *grihasthas*. (Shl 46) Oh sinless! If I am an authority for you, then whether I am at home or outside, you should never humiliate a guest who comes to our home. Hearing this, Oghavati bowed to him and said: (Shl 47) There is nothing I will not do according to your orders.... **When Sudarshana was thus practicing *Grihastha dharma*, *mrityu* (death) was always behind him looking for a deficiency or fault in him which he could use to kill him.** Once when Sudarshana had gone out to bring *samit (idhma)* a *maha tejasvi* brahmana guest came to his house and said to Oghavati: (Shl 50) I wish to be treated well as guest by you. If you consider *atithi satkara* acceptable under *grihasthashrama* as sacred, then show hospitality to me.

Yudhishtira! Oghavati welcomed him by methods stated in Vedas and after the formalities said to him: Great *vipra*! Desiring which benefit have you come here? What shall I give you? Thus questioned, the brahmana said to the princess: (Shl 53) *Kalyani*! I need a benefit from you only. Without any doubt undertake my work. *Maharani*! If you consider *atithi dharma* in *grihasthashrama* as a standard, make me happy by submitting yourself (your body) to me.

Yudhishtira! Oghavati repeatedly requested him to ask any thing other than that. But that brahmana said that he desired nothing else. Then the princess recollected her husband's words and with much shyness consented. Smiling, the brahmana entered the house with her. Sudarshana returned home after a while followed by *mrityu*. After reaching home, he repeatedly called his wife Oghavati but she did not reply..... Then the brahmana who was inside the house said to Sudarshana: *Agniputra* (son of *agni*)! Understand that I am a brahmana who has come to your house as a guest. **Your wife told me that she will fulfil my desire as a part of hospitality to guests. Then I selected her for my satisfaction. Now she is with me. You can do whatever seems appropriate to you.**

At that time, *mrityu* was waiting behind him with uplifted thick metal rod hoping that now the moment to kill him would come as he would make a mistake. But Sudarshana who had given up jealousy and anger in mind, actions, eyes and words, smilingly said: (Shl 69) *Vipra shreshta!* Let your sexual desire be satisfied. This has made me very happy because, it is the greatest dharma for a *grihastha* to show every hospitality to the guest who comes home. (Shl 70) That *grihastha* from whose house the guest goes contented is a great *grihastha*. **Scholars say that for a *grihastha* there is nothing higher than showing hospitality to guest.** (Shl 71) It is my vow to give my life, wife and other money and wealth I have to guests without thinking twice.... (Shl 73, 74) Great among *dharmatmas*! The following ten *gunas* viz *prithvi, vayu, akash, jala, jyoti* the fifth, *buddhi, atma, manas, kaal & dik* exist within the body of living beings constantly observing their good and bad deeds. (Shl 75) If what I have said now is not a lie, let *devatas* protect me based on the strength of that truth. If a lie, let them burn me.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! As soon as Sudarshana said this, from all directions the statement was heard, 'What you have said is true. There is no trace of falsehood in this'. Then the guest came out of the house. He had pervaded earth & sky like *vayu*. He said to Sudarshana: Oh sinless! Sudarshana! May you have all auspiciousness! I am dharma. I came here only to test you. I am highly pleased having seen your *satya nishta* (dedication to truth). (Shl 80) **You have conquered death who is always behind you. You have taken control over him by your courage.** (Shl 81, 82) In all the three *lokas* there is none who can even see your faithful wife with any evil intention. She is protected by your virtues and her fidelity to you. No one can defeat her. Whatever Oghavati speaks will turn out to be true. It will never be false..... (Shl 86) **You will go to higher *lokas* with this physical body. You have conquered death...** (Shl 88) *Maharaja* Sudarshana! This princess Oghavati has overcome all blemishes like attachment, passion, sloth, confusion, treachery etc due to serving you. .. Even as he was saying this, *bhagawan Devendra* came in a thousand horsed chariot and took him along with his wife Oghavati to his *loka*.

Yudhishtira! **Thus by practicing the great dharma of *atithi satkara* he conquered *mrityu, atma, lokas, panchabhutas, buddhi, kaal, manas, akash, kaam & krodh*.....**

In answer to your question I have told you how a *grihastha* conquered death.

3. Story of a dead brahmana boy coming back to life

Bhishma: Listen to the historic conversation that took place between a vulture and a fox in Naimisharanya in the past.

A brahmana had a son born after much difficulty. Unfortunately the child died at a very young age. With great grief and wailing the relatives took the body to the grave yard. The parents kept the body on their laps and were continuing to cry bitterly. They would recollect the babble and sweet childish words of the boy and cry. They were unable to leave the dead body behind in the graveyard and return home. **Seeing this, a vulture came near them and said:** (Shl 8) Leave this only son of yours who is dead and go back. Do not wait. *Kaal-purush* (god of death) brings thousands of men and women here. All the relatives of the dead leave them here and go away. (Shl 9) See. **This whole world is enveloped with happiness and grief. Here coming together and separation keeps happening in cycles.** (Shl 10) Those who carry the dead today to the graveyard and those who follow them, will be carried by others when their time is over. (Shl 11) It is enough that you stayed so long in this scary place. There is no use irrespective of how long you stay here. Therefore leave the dead child and go back. (Shl 12) **Whether someone we love or someone we hate, once his time is over and he is dead, no one will again become alive. All living beings in this world suffer the same fate.** (Shl 14) The Sun is setting. It is time for all people to finish their daily chores and rest. Give up attachment to the son and return to your houses.

Yudhishtira! Hearing this, the relatives again wailed uncontrollably. Then they left the dead boy in the graveyard and proceeded towards their homes. They also decided the dead will not come back. **As they were going, a black fox appeared before them and said to them:** Oh men! You are most unkind. Fools! The sun has not yet set. Do not be afraid. Show your affection for some more time on the son you brought up with love for so long. There are many types of *muhurtas*. *Amrit-ghaliga* may come. In such a auspicious time, the son may regain life. (Shl 20) Why are you who are so unkind leaving behind the body and going away? (Shl 21) It appears that you have no love for the child which gave you so much joy with his sweet words. (Shl 22, 23) See for yourself how the love for children is among animals and birds. **They do not nurture their babies out of any desire for returns (selfish). They derive no benefit by nurturing and nourishing their young ones. The karmas done by**

munis without any desire for fruits obtains higher lokas for them. But animals, birds and insects do the same towards their babies but with no such results. (Shl 24) These beings see no benefit either in this world or other world due to their affection for their young ones. Still they all protect and nourish them well. (Shl 25) **Animals and birds do not see their young ones once they grow up and hence they do not experience any kind of grief. Moreover, after growing up they also do not care for their parents.** (Shl 26) Among human beings, the children care for their parents later. Therefore it is natural to feel very sad if they die. But where is the affection of you people who are leaving behind this child? Where are you going leaving behind this son who would have continued your lineage? (Shl 28) **Other than relatives and friends no others stay with someone who is sick & has become very weak, who has committed a financial offence and near the dead body.** (Shl 29) All love their life. All desire mutual friendship. Even among the animals and birds, notice how much love they have for their young ones. (Shl 30) How can you leave such a beautiful looking child here and go away?

Bhishma said: Hearing the words of the fox, the parents and relatives returned to be with the dead son. Seeing them return the vulture said: (Shl 32) Human beings! You are very weak. Why did you return believing in this cruel, dim-witted and silly fox? (Shl 33) This boy is dead and all his senses are not functioning. He is just like dry firewood. Why are you grieving for such person? Someday in future even you will face a similar fate. Therefore why are you not grieving for yourself? (Shl 34) Instead of sitting and crying before a dead body you might as well perform *tapas*. By doing so, you will all be absolved of your sins. By doing *tapas* all desires will be fulfilled. What will your useless crying achieve? (Shl 35) Evils and auspicious features both come with the body when the child is born. It is for this reason that this child has drowned you in grief and left you. (Shl 36) *Tapas* is the basis for money, cattle, gems, precious stones and son. All these are obtained only by *tapo-yoga*. (Shl 37) All animals get happiness and grief according to their *karma-phalas*. **The jeeva takes birth bringing with it happiness and grief according to its past karmas.** (Shl 38) **Son is not influenced by the karmas of the father. Neither is father influenced by the karmas of the son. Even though they are born as father & son, all things in life will occur only according to their respective karmas. Their behaviour, nature and actions will all be different.** Bound by their individual *punya & paap* they walk their own paths. (Shl 39) Practice dharma wilfully. Do not turn your mind to *adharma*. Do the service of brahmanas and *devatas* as much as possible,. (Shl 40) Push away your sadness and miserableness. Do not have love is the dead son. Leave his body in this isolated place and return quickly. (Shl 41) Whatever be the animal, if it does *punya-karma* or bad *paap-karma* it shall experience its fruits. This boy has died because of his karmas. What is the role of relatives in this? (Shl 42) Relatives of the dead, once having left the body here, do not stay here. They give up the love they had till then and go back with teary eyes. (Shl 43) **Whether a scholar or a fool, whether a rich or a poor, they all die carrying their paap-punya karmas.** (Shl 44) What will you achieve by continuously grieving? Will he come back if you cry? Therefore why cry for a dead person? **Kaal is the lord of birth and death. He treats all equally according to his dharma.** (Shl 45) **Kaal who is the form of death enters everyone, be it youth, boys, aged or foetus in the womb. He makes no differentiation. This world itself is like this.**

Hearing this, the fox said to the relatives: (Shl 46) This foolish vulture is weakening the affection you have for your son. (Shl 47) What a surprise that you are giving up your affection for son, influenced by the apparently straight, logical, reasonable and believable words of this vulture. (Shl 48, 49) Having seen all this, now I have realised the intensity of grief of losing a son. Even though my friendship with these people is only of short duration, my eyes are filled with tears. (Shl 50) **To accomplish our desires we should be trying constantly. Only then due to daiva-yoga we can accomplish things. The combination of self-effort and daiva makes it possible to achieve success in due course of time.** (Shl 51) **One should keep doing his work tirelessly and without disappointment. How can you gain happiness if you lose heart with grief? Desired work gets done only by efforts.** Therefore try to have this dead boy come alive. Instead of that why are you leaving this sweet child alone here and going away? (Shl 53) Or you can do this. Be here till the sun sets. After that either take back your son or sit with him. But it is certainly not appropriate for you all to go before sunset and leave your dear son here.

The vulture said again: (Shl 54) Human beings! It is more than thousand years since I was born. I have been here only all these years. **So far I have not seen man or woman or eunuch coming back to life after death.** (Shl 55) Some children die in the womb itself. Some die soon after birth. Some die after learning to walk & some in their youth. (Shl 56) **In this world even for animals and birds their fortunes are uncertain. Whether moving or non-moving (sthavara, jangama) age is the main characteristic.** (Shl 57) Those who lose their dear wife, dear son, all leave the dead bodies

here and go back to their houses everyday. (Shl 58) Several relatives have so far come and left thousands of disliked and hundreds of loved ones here and have gone away. (Shl 59, 60) This dead boy is lying here like a piece of wood. Leave this dead body and go back. **Do not be under delusion that it will get back life. The life of this boy is already eager to enter another body.** Your love for this dead body is meaningless. Your wail and crying with the intent of getting him back to life is all a waste. (Shl 61) **This boy is not seeing your depressed condition arising due to the separation. He is not hearing your wails of excessive grief.** This being so leave this wood like body and return to your houses. (Shl 62) My words may sound very harsh to you. But what I am saying is very reasonable. I am saying all this based on *moksha-dharma*. Therefore respect my words and return. Reach your houses as soon as you can. (Shl 63) Human beings! I have told you many things enriched with *jnana & vijnana*; I, who preach to others, good *jnana* and *viveka* have told you many reasonable things based on *moksha-dharma*. By seeing this boy repeatedly your grief will only increase. But there is no use of grieving like this.

Hearing the well reasoned words of the vulture, the relatives again started to proceed to their houses. But soon the fox, looking at the dead boy, started saying: (Shl 84) This world of humans is dreadful. This world destroys all living beings. Dear ones also die in this world. The life span here is very short. (Shl 85) This human world is filled with many unpleasant events and untruth. There are many here who talk useless and unpleasant things. There are none who speak likeable and soothing words. The nature of people here is to increase sadness and grief. Seeing all this I do not feel like living here for a moment more. (Shl 86) My condemnation to you unkind fellows! Prompted by this vulture, like fools you wish to go away from here with no love at all towards your son. (Shl 87) This vulture is full of sins. It has blemished mind. Why are you listening to it and going away? Come back. (Shl 88) **After happiness comes sadness. After sadness comes happiness. In this world there will never be continuous happiness or sadness.** (Shl 91) Oh unkind humans! I feel this boy is still alive. I have no doubt he is alive. He will not die also. If you stay here and keep wailing surely you will get him back and go home happily. (Shl 92) Filled with grief of son's death you are also as if dead. Therefore it is not right for you to return now. Imagine that your boy may come back alive. Imagine so, and feel happy. Instead like dim-wits don't leave him here to go back.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! That fox always lived in the graveyard. Its job was to eat up the dead bodies which were brought there. It was waiting for the nightfall. That is why it was trying to bring back the parents and relatives by saying things which were against dharma but were pleasing to hear. The relatives could not go away listening to vulture nor could they stay listening to fox. Due to influence of the fox, they again stayed back.

Seeing this, the vulture again started its discourse: (Shl 95) Humans! This forest is filled with ghosts. There are many *yakshas & rakshasas* here. Resounding with the call of many owls this place is very scary. **(It describes the scary picture of the graveyard after dark in a few shlokas).** (Shl 97) before the sunsets and when the directions are still clear, leave the body and go back and perform the post-death rituals. ..(Shl 102) In case you listen to & obey the fox, you will all be destroyed. **The vulture now adopted *bhedopaya*. It did not say soothing words as it had done earlier. It did not even talk dharma. Its intention was only to scare them and drive them away.** When the relatives were thinking what to do, the fox again spoke. (Shl 103, 104) Oh relatives of the boy! You don't have to feel scared here. You can stay here till there is sunlight. Till then express your affection for the boy. Cry as much as you want without any fear. Why should you bother about what this vulture which desires to eat flesh has to say? (Shl 105) If you accept what this carnivorous vulture says you will lose your son completely.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! In reality both the fox and the vulture were hungry. The dead body was food for both. Vulture wanted to deprive the fox and eat it before it gets dark. Fox wanted to delay till nightfall and eat it all by himself. In this manner out of selfishness they were both preaching the relatives. The confused relatives were sometimes trying to go and sometimes trying to stay there but were crying all the time. Then prompted by kind Parvatidevi, Bhagawan Shankara appeared before them and granted them a boon. They prayed that their son be made alive. He granted life to the boy and gave him a hundred years of longevity. He also gave boons to the fox and vulture so that their hunger would be quelled.

(Shl 116) Man should never feel depressed and with firmness and strong decision should keep trying hard for his goals. Such effort and Bhagawan Shankara's grace will yield positive results. **(Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 153)**

4. Bringing peace to grief filled heart

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 6) Grandfather! If money is lost, if wife, children, mother, father die, what thinking should be resorted to in order to overcome the grief?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 7) Child Dharmaja! If these things happen, then, by thinking '*aho!* This world is so full of grief' one should overcome it. (Everyone who is born has to die someday. The grief of separation cannot be avoided. Therefore this world is full of grief. Other than *atma* everything else is a form of grief. By understanding the *atma*, this sea of grief has to be crossed). In this matter a well-wishing brahmana came to Senajit and preached him in this matter. I will retell the same to you.

King Senajit's son died. There was no end to the grief of the king. Seeing his plight, a brahmana said to him: (Shl 10) *Maharaja!* Why are you overtaken by *moha*? Certainly you are a fool. You are yourself worthy of being lamented. So why are you lamenting about others? When you attain the same state as your son one day, those who will grieve for you will also be lamentable. Again for them a few others will have to grieve. (Even those who cry for the dead cannot escape death. Thus when death is inevitable for all who are born, why should you cry for them?). (Shl 11) **You, me, these dependents of yours, all have to return to where we came from. None can live here eternally. We return to wherever we came from.** (We came from the unseen & the unknown and will return to the unseen & the unknown).

Senajit questioned: (Shl 12) Oh *Tapodhana* (wealthy of *tapas*)! What kind of knowledge do you have that makes you not to grieve at such times? What *tapas* have you done? What *samadhi* do you depend on? Which *shastras* have you studied?

