

Mahabharata Series

Karma & Karma phalas (Action & its fruits)

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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/>). Whereas the material in that was included in the order in which it appears in the original epic, in this compilation I have grouped them by meaningful Topics & Sub-topics thus making it much more useful to the student/scholar of this subject.

This is a brief compilation of the contents appearing in the great epic Mahabharata on the topics of **Karma & Karma phalas**. The compilation is not exhaustive in the sense that every para appearing in the great epic is not included here for the sake of limiting the size of this document. But still most of the key or representative passages have been compiled here. The contents are from Mahabharata excluding the Bhagavad Gita.

The discussion on karmas appears in various contexts in the epic. Readers who need a comprehensive view are encouraged to read my other compilations where karma with respect to specific aspects such as Varnas, Ashramas, Birth & death, Yogis, Trigunas, Dharma etc have been included. This work contains the commonly applicable or general aspects of karma.

I hope the readers will find the document of some use in their study on these topics.

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

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Karma & Karma phalas

(Action and its fruits)

Karmas

Origin & causes of karma

- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: (Shl 19) **But there is something called *antaratma***. It is not visible to the normal eye. It is subtler than subtle (*sookshmaati-sookshma*). It is not possible to precisely describe it in words. That same *brahma-vastu* hides its real form, **fronts *avidya* which causes karma** and undergoes transformation as *jeeva*. When *brahma-vastu* transforms as *jeeva* it gets designated by various names and forms such as 'he is *grihastha*', 'he is *brahmana*', 'he is *kshatriya*' etc. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 19)
- Upamanyu to Parashiva who has come in the guise of Indra to test him: (Shl 222) Yogis worship only Shiva through *jnana*, *siddhi* & *kriya-yoga*. Similarly, *rishis*, Gandharvas and *siddhas* accept Shiva as the ultimate cause and seek his refuge. (Shl 223) **I say that such Mahadeva who is free of all *karma-phalas* and whom *devatas* & *asuras* serve everyday through *karma*, *yajna* & *kriya-yoga* is the ultimate cause of all**. (Shl 224) Mahadeva's *parama pada* is *sthula* (gross), *sookshma* (subtle), incomparable, is impossible to grasp with *indriyas* and beyond *gunas*. (Shl 225, 226) *Indra*! That who is the *Isha* to the universe, is the regulator of *Prakriti*, is the cause of creation & dissolution, past, present & future are merely whose forms, who is the father of everything, is the cause of everything, who is *kshara*, *akshara* & *avyakta*, is the manifestation of *vidya* & *avidya*, **who is both the doer of karmas and *akarma***, from whom both *dharma* & *adharma* have been prompted, **I say that he is the cause of all**. (Anushasana; Daandharma; 14)
- Vasishta: (Shl 22) The *mool-prakriti* which became manifest from the unmanifest Paramatma is called *vidya-sarga*, and *mahat-tattva* & *ahankar* are called *avidya-sarga*. (Shl 23) **Both *avidhi* (*jnana*) and *vidhi* (*karma*) are born from that Paramatma**. Scholars who discuss the meaning of *Shruti* & *shastra* have made these *avidhi* & *vidhi* well known as *vidya* & *avidya*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 302)
- Guru to his disciple: (Shl 2) Just as in a seed the size of sesame an entire *ashwattha vriksha* (holy fig tree) is hidden in an *avyakta* form, and when it germinates and grows becomes *vyakta* as a huge tree, **in the same way from *avyakta* the *vyakta* arises/springs up**. (Shl 3) Just as, even though iron is inanimate it rushes towards a magnet, **as soon as the body takes birth, the *avidya*, *kaam*, *karma* etc *gunas* resulting from past *samskaras* are pulled towards that body**. (Shl 4) In the same way, the insentient *bhavas* (like *kaam*, *karma*, *vasana* etc) of the *kartru* (doer) *jeeva* which are born from the *avyakta* and are also *kaaranas* (causes, means of action) are gathered together by the **sentient Paramatma who is the universal cause**. (Shl 5) In the past *prithvi*, *akash*, *swarga*, *bhuta-gana*, *rishi-gana*, *devatas*, *asuras* etc did not exist. **Other than *jeeva* nothing existed**. There was no union of *jada* & *chetana* (insentient, sentient). (Shl 6) **In the past, the *jeeva* was assigned with *ajnana-karma*** which is permanent, all pervasive, born from mind and indescribable **by Paramatma who is the cause. This is the characteristic of *karana*** (means of action) (It is Paramatma who assigns to the *jeeva* beginningless *avidya* and *karma*. It is he only who also points the way to disentangle from it). (Shl 7) **The *jeeva* associated with *vasana*** (the impression of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind, the present consciousness of past perceptions) **etc *karanas* gathers karmas. *Jeeva* engages in karmas based on past *vasanas*. From *karma* *vasanas* are formed and from *vasanas* karmas. This goes on. In this manner the big *samsara chakra* (wheel of *samsara*) keeps rolling along**. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 211)
- Guru to his disciple: (Shl 10) ***Jeeva* under the control of *ahankara* does karmas due to *trishna*** (thirst). It has been propounded that such karmas become the causes of future *karya-kaarana-yoga*. (Shl 11) ***Kaarana* (cause) does not chase *karya* (effect). *Karya* does not approach *kaarana*. It is *kaal* (time) that becomes the motive for the accomplishment or non-accomplishment of *karya***. (Shl 12) The eight components of *mool-prakriti* along with