Brahmana replied: (Shl 13) *Maharaja!* Look at how in this world higher, middling & lesser animals (*devatas*, human beings, lower animals etc) are engaged in different karmas and are filled with all round grief. (Shl 14) By thinking that , 'this body is not mine', 'all this earth is not mine', 'just as all things are mine they also are other's', there will be no grief. By having such thoughts I neither feel happy nor sad. (If the feeling 'body is not mine' has to arise, then the feeling that 'body is *atma*' should be given up. Body is only an armour the *chaitanya* (energy) within which is I. The 'I' should merge with *chid-vastu*. That *chid-vastu* should be seen everywhere. Then there will be nothing other than *chid-vastu*...Happiness and sadness are only to the body or the mind associated with the body and its attributes. Paramatma who is *sacchidananda swaroopi* has no happiness or grief. That state which transcends duality is *brahmananda*). (Shl 15) **Just as two pieces of wood (or logs) come floating in the floods of the river, float together for a short while in the ocean and again separate due to the force of the waves, living beings also come from the unseen, live together for a short while and separate and go back to the unseen. This union in the form of relatives and friends is not permanent.** (Shl 16) Therefore it is not appropriate to have much attachment with them. (Shl 17) Your son came from the unseen, was here as your son for some time and returned to the unseen. You did not know who he was before he was born. He did not know who you were. You do not know where he will go further. Who are you? Who is he? Why are you grieving for him? (Shl 18) Man suffers grief due to the thirst of wanting to enjoy desirable things. **After such pangs of grief there will be happiness. After the happiness again there will be grief due to the influence of thirst.** In this way, even though happiness appears before us like a mirage, there will always be grief. (Shl 19) Human beings will keep having joy and grief one after the other. They keep rotating like a wheel. (Shl 20) The birth of your son was a joyous occasion. You who were elated with the birth of your son are now grieving his separation. In case another son is born again you will rejoice. No living being can have eternal happiness or grief. (Shl 21) This body is the abode of both happiness and grief. **Man who is *dehabhmani* (believes that body is the *atma*) experiences happiness and grief through the same body which is itself the result of his auspicious and inauspicious deeds.**

(Shl 22) By nature, *jeeva* is born with the body. It then undergoes transformations through childhood, boyhood, adulthood & old age and finally is lost along with the body. (Shl 23) **Human beings are bound by a variety of attachments and are always interested in pleasures of the senses. Just as sand banks are destroyed by rush of waters they are destroyed before all their desires are fulfilled.** (Shl 24) Just as sesame seeds are ground by those who extract oil from it, due to attachment all people are ground in the wheel of creation through the grief generated by ignorance. (Shl 25) **Man indulges in many wrong deeds for the sake of caring & supporting his wife & children and accumulates sins. But the fruits of sins he accumulates have to be experienced by him alone whether here or in other *lokas*.** (Others who enjoyed the benefits of his illegal earning etc do not partake of the fruits of sins he accumulates). (Shl 26) All human beings who being interested in *samsara* consisting of with wife & children drown into the sea having mire called grief just

as aged elephants fall into mire and suffer. (Shl 27) Whoever loses son or wealth or close relatives suffers grief intense as wild fire. **But happiness, grief and birth & death are controlled by *daiva*.** (Shl 28) Whether human being is in the company of *suhrids* or not, whether he is with enemies or friends, whether he is intelligent or foolish, if *daiva* favours him he will enjoy happiness. (*suhrid*: One who does beneficence without expecting any thing in return; friend: who helps expecting returns). (Shl 29) **If *daiva* does not favour, *suhrids* cannot cause happiness. Enemies cannot cause grief. Intelligence cannot earn wealth. Money alone cannot bring happiness. It is not true that just having money results in happiness.** (If *daiva* favours, *suhrid* may cause happiness, enemy may not trouble, intelligence may accumulate money and happiness may come from money). (Shl 30) **Power of intelligence alone is not responsible for gaining money. Foolishness alone is not responsible for being pauper.** Only a *jnani* can understand this affair of the wheel called *samsara*. No others can. (Shl 31) If *daiva* favours, then without any differentiation that one is intelligent, valiant, stupid, cowardly, sloth, scholar, weak, mighty etc and without any effort also human beings can be fortunate and enjoy happiness. (Shl 32) To whom does a milking cow belong? IT can belong to the calf or the cow-herd or the owner. It can also be of the thief who steals it. Scholars have finally come to the conclusion thus: It belongs to one who drinks the milk of that cow. (**Do not have more attachment than needed?!**) (Shl 33) Only the most stupid and those with intelligence par-excellent (*atma-jnanis*) are happy. **Those in-between who are neither stupid nor who have transcended intelligence will be suffering a variety of griefs.** (Shl 34) *Jnanis* experience bliss in their final state of *Samadhi*. They have no bliss in the middle state (worldly affairs). This final state (*atma-darshan*) is said to be the happy state. **The state between stupidity and *jnana* is said to be grief.** (Shl 35) Those who have gained the happiness arising out of *jnana*, are beyond the dualities of heat & cold, happiness & grief, gain & loss, victory & defeat and have no *matsarya* (envy) will not be bothered by *artha* or *anartha*. (Shl 36) Those who have not transcended intelligence, who have crossed stupidity, will experience great joy when happiness comes and excessive grief when sad events occur. (Shl 37) Fools who have lost their minds, have no discriminative thinking and have no understanding of *sat* & *asat*, humiliate others with great arrogance and feel joy as if in *swarga*. (Shl 38) **Sloth or laziness feels like comfort in the beginning. But since it does not permit you to do your duties, in the end it results in grief.** When you start your work with efficiency, though it may appear as grief in the beginning, it will end in bringing happiness. It is only with a skilled and efficient worker that wealth with Lakshmi resides and never in the lazy. (Shl 39) **Whether happiness or grief, likeable or unlikeable things occur, one should experience whatever comes his way at different times without any weakening in heart.** (Shl 40) There are thousands of causes for grief. There are hundreds of causes of fear. But grief and fear take possession of a fool every day. But they do not even come near a scholar.

(Shl 41) Grief will not touch one who is intelligent, who has cultured and ripe wisdom, who likes to listen to words of *viveka* (discrimination, right knowledge), who has no jealousy and who has control on his internal and external *indriyas*. (Characteristics of a *jitendriya* according to Manu: That person who does not feel happiness or sadness upon hearing blames or praises, touching hard or soft objects, seeing beautiful or ugly things, eating sweet or bitter things and smelling fragrant or foul smelling things). (Shl 42) A scholar should develop such intelligence and protect his mind from *kaam*, *krodh* etc six enemies and engage only virtuous practices. **Grief does not touch the one who knows (*brahma-jnani*) sunrise and sunset** (creation and destruction). (Shl 43) That which is the cause of grief, anxiety and sadness, that which causes increased exhaustion, even if it be an organ of the body, it should be relinquished (Therefore it goes without saying that things like material wealth etc should be given up). (Shl 44) **Whenever man develops even a small sense of 'mine' in anything, that '*mamakara*' will cause all kinds of agony or anguish.** (Shl 45) Whichever objects of desire who give up, it causes happiness. As you give up anyone (& each one) of the five desires of the senses viz sound, touch, looks, taste and smell, it brings happiness. Therefore make a habit of giving up one by one. Gain control over *indriyas*. Instead, one who becomes a slave of the senses and struggles to satisfy them will be destroyed chasing these desires. (Shl 46) *Maharaja*! All the objects of desire & pleasures in this world and in *swarga* cannot equal even one sixteenth of the happiness of *trishna-kshaya* (decay or waning of thirst of desires) (Not having desire for anything. Controlling the five senses which are the root of desires. This *trishna-kshaya* is a very important practice for *atma-sakshatkara*. The essence is that compared to the bliss of *atma-sakshatkara*, all these worldly & heavenly pleasures are extremely insignificant). (Shl 47) Whether the person is a fool or intelligent or courageous etc he will be experiencing the fruits of his good and bad deeds of his past births. (The respective karmas will themselves come in search of the doer). (Shl 48) In this manner among the *jeevas* liked and disliked, loved and hated etc are constantly changing in cycles. (Shl 49) One who takes refuge in the wisdom of decaying *trishna* and has qualities of *shama* & *dama* will be

truly happy. **All kinds of desires should be looked upon with disinterest.** All of them should be pushed back. (Shl 50) **Desire which takes birth in the mind grows there itself and matures (becomes stronger). Then that same desire takes the form of death.** Whenever there is any hurdle or obstruction to that *kaama* it transforms to *krodh* (anger). **Scholars say that for those who have ‘bodies’ anger is like death.** (Shl 51) Just a tortoise withdraws all its organs into its shell, when man withdraws all desires from his senses, then he will realise the supreme light, Paramatma, in his purified *antah-karana*. (Shl 52) **When the person does not feel any fear from others, when others do not fear anything from him, when he neither desires nor hates anything he becomes *brahma* itself.** (Shl 53) The *sadhaka* will become calm minded (composed, tranquil) by relinquishing *satya-anrita*, *shoka-ananda*, *bhaya-abhaya* and *priya-apriya*. (Giving them up means being tranquil without any of these dualities causing any distortion in the mind). (Shl 54) When the *dheera* (wise and sensible) does not indulge in sinful deeds towards any living being by way of action (*karma*) or mind or speech, then he will attain *Brahma-sakshatkara*. (Shl 55) **One who gives up *trishna*, (thirst for desires) which cannot be given up by the wicked, which does not decay even though the human being decays and which is a terminal disease, will enjoy ultimate happiness.**

Maharaja! In this matter the songs of Pingali have come down from ear to ear. Even though she was in great trouble she adopted *sanatana dharma*. Once there was a prostitute called Pingala. She was awaiting her lover at a pre-determined place for a long time. But when he did not turn up she faced much problem. At that time due to the auspicious karmas she had done in her past births ‘*vairagya*’ took birth in her. Therefore she remained calm and thought thus: (Shl 58) I am living with the shapeless, most attractive *kaanta* (beloved/husband) who has always been residing in my heart. But due to my intoxication I never realised his presence. (Shl 59) **With hands of knowledge I will close the *nava-dwaras* (nine doors: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, anus and generative organ) of this house called body which is supported on the single pillar of *avidya* so that no outsider (*ari-shadvarga*) can come in.** Which woman would consider an outsider as her dear when there is an internal beloved/husband in the form of ultimate light (*jyoti-swaroopa*)? (Shl 60) Now I have woken up from the slumber of *ajnana*. Now that I have closed the nine doors which are the birth place of *kaama* and have become *akaama*, men cannot cheat me again by donning the form of *kaama*. (Shl 61) **Fortunately or by virtue of good deeds done in the past, even bad events become cause of good beginnings.** Having waited for an ephemeral lover and having been disappointed, now I am awakened by higher *jnana*. Now there are no distortions in my mind. Now I am not an *ajitendriya*. (Shl 62) **One who has no desires sleeps peacefully. Not having desires is the ultimate happiness.** Pingala will sleep happily having converted a mind full of desires to one without desires.

Bhishma concluded. Yudhishtira! After listening to these logical words of the brahmana, Senajit regained his composure. He gave up grieving for his son and lived happily. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 174)**

Specific cases of death

Abhimanyu's end

Abhimanyu attacked by many

....Abhimanyu killed those five kings and shot three arrows at Shakuni. In reply Shakuni also shot three arrows at him and said to Duryodhana: “Before he kills each one of us by selecting us individually let us use some trick and kill him by attacking together.” Then Vykartha's son Karna said to Drona. “Quickly tell us a way to kill Abhimanyu before he kills us all.”

Drona, addressing them all said: “Check if you see any defect or crack in his fighting technique. I am unable to see even the slightest defect in his fighting technique.Even though he is causing lot of agony to me with his arrows, he is only causing me happiness repeatedly. ...I do not see any difference between him & Arjuna.”

Karna did not tolerate the praise of Abhimanyu. He again prayed Drona to indicate some way to kill him. (Shl 26) “*Acharya!* Though I am quite agonised by Abhimanyu I am just standing here because it is not good to retract from war. ..His arrows which are as powerful / burning as *yajneshwara* are slicing apart my heart.

Drona guffawed and said “Karna! Abhimanyu's *kavacha* (armour) cannot be pierced. He is still a young man. He is capable of displaying his valour & skill very quickly. I taught his father the technique of wearing the *kavacha*. It is clear that he has learnt everything that I taught Arjuna. But it is possible for someone with full concentration to cut his bow with arrows. Then the reins of his horses have to be

cut and thereafter his horses can be killed. Radheya! If you can manage, cut his bow in this way and divert him from the fight & then hit him from the back. This is the only way to kill Abhimanyu. (Shl 30) It is impossible even for *devatas* to kill him when he is holding the bow. If you desire his defeat you have to cause him to be without the bow & the chariot.”

Hearing Drona, Karna cut off the bow of Abhimanyu and at the same time Kritavarma killed the horses of his chariot. As it required quick action at that time, six *maharathas* mercilessly rained arrows on that boy who was without bow & chariot.

Undeterred, Abhimanyu jumped in the air in a special manoeuvre with his sword & shield. Drona quickly cut off his sword even as he was in the air. Next moment Radheya cut off his shield. Abhimanyu landed and picked up his *chakra* and advanced menacingly towards Drona. (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 48**)

(Chakra was a weapon of many warriors. Earlier also in the description of how the warriors prepared their chariot for the war, among the list of weapons they loaded, Chakra is mentioned. The famed Vishnu-Chakra was obviously a very special version. Later on page 2539, the editors have explained their firm conclusion that he could not have fought with the wheel of the chariot as some legends suggest but it was the weapon *chakrayudha*)

Abhimanyu is killed

Seeing Abhimanyu holding up the *chakrayudha*, one of the greatest among weapons, disturbed kings immediately cut the chakra into pieces.....Abhimanyu pounced on Ashwatthama with his *gada* (mace). Seeing him coming at him in such a terrifying way, Ashwatthama went back by three steps. Abhimanyu killed his horses and two guards on his sides. The arrows shot by the enemy were stuck all over his body and Abhimanyu looked like a porcupine. Then he killed Kalikaya, the son of Subala, with his mace along with his 77 associate warriors. Then he killed 10 Vaasathiya *rathikas*. He pulverised seven chariots of Kekayas. He killed 10 elephants. He pulverised the chariot in which Dushasana's son was seated. Angered by this, Dushasana's son picked up his mace and rushed at Abhimanyu saying, 'Stop! Stop!' Each intended to kill the other....Hit by the tip of the mace they both fell to the ground. Dushasana's son quickly got up and hit rising Abhimanyu on his head. Due to the power of the hit and the great stress he was already in, Abhimanyu dropped dead.

Maharaja! In this way, several *maharathas* joined together and killed the lone Abhimanyu.

...*Maharaja!* Your children felt great happiness by his death. But there were copious tears in the eyes of other warriors....All the animals (birds) in the sky screamed in agony. Those watching from the sky said, "This lone warrior is lying dead killed by Drona, Karna etc six *maharathas*. We believe that six *maharathas* killing one person is not *dharma*."

.....*Maharaja!* That warrior who had killed thousands of elephants, horses, soldiers and *rathikas* was not satiated with war. He who did such *punya-karma* should really not be grieved because he has attained the permanent *lokas* which can only be attained by *punya-karmas*." (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 49**)

(Editors: It can be said that Abhimanyu fought better than his father Arjuna because, Arjuna is never alone. Sri Krishna is always protecting him. Even though a loyal & skilled charioteer—Sumitra--was with Abhimanyu, Sumitra & Sri Krishna are not comparable. Therefore it can be said that Abhimanyu's valour surpasses Arjuna's or at the least equals his)

Bhishma's death

- Pitru-*devatas* speaking to Parashurama: Do you know who this Bhishma is? He is one among the *ashtavasus*. You should have been killed by him. You survived due to luck. It is not that he has no death. But the time for that has not yet come. Brahma has ordained that his death will be at the hands of Arjuna, the greatest among Pandavas, the son of Indra, the mighty, the *Nara*, the courageous, the *sanathana*, well known as *savyasachi* in all three *lokas* and the most valorous. (**Udyoga; Ambopakhya; 185**)

Bhishma withdraws due to Shikhandi's presence

- ...Seeing that his *shaktyayudha* was also rendered useless by Arjuna, Bhishma thought to himself: " (Shl 32) If Vishwakshena (Sri Krishna) was not the protector of Pandavas, I would have killed all Pandavas with a single arrow. Due to the two facts that Pandavas are invincible due to protection of Sri Krishna & that Shikhandi was a woman, I do not wish to fight with Pandavas.

When my father was married to Satyavathi, pleased with me he gave me two boons; That I cannot be defeated in war and that I could die when I wished. I think the time for my death has now come."

The *rishis* & Vasus who were watching from the skies, became aware of his decision. They said to him: "We are happy with your decision. Bhishma! Withdraw your mind from war." There were many auspicious omens at this. (**Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; 119**)

- Shikhandi faced Bhishma and attacked him with ten arrows called '*bhalla*' which he shot at his chest. Bhishma stared at Shikhandi as if he would burn him merely with his looks. But, recollecting that Shikhandi was born a woman, he did not hit back Shikhandi. **This was known to all. But Shikhandi did not understand this.** At that time Arjuna said to Shikhandi: "Go forward quickly. Kill grandfather. Do not bother about Bhishma not hitting you back. What have got to do with whether he hits you back or not? Kill *maharathi* Bhishma quickly. I have not seen anyone other than you in Yudhishtira's army who can attack Bhishma. I am telling you the truth." Soon after hearing this Shikhandi attacked and enveloped Bhishma with variety of arrows. *Maharaja!* Bhishma ignored the shower of arrows from Shikhandi and stopped Arjuna with many sharp & powerful arrows.

Dushasana fought very bravely the Pandava warriors at this time. He was both fighting many famous warriors and was protecting Bhishma from them.

... Then, Bhishma displaying many *divyastras* attacked Arjuna. But at that time Shikhandi faced & started attacking Bhishma who was about to encounter Arjuna. For that reason Bhishma withdrew his *astras*. Arjuna destroyed a large number of soldiers & stunned Bhishma. (**Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; 117**)

... Madhusudana said to Arjuna: "Bhishma, the son of Shanthanu is standing in the middle of both armies. You will gain victory only if you forcibly kill him. Block Bhishma at the same place where he has penetrated our army. Block him from moving in any direction. None other than you can withstand the arrows of Bhishma."

....Then Shikhandi who was protected by Arjuna, took up his strong bow and rushed towards Bhishma.....Grandfather, as if playing with his bow & arrows, destroyed all the arrows that were coming at him. But recollecting about Shikhandi he did not shoot arrows at him. (**Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; 118**)

- **Bhishma falls from his chariot**

Several leading warriors attacked Bhishma with every type of weapon from all sides. His armour was broken into pieces. His body was being penetrated, but he did not feel worried.

....Then Bhishma freed himself from the middle of chariots, moved around outside and again went back to the middle. Without caring for Drupada & Dhrishtaketu he reached the middle of Pandava army. There he strongly & severely attacked & hit hard Satyaki, Bhima, Dhananjaya, Drupada, Virata and Dhrishtadyumna.

... Shikhandi protected by Kiriti, hit Bhishma who did not have a bow with ten arrows, his charioteer with 10 arrows and with another arrow cut his flag. Bhishma picked up another bow and when in the process of tying its string, Arjuna cut that bow also. In this manner Arjuna went on cutting all the new bows that Bhishma picked up.

...Seeing that his *shaktyayudha* was also rendered useless by Arjuna, Bhishma thought to himself: " (Shl 32) If Vishwaksena (Sri Krishna) was not the protector of Pandavas, I would have killed all Pandavas with a single arrow. Due to the two facts that Pandavas are invincible due to protection of Sri Krishna & that Shikhandi was a woman, I do not wish to fight with Pandavas. **When my father was married to Satyavathi, pleased with me he gave me two boons; that I cannot be defeated in war and that I could die when I wished. I think the time for my death has now come."**

The *rishis* & Vasus who were watching from the skies, became aware of his decision. They said to him: "We are happy with your decision. Bhishma! Withdraw your mind from war." There were many auspicious omens at this.

Shikhandi & Arjuna continued to hit Bhishma with several arrows....In this manner Arjuna cut many new bows that Bhishma took up. Then Bhishma simply sat down without reacting to Arjuna.

..Injured & hurt by several wounds, Bhishma said to Dushasana: "This angry & *Maharathi* Arjuna has injured me with thousands of arrows....I am severely wounded by the arrows of Gandivi. His arrows cause agony like *vajrayudha*. These arrows are not shot by Shikhandi. They appear as if coming from Shikhandi. They have penetrated my strong armour and are hurting me.Therefore these are not arrows from Shikhandi.....These arrows have penetrated my body deeply. Therefore these are not Shikhandi's arrows. They are Arjuna's.

..Then Bhishma took up his sword & shield. Before he could get down from the chariot for sword fight, Partha cut his shield to pieces with several arrows. His archery was amazing.

... Rajendra! Just as a whirlwind rises at the time when Ganga joins the ocean, for a short while there was again a fierce battle between Bhishma & Arjuna. ...That day even though Bhishma was injured badly in all sensitive places, he killed 10,000 soldiers and stood like a rock. Then Arjuna broke into the Kaurava army and scattered them all. All were scared of Arjuna at that time.

.... Bhishma killed hundreds & thousands of soldiers. But there was not an inch that was not injured in his body. In this manner, your father who was pulverised by sharp arrows of Arjuna, **even as all were watching, fell from his chariot head first just before sunset....**With him all our hearts sank.

...But pierced by arrows all over his body he did not touch the ground. Bhishma, who was on a bed of arrows, had a divine feeling. At that time *Parjanya* showered rains. The earth shook. Bhishma, even as he fell from the chariot, noticed that the Sun was on the Southern side. Bhishma who was thinking of time was fully conscious. He (alone) heard the words emanating from the sky: *(Shl 95) How can Gangeya, the greatest among those who know all *shastras*, mahatma who has control on time, who is like a tiger among men, breathe his last when it is *Dakshinayana*?" Hearing this Bhishma said "*sthithosmi*" (I am alive). **Saying this, even though he fell from his chariot held onto his life, waiting for *Uttarayana*.**

Coming to know of his intent, his mother Ganga sent a few *Maharshis* to him in the form of swans. The *maharshis* who lived near Manasarovara, rushed to him. ..Then they consulted among themselves about *dakshinayana* & said: "(Shl 102) How can Bhishma, a mahatma, die in *dakshinayana*?" Saying this they started towards the southern direction. Seeing them preparing to go to south, Bhishma thought for a while and said: "I shall not breathe my last for any reason when Sun is in *dakshinayana*. I had this in my mind from the beginning. **Only after Sun starts his *Uttarayana* movement, I will go back to my original place.** Swans! I am telling the truth. I will hold my life waiting for *Uttarayana*. I have the power to relinquish my life whenever I desire by virtue of the boon given by my father...."

...Warriors on both sides put down their weapons and were immersed in deep thought. **Some were sobbing uncontrollably.** Some were running directionless. Some fell down unconscious. Some others were condemning the *kshatriya* dharma. *Rishis* and *Pitru-devatas* were singing the praise of Bhishma....**Bhishma took refuge in yoga, the essence of Upanishads, and with full concentration started *pranava-japa* (Omkaara) and was lying in the bed of arrows awaiting *Uttarayana*. (Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; 119)**

Bhishma prepares to end his life

Yudhishtira lived in Hastinapura continuously for fifty nights. Then he remembered Bhishma. Seeing that Sun was entering *Uttarayana* from *Dakshinayana*, surrounded by *yajakas* he travelled to where Bhishma was lying on bed of arrows. He had sent various items required for performing last rites of Bhishma. Lead by Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, mother Kunthi, brothers, Janardana, Vidura, Yuyutsu & Satyaki he went to see Bhishma. At that time he was going with all the paraphernalia of a monarch but behind three *agnis*. In a short while he reached the place where Bhishma was lying. At that time Parashara's son Vyasa, Narada and Asita-Devala were already there. As soon as he saw him, he got down from the chariot, prostrated to him formally and also to other brahmanas present there. They in turn greeted him. Then he said to Bhishma: Gangaputra! Nareshwara! Mahabahu! I, Yudhishtira, bow to you. If you are hearing me, order me what I should do now. I have come at the time you had asked me to with *agnis*, *acharyas*, *brahmanas*, *ritvijas* and my brothers. Your son Dhritarashtra has also come along with ministers. Vasudeva is also here. All the remaining kings and citizens of Kurujangala

have also come. Oh great man! Open your eyes and see them all. I have done all the duties you had assigned to me. I have collected all items needed for this time and have come here. Everything has been readied as you had wished.

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! After Yudhishtira, the son of Kunthi had said this, Bhishma, the son of Ganga, opened his eyes and all those who were standing there. Then Bhishma, who was skilled in giving discourses, lifted his arms and with a voice like that of clouds (booming voice) said: (Shl 26) Kaunteya! Yudhishtira! Fortunately you have come here along with ministers. Sun with thousand rays has turned from Dakshinayana to Uttarayana. (Shl 27) I, who have been sleeping on bed of sharp arrows, have completed 58 nights now. But it appears like a hundred years! (Shl 28) Yudhishtira! This time is *Maagha masa* according to lunar calendar (**Maagha is a month of the Hindu calendar. In India's national civil calendar, Maagha is the eleventh month of the year, and in the Gregorian calendar it corresponds with February/March. In lunar calendars, Maagha may begin on either the new moon or the full moon around the same time of year, and is usually the eleventh month of the year. It is named because in this month, the full moon is usually found nearby or within the star cluster called "Magha". In solar calendars, Maagha begins with the Sun's entry into Capricorn, and is usually the tenth month of the year**). Since three parts of the month are still remaining, this must be *Shukla paksha*. (Because one fourth of the month is over, it must be *Ashtami*) (**Bhishma Ashtami: This comes after the day of *Ratha Saptami*. In the great Mahabharata, It is believed that sage Bhishma breathed his last on this day**).

Janamejaya! Then he called Dhritarashtra near him and said: King Dhritarashtra! **You know dharma very well. You have clarity on *artha shastra*. Now you do not have doubts on any *shastra*. You have served many brahmanas who knew many *shastras*. You have fully understood the four Vedas, all *shastras* and dharmas. You should not grieve about children. It all happened as it had to. Moreover you have learnt the *deva-rahasya* (secret of *devatas*) from Krishna Dwaipayana. Yudhishtira etc are my children just as they were for Pandu. You, staying firmly in dharma, should care for them, who are engaged in serving the elderly, as your own children. Dharmaraja who is of pure heart will be obedient to you. I consider him as not cruel and as affectionate towards elders. Your children were all wicked, had only anger & greed, were jealous and of bad conduct. It is not worthy of you to grieve about such sons.**

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Then he said to Vasudeva: (Shl 37) Oh worshipworthy! You are lord for even Indra the master of *devatas*! You are saluted by *suras & asuras*! Trivikrama! *Shankha-chakra-gadadhara*! I prostrate to you! (Shl 38) You are Vasudeva; *Hiranyatma*; *Parama-purusha*; *Savitru*; *Virat swaroopa*; *Anuroopa*; *Atma*; *Sanatana Paramatma*. (Shl 39) *Pundarikaksha*! *Purushottama*! *Vaikunta*! Protect me all the time! Krishna! Permit me to go to *Paraloka*! You should protect Pandavas to whom you are the refuge. I was repeatedly telling the wicked Duryodhana: '***Yatah krishnastatho dharmah yato dharmahstato jayah* (Where there is Krishna, there will be dharma. Where there is dharma, there will be victory)**. Take the help of venerable Vasudeva and make a compromise with Pandavas. This is the best time for compromise.' But that foolish Duryodhana never listened to me. He destroyed himself along with many valorous people on earth.

(Shl 43) Vasudeva! I know that you who are God and are *muni* Narayana who lived for a very long time in Badari with Nara. (Shl 44) Both Narada and great *tapasvi* Vyasa have told me that ancient *maharshis* Nara-Narayana who were living in Badarikashrama have taken birth as Krishna & Arjuna. **Krishna! Please give me permission now. Now I wish to give up this body. If I give up this body with your permission, I will surely get *uttama gati*.**

Shri Krishna said: (Shl 46) Oh splendorous Bhishma! I will gladly permit you to relinquish your body. **You will join with Vasus after giving up this body. You have not been smeared with even an iota of sin in this *loka*.** (Shl 47) Rajarshi! You are also devoted to father (*pitru-bhakta*) like Markandeya. **That is why death is waiting upon you humbly like your servant.**

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! After Shri Krishna had said this, Bhishma addressed all others and said: (Shl 49) Dear relatives! Now I have desired to end my life. You should all permit me. **You should all always try to practice truth. Because truth is the greatest strength.** (Shl 50) **You should be kind towards all. You should have your *indriyas* under control. Should be devoted to brahmanas. Should be dedicated to dharma and should be *tapasvis* everyday.** Then he again said to Yudhishtira: (Shl 52) Janeshwara! **Everyday you should be worshipping & honouring brahmanas, that too the wise & learned brahmanas, *acharyas* and *ritvijas*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 167)**

Bhishma gives up his body

(Shl 1) Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Shantanu's son Bhishma remained silent for a while. (Shl 2) Then he started to establish *pranavayu* combined with *manas* in different *dharanas*. (*Dharana*: This is one of the eight types of yoga. This involves fixing the mind firmly in Paramatma. The places the mind is fixed: Navel, *chakra*, heart, tip of tongue, head etc parts of body or fixing it in auspicious objects outside). Thus having been restrained by *yogic kriya* his *pranas* started to move upwards. (Shl 3, 4) **At that time an amazing thing occurred even as all the great people were watching it. From whatever parts of body Bhishma pulled his *pranas*, the arrows fell away from that part.** (Shl 5) As they were watching, in a short while all arrows fell off his body. Seeing this Shri Krishna and others were amazed. (Shl 6) ***Prana* which was stopped at all exits by Bhishma, pierced through *Brahma-randhra* and went away to *Swarga*.** (Shl 7) At that time there was a shower of flowers and auspicious sounds made by *devatas* (*deva- Dundubhi*). *Siddhas* & *brahmarshis* shouted with joy, '*Sadhu! Sadhu!*' (Shl 8) Janamejaya! Bhishma's *prana* left from *brahma-randhra* and shining brightly like a meteor entered the sky and vanished in an instant.

In this manner, *mahatma* Bhishma ended his life.

(There is a description of the rites they performed to the body.

Then they offer *tarpana* to him in river Ganga. Ganga, his mother, appears in physical form and grieves for his death inconsolably, particularly because he who was such a valorous person was killed by Shikhandi.).

Then Shri Krishna said to her consolingly: (Shl 30) Oh Gangadevi! Please console yourself. Do not grieve. Your son has gone to the best of *lokas*. There is no doubt in this. (Shl 31) Bhishma who was born as your son is the great *tejaswi Vasu* (one among the *Ashta-vasus*). He took birth as human due to a curse of Vasishta. It is not fit for you to grieve about him. (Shl 32) *Devi* ! Your son fought in the battlefield according to *kshatriya-dharma*. **When fighting thus he was killed by Arjuna. Not by Shikhandi.** (Shl 33, 34) Oh auspicious faced! Your son Bhishma could not be defeated even by Indra in a fight (how can he be killed by Shikhandi). Your son gave up his body voluntarily and has gone to *Swarga*. (Shl 35) *Devi* ! Even if all *devatas* join together they could not have defeated your son in a war. Therefore do not grieve his death. **Your son has gone to the place of Vasus. Give up grief.**

After Shri Krishna & Vyasa and consoled her thus, she gave up grief and merged into the river. All the people returned to the town. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 167**)

Drona's end

Drona again starts decimating the remaining army of Yudhishtira

Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: Seeing that the sons of Pandu were scared by the archery of Drona, intelligent Sri Krishna interested in their welfare said to Arjuna: "(Shl 10) Arjuna! It is not possible even for Indra to defeat Drona as long as he is holding his bow & arrow in the battlefield. (Shl 11) It is possible to kill him only if he relinquishes his weapons. **To ensure that he does not kill all of you in this war and for you gain victory, we have to find a trick keeping aside dharma.** (Shl 12) It is my opinion that he will not fight further if his son Ashwatthama is killed. **Let someone inform him that Ashwatthama died in the war.**

Maharaja! **This suggestion of Sri Krishna was not liked by Arjuna.** (Shl 13) He just did not like the suggestion. Bhima-Nakula-Sahadeva and others agreed. Yudhishtira also agreed with much difficulty.

Then the mighty Bhimasena killed a huge elephant called 'Ashwatthama' of his own army. It belonged to Indravarma of Malava. **Then Bhima approached Drona shyly and said loudly 'Ashwatthama hatah', meaning Ashwatthama died.** Hearing these words of Bhima Drona was quite disturbed. Instantly his body became weak just as sand dissolves in water. **But next moment he recollected the valour of his son and suspected that Bhima might have lied.** He thought for a few moments, decided that his son could not have been killed, regained his energy and became calm again. He attacked Dhritadyumna fiercely who was known to be the cause of his death.....Then Drona again brought up *Brahmastra* to eliminate the Panchalas and destroyed a very large number of warriors.....**Seeing that Drona was in the battlefield determined to destroy *kshatriyas* completely, all the *rishis* came to him lead by Yajneswara. *Maharshis* like Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadwaja, Gouthama, Vasishta, Kashyapa, Atri etc came there with the intent of taking him to *brahma-loka*. Along with them came *Sitakas, Prishnis, Garga, Valakhilyas, Marichipa, Bhrgus, Angirasas*, and many others in their subtle forms. They all addressed Drona and said to him: "(Shl 36)**

Drona! Put down your weapons. See all of us who are standing before you. **So far you have fought with *adharma*. The right time of your death has come.** Therefore it is not appropriate for you to continue this cruel killing. (Shl 37) You are an expert in Veda-Vedangas. You are dedicated to *satya-dharma*. **More than all, you are a brahmana. Therefore this kind of destructive activity does not suit you.** (Shl 38) Oh Drona who have arrows which are never wasted! Relinquish your weapons. Fix your mind in the eternal *sanatana dharma*. Your time of living in this human world is over. (Shl 39) You have burned even those who do not know how to use weapons with your Brahmastra. This act of *adharma* you have done is certainly not right. (Shl 40) Oh great *dvija*, Drona! Right now relinquish your arms. Do not again start this most sinful act of killing.”