kaarana and their sixteen **vikaras** take shelter in Purusha and keep coming together and keep expanding the creation. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 211)

- Bhishma: (Shl 9) **Prakriti** is constituted of **trigunas**. It is the natural dharma of **Prakriti** to create. But it should be understood that the characteristics of **Purusha** are opposite and peculiar when compared to the characteristics of **Prakriti**. (Shl 10) The **Purusha** who has no **gunas** observes directly the **vikaras** (actions, works) of **Prakriti**. Neither of them is visible (perceptible) to the **indriyas**. Because they are in **avyakta** state they have peculiar characteristics with respect to each other. (Shl 11) It can be inferred from the karma that the mobile & immobile world is created by the union of **Prakriti** & **Purusha**. **Jeeva** performs his karmas through **manas** & **indriyas**. He claims himself to be the 'doer' of all the karmas he performs. By sounds and indications he publicises 'who am I, who is this person and who is that person' etc. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 217)
- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 22) Atma does & makes us do the karmas; Parabrahma which has created the whole universe is beyond this or far greater than this. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 213)
- Bhishma: (Shl 19) All the following are established in **ahankara**: **pancha-mahabhutas**, ten **indriyas**, **shabda**, **sparsa** etc **gunas**, **sattwa** etc three **gunas** and the three **lokas** associated with **loka-pals**. (Shl 20) In this world at specified times qualities related to seasons show up. In the same way, it should be understood that in all living beings **ahankara** is the prompter/instigator of karma. (Shl 21) **Ahankara** is of three types: **sattwik**, **rajasik** and **tamasik**. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 212)
- Bhagawan to Narada: (Shl 35) As soon as the lord **chetana** enters the body he activates it. Without the coming together of **pancha bhutas**, there can be no creation of bodies. (Shl 36) Even though **vayu**, one of the **pancha bhutas** is main reason for the activity of the body, unless **jeeva** enters the body, **vayu** does not activate it. That **jeeva** who is the lord of the body is called **Shesha** or **Sankarshana**. (Shl 37) That same **sankarshana** by his acts of meditation & worship gets the position called **Sanat Kumara**. That into which all beings merge and are destroyed, the **manas**, is called by the name **Pradyumna**. (Shl 38, 39) That which takes birth from **Pradyumna** is **ahankar** which is the doer, the cause & the action. All the moving and unmoving beings are born from that **ahankar**. He, the form of **ahankar**, is **Aniruddha** or **Ishana** who shows himself (as the 'pride of doer') in all karmas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 339)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (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 said: (Shl 1) Child! There are three types of impellers for doing karma. First the **manas**, with its mere **sankalpa** (volition, resolves), creates variety of feelings. **Buddhi** decides whether or not to carry out those karmas. Heart or **antah-karana** experiences the good or bad results of the karmas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 248)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (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. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 33)
- (Shl 41-42) **Dhritarashtra questions**: Some are famous as **panchavedis** having studied the four Vedas & puranas. Some others are **chaturvedis**, some **trivedis**, **dwivedi**, **ekavedi** and some have not learnt any Vedas. Among these who is superior? Whom do I consider as brahmana? (Points from Commentary given for this question: **Chaturvedis** say there are four **purushas**—**sharirapurusha**, **chhandahpurusha**, **Vedapurusha** and **mahapurusha**; **Trivedis** call this same Purusha as **kshara**, **akshara** and **uttama**; **Dwivedis** say that the entire creation is held in **shabdabrahma** & **parabrahma**; **Ekavedis** say that there is only one brahma. He is himself the creation. That itself is **Ishwara**. It is not other than us. This is the **siddhantha** of **anrichas**. They are