Maharaja! Hearing all this, and hearing Bhima shout that ‘Ashwattama is dead’, seeing Dhrishtadyumna ready with his weapons, Drona became disinterested in war. To clear his doubt about whether his son was dead or not, he asked Kunthi’s son Yudhishtira, “Is my son dead or not?”. The reason for him to question Yudhishtira was just this: (Shl 43) Drona had a clear impression that Yudhishtira will not lie even for all the wealth in the three worlds or for any reason. (Shl 44) Therefore he asked only Yudhishtira and not anyone else to know the truth. He had confidence that Yudhishtira is dedicated to truth even from boyhood.

Maharaja! Sri Krishna got quite worried that Drona had asked Yudhishtira to know the truth. So he said to him: “(Shl 46) If angry Drona fights for even another half-day he will completely annihilate your army. I am speaking the truth (*no exaggeration*). (Shl 47) *Maharaja!* Now you have to save us all from Drona. **Sometimes lies are better than truth. If a lie is told to save one’s life, the sin of lying will not attach.**”

When Sri Krishna and Yudhishtira were conversing Bhimasena said: “.....Brother! Respect the words of Sri Krishna who is only interested in our welfare. Do as he says. Tell Drona that Sahardwati’s son Ashwattama is dead. (Shl 53) If you say this, the great brahmana Drona will surely not fight again. The reason is that you are famous for your truthfulness in all three worlds.

Hearing Bhimasena’s words and urged by Sri Krishna Yudhishtira agreed to say the words. He also had fear of sin at that time. At the same time he also wanted somehow to gain victory. **Yudhishtira, who was in such vacillating mind, said ‘Ashwatthama’ loudly and ‘hatah kunjarah’ indistinctly.**

(Later in Adhyaya 193, Page 3552, Vol 18, Kripacharya describing the death of Drona to his son Ashwatthama recounts it thus: “Yudhishtira went near Drona and said loudly, ‘(Shl 57-58) Acharya! Ashwatthama because of whom you took up weapons, by seeing whom you are living, whom you love much has been killed in war. Like a lion’s cub killed in forest, he is now lying in the battlefield.’ Son of Drona! Knowing very well that telling a lie to Acharya will result in accumulation of sins, Yudhishtira told Drona that Ashwatthama was killed. Then he indistinctly said that elephant died.” The commentators have pointed out how this could be not authentic & perhaps is added later)

(Shl 55) **The result of his telling the lie was evident immediately. Yudhishtira’s chariot used to be four inches above ground till then. As soon as he uttered a lie, his horses touched the ground. (Note: The intent is important, not the words!!)**

As soon as Drona heard these words of Yudhishtira, he was overwhelmed with grief for his son and became dispirited. **He felt that as said by the *rishis* he had wronged Pandavas badly.** Drona in such state, even when he saw Dhrishtadyumna, was unable to fight with his usual incomparable valour. **(Drona; Dronavadha; 190)**

Drona is killed

.....Drona said, “Karna! Kripa! Duryodhana! Now you all fight together and try to gain victory. I have been saying this repeatedly. May Pandavas cause good things to you! Now I am relinquishing my weapons.”

Saying this, Drona cried many times: ‘Ashwatthama! Dear son!’ **He relinquished his weapons and sat down at the back of the chariot.** He blessed all animals. Then he went into *Samadhi*. Thinking that it was the best time to kill Drona, Dhrishtadyumna took up his sword and went near him. Seeing this many cried and shouted, ‘Ayyo! Ayyo’. Some others shouted ‘Condemnation to Dhrishtadyumna.’ But Drona having relinquished weapons merged his mind in *parama-jnana-swaroopa*. He adopted yoga and attained Mahavishnu, the *jyoti-swaroopa*. (Shl 51-52) Drona sat firmly with his chin slightly raised and chest pushed forward a little. He had closed his eyes and established *dharana-murthy* in his heart. Reciting the OM *mantra* (*Om ityekaksharam brahma*) he went to Brahmaloka of *sacchidananda-swaroopa*, *parama-purusha*, *devesha*, *prabhu*, *jyoti-swaroopa* etc. When he was thus

going, we felt there may be two suns in the sky. Then Drona's brilliant *jyothi* merged with sun and became one. *Maharaja!* In this manner that great *jyothi* disappeared in a minute.

This journey of Drona to Brahmaloka was seen only by me, Dhananjaya, Kripa, Vasudeva and Yudhishtira....At that time his body had many injuries and he was bathed in blood. At such time Dhrishtadyumna went and caught him. By then his *prana* had merged with *param-jyothi*. Therefore he was not speaking anything. **At that time Dhrishtadyumna caught him by the hair and cut off his head....**

Maharaja! Drona was somewhat dark in colour. **He was eighty five years old.** His hairs had become white all over the head. For your sake he was fighting like a 16 year old.

When Dhrishtadyumna went with his sword near Drona, Arjuna shouted, "(Shl 66) Son of Drupada! Bring Drona alive. Do not kill him for any reason." The warriors of both sides shouted, "he does not deserve to be killed". (**Drona; Dronavadha; 191**)

Duryodhana's end

Fall of Duryodhana

Sanjaya said to Dhritarashtra: *Maharaja!* Seeing the fight between the two going through ups and downs every minute, Arjuna said to Sri Krishna, "(Shl 2) Janardana! Who is better between the two in your opinion? Who has better quality of fight? Tell me."

Sri Krishna said, "(Shl 3) Arjuna! Both have had the same kind of training. Bhimasena is the mightier one. Duryodhana is better in terms of practice and effort. (Shl 4) If Bhima keeps fighting following principles of dharma, he certainly cannot defeat Duryodhana. **Only if he deviates from the path of dharma and violates yuddha-dharma he can kill Duryodhana.** There are precedences of killing enemies in war by unjust means. **He quotes a few precedences.** (Commentary: In a way they do not appear to be cases of 'cheating'). **Therefore in this gada-yuddha also let Bhima adopt valour with maya** (trick/deceit). (Shl 7) At the time of the *dyuta* (game of gambling) Bhima has made a vow that he will kill Duryodhana by breaking his thighs. (Shl 8) Therefore let Bhima fulfil that oath. **Let him kill that deceitful Duryodhana with deceit itself.** (Shl 9) In case Bhima depends on his might alone and keeps hitting in a just manner, Duryodhana cannot be killed. **On the other hand, it is possible that using his strength of practice and motivated efforts, Bhimasena may be killed by him.** Then it will result in most difficult situation for Yudhishtira. Arjuna! I am repeating this; listen to me carefully.

(Shl 10) Because of Dharmaraja's mistake, we are again afraid. (Shl 11) After having done very strenuous deeds and killing Bhishma and other Kuru leaders, we gained victory and fame and delivered fitting revenge to the enmity. But Dharmaraja has again put that victory in doubt. (Shl 12) **I feel the intelligence (buddhi) of Dharmaraja, who made the condition that by winning any one of the Pandavas he can win back the kingdom, is lacking in discriminative thinking (viveka).** (Shl 13, 14) Suyodhana is skilled in *gada-yuddha*. Moreover he is firm in a single decision. He is fighting with the sole intention that he must win. He has no other go. Winning this fight is the only way for him to survive. In this matter there is an old *sholka* of Shukracharya. I will tell you that, listen. (Shl 15) **You should be more afraid of those warriors who had run away from battle to save their lives, but later return to fight.** Because, they would have completely given up their love for life, they will concentrate their efforts in winning without bothering about their lives. (Shl 16) Dhananjaya! **It is impossible for even Devendra to fight those who come forward to fight with great courage and without any hopes for their lives....**Duryodhana has practiced *gada-yuddha* very well for these 13 years. Such a Duryodhana sometimes walks sideways and sometimes even jumps up with the intent to kill Bhima. (Shl 20) **If mighty Bhima does not kill him in unjust ways, Dhritarashtra's son will be our king."**

Dhritarashtra! **Hearing Keshava, Dhananjaya slapped his left thigh even as Bhima was looking at him. Bhima caught the hint.....**

Maharaja! Due to the long and fierce fight both were quite exhausted. They both rested and again picked up their heavy maces and started fighting with anger.....Duryodhana, who in this manner escaped the mighty hit of Bhima, swiftly bashed him with his mace. Bhima started bleeding profusely. The blow of Duryodhana was also quite heavy. For these reasons Bhimasena became nearly unconscious. But with a great effort he withstood the blow and the pain. Due to this, Duryodhana could not know that Bhima was really agonised by his blow. Though Bhima stood for a few moments without consciousness, Duryodhana thought that he was waiting to return the blow.....Seeing that Bhima was again approaching him to hit, Duryodhana decided that once again he would cause that

blow to become useless. He decided to stay put wherever he was. Then he decided that he would jump up to deceive Bhimasena. Bhima could read Duryodhana's intentions from his movements. **Moving around in the *mandala*, Vrikodara approached Duryodhana quickly as he jumped up and aiming at his thigh hurled his mace with tremendous force. That mace came with the speed and power of a thunderbolt and broke the shapely thigh of Duryodhana. His thigh broken by Bhimasena, your son fell to the ground..... (Shalya; Gada; 58)**

(Many bad omens which occurred are described).....

Duryodhana's death

Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: *Maharaja!* All the three went to the place where Duryodhana was lying. Finding that Duryodhana still had some life left in him, they all got down from their chariots and sat close to him. Duryodhana had held onto his life with great difficulty. He had lost his mind. He was vomiting blood. He was surrounded by many fearsome carnivorous animals that were waiting to eat him up. With great difficulty he was managing to keep them away. All the three saw Duryodhana who was thus suffering with acute agony and was rolling on the ground.....Unable to control their grief at the fate of Duryodhana they all cried bitterly.....Then Kripa said, "(Shl 10) **Nothing is difficult for *daiva***. Our king who was the master of 11 *akshauhini* army is now bathed in blood and is lying all alone in the battlefield.....Look at the way this mace is lying with him just as a loving wife would sleep with her husband on the bed in a palace.....In the past, hundreds of kings would come to him in groups and bowed to him. Such a person is today lying on the ground surrounded by carnivorous animals.....(Essentially he compares the past glory and pomp of Duryodhana with his current most pathetic state). Then Ashwatthama wailed at the state of Duryodhana and said, ".....(Shl 21) *Maharaja! Kaal* (time) is really very powerful. Because are we not seeing you killed by Bhima who is no match to you in *gada-yuddha*?.....(Shl 24) Condemnation to Yudhishtira and Sri Krishna who did not stop that mean Bhimasena from stepping on your head.....You have attained the auspicious *uttama-gati* promised to those who face the enemy bravely in a war and give up their lives. For this reason I do not grieve much about your death. But I grieve deeply for your parents who have lost all their children. A situation has emerged where they have to roam this earth like beggars grieving all the time. My condemnation to Sri Krishna and the wicked Arjuna.....(Shl 34) Condemnation to me, Kripa and Kritavarma who cannot follow you to *swarga*. (Shl 35) Condemnation to us who are not following you even though you, the king, provided us with all we desired and who were always interested in the welfare of the citizens.....By not following you to *swarga* we have lost *swarga*, by losing you we are losing our *artha* (financial support) and we are burning with grief remembering all your good deeds towards us....**Truly we have to roam this earth suffering grief all our life.....**

Sanjaya said to Dhritarashtra: Then staring at Duryodhana Ashwatthama again said to him, "(Shl 48) Duryodhana! You are still alive. Therefore listen to my words which will be music to your ears. **Now only seven persons are left on Pandava's side. On Kaurava's side only we three are left.** (Shl 49) **They are, the five brothers, Vasudeva and Satyaki....**The five sons of Draupadi were killed. All children of Dhrishtadyumna are dead. All Panchalas are also dead. Notice the revenge we took on them for what they did to us. Now the five Pandavas have lost all their children. The camp was completely destroyed including people, horses and elephants when all were sleeping. I entered the camp at night and killed the sinner Dhrishtadyumna by pounding him with my fists just like killing an animal.

Dhritarashtra! Duryodhana who had woken up from his unconscious state, heard Ashwatthama's words and said, "**This most pleasing task you have done along with Kripa and Kritavarma was not done even by Bhishma or Karna or your father....**(Shl 56) May good happen to you all. May auspicious things happen to all of you! We will meet again in *swarga*." He became silent after saying this. **Then handing over all the grief to his friends, brave Duryodhana breathed his last.** Soon he went to *swarga*. His mortal body remained on this earth. *Maharaja! In this manner your son who went to war first* (leading everyone) **died as the last person***Maharaja! In this manner, as a result of your evil counselling a horrible, fierce war between Kurus and Pandavas which destroyed all people ended.*

(Shl 62) **After your son went to *swarga*, the special powers (divine-sight: *divya-darshitva*) given to me by Vyasa *maharshi* also lapsed.**

Vaishampayana said to Janamejaya: "*Maharaja!* Having heard the news of his son's death, king Dhritarashtra repeatedly sighed deeply and became absorbed in thought." (**Sauptika parva; 9**)

Dushasana's end

(Nothing can be more gruesome and horrible than the way Bhima killed Dushasana)

Sanjaya:Then your son (Dushasana) very quickly shot another fierce arrow and injured Bhima badly. Bhima was quite distressed by it. As soon as Bhima saw Dushasana's face he burned with anger. He shouted loudly to him, "Oh warrior! I am very badly injured by you. Now withstand my mace-throw." Saying this, Bhima picked up his terrible mace and again said to him, "You wicked! I will drink your blood in this battlefield." Your son threw a fierce *shakthyayudha* with great force at Bhima even as he was speaking. Bhima boiling with anger threw his mace at Dushasana with great force. That mace pulverised the *shakthyayudha* and went further and banged Dushasana's head.

(Shl 9) That mace flung Dushasana by a distance of 10 bows. Due to that force of impact Dushasana's clothes, *kavacha*, ornaments and garlands were all destroyed. He was agonised by tremendous pain. He was shaking. He was rolling on the ground due to the agony. By that impact Dushasana's charioteer died. The horses also died. The chariot was pulverised. All the Panchalas and Pandavas roared with joy at his fate. Bhima roared with joy filling all directions with that sound. All those who were near him fell unconscious due to that roar.

Then Bhima who is known for being fast with everything got down quickly from his chariot and went to Dushasana. At that time he recollected the words of enmity spoken earlier by your children. The very mighty Bhimasena, recollecting the cruel grabbing of innocent Draupadi's hairs, attempt to disrobe her, the helpless manner in which her husbands were sitting with their heads bowed and many other humiliations and tribulations heaped on them, started burning with anger like a fire invigorated by the pouring of *ghee*. At that time addressing Karna, Duryodhana, Kripa, Ashwatthama and Kritavarma he roared, "Right now I will kill this sinner Dushasana. If all of you together have the ability to save him, try it."

Saying thus, the extremely mighty Bhimasena jumped down from his chariot and very rapidly went to Dushasana with the intent of killing him. **Like a lion holds down an elephant, he pinned down Dushasana in the presence of Duryodhana-Karma, and glared at him, pulled out his clean sword, pressed down his neck with his foot and said,** "(Shl 20, 21) Oh wicked! Did you not say '*gau, gau*' along with Karna & Duryodhana looking with immense glee at Draupadi? With which hand did you pull the hair of Draupadi which had been rendered sacred with the *avabhrita-snana* of *Rajasuya* yaga? Tell me, Bhimasena is questioning you, answer immediately."

Hearing these terrible words of Bhima, Dushasana glared at Bhima and burned with anger. His eyes were rolling. Even as Kaurava & Somaka warriors were all listening he said with wrath, "(Shl 23, 24) Bhimasena! This is the arm which you are asking for, the arm which is like the trunk of an elephant, which squeezes the breasts of many beautiful women, which has given to charity thousands of cows, and which has destroyed many *kshatriyas*. Bhima! It is with this arm that I dragged Yajnaseni by her hair to the full assembly even as all of you and prominent persons of Kuru were seeing. Did you understand?"

Hearing these words spoken with a smiling face, Bhima who became a personification of extreme anger, bashed Dushasana's chest with his fist, held him in tight embrace with both arms, and roaring loudly said addressing all warriors, "Oh Kuru warriors! This moment Dushasana will lose his arm. Not only arm, he is about to lose his life itself; if anyone thinks he can save him, come forward." **Challenging the warriors thus, mahatma Bhima who was boiling with anger, ripped out Dushasana's arm from his body with his bare hands and flung it.** Then he bashed Dushasana with his arms which were like *vajrayudha*.

Then he plunged his hands into the chest of Dushasana who was lying on the ground and opening it started drinking the hot blood from there. Dushasana's body which was half-dead was writhing. It was trying to get up. Not tolerating even that, Bhimasena took his sword, cut-off his head and pushed the body down so that it could not rise again. Bhimasena, with the intent of fulfilling his oath again drank his blood. Tasting his blood again and again, with immense anger he looked at Dushasana and said, "(Shl 30, 31) I am finding this enemy's blood tastier than mother's breast milk, mix of honey and *ghee*, drink made out of finely processed grape juice, divine *thoyarasa*, buttermilk that comes from milk and curds, and many other tasty drinks in this world." (He did not actually drink the blood. See his clarification to Gandhari in this table, Sl. No. 421, second sub-heading)

Bhima, who was capable of dreadful deeds, looked at dead Dushasana, laughed boisterously and said, "(Shl 32) **What shall I do? Death itself has saved you!**" (Commentary: If you were alive, I could have shown my anger in many more ways). Seeing Bhima who was talking thus and was dancing with joy after drinking blood, many collapsed with fear. Weapons fell off the hands of those who did not collapse. **Some were so scared that they were screaming for help in hoarse voice.** Some closed their eyes unable to see such a gruesome sight. Those who were near Bhima and saw him drinking Dushasana's blood ran away saying, 'He is certainly not a human.'

..... Bhimasena having killed Dushasana, filled his palms with his blood and roared, "(Shl 42) You worst among men! I am drinking your blood through my neck (throat?). Now again tease Draupadi as '*gau, gau*! Let me see (Shl 43) Now I am dancing around calling '*gau, gau*' those who danced and teased us '*gau, gau*' that day in the assembly hall. (Shl 44-48) You are the root cause for the many sufferings we experienced due to the evil confabulations of Shakuni, Karna and Duryodhana, such as, feeding me with poison laced food and drowning me in *Pramanakoti-theertha*; getting me bitten by black cobras; conspiracy to burn us in the inflammable mansion; snatching our kingdom through the game of dice; driving us away to forest; grabbing Draupadi's hairs; shooting deathly *astras* and *shastraas* on us; not allowing us to live peacefully in our own homes; variety of grief we suffered in Viratanagar etc. **Because of the evil intentions of Dhritarashtra along with his sons, we have always known only what is difficulty and troubles and have no memory of happiness.**" Having said thus, Bhima went near Arjuna's chariot and again said to Keshava and Arjuna who were smiling seeing his act of valour.

At that time Bhima was bathed in blood. Blood was dripping from his face. The fast Bhimasena was very angry at that time. "(Shl 50) The vow I had made in respect of Dushasana has become true oath today in the battlefield. (Shl 51) **I will sacrifice the second sacrificial animal Duryodhana also here. In the presence of all Kauravas I will stamp his head with my foot and find peace of mind.**"

Maharaja! Bhimasena, who was bathed in blood, said this much and then roared loudly. (Karna; 83)

Ghatothkacha's death

(Summary)

Ghatothkacha creates havoc in Kaurava army. All the *astraas* of Karna are neutralised by him. By *maya-yuddha* (war with illusions) he causes a rain of boulders resulting in death of large part of the army. None are able to withstand his assault except Karna who keeps fighting him bravely. Finally all the other warriors urge Karna unanimously: (Shl 48) Karna! Kill this *rakshasa* with the Shaktayudha given by Indra. If you do not do it, all the Kuru warriors and Dhritarashtra's sons will be killed by this *rakshasa* himself. Looking at the destruction he is causing, it is unlikely that Partha & Bhima can do more. **Therefore please kill this fellow right now. Whoever can rid us of this terrible battle, only he will be capable of fighting with Pandavas.**"

Karna who was also being injured badly by Ghatothkacha *rakshasa*, seeing the fear in Kaurava army and hearing their cries decided to use his Shaktayudha.....He aimed it at Ghatothkacha and released it. ..It went like a brilliant fire and pierced the chest of the *rakshasa* very deeply and then went into the sky towards the stars.

Even as he was dying Ghatothkacha used another powerful *maya*. He grew his body to an enormous size...Then fell down on the ground dead. With his massive body which fell on the ground he killed nearly an *akshauhini* soldiers. (Drona; Ghatothkachavadha; 179)

Karna's death

Hearing Karna's words to Arjuna, Sri Krishna said to him (Karna), "(Shl 1) **Radheya! Fortunately now you are remembering dharma, isn't it? That's the nature of mean persons. When faced with disaster mean people generally blame *daiva*. But they never blame all the evil acts they did.** (Shl 2) You along with Suyodhana, Dushasana and Shakuni had Draupadi, who was in single cloth, forcibly dragged to the assembly. **Karna! At that time dharma did not appear in your memory, isn't it?** (Shl 3) King Yudhishtira did not know *aksha-vidya*. Shakuni knew very well that he did not know it. In spite of knowing this he was invited to come for the game of dice and Shakuni defeated him by cheating. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 4) Even though Pandavas completed their 12 years of *vana-vasa* and one year of *ajnata-vasa*, you did not return their kingdom as per the agreement. **Where was your dharma when they returned desiring their kingdom?** (Shl 5) Following your suggestion Duryodhana had Bhima bitten by poisonous snakes. He fed him poison

laced food. **At that time did you not have the sense of dharma and *adharma*?** (Shl 6) You deliberately tried to burn down Partha sleeping in the wax house in Varanavatha. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 7) You made fun of Draupadi who was in the evil grip of Dushasana and was menstruating. Did you not feel at that time that doing so is *adharma*? **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 8) Vulgar Duryodhana and others harassed innocent Draupadi so horribly. At that time, you like someone who has lost his mind, went close to her and looked at her with vile eyes. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 9) 'All Pandavas are finished; they have fallen into permanent *naraka*. They cannot regain their status ever. Therefore select someone else as your husband.' Saying this you went close to Draupadi and were staring at her. Did you not feel it was *adharma* to speak to a *sadhwi* (virtuous woman) like that? **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 10) Greedy for kingdom, you encouraged Shakuni's game of cheating and called back Pandavas who had returned to Indraprastha and caused them grief. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 11) Several *maharathas* (including you) surrounded young Abhimanyu who was fighting alone and killed him. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 12) **The dharma that you are talking about was not being practiced by you then. Therefore, talking about dharma now only results in your mouth drying up.** There is no other use. Now you can do many acts of dharma. But today you cannot escape alive from this battlefield. ...

Maharaja! When Vasudeva said all this to Karna, he bowed his head with shame. He did not give any answer. But his lips were trembling with anger. He picked up his bow and again started to fight with Arjuna. Vasudeva said to Arjuna, "fell him with a *divyastra*."

.....That very fierce arrow shot by Karna, which was like Indra's *vajrayudha*, had a very sharp tip, approached Arjuna's chest and pierced and entered it. Arjuna trembled due to the impact. His grip loosened and Gandiva slipped out. It shook Arjuna as earthquake would shake even a mountain. Karna who was waiting for such opportunity got down from his chariot and again tried to lift his chariot. But even though Karna was very mighty, due to *daiva* he could not lift it up. ..Arjuna recovered within a few moments. Vasudeva said to Arjuna, "(Shl 33) Partha! Before Karna again climbs into the chariot kill him with the bow you have readied."....Arjuna took out an arrow called Anjalika....Arjuna readied it in Gandiva, invoked a *mahaastra* into it, pulled it back fully in the thread and said, "(Shl 46) This arrow which is empowered as *mahaastra* can snatch enemy's body and life. If there is any *phala* of my *tapas* (still in my credit), if I have pleased by *gurus* with my service, if I have performed *yajna-yaagas*, if I have listened to good advice of friends, then by virtue of truth of these, let this arrow kill my bitter enemy Karna." Thus saying Arjuna released that arrow.....**Just as Mahendra cut-off the head of Vritrasura with his *vajrayudha*, Arjuna cut-off the head of Karna with that arrow.**

Indra's son Arjuna in the afternoon of seventeenth day of war cut-off Karna's head with a *mahaastra* called Anjalika. First his separated head fell on the ground which was followed by his body.....A *tejas* emerged out of his body and went up and merged with Sun.....Seeing the brave Karna dead, Madraraja Shalya went away in the chariot whose flag had been cut by Arjuna. Warriors of Kuru who had been badly injured by Arjuna in that battle ran away looking repeatedly at the flag of Arjuna's chariot. (**Karna; 91**)

- Narada to Dharmaraja: (Shl 11, 12) Yudhishtira! Several causes combined together for the death of Karna. The curse of brahmana; Parashurama's curse; his boon to Kunthi; Indra's *maya* (he took away his *kavacha and kundala*); Bhishma's deprecating him as *ardha-ratha*; Shalya's *tejo-vadha* when he wanted to fight a fierce battle. Along with all these Vasudeva's *yuddha-neeti*. However he was not killed by an ordinary human. Arjuna had to use many *mahaastras* to kill him....Still as he died due to weapons he has attained *punya-lokas*. Therefore you need not grieve his death. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 5**)

Pandava's end

Pandavas relinquish kingdom and set out on long journey

(*Mahaprasthan* means (i) setting out on the great journey and (ii) departing this life)

Janamejaya questioned: (Shl 1) What did Pandavas do after hearing the episode of Vrishnis & Andhakas?

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Soon after hearing all that, Yudhishtira decided to start the *mahaprasthan* and said to Arjuna: (Shl 3) Arjuna! **Kaal cooks all living beings. I know what this noose of *kaal* is.** It is appropriate for you also to know what this is. ... All the brothers also supported

the decision of their eldest brother. Yudhishtira called Yuyutsu, the son of vyasa woman, and handed over (made him the care taker) the kingdom to him. He enthroned Parikshita and said to Subhadra: (Shl 8) Subhadra! Your son's son Parikshita will be the king of Kurus. Vajra, the remaining Yadava is already ruling Yadus in Indraprastha. You should protect these two. **Never allow them to go in the path of *adharma*.**

After having said this, Yudhishtira performed the various death related ceremonies for maternal uncle Vasudeva, his sons Vaasudeva & Balarama. He fed a great/tasty meal to Vyasa, Narada, Markandeya, Bharadwaja and Yajnavalkya addressing these three dead persons. He recited the names of Sri Krishna and gave away huge donations of gems, clothes, villages, horses, chariots and women to brahmanas.

Then he honoured Kripacharya suitably and handed over Parikshita to him as a disciple. Then he called all the ministers and important people and told them what he intended to do. **But they were all quite disturbed upon hearing it and did not agree. But *dharmatma* Yudhishtira convinced them with very polite and sweet words and obtained their consent.**

Then Yudhishtira removed all his jewellery and expensive clothes and wore rough clothes. His brothers and Draupadi did the same following him. The citizens started to weep loudly seeing them ready to go thus. **At the time of going to forest the previous time, Pandavas were very sad. But now they were all quite joyous. Five Pandavas, sixth Draupadi and a dog as seventh started the journey.** All the others followed them up to some distance and then they returned. Uloopi entered the river Ganga. Chitrangada went back to Manipura. Others remained with Parikshita.

Their journey

They started going towards the east. (Shl 32) **Yudhishtira was walking in the front. Then there were Bhimasena, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, Draupadi and the dog in that order.** Travelling thus they crossed several countries, rivers, seas and **reached near 'Red sea'**. Arjuna had not given up his Gandiva bow or his divine quiver. When they were approaching the Red sea, they saw *agni* standing in their way in a massive human form. He said to them: ... Let your brother Arjuna relinquish the Gandiva and the quiver. There is no use of these to him now. Even Sri Krishna's *chakra* has gone back to where it came from. It will be with him again when the time comes. I had brought this bow and quiver especially for Partha from Varuna. Now it should be surrendered back to him.

Upon hearing this, other brothers also persuaded Arjuna to do it. Arjuna dropped them all in water. Then *agni* vanished. Then Pandavas travelled in the southern direction. Then after touching the northern shore of *lavana samudra* (salt sea) they turned to south-west. After travelling some distance in that direction, they turned west. There they saw Dwaraka which was under water. Then with the intention of circumambulating (**always clockwise for auspiciousness**), they turned towards north and continued the journey. (**Mahaprasthanika parva; 1**)

Except Yudhishtira all others collapse & die

Vaishampayana said: (Shl 1) Janamejaya! Pandavas who were travelling northwards with mind under control and in state of yoga saw the massive Himavat mountain. **They crossed it and travelling further, they saw the sea called Valuka.** Then they saw the greatest among mountains, the Meru mountains.

As all Pandavas were walking quickly, **Draupadi fell down** (dropped dead) on the ground slipping from yoga. Seeing this, Bhima asked Yudhishtira: (Shl 5) This princess Draupadi has not done any *adharma*. Still she slipped from yoga and fell down. Tell me the reason for this. Yudhishtira said: (Shl 6) Great among men! **She had particular partiality towards Arjuna** (*pakshapato mahanasyaa visheshena dhananjaye*). She is now experiencing its fruit.

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Having said this to Bhima, the *dharmatma* & great among men Yudhishtira continued his journey with a firm mind without even looking back at her. After travelling some distance, the scholarly Sahadeva collapsed. Bhima again questioned: (Shl 9) Brother! This Sahadeva was always engaged in serving us. Moreover he had no ego. Why did such a *dharmatma* son of Madri collapse? Dharmaja replied: (Shl 10) Bhimasena! This prince **Sahadeva had thought that none are equal to him in intelligence/knowledge** (*atmanah sadrsham prajnam naishomanyata kanchana*). He collapsed due to this one blemish.

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Having answered thus Yudhishtira simply continued the journey with others with the dog following him. Seeing the fall of the two earlier, the valorous **Nakula** also

collapsed. Again Bhima questioned: (Shl 14) Brother! Why did Nakula who practiced dharma without a flaw, who was obedient to us and was extremely handsome, fall. Yudhishtira answered: (Shl 16) Bhimasena! **He had the feeling that none can match him in handsomeness** (*roopena matsamo naasti kashchidityasya darshanam*). For this reason he slipped from yoga and collapsed. Vrikodara! Let us go. **Whoever has done the kind of karma will surely experience corresponding fruits.**

After sometime, seeing the fall of others before him, a grieving **Arjuna** also collapsed. Seeing even Arjuna who had the *tejas* like Indra and was a lion among men dead, Bhima again questioned: (Shl 20) Brother! I cannot recollect a single incident when even in jest this brother of ours had spoken a lie. This being so, for what reason did he die. Yudhishtira replied: (Shl 21) **Arjuna had excessive pride about his valour. He had said that he would burn all enemies in just one day. But he could not do so** (*ekahnaa nirdaheyam vai shatruni iti arjunah abravat na cha tat krtavan esha*). (Shl 22) **He was humiliating all archers** (*avamaane dhanurgrahaanesha sarvaashcha phalgunah*). Therefore this fall happened. **One who desires his welfare should never do so.**

Janamejaya! Then Yudhishtira continued walking further. By the time they travelled a short distance **Bhima also fell down.** But he did not lose consciousness immediately. He asked Yudhishtira even as he was lying on the ground: (Shl 25) *Bho Bho Maharaja!* See here. I, your loved one, have also fallen. If you know please tell me the reason. Yudhishtira replied: (Shl 25) Bhimasena! **You were eating too much. Without finding out about other's might, you would boast about your own might** (*atibhuktam cha bhavataa praanena cha vikatthase anavekshya param partha tenasi patiath kshitau*). That is why you have also collapsed before reaching the destination.

Janamejaya! After saying so, Yudhishtira simply continued without even looking back at Bhimasena. As I have said many times before, **only the dog was following him.** (**Mahaprasthanika parva; 2**)

Yudhishtira's end

Yudhishtira is shown Naraka

Summary: Yudhishtira tells the *devatas* that he is not seeing any of his valorous brothers as well as Radheya. ... He once again expresses his strong desire to see all his brothers, Darupadi & others.

Yudhishtira said: (Shl 12) Oh great *devatas*! **What do I gain from this Swarga which does not have my co-borns? Wherever they are is Swarga for me.** For me this is certainly not *Swarga*. This is my opinion.

Then *devatas* said: (Shl 13) Child! If you are so keen to be in the *lokas* where your co-borns are present, you can surely go there. It is Indra's order that we should do whatever pleases you. We will do accordingly. Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! Having said this, the *devatas* called *devadutas* (messengers) and ordered them to show Yudhishtira his brothers and dear ones.

Description of naraka

Then Yudhishtira followed the *devadutas*. That path was highly inaccessible and was very inauspicious. It could be traversed only by the sinners. (Shl 17) It was filled with darkness. It was very scary. There were hairs, fungus and grass in the path. It was filled with the stink of sinners. There was mire of flesh & blood everywhere. (Shl 18) That path was infested with gadflies, frogs, bears, flies and mosquitoes. It was filled everywhere with dead bodies (**GHV: An illusion? From where did dead bodies that were already cremated, come?!**). (Shl 19) That path was filled with bones and hairs. It was filled with insects & worms. There were bright fires burning everywhere (**GHV: Then how did all these survive?**). (Shl 20) Crows, vultures & such birds with iron beaks were flying around. That path was covered by *pretas* (ghosts) which were massive like mountains and had faces sharp as needles. ... (Shl 22) A highly worried Yudhishtira was walking behind the *devadutas* through that impossible to traverse path. (Shl 23) While going thus, he saw the forest known as Asipatra which had rivers with boiling water and leaves sharp as sword. (Shl 24) He saw hot sand spread in some places. There were rocks made of metals. Around the path were cauldrons of boiling oils. (Shl 25) There were trees covered with sharp, impossible to touch thorns.

Yudhishtira kept walking looking at the severe agony suffered by sinners there. Finding that the entire path was stinking, he asked the *devadutas*: (Shl 26) How far do we have to go in this path? Kindly tell me where my co-borns are. To which area of *devatas* does this region belong? I wish to know this.