called *brahmadvaitha vadis*. Who is great among these is the hidden meaning of Dhritarashtra's question)

Sanatsujatha's reply: (Shl 43) Veda which was a monolithic entity in the beginning was divided into four parts as it was not possible to understand it. Paramatma, who has no second (*adwitiya*) is eternal (*Vedaswaroopa*). **Maharaja! It is very rare to find someone who has understood the essence of the monolithic Veda which represents the ultimate Truth (*satyaswaroopa*).** (Shl 44) Not understanding the truth of Veda in this form, man considers himself as knowledgeable (by talking of *panchaVeda*, *chaturVeda* etc). *Daan*, *adhyayana* & *yajna* are done with greed (with desire for fruits). (Shl 45) The resolve of those who miss the real essence of Truth will be also in accordance with the slippage. **From *ajnana* karmas are born. This happens due to not understanding the Truth. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 43)**

Birth & Karmas

- Dharma Vyadha: (Shl 21) Many are born in the same *nakshatra*, same *rashi* & same day but there will be lot of difference in the results in their life. **Even the karmas they do will not be related. (Vana; Markandeya samaasya; 209)**
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 17) (I am a hunter by caste. Selling meat is the dharma ordained for my caste. It is certain that I have obtained this birth due to my past karmas). Therefore I will never give up the karmas prescribed for my caste. **I will accept that I have got this birth because of my past karmas and will continue in this profession.** (Shl 19) The karmas of past lives never desert the living being (*dehi*). **Brahma primarily considers the *karma-phalas* of the past in determining the birth & karmas of a living being. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 208)**
- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 36) If human being continues to engage in bad deeds, those fruits will accumulate with the past fruits and **he will be born in even lower births.** Just as if someone who is already sick violates the prescribed diet (*pathya*) will never be cured, living beings will be stuck in the wheel of karma and will be subjected to many griefs & difficulties. **(Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)**
- Draupadi to Yudhishtira: (Shl 2) **Jeeva gets his place according to its karma** in *uttama* (superior), *madhyama* (middling) or *adhama* (inferior) births and in *urdhwa loka* (higher worlds) or *adho-loka* (lower worlds). Therefore karma is ever present. (It cannot be reduced except by experiencing the karmas). Some are deluded by greed and desire to be freed of grief without doing any *karmas*. **(Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 30)**
- Yayati 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)**
- 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)**
- Siddha purusha to Kaashyapa: (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. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18)

- Siddha purusha to Kaashyapa: (Shl 23) In this manner a living being always experiences the fruits of past birth's karmas. **Even though *jeeva* is a form of *nirvikara* (unchangeable) *Parabrahma*, the reason for taking on changes and birth is *karma* alone.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18)
- Bhishma: (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**, 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: (Shl 24) The *chetana* of an ignorant or a *jnani* will obtain *narak* or birth as birds or animals or *swarga* depending on its karmas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 298)
- Yudhishtira: (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 again 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)

- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 15) *Atma* who dwells in the body is completely different from the body. He never suffers from the defects/imperfections of birth, growth, decay and death. **But the *ajnani* man (ignorant) keeps moving from one subtle body to another body due to the past karmas** and without realising his truth and that he is himself the pure *atma*.... (Shl 18) Upon death, man gives up the visible gross body, distributes the body in the *pancha-bhutas* and **gains an invisible subtle body. Then according to his karmas he will take shelter in another gross body and take its shape.** He thinks he is that gross body. ... (Shl 23) Just as after New Moon day, Moon again becomes visible and joins the stars, *atma* who exits from one body enters another body along with all the *karma-phalas*. Just as Moon is not destroyed on New Moon day, *atma* is not destroyed due to death of body. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 202, 203)
- Guru to his disciple: (Shl 45) **The existing body suffers only due to karmas. It is because of karmas that another body is taken after death. Due to the powerful karmas done by *jeeva* he is taken to another body.** (Shl 46) Just as *jeevatma* gives up one body and takes up another, *jeevatma* by virtue of its karmas takes other physical forms. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 210)
- Bhishma: (Shl 18) **At the time of birth human being will have fully developed organs formed due to the influence of karmas** and will also be associated with subtle body. Human being so born will be agonised by physical & mental griefs in the beginning, middle and end of life. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 213)

- Panchashikha: (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 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. (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.** (Shl 18) The differences and uniformity we see in *mahabhutas* like *akash*, *indriyarthas* like sound, in the form/shape of *devatas* are all made by Brahma himself. **It is Brahma who appoints the living beings in different *karmas*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232)
- Parashara said: (Shl 32) Maharaja! **Both *karma* & *jaati* can make a person blemished.** There is no doubt in this matter. But I will tell you the differences between these. (Shl 33) Not being wicked by birth and engaging in great karmas without doing any wicked deeds makes him an *uttama-purusha* (excellent or best person). Similarly, that person who even if wicked by birth does not engage in sinful deeds also is an *uttama purusha*. (Shl 34) Even if great by *jaati* (birth) but indulging in abhorrent karmas will make him blemished. Therefore it is not right to engage in bad deeds under any circumstances. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 296)
- Yajnavalkya to Vishwavasus: (Shl 91) King Janaka! **Men are born in different kinds of birth due to performing karmas with ignorance.** Similarly, they die too. In the same way even people of brahmana etc *varna* due to terrible ignorance and lack of *jnana* fall into the net of different births in *Prakriti*. (Shl 92) **Therefore every effort should be constantly made to gain *atma-jnana*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 318)
- Bhagawan Prajapati Brahma said: (Shl 14) Here that which is *Paramatma* has been said to be *nitya* (eternal) & *nirguna* (without attributes). It should be understood that he alone is Narayana and *purusha* who is the *atma* of all. Even though lotus leaf is in water, it does not stick to water (or does not get wet). In the same way, **even though *Paramatma* dwells inside the *jeevas* who perform karmas, he does not stick to the karmas (or is not smeared by those karmas).** (Shl 14) **That person or *jeevatma* which attaches itself to karmas will be subjected to the bondages of birth & death.** That *karmatma* or *jeeva* consists of a group of 17 *gunas* (five *jnanedriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, five *mahabhutas*, *buddhi* & *manas*). **In this way, that *karmatma* takes different births according to the fruits of karmas.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 351)

Nature of karma

General

- Janaka said: (Shl 15) **In this world all states obtained according to karma have an end. I know this very well. That is why I could not know what belongs to 'me'** (Nothing can be 'mine' for ever. I can say that something, such as house etc, as 'mine' only for a limited time. After that others will say the same as 'mine'. This goes on like this). (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 32)