Janamejaya! As soon as the *devadutas* heard this, they said, 'we had to go only this far in this path.' *Devatas* had ordered us to bring you back as soon as you feel tired. Therefore it is right for you to return with us. By then Yudhishtira was truly exhausted. He was almost losing consciousness due to

the unbearable stink. Therefore he decided to return and turned back. Feeling very sad that he could not see his co-borns, he listened carefully to the cries of help emerging from all sides. (Shl 32) *Bho bho Dharmanandana! Rajarshi! One born in holy lineage! Stay here for a while to grace all of us.* (Shl 33) As soon as you came here, breeze with fragrance has started to blow. The wind which is flowing on your body is bringing fragrance to us and making us comfortable. (Shl 34) We are enjoying some comfort after a very long time due to your visit. (Shl 35) Oh mighty! Please stay here for a few minutes. This agony of *Naraka* will not bother us for sometime. .. Listening to these voices, he felt that some were familiar voices. But he could not identify them. Therefore he questioned them, 'Who are you? Why are you here?'

Then voices came from all sides: (Shl 41) Prabhu! I am Karna!. From another side 'I am Bhima', 'I am Arjuna', 'I am Sahadeva', 'I am Dhrishtadyumna', 'I am Draupadi', 'We are sons of Draupadi' etc.

Janamejaya! Hearing all these sounds he started to analyse in his mind as to what the method of *daiva* is.

Summary: He wondered how these people could suffer such severe agonies whereas Duryodhana is happily enjoying in *Swarga-loka*. (Shl 48) He said to himself: Am I sleeping? Do I have sentience now or not? Is this some aberration of my mind? Or have I gone insane? ..

(Shl 50) Yudhishtira became quite angry at that time. He started to censure *devatas & dharma*. He said to *devadutas*: Oh *dutas!* Go back to those for whom you are messenger. I will not come there. Inform those *devatas* that I will stay here. At least my co-borns will be comfortable due to my presence here.

The messengers then went back to Indra. They reported all the happenings to him. (**Swargarohana parva; 2**)

Yudhishtira gets divine body & goes to divine lokas

Janamejaya! As Yudhishtira was standing rooted there, Indra and others came there. Even Yamadharma came in a physical body. Several other *devatas* also came there. All the darkness vanished with their coming. The suffering of sinners was not seen then. **There was no fearsome Vaitarini river also. All the other ghastly scenes also vanished.** The breeze was very pleasant, fragrant & sacred. Along with Indra came Maruta, Vasus, Ashwini devatas, Sadhyas, Rudras, Adityas, other *devatas*, Siddhas and *maharshis*. Then Indra said to Yudhishtira: Yudhishtira! Come here. You need not suffer more than this. This is enough. You have obtained undecaying *punya lokas*. You have also gained *siddhis*. Do not be angry. Listen to me. **All kings must necessarily see *Naraka*. There are two heaps with every human being: Heap of auspicious karmas and that of inauspicious karmas. One who first enjoys the fruits of good deeds will have to go to *Naraka* later. One who experiences the agonies of *Naraka* first will then go to *Swarga*. One who has done serious or many sins will first go to *Swarga*.**

(Shl 15) Oh king! With the intention of causing good things to you I sent you to see *naraka* first. **Using an elephant as pretext, you caused Drona to believe that his son had died. In the same manner, under the pretext of showing your brothers and others, I showed you *Naraka* (*vyajena hi tvaya drona upachirna sutam prati, vyajenaiva tatho rajan darshito narakastava*).** Just like you, your brothers & Draupadi have also been to *Naraka* only as a pretext.

Your brothers, Draupadi, and other relatives have become free of all sins. All the kings who fought on your side have also gone to *Swarga*. You can see all of them. Let your grief vanish. Give up your agitation and anxieties. ... Now you will obtain the *punya lokas* you have obtained by virtue of the *Rajasuya yaaga & Ashwamedha yaaga* you performed. You will gain the great results of your *tapas*. Yudhishtira! The *lokas* you have gained are all quite above like the *lokas* of king Harishchandra. You will live there as you please.... Partha! **This is the most sacred river Akash Ganga. By bathing in this you will go to your *punya lokas*. As soon as you bathe in this holy river, your human nature will go away. You will become griefless, exhaustionless and hatredless.**

When Indra was saying all this, Yamadharma again appeared and said to his son Yudhishtira: My dear son! **I am highly pleased with your devotion to me, your truthfulness, your forgiving quality and your restraint on *indriyas*.** Yudhishtira! This was the third time I tested you. ... Your third testing occurred now. You were ready to live in *Naraka* for the sake of your brothers. You are pure. You are sinless. You will be happy in future. As you had thought your brothers certainly do not deserve to be in *Naraka*. **Devaraja Indra had created this illusion only to test you.** Child! All kings

have to see *Naraka*. That is why you also had to experience for a short while. ... Child! Come! **see this holy river which travels in all three lokas.**

... Then your great grandfather Yudhishtira bathed in Akash Ganga and gave up his human body. Soon he obtained divine body and became free of human nature and behaviour. Then he went happily to places where the valorous Kauravas & Pandavas were living. (**Swargarohana parva; 3**)

Vidura's end

Vidura appears before Yudhishtira

Yudhishtira asked Dhritarashtra. Where has Vidura gone? I do not see him.

Dhritarashtra replied: Son! Vidura is alright. He is engaged in very severe *tapas*. He is living only on air. He has become very thin. One can see the veins in his body clearly. He is seen by some brahmanas sometimes in this forest.

Janamejaya! Even as he was saying this, Yudhishtira was informed that Vidura with twisted hairs, wrinkled face, thin naked body covered in mire and dust was standing at a distance. But Vidura just took one look at the *ashram* and went back. Immediately Yudhishtira followed Vidura into the forest. Vidura was sighted sometimes and he would vanish sometimes. Yudhishtira was shouting: 'Oh Vidura! I am your dearest Yudhishtira!' and was chasing him with an effort. Finally Vidura stood still under a tree in the most secluded part of the forest. The highly wise and intelligent Yudhishtira recognised him as Vidura who was barely recognisable by the shape of body. Yudhishtira stood close enough for Vidura to hear and said 'I am Yudhishtira'.

Vidura enters Yudhishtira's body by power of Yoga

At that time Vidura was merely looking deeply at Yudhishtira without even blinking. Vidura joined his sight with Yudhishtira's. The great Vidura merged his body parts with that of Yudhishtira, his *prana* with Yudhishtira's and his *indriyas* with that of Yudhishtira. At that time Vidura was radiant with *tejas*. **With the help of *yoga-bala* (power of yoga) Vidura entered Yudhishtira's body.** Vidura's body was still standing under the tree. His eyes were still. But there was no sentience in his body. Yudhishtira saw Vidura without *chetana*. He also felt that he had become more powerful and had increased qualities. Then Dharmaraja remembered his complete old form (He realised that both he and Vidura were certain manifestations of Yamadharma). Then *maha-tejasvi* Yudhishtira recollected the *yoga-dharma* told by Vyasa.

Then Yudhishtira thought of cremating Vidura's body there itself. By then a formless voice said: (Shl 32, 33) Yudhishtira! **You should not burn this body called Vidura here. Vidura was practicing *yati-dharma*. It is a very old custom not to burn bodies of such persons.** Therefore you should not even grieve for him. Since he had conquered his *indriyas* he will get *lokas* called Saantanika. After hearing this he returned to the *ashram*. He told everything to Dhritarashtra. All who heard him were amazed. Highly pleased king said to Yudhishtira: Child! Now accept the fruits & roots I have to offer. **Man should show hospitality with whatever things he himself uses.** Yudhishtira agreed and ate the items that were offered. They all spent that night there sleeping under the trees. (**Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; 26**)

Overcoming death and rebirth

- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 27) That *tapasvi* who clearly understands that only by withdrawing the mind from its free-running nature, that the only power worth taking refuge in is *chinmaya brahma*, can attain the brahma with constant efforts. They can enjoy *brahmananda* here and after death attain *punya lokas* which have no rebirths. (**Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 90**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 33) That *jnani* person who has no enmity or opposition with any living being and who is always joyously established in the *atma* who is *jnana-swaroopi*, has no fear of being reborn in this world and hence what fear will he have of the other worlds? (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 160**)
- Tandi muni's sthuti to Parashiva: (Shl 20) Oh Prabhu! In case you did not wish to uplift the *jeevas*, these *jeevas* would be stuck in the vortex of birth and death and will be reborn forever in several types of births. You are the gateway to both *swarga* & *moksha*. You are capable of granting or stopping to any *jeeva* the entry to either of these gates. (**Anushasana; Daandharma; 16**)

- Highly pleased with Kaashyapa, that Siddha *purusha* preached to him about *para-siddhi*. (Shl 38) **Living like this, once I felt very dejected and took refuge in the formless Paramatma. Being very sad, I gave up completely all transactions with the world.** (Shl 39) **After having experienced all happiness & difficulties I took refuge in the path of *Brahma-tattva* and then by grace of Paramatma attained this *siddhi*.** (Shl 40) I will not come back into this *samsara*. As long as the work of creation goes on, I will be watching the auspicious states of myself and other beings. (Shl 41, 42) Oh Kaashyapa who can scare enemies like *kaam* & *krodh*! This is how I have obtained this great state. After completing travel of this *loka* I will go to even higher *loka*. But I will not stop there. I will go to *satya-loka* which is better than *Swarga-loka*. I will proceed from there also and go to even better place of *avyakta Brahma* (unmanifest Brahma). Do not have any doubt in this matter. Once I merge into *Parabrahma tattva*, I will not return to this world of death (mortality). (**Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 16**)
- Bhishma: Yudhishtira! Manu continued and said: (Shl 1) Brihaspati! From the indestructible Paramatma came *akash*, from *akash* came *vayu*, from *vayu* *agni*, from *agni* *jala* and from *jala* *prithvi*. **In this *prithvi*, things which undergo changes are born.** (Shl 2) Once the *ayushya* (longevity) ends, life-forms born in this world with a physical body, in an ascending order starting with *jala*, first dissolve in *jala*. Then from *jala* in *agni*, *agni* to *vayu* and *vayu* to *akash*. Again in creation in the descending order they come to earth and are born as different living beings. This cycle of birth and death goes on incessantly. **But *jnanis* will go above the *akash-tattva* and attain *parama-moksha*. They will not have rebirth on this earth.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 202)
- Panchashikha to Janakadeva: (Shl 32) *Avidya*, *karma*, *trishna*, *lobh* & *moha*—these are blemishes. Scholars say that serving the blemishes also forms a cause for rebirth. (Shl 33) These scholars call *avidya* as *kshetra*. **The good & bad karmas of past births will be the *beejas* (seeds). *Trishna* is the water or attachment which causes the germination of the seed.** In their opinion this becomes the cause for the rebirth. (Shl 34) Even if this body which has the dharma of death is buried or burnt or cut, another body takes birth due to the good & bad karmas mentioned above. **When that *beeja* (seed) is destroyed by the power of *jnana* then rebirth is also extinguished.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 218)
- Vyasa to Shukadeva: (Shl 3) **A *muni* with single minded focus should destroy all blemishes like *kaam*, *krodh* etc in him and take recourse to the 12 yogas viz *desh*, *karma*, *anuraga*, *artha*, *upaya*, *apaya*, *nishchaya*, *chakshus*, *ahara*, *samhara*, *manas* & *darshan* and practice *dhyana-yoga*.** (Commentary: *Dwadasha-yoga*: (i) *Desh* = place: The place you sit should be level. Should be sacred. There should not be stones, fire or sand. It should be silent. Should be supportive to the mind. Should not hurt the eyes. Should not be very windy. Such a lonely cave is best suited for *dhyana*. (ii) *Karma*: Food, pastime, activities, sleeping and waking hours should be limited/regulated and according to a discipline. (iii) *Anuraga*: There must be devotion and eagerness to realise god (iv) *artha*: should possess only absolutely needed things (v) *upaya*: Should sit in a posture suited for *dhyana* (vi) *apaya*: Giving up attachment or interest in worldly affairs and relatives etc (vii) *nishchaya*: having faith in gurus and statements of Vedas (viii) *chakshus*: Fixing the sight at the tip of the nose (ix) *ahara*: consuming only pure and *sattwik* food (x) *samhara*: withdrawing the *indriyas* & *manas* from seeking the objects of senses (xi) *manas*: Freeing the mind from resolves and changes and focussing only on Paramatma (xii) *darshan*: Viewing the grief that occurs when faced with ageing, death, sickness etc with indifference (*vairagya*)). (Shl 4) **The person who wishes to gain the best *jnana* should control his speech and mind using his *buddhi*. One who wishes peace of *atma* should, with the help of *jnana* thus gained, merge his *buddhi* in *atma*.** (Shl 5, 6, 7) Whether the person is highly dreadful or knows all the Vedas or is devoid of knowledge of Vedas even though a brahmana or is a dharmic or is engaged in *yajnas* or who has done heinous sins or a great man or one who is living a very difficult life, **if he follows the above said twelve yogas, he will cross the most inaccessible ocean of birth and death.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 236)
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 20) One who has given up all desires and is focussed on the great *para-tattva* will be pervaded by bliss on all sides like the body of Moon. (Shl 21) The grief of the person who treats all beings equally and has transcended *gunas* will go away easily just as darkness goes away upon rising of Sun. (Shl 22) The brahmana who has renounced karmas, who has transcended the dependence on *gunas* and is devoid of *vishaya-vasanas* (longing for pleasures

of senses) will not be bothered by birth & death. (Shl 23) When the *sadhak* is free of all kinds of bondages and is in a state of equanimity, then even though in the body, he would have transcended the *indriyas* & its objects. (Shl 24) In this way, the *jnani* person who attains Brahma who is the ultimate cause and transcends *Prakriti* which is the form of actions and who has reached the ultimate state (*parama-pada*) there is no fear of rebirth. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 251)

- King Janaka to Sulabha: (Shl 32) Just as a field which has been tilled and watered will then help germination of the seeds sown, this body in the form of *kshetra* due to the farming of auspicious & inauspicious karmas will result in germinations called rebirth. (Shl 33, 34) Just as seeds (*beeja*) fried in a suitable vessel will lose their quality of germination (*abeeja*) and then even if sowed in a well prepared field will not germinate, **the *jnana* preached by *sanyasi bhagawan* Panchashikha has transformed all my auspicious & inauspicious karmas into *abeeja*. They do not germinate in the field filled with objects of sense.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)
- Vyasa to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 13, 14) Normally humans have happiness & anger. Sometimes they become angry. They are bound by many bonds like spouse, children, cattle etc. They are not satisfied with the wealth acquired by self-efforts. They feel jealous about wealth of others. Just as a blind person following another blind falls into a deep pit, such persons obsessed with desires again & again submit themselves to Death (Yamaraja) driven by their own karmas. (Shl 15) The *jnana-marga* (path of knowledge) through which *jitendriyas* realise Parabrahma is only this. This is the only way to attain to Paramatma. The knowledgeable understand this *jnana-marga* and cross the states of birth & death. Mahatmas do not ever get attached to this world which is a death trap. (Udyoga; Yanasandhi; 69)
- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: (Shl 36) Dhananjaya! The sins done can be remedied by doing auspicious acts, by publicising the sinful deeds done and repenting for them, and by charity & *tapas*. (Shl 37, 38) Sins done can be atoned by *tyaga* (sacrifice), pilgrimages, *Veda-parayana* and by repetition of *mantras* in *shrutis* and *Smritis*. But Shruti states that a *tyagi* (who gives up worldly objects) will never again commit sins. **Shruti proclaims that *tyagi* will be freed of birth and death and will attain *amritatva* (immortality).** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 7)
- Yudhishtira's reply to Bhima (and others): (Shl 13) Even if the inclination to do karmas appears in the mind, do not do them. Reject the desire which is the root of karmas and *mamakara* which is the root of desires. Attain un-decaying and grief-less position in this and other world. (Shl 14) One who has given up pleasures will certainly not grieve. Therefore, why are you grieving for these pleasures? It is only by rejecting all sensory pleasures that you can free yourself from falsities (*mithya-vada*). (Shl 16) **Maharshis by engaging in *tapas*, *brahmacharya* and *adhyayana* avoid becoming a target for 'death' and attain eternal Brahmaloka.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 17)
- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 12)... **In worldly affairs and Vedic affairs there are two categories: *apravaritti* and *pravritti*.** (Shl 13) **By *apravaritti* (not being interested in worldly affairs) one attains immortality.** Acts done by *pravaritti* (deeper interest and attachment to worldly affairs) result in this *samsa* which is characterised by cycles of birth and death. Even in this *pravaritti* based karmas there are two types viz *shubha* and *ashubha* (auspicious and inauspicious). Auspicious deeds bring *punya-phala*. Inauspicious deeds bring *paap-phala*. Since karmas themselves are categorised as *shubha* & *ashubha* corresponding fruits of karma will also be good or bad. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 36)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 21) Yudhishtira! **All kinds of crookedness are the abode of death. All kinds of straightness/rectitude are the abode of Brahma. The substance of *jnana* is just this. Rest are useless babble; what will they do?!** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 79)
- Siddha purusha to Kashyapa: (Shl 22) Just as a person pulls out *ishika* from within *munja* grass (thin grass from within an outer sheath of grass), in the same way yogi can see the *atma* separately from the body. (Shl 23) *Munja* is said to be the body. *Ishika* is said to be the *atma* dependent on the body. **Those who know *yoga vidya* have given this great example to**

illustrate that body & atma are separate. (Shl 24) At the time when man sees the *atma* with his inner eye through yoga, even the lord of three *lokas* will not be Ishwara to him. (Shl 25) **A yogi can do any kind of body as he wishes. He turns away even ageing and death.** He neither grieves nor feels joyous about anything. (Shl 26) A *siddha* who has *indriyas* under control and is in yoga can be a *devata* to the *devatas*. (Shl 27) A *yoga siddha* will not be afraid even if all living beings are destroyed. Even if all living beings feel distressed he will not feel distressed in any way. (Shl 28) A *siddha purusha* who is in state of yoga, is calm and who has given up all desires will not be disturbed/made unsteady by grief, sadness or fear which arise out of attachment and affection. (Shl 29) **Weapons cannot pierce a yogi** (*nainam shastrani chhidyante*). **He does not have death.** None happier than him can be found in this world. (Shl 30) Yogi merges the *buddhi* completely in *atma* and stays in that state. He turns away grief and old age and sleeps happily. (Shl 31) **A yogi can relinquish this human body and take on any other body he wishes.** A yogi who enjoys the wealth generated from yoga should never develop indifference towards yoga for any reason. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 19**)

- **State of a jnani**

Brahmana said (Shl 1) I do not smell the smells. I do not taste the *rasas*. I do not see the forms. I do not touch anything. I do not hear a variety of sounds. And I do not desire anything. (Shl 2) **It is nature that desires the things it wants. It is nature that hates the things it feels like hating.** Just as *prana* & *apana* enter the body naturally and do the work of digestion etc, it is by nature that love and hate emerge. (Shl 3) I see in my body Paramatma who is different from these and is in the form of *atma*, and I see the impermanence of these. **I, who have mind firmly fixed only in the Paramatma am not touched by old age or death or kaam & krodh** for any reason. They do not bother me. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 28**)

- Sri Krishna said: Arjuna!The guru gave appropriate answers. (Shl 15) Child! Brahma has already given answers to all these on the basis of *Veda vidya*. All great *rishis* depend on those *tattvas* of Brahma. What Brahma has said contains matters of *Paramartha*. (Shl 16) We consider *jnana* as the ultimate thing and *sanyas* as the great *tapas*. One who clearly realises Paramatma who resides in everyone's heart as unobstructed *jnana-tattva* is considered as *sarvagati* (or *sarva-vyapi*). (Shl 17) That scholar who knows *sahavasa* & *vivasa* (living/coming together and separation) and *ekatva* & *anaikatva* (single and many states) from the viewpoint of *tattva* will be freed of *dukha*. (Shl 18) One who does not desire anything and who does not have pride/ego about anything will attain *brahma-bhava* even if existing in this *loka*. (Shl 19) **One who knows the secret of sattva etc gunas of prakriti, knows the secret of creation of all living beings, has given up the feeling of 'me & mine', and has no ego will be liberated.** There is no doubt about this. (Shl 20, 21, 22) This body is like a tree. It is born from the unmanifest seed of Brahma (*avyakta beeja prabhavo*). *Buddhi* is the place where it branches off. *Ahankar* is the branches. *Indriyas* are the hollows in the tree. The variations of *mahabhutas* are its sub branches. This tree is always filled with leaves of desires and flowers of karma. The happiness & unhappiness which are result of karmas are always present in that tree as fruits. Thus, this body which has appeared out of the seed of Brahma is continuous like flow of floods and is the basis for all living beings to exist. **One who understands these principles well and cuts it off with the sword of jnana will obtain immortality and will find freedom from the cycle of birth & death.** (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 35**)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 25, 26) Another characteristic of mind is *dhyana* (meditation, attention, contemplation). It is the characteristic of *sadhu-purushas* not to show themselves to the external world in worldly matters. **Pravrtti is the characteristic of karmayoga. Jnana is the characteristic of sanyasa.** Therefore an intelligent/wise person should take refuge in *jnana* and take up *sanyasa*. (Shl 27) **A sanyasi who has jnana will go beyond dualities, cross ignorance, ageing and death and attain the highest state** (*parama gatim*). (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 43**)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 18) Sunset is the end for day. Sunrise is the end of night. **End of happiness is continuous unhappiness. End of unhappiness/sorrow is continuous happiness** (*sukhasyantam sada dukham dukhasyantam sada sukham*). (Shl 19) All accumulations end in destruction. Fall is the end of rise/properity. Separation is the end for coming together. Death is the end of life (*sarve kshayanta nichayah patananta samucchrayah, samyogashcha viyoganta marananta cha jeevitam*). (Shl 20) All things which have been built will

all end in destruction. Death is certain to the born. In this world whether *sthavara* or *jangama*, it cannot remain permanently (*sarvam krtam vinashaantam jaatasya maranam dhruvam, ashashvatam hi lokesmin sada sthavara jangamam*). (Shl 21) Whatever be the *yajna*, *daan*, *adhyayana*, *vrata*, *niyama* – all these (their fruits) will finally be destroyed. **But there is no end to *jnana* (*janasya anto na vidyate*).** (Shl 22) **Therefore one who has calm/peaceful mind (*prashantatma*), is *jitendriya*, has no attachment of ‘mine’ (*nirmamo*) and has no *ahankara* (*nirahankaro*) will find freedom from all sins with a purified heart.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 44)

- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 47, 48, 49) That person who can see in the cavity of his heart the *atma* which resides in all living beings and which has no arms, legs, back, head or stomach, which is free of *guna* & *karmas*, is without a second, who is pure, who is steady, who cannot be known by attributes of *gandha*, *rasa*, *roopa*, *sparsha* & *shabda*, who is worth knowing, who is detached, who is without bones & flesh, who is without worries, is indestructible, **is divine and is unmoving will have no death.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 46)
- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 30) **Some dim-witted people praise *swarga* etc fruits obtained by *kaamyas* *karmas*. But *mahatma jnana vrddhas* (great, aged & knowledgeable people) do not praise *kaamyas* *karmas*.** (Shl 31) By doing *sakaam karmas* the *jeeva* again takes birth in the physical body having sixteen *vikaras*. *Avidya* swallows up such *purusha*. Not just this; such human being also is subject to grasping (being trapped) by *devatas* (*tadgrahyam amritashinam*). (Shl 32) That is why *mahatmas* who have reached the shores of *samsara* are disinterested in *karmas*. Because, *Purusha* is *vidya-maya* and not *karma-maya* (*vidyamayoyam purusho na tu karmamayah smrtah*). (Shl 33) **Thus one who realises the *chetana* as being *amrita*, *nitya*, ungraspable by *indriyas*, *sanatana*, having no birth, *vashyatma* and unattached will not be caught in the bondages of death.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 51)
- Vidura: (Shl 2) Once in the past the great & eternal Sanatsujata had clearly said that there is no death.
Vidura to Sanatsujata: (Shl 11-12) Kindly preach to Dhritarashtra that great *upadesha* after listening to which he will be free from all kinds of grief and **will not be bothered by**—gain & loss, likeable & unlikeable, **old age & death**, fear or intolerance, hunger or thirst, intoxication or wealth, worries or laziness, desires or anger, prosperity or decline. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 41)
- Sanatsujata to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 3) **‘There is death. But to win over death prescribed *karmas* have to be practiced (*karmanushtana*). By *karmanushtana* & *tapas* death can be defeated—this is the opinion of some. ‘There is nothing called death’—this is the opinion of some others.** ‘Is there death? If there is what is it? What should be called death?’—we will explain to you all these. You have no reason to doubt the matters that we will preach you.

(Shl 4) Both the opinions are true. *Jnanis* consider *moha* (*maya*, *prakruti*) to be death. But I consider *pramada* to be death. (*Pramada* means falling (*chyuta*) from the natural *brahma* state—*swabhavik Brahma bhava*: possible for people like Sanatsujata who from birth are naturally in *brahma bhava*). **I consider *amritatva* or being immortal as being always in *apramada* state.** (Shl 5) Because *asuras* (another meaning: those who indulge in pleasures of the senses) moved away from *brahmajnana* they were defeated (became subject to death). *Suras* (Another meaning: Those who are always in *atmadarshana sukha*, *atmajnanis*) did not wander away from the path of *brahmacharya vrata* and became *brahmabhuta*. **Death does not eat up living beings like a tiger does. We have not seen death having any physical shape.** (Shl 6) Some call Yama, who lives in *buddhi* (*atma-vasannam*), has no death and is devoted to *brahma* (*brahmanishta*) as death. They say that he lives in *pitrloka* and hands out *sukha* to those who have *punya* and *dukha* to those who are *paapis* (sinners) (Commentators: He separates & takes away the *jeeva* but cannot destroy it). (Shl 7) Yama is the director of *krodha*, *pramada* & *lobha* which are personifications of death. ***Jeeva* lives in *ahankara* and hence walks a path opposite to the path towards *Paramatma* & therefore does not achieve yoga with Him.** (Desire or *ahankara* pushes away all the *purusharthas* from man. Due to this *ahankara*, *kaama*, *krodha* etc are born in man). (Shl 8) **Thus, under the influence of *moha* man considers body as *atma* and hence is always subject to death;** some day he dies & goes to *yama-loka* & follows the cycle of birth & death. The *devatas* (=ten *indriyas*) are responsible for this cycle.

(Shl 9) Once karma takes birth, it becomes natural to expect fruits of karma. As soon as fruits are desired Jeeva is bound by it (It does not matter whether they are good or bad karma). **Jeeva will have to obey the consequences arising from fruits of karma. Therefore he cannot transcend death** (Good karma *phalas* may take the jeeva to good *lokas* & bad *phalas* to bad *lokas*. But after exhausting the *phalas*, the cycle resumes). Jeeva gets bound to *karma phalas* due to ignorance of the truth of Parabrahma. It enjoys pleasures (*bhoga-yoga*) and remains in the cycle of birth & death.

(Shl 10) Enjoyment of pleasures is very attractive to the *indriyas*. This lust for enjoyment creates a strong tendency of attraction towards 'false/unreal entities' (*mithyarthas*) to the jeeva. This attachment causes the jeeva to forget his reality and thinking always of these objects/matters, serves them all the time in every way. (Shl 11) **The desire for pleasures is not satiated by enjoying these pleasures.** Just as fire burns more strongly when *ghee* (clarified butter) is poured into it, the desire only increases. (Shl 11) **Desire to acquire what is others', kills first. The efforts done in order to acquire these bring kaama & krodha. These bring death to the fools who eternally run after these. Only the dheera has the courage to stay away from these & crosses the river of death.** (Shl 12) That *dheera* who realising that the pleasures of the *indriyas* are transient & bring grief, faces their continuous attack and conquers them, completely ignores them & stops always thinking about them is considered a *vidwan*. **He becomes a death to the death causing kaama & krodha.** (Shl 14) This *kaama* which is actually *ajnana* is a darkness for the *jeeva* as it takes away discriminative thinking. It is also equivalent to *naraka* & causes great grief. Just as a drunkard roams aimlessly lacking consciousness about his body and falls into a ditch, man under the illusion that physical pleasures are true happiness, falls into the *naraka* called *tamas* (darkness). (Shl 15) **Death can do nothing to the man who is not fooled by kaama. Death will have the same effect to a jnani as a tiger made of grass would have.** Therefore, a *jnani* clears his mind of the *ajnana* of sensory pleasures, keeps them away & never longs for them. He does not bring them up in his mind even once. (Shl 16) To him who has an inner mind filled with *kaama-krodha-lobha-moha*, that inner mind itself becomes the death causing factor. **Thus, to one who understands that death is caused by illusion of pleasures and who stays firmly in jnana, there is no fear of death here. Just as man becomes a target of death, death becomes the target for a jnani.** ... (Shl 6) One who enters the *ashrama* of *acharya* and lives with him (lives in his womb), practices *brahmacharya vrata* relentlessly and gets the grace of the guru becomes a *shaastrakara* (attains *brahmabhava*). In this *loka* itself, in this body itself they realise *brahma* and even after giving up the body merge in *brahma* & escape the cycle of birth & death. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42, 44)

- Sanatsujata to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 17) **The absence of resolves (*nissankalpa*) of a brahmavid is far superior to the abilities of a purusha who can realise his desires by merely a resolve.** I will tell you more in this matter, listen Dhritarashtra. (Shl 18) This important/very significant *yoga* should be taught to virtuous *shishyas*. Because this *yoga-shaastra* is the gateway to *brahma-prapti* or *atma-darshana*, *pandits* say that rest of the *shaastras* are merely circus of words (*vaacho-vikara*). All *shaastras* are incorporated in this *adhyatma yoga*. **Whoever understands this and realises atma (has atma-darshana) will be freed of the cycle of birth & death and will become immortal.** (Shl 19) **If there is no absence of desires (*nishkaama*) there is no possibility of realising God by virtuous acts like building wells, lakes etc. An ajnani cannot attain immortality by performing homa, japa, yajna & yaagas. Such a person will not attain peace even at his time of death.** (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 45)
- Vidura: (Shl 23, 24) Therefore character should be developed by banishing *kaama, krodha, lobha* and having love towards all. *Dama (jitendriyatva), tyaga* (sacrifice), carefulness—these are the three horses that take you to *brahma*. One who sits in the chariot called mind, harnesses these three horses, controls them with the reins of character, will attain *brahmaloka* without fear of *mrityu* (death). (Stree parva; Jalapradanika upa-parva; 7)
- Poojani to Brahmadata: ... (Shl 61) Those who desire salvation adopt methods of attaining *moksha* to escape from the bondage of death and *samsara*. Wise men who know Vedas say that it is possible to bear the grief arising from birth and death. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 139)
- Sahadeva to Yudhishtira: (Shl 4) **By adopting the two akshara mantra 'mama' (mine) we get death. By adopting the three akshara mantra 'na-mama' (not mine) the same human being can attain immortality and obtain eternal brahma-loka.** (Shl 5) *Maharaja!* Both *brahma* and

mrityu (death) are residing in our body. One does not have to go to forest to search for **brahma who is within us**. Both these are residing hidden in our body and keep fighting within the living beings. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 6) Brother! As you have already understood, if there is no destruction to the *jeeva*, then no violence is done to it even if the body is cut to pieces. (Shl 7) In case you have the doctrine that *jeeva* is born with the body, dies with the body and is lost with the body, then all these *vaidika-margas* are essentially a waste (Commentary: *Jeeva* is indestructible. With the assumption that he can eventually give up 'I-mine' and achieve freedom from this *samsara*, several *samskaras* are given to the *jeeva* by Vedic rituals such as *shodasha-karmas*, *yajnas*, *satkarma* etc towards helping in that *sadhana*. If the assumption is not valid, then all these are a waste). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 13)

On existence of *jeeva*

Serious doubts on existence of *Jeeva* and answers to it

Bharadwaja presenting his doubts and said: (Shl 1) Bhagawan! If as you said *vayu* were to enable & provide *prana* to *dehis* (those who have a body), if *vayu* makes the animals active, if he also does inhaling & exhaling, if for the speech of men also he is responsible, then it becomes meaningless to say that there is something called '*jeeva*' in human body. (Shl 2) If it is true that the heat in the body is a component of *agni*, if what we eat is digested by *agni*, if it is *jataragni* that digests everything, then it becomes meaningless to say that there is something called '*jeeva*' in the body. (Shl 3) **However much you search you cannot find '*jeeva*' in a living being that is dying.** The *vayu* which makes the body active will go away upon death. With the final exhalation of *vayu* the body becomes inert. **Similarly in the dead body there will be no heat.** The whole body becomes cold. From this one can conclude that before there was activity of *vayu* & *agni* in the body and due to their exit the body has become inert & cold. **We see no difference between the states in which *jeeva* was present and is not present.** Therefore it is meaningless to talk of existence of *jeeva*. (Shl 4) In case it is said that *jeeva* consists of *vayu*, it has close relationship with *vayu*, **then just as we can practically experience *vayumandala* (atmosphere), we should have experienced *jeeva* also.** There should have been some practical evidence that *jeeva* exited with *vayu*. (Shl 5) In case *jeeva* did have a close relationship with *vayu* and for that reason we say that *jeeva* is also lost along with *vayu*, that the lost *jeeva* also mixed/merged with external atmosphere, then just as when a vessel filled with water is dropped in the sea that water only undergoes change of place and it will not retain any distinct or separate identity. In the same manner there will be no distinct identity for *jeeva*. (Shl 6, 7) If you pour water into a well, that water is lost as soon as it falls into the well. That is when it was in the vessel it had a separate existence. After being poured into the well it mixed it with such that it lost its unique existence. Because it cannot be identified separately it is as good as destroyed. If you drop a lamp or candle into the blazing fire, that light will not be seen in the fire. It gets completely merged in it. In the same manner when from this body which is of *pancha-bhutas*, *vayu* & *agni* go out and merge with the *mahabhutas* outside, the remaining *prithvi*, *akash* & *jala* will also merge with the *mahabhutas* outside. **This being so where is the existence for *jeeva* in the body? Therefore this much is evident: there is nothing separate called *jeeva* other than the interaction of the *pancha-bhutas*.** Among these five *bhutas* which are closely knit together, if any one is absent the other four also will not continue. This is called *mrityu* (death) (close combination of *pancha-bhutas* is birth; their breaking up is death).