- Rishi Markandeya to Yudhishtira: **Only three ways to get fruits in life:** (i) *daivanugraha* (God's grace) (ii) *adrishta* (luck or fortune) & (iii) own karmas. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 183)
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 19) **Vedas say that karmas are of three types: *sattwik*, *rajasik* & *tamasik*.** In the same way the *mantras*, the related prescribed procedures, the practice or application of karmas, the intent or desires of those who do the karmas and the man who enjoys the fruits of karmas are all also of the same three types. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 201)
- Parashara: (Shl 20) **As karmas enlarge they cause more anguish. Short karmas bring happiness.** Moreover all expanded/long karmas (*yajna-yaagas* are all karmas meant to fulfil some desire) are *pararthas* (another's advantage or interest is the goal). They are performed only to satisfy the *indriyas*. **Scholars understand that the short karma of *tyaga* (sacrifice, renunciation) is in the best interest of soul. *Tyaga* is a short karma. It is for the welfare of the soul.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 298)
- Bhishma: Friendship or affection is in the form of mire. Old age is like a fort at the edge of the ocean. *Jnana* is like an island in the middle. **Karma is its unfathomable depth.** Truth is like its shore. *Vrats* are its stability. Violence is its rapid force. This ocean (of *samsara*) is filled with a variety of juices called *vishaya*. Several kinds of love are its gems. Grief & anguish are the wind that blows on it. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 301)
- Bhargava to Vasumantha: (Shl 16) **When place, time, person and the specialities of the karma are analysed, the same karma could be dharma for one and *adharma* for another.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 309)
- King Janaka to Sulabha: (Shl 42) Those persons called *sanyasis* have a *tridanda*. A *grihastha* king bears ceremonial umbrella, hand-fan, sceptre etc. If anyone were to get *jnana* merely by having *tridanda* then why can't *moksha* be attainable by someone having umbrella & sceptre? **The factor of 'acquisition or possession' which is the cause of hindrance or an obstruction is common to both.** One collects *tridanda* while another collects umbrella & sceptre etc. (Shl 43) **The reasons and karmas through which man acquires the objects of his desire will be the karmas man depends on or takes refuge in.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)
- Bhagawan to Arjuna: (Shl 86, 87) There are three well known *dhatus* called *vaata*, *pitta* & *kapha* in the body. **These are said to be *karma-janya*** (born from karmas). The group of these three are called *tridhatu*. Living beings exist because of this *tridhatu*. When they decay or wane, living beings die. It is for this reason that scholars of *ayurveda* call me *Tridhatu*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 342)
- Sanjaya to Yudhishtira: (Shl 12) **This is the *karma bhumi*. Whether *punya karma* or *paap karma*, it has to be done here. There is no karma to be done in *paraloka*. There is no possibility of doing any karma there.** (Shl 13) There is no death or ageing or fear in *paraloka*. There is neither thirst nor hunger. There is nothing that displeases the mind. **All our acts here on earth are rooted in thirst & hunger. Therefore man has to work here.** Since there is no thirst or hunger in *paraloka* he has no duty to perform there. Then what is done there? There are many facilities/mechanisms like *apsaras*, *kalpavriksha* etc to enjoy sensory pleasures. Other than enjoying such pleasures to heart's content, there is nothing else to do there. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 27)
- *Siddha purusha* said: (Shl 1) Kaashyapa! **With mind as the leader, *jeevatma* engages in good or bad deeds.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18)
- Bhishma: (Shl 8) One who has a mind that has passionate interest in desires will experience several scenes in the dream **according to the *samskars*** (impression on the mind of acts done in a former state of existence) **of present and past several births.** *Samskars* of several past births are concealed in the human mind. Paramatma who dwells within us knows them all. (Shl 9) The *sookshma-bhutas* show to the mind through the dream state the *guna* (*sattwa*, *rajas* & *tamas*) that is established in *buddhi*, the fruits of past karmas and the *samskara* of mind. (Shl 10) Even as we are seeing our dreams, the *trigunas* with the purpose of making available to the sentient the

experience of grief & happiness according to the karmas appear on the mind-stage of the sentient. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 216)**