(Shl 8) If an animal does not drink water the *jala-tattva* will be destroyed. If breathing is stopped, the *vayu-tattva* in the body is destroyed. If the stomach is pierced *akash-tattva* will be destroyed. If you do not eat at all, the *agni-tattva* will be destroyed. (Shl 9) Due to wounds and diseases the *prithvi-tattva* is destroyed. **If any one of these five *tattvas* is harmed in the body the entire group is destroyed.** (Shl 10) In case something called *jeeva* does exist even after this body is destroyed, then with which of the *pancha-bhutas* will it go? **What can that *jeeva* devoid of the *pancha-tattvas* experience?** What does it hear? What does it say? (Shl 11) At the time of dying, man gives *daan* of a cow with the resolve that, 'this cow will save me, who am about to go to *paraloka*, from many of the sins.' Even if we assume that the cow which was donated has the power of absolving/deliverance of the man, whom does it absolve? Is it the *pancha-bhutas* that leave the body or *jeeva*? **Moreover how can an invisible and beyond thought *jeeva* be absolved or given deliverance?** (Shl 12) **The cow, one who accepted the cow in donation and the one who gave the donation will all someday merge in the *pancha-bhutas*. Where will they meet again? How is it possible?**

(Shl 13) Sometimes after death the body is eaten up by vultures etc. Some fall from a mountain and is destroyed. His body will break into pieces. The dead bodies are burnt to ashes. **Nothing of the combination of *pancha-bhutas* remains. This being so, when there is no body, how can *jeeva***

exist? **How can it come alive again?** (Shl 14) If a tree is removed from its roots it will never grow again. Only the seeds of that tree will germinate. Similarly from where will the dead person come back? Just as the seeds of a tree the children of the dead person can continue. **Just as a completely uprooted tree cannot grow back a dead person does not come back at all. For this reason there is no existence for the jeeva.** (Shl 15) In the past (at the beginning of creation) only the seed was created. That is why this world is growing. Those who die are completely destroyed. **Those pancha-bhutas which are integral with the body merge with the pancha-bhutas and hence nothing remains of the body. But from a seed a tree can grow. From the tree seeds are again born. This is natural. For human beings sons and grandsons are born and the vamsha continues.** (Therefore there is nothing called *jeeva*).

Adhyaya 187

Doubts continue to be expressed; Bhrgu answers

Bhrgu answered: (Shl 1) Bharadwaja! Even though the body gets destroyed *jeeva* is not destroyed. The charity/donation given and fruits of karmas are never destroyed. Only the body is destroyed. **The prani undergoes a change of body.** (Shl 2) Just as even if the *samits* (small twigs/branches of a tree used for *yajnas* & *homas*) burn out the fire which is embedded in any fuel continues to be visible, even though the body is destroyed, the *jeeva* that had taken shelter in the body does not get destroyed (and remains as a special form of *chaitanya*).

Bharadwaja said: (Shl 3) Bhagawan! If you say so, then from the simile of *agni* it is equivalent to saying that *jeeva* is destroyed because, if the firewood burns out completely to ash there will be no fire in it. (Shl 4) Just as the fire is completely calmed when the firewood burns out, I feel *jeeva* is also destroyed once the body is destroyed. **Because, there is no proof/evidence that jeeva exists. It does not have a state or a motion.**

Bhrgu said: (Shl 5) Child Bharadwaja! Just because fire cannot be seen after destruction of firewood it cannot be concluded that there is no fire. There is no destruction for fire. **It remains in akash in invisible form. Because it does not have an ashraya (a shelter, refuge) it cannot be grasped by the indriyas. (The agni-tattva is never destroyed. Its manifestation in a physical medium ends as the medium itself burns out).** (Shl 6) In the same way, even after giving up the body, *jeeva* continues to exist like the *akash*. **Because jeeva is in a very subtle form it cannot be grasped just as a very minute light cannot be grasped.** (Shl 7) *Agni* bears *pranas*. You can consider that *agni* itself as *jeeva*. That *agni* or *jeeva* is borne inside the body by *vayu*. Due to the stoppage of breathing, along with *vayu*, *jeeva* which is form of *agni* also becomes invisible. (Shl 8, 9) After the *agni* in the body is lost, the body falls on the ground and attains an earthy state. Earth is the refuge for all insentient things. The prana *Vayu* of all beings goes to the *akash*. *Agni* follows *vayu*. **In this manner when akash, vayu and agni meet at one place, the jala-tattva & prithvi-tattva which were components of the body remain in the form of dead body on earth.** (Shl 10) **Where there is akash there will be vayu. Where there is vayu, there will be agni. These three which have no intrinsic form or shape take the form of the body.** When they are in the bodies of living beings, they appear to have forms of the living beings.

Bharadwaja questioned: (Shl 11) Anagha! If we say that in body there are *agni*, *vayu*, *prithvi*, *akash* *jala* and *jeeva* then what are the characteristics of that *jeeva*? Tell me about this. (Shl 12) As I understand the body is constituted of *pancha-bhutas*. It is interested in *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rasa*, *roopa* and *gandha*. The five *jnanedriyas* and *chitta* are in the body. You have said that in such a body there is a thing called *jeeva*. I wish to understand the nature of this *jeeva*. (Shl 13) If we cut open this body consisting of blood and flesh, fat and intestine and bones etc we will certainly not find this thing called *jeeva*. (Shl 14) **But even if we assume that this body of pancha-bhutas is without a jeeva a question arises. Who experiences pain if it afflicts the body or mind?** (Shl 15) *Maharshi*! *Jeeva* will be hearing what another person is saying. But if the mind gets agitated or disturbed those words will not be heard at all. Therefore the existence of a *jeeva* other than mind is meaningless. (Shl 16) Everything is seen with the eye supported by mind. But if the mind becomes agitated or disturbed, even though the eyes are seeing nothing is grasped. Therefore I feel *jeeva* is meaningless. (Shl 17) A man who is asleep is though having a *jeeva* as you say he does not see anyone, does not smell anything, does not hear anything & does not speak anything. At that time the *jeeva* has no experience of touch or taste. Therefore I feel *jeeva* is meaningless. (Shl 18) **Though I feel that even if there is a jeeva it is useless I desire answers to some questions: Who experiences joy in our body? Who feels anxiety? Who desires things? Who thinks? Who hates? Who speaks?**

Bhrigu answered: (Shl 19) Bharadwaja! **Because mind also has connections to *shabda*, *sparsa*, *roopa*, *rasa* & *gandha* it is also constituted of *pancha-bhutas*. It is not a *tattva* different from *pancha-bhutas*. But *manas* is not the ‘conductor/manager’ of the body. It is *antaratma* who alone bears this body. It is he who experiences all the attributes.** (Shl 20) *Antaratma* has realised in this *pancha-bhutatmik* body the *manas* which has the qualities of the *panchendriyas* and he pervades all organs and experiences happiness and unhappiness. When the connection of *antaratma* is broken then the body cannot experience these (by this the existence of an entity other than mind—*jeeva*- and which is a witness to the mind is established). (Shl 21) When in the body there will be no feeling of *roopa*, *sparsa* and heat then the *agni* in the body is doused. Even though the *jeeva* a form of *agni* leaves the body with the *agni*, the *jeeva* will not be destroyed. (Shl 22) **This whole world is full of water. The body of animals is also full of water.** In this body which is essentially water, *atma* appears in the mind which is in the body. He is well known as Brahma who creates all life forms. (Shl 23) **When *atma* is associated with qualities derived from nature (*Prakriti*) then he called *kshetrajna* (*jeeva*). When he becomes free of these qualities then he called Paramatma.** (Shl 24) Understand that Paramatma is one who does the welfare of the whole world. That Paramatma is in the bodies of living beings like a drop of water on lotus leaf which is not stuck to it though it appears so. (Shl 25) Understand that *kshetrajna* is also interested only in the welfare of the world. Understand that *tamoguna*, *rajoguna* & *sattvagunas* are the *gunas* of *jeeva*. (Shl 26) It is said that the *indriyas* and *manas* are made sentient by *jeeva*. The *jeeva* becomes active and causes the *indriyas* & *manas* also to be active. Scholars who have understood the *tattva* of *sharira* say that Paramatma, the *antaratma*, who is the creator of the seven *lokas* is greater than the *kshetrajna*. (Shl 27) Even though the body is destroyed *jeeva* is not destroyed. Only the ignorant say that the *jeeva* has died. This is a lie. *Jeeva* never gets destroyed. When the body is destroyed *jeeva* goes and joins another body. Separation of the *pancha-bhutas* which had combined together is the destruction of the body. (Shl 28) In this manner, *atma* enveloped in ignorance will be dwelling secretly in the cave of heart of all animals. Those who know the *tattva* realise him by great and subtle *buddhi*. (Shl 29) By eating very light meal (*laghu-ahara*: just enough to survive), by being in *dhyana* in the first & last *yaamas* (3 hours) of night and by having a pure mind scholar can realise Paramatma in himself. (Shl 30) That *jnani* who has a mind without distortions/blemishes, has given up both auspicious and inauspicious works and has his mind immersed only in the *antaratma* will experience unending happiness (bliss). (Shl 31) The *agni* which dwells in bodies of animals and is related to *manas* is called *jeeva* or *chaitanya*. This creation of Prajapati has been stated in telling definitively about *adhyatma*. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 186, 187**)

Appendix 1: Vyasa reveals secret of all characters

Vyasa continued and said: Gandhari! Tonight you will see your sons, brothers and other friends. Your daughters-in-law will appear as if they were sleeping with their husbands and have come out. Kunthi will see Karna. Subhadra will see Abhimanyu; Draupadi will see her five sons, father & brothers. Even before you, Kunthi and Dhritarashtra requested this I had made a decision to show them to you all. All these princes were *mahatmas* and were dedicated to *kshatra dharma* and accordingly they have died in a war. Therefore you should not grieve for them. Oh blemishless! **This was the act of *devatas*. It had to happen this way. Therefore it has occurred. All these were born on earth with a component of *devatas*** (partial incarnation of *devatas*). Gandharvas, *apsaras*, *pishachas*, *guhyakas*, *rakshasas*, holy men, *siddhas*, *devarshis*, *devatas*, *danavas* and group of pure *devarshis*—all these incarnated on earth and died in the war.

(Shl 8) Dhritarashtra, the king of Gandharvas in Gandharva *loka*, has become your husband Dhritarashtra. (Shl 9) Know that Pandu *maharaja* who never fell from his greatness is a *devata* greater than *Marudgana*. Vidura and Yamadharma are partial incarnations of Yamadharma. (Shl 10) **Know that Duryodhana is *kali-purusha*. Shakuni is *dvapara*. Dushasana & other children are *rakshasas*.** (Shl 11) Bhimasena who is invincible and mighty is partial incarnation of Marudgana. Dhananjaya, the son of Kunthi is the ancient *maharshi* Nara. (Shl 12, 13) Bhagawan Shri Krishna is the ancient *maharshi* Narayana. Nakula & Sahadeva are partial incarnations of Ashvini *devatas*. Know that Karna who used to create fight between Kauravas & Pandavas is the partial incarnation of Bhaskara. Abhimanyu, that son of Arjuna, whom six *maharathas* surrounded and killed is incarnation of Chandra. By dividing his body into two parts by power of yoga, Chandra both stayed in the sky and incarnated as Abhimanyu. (Shl 15) Know that Dhrishtadyumna who was born in fire (in a *yajna*) was partial incarnation of *agni*. A *rakshasa* had incarnated as Shikhandi. (Shl 16) Know that Drona was partial incarnation of Brihaspati and Ashwatthama was from Rudra. Know that Bhishma, the son of Ganga, was one of the Vasu *devatas*.

Oh highly wise! **In this way after the work for which they were born was completed they have gone back to Swarga.** Now I will clear the fear you have all had in your minds with regard to the other world. All of you should proceed to the bank of river Bhagirathi. There you will all see the dead relatives.

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! As soon as they heard these words of Vyasa all the assembled people roared with joy and proceeded to the river bank. Once that sea of people reached the banks of Ganga, they set up camps according to their convenience. .. All of them who were waiting to see those who died in the war were awaiting nightfall impatiently. They spent the day as if it was stretching to a hundred years. Then as the day progressed the Sun god reached the western mountain. Then they all had their bath and finished their evening rituals.

Vyasa makes all the dead re-appear

(GHV: This *adhyaya* is very significant in its implications)

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! As soon as it was evening, all the people, having finished their bath and evening rituals, went to *maharshi* Vyasa. Dhritarashtra sat down with *rishis* who had come and with Pandavas. All the women sat with Gandhari. The citizens and other people of the country sat according to their ages.

Then Vyasa of great *tejas* bathed in the scared Ganga and invited all those warriors who had died in the war. .. In a short while a huge noise was heard just as it used to be heard when the armies of Pandavas & Kauravas were assembled in the battlefield.

Then all kings including Bhishma, Drona along with the armies emerged from the river in thousands. Virata & Drupada along with their army & children, five sons of Draupadi, Abhimanyu, Ghatotkacha all of them emerged out of water. Karna, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Dushasana & other sons of Dhritarashtra, Sahadeva the son of Jarasandha, Bhagadatta, valorous Jarasandha, Bhurishravas, Shala, Shalya, Vrishasena with his brothers, Prince Lakshana, sons of Dhrishtadyumna, sons of Shikhandi, Dhristaketu with his brothers, Achala, Alayudha the *rakshasa*, Bahlika, Somadatta, Chekitana and many more kings and warriors emerged with glowing/lustrous bodies. Since their numbers were huge it is not possible to list all the names. They appeared in whatever dress, weapons, vehicle and flag they were using when fighting. They all had divine clothes. They had brilliantly shining ear rings (*kundalas*). **All of them were without any ego. They had no mutual hatred. They had no anger or jealousy.** Gandharvas were singing in praise of their qualities. All of them were wearing divine garlands and were surrounded by *apsaras*.

At that time a cheerful Vyasa, with the power of his *tapas*, endowed Dhritarashtra with divine vision. Gandhari who had divine *jnana* saw her sons as well as her relatives who had been killed in the war. All the people who had come from Hastinapura watched with wonder that most amazing, unthinkable and thrilling sight without batting their eyelids. **That entire sight was looking like a painting on a large canvas.** Dhritarashtra saw everything with the help of divine sight given to him and felt very happy. (**Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; 32**)

(It would appear as if the Mahabharata was a play/drama of *devatas* played for the benefit of human race and authored by *maharshi* Vyasa. Towards the end of the play he is introducing the main actors!!)

All of them meet each other happily without any negative feelings

Vaishampayana said: (Shl 1, 2) Janamejaya! All those great men, who were free of anger and envy, had no sins, as ordained by Vyasa met each other like *devatas* in *devaloka* with great love. (Shl 3) Son met with parents, women with husbands, co-borns with co-borns, and friend with friend and talked joyously. (Shl 4) Pandavas met and talked joyously with Karna the great archer, Abhimanyu and the five sons of Pandavas. (Shl 5) Then Pandavas mixed happily with Karna and interacted with him with love. Due to the grace of Vyasa *muni* **they all came together without any feelings of enmity or anger and strengthened the cordiality.** They all spent that entire night with their partners and felt as if they were all members of *Swarga*. (Shl 9) Great among Bharatas! **In their mutual meeting none of the feelings of grief, fear, trouble, anxiety or infamy occurred in their minds.** (Shl 10) The women who had come met their fathers, co-borns, husbands and sons and experienced indescribable happiness. Their grief was cured completely. (Shl 11) After being together all night, at daybreak they all took permission from each other and after embracing tightly went away to wherever they had come from.

Then, the great *muni* Vyasa dissolved the *loka* he had created with his power of *tapas*. Even as Dhritarashtra and others were watching they all vanished in an instant. Just as they had appeared out of waters of Bhagirathi river, they immersed in it and went away to their respective *lokas*. Among them some went to *Brahma-loka*, some to Varuna *loka* and some to Kubera *loka*. Some kings went to *Yamaloka* also. Some went to *lokas* of *rakshasas* & *pishachas*. Some went to the *loka* of Uttara kurus. In this manner they all obtained different states.

After they were all gone, Vyasa, who was still in water, said to women who had lost their husbands in the war: (Shl 19) *Devis!* Those *pativratas* among you who wish to go to the *lokas* of your husbands should without delay, immerse yourself fully in the Ganga river. Hearing Vyasa, those women took permission of Yudhishtira, their in-laws and immersed themselves in the water. (Shl 21) All those virtuous women gave up their physical bodies, obtained divine bodies and went along with their husbands to their *lokas*. At that time Vyasa fulfilled whatever desire each of them had. Hearing this episode people from many countries were dumbstruck. (**Ashramavasika parva; Putradarshana; 33**)

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