Karma always follows the jeeva

- Ashma replied to king Janaka: "(Shl 5) **From the time of birth, according to his karmas, happiness and grief follow the man continually without any respite.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28)
- Drona to Jayadratha: Killed by mighty *kaal* (time), we will all go one after the other to *paraloka* along with our baggage of our *karmas*. **(Drona; Pratigya; 74)**
- *Siddha purusha* to Kaashyapa: (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. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 17)**
- Panchashikha counselled the worried king with following words: (Shl 6) Janakajanadeva *maharaja*! **All the *sadhanas* done by *jeeva* till the time of death are not lost upon death.** He will not have *bhava-nishta* also (not tied to the state of mind?!) **This body is an association of the gross body, *indriyas* and *manas*.** Though these appear to be separate, in performing karma they act together and with mutual dependence. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 218)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 51) Oh son! **When you go to *paraloka*, only the good & bad karmas done in the past will be with you.** (Original: *yadeva karma kevalam pura kritam shubhashubham, tadeva putra sarthikam bhavatyamutra gacchatah*). (Shl 52) **None of the money, gold, objects, vehicles etc man has earned in good or bad ways will be of use when his body is destroyed.** (Shl 53) **When undertaking journey to *paraloka* there will be no witness equal to his *atma* for the karmas done and not done in this *loka*.** (Shl 54) When you go to *paraloka* this human body will not be present. The *jeeva* will enter a subtle body and will be seeing everywhere with the eye of *buddhi*. (Shl 55) In this *loka* three *devatas agni, vayu & Surya* reside in human body. These three will be witnessing the deeds of human beings and will be witnesses for their karmas in *paraloka* (Shl 53 said that *atma* is the witness for all our deeds!). (Shl 56) Day lights up all objects. Night covers them up. These day and night pervade everywhere and touch all things. **You should keep practicing dharma both during day & night.** (Shl 57) On the path to *paraloka* there will be many who cut off the head. Moreover, it is filled with fierce flies. (When *jeeva* enters a subtle body & travels, what is the relevance of these?) **In that fearsome path only the karmas you have done go with you. Therefore protect your *satkarmas*.** (Shl 59) Groups of *apsaras* enjoy happiness arising from *punya-phalas* with *maharshis*. In the same way *punyaatmas* sit in *vimanas* and travel as they wish and enjoy the fruits of auspicious deeds. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 320)**

Karmas trap the living being

- Vidura: (Shl 12) *Samvatasara, ritu, masa and dina* are agents of *kaal*. A fool does not understand this. **Vidvans say that *Brahma* has already written the happiness and grief of all animals according to their karmas.** (Shl 13, 14) The body is itself like the chariot. The *jeeva* in the body is the charioteer. The *indriyas* are horses. **The *manas* (mind) which is formed according to the karmas forms the reins.** One who runs behind the horses in the form of *indriyas* galloping after the pleasures of senses, will be caught in the wheel and keeps rotating with it in this *samsara*. **(Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 7)**
- Janamejaya to Vaishampayana: (Shl 13) There is this one blemish in those busy in karmas who have taken to *pravritti marga* with an eye on *swarga* etc fruits which are valid only for a limited duration. They are caught in the grip of *kaal* and are constantly experiencing auspicious & inauspicious fruits. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 340)**

Karmas cannot/should not be relinquished

- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 33) **You have to do that *karma* for which *Brahma* has created you. Only by doing that you will attain success/fulfilment (*siddhi*). You are not the master of *karmas*.** Since *Brahma* has created you in *kshatriya vamsha*, you should perform

those *karmas*. **You have no liberty to give up *karmas* (*karma-tyaga*). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 27)**

- Questioned thus by his wife, that brahmana, as if smiling, said to her: (Shl 5, 6) Oh sinless! Oh fortunate one! I do not think that what you are saying is blemished statement. Whatever worthy *karmas* we see or grasp (such as *deekhsa*, *vrats*) are visible and truly gross actions (*sthoola karma*). They are designated as '*karma*'. Those who work diligently or are engaged in sacred actions or rites (*karminah*) call that itself as *karma*. (Shl 7) **Those who have no understanding, accumulate *moha* through *karmas*. It is not possible for human being to be without any action for even a moment.** (Shl 8) You will find in all living beings good and bad *karmas* performed through **actions, mind and speech** as well as *karmas* **done from the time of one birth to the time of next birth.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 20)
- Sri Krishna to Sanjaya: (Shl 5) It is only by eating the delicacies (*bhakshya-bhojya*) that you can experience contentment. Merely by having knowledge of such delicacies this cannot happen. The act (*karma*) of eating has to be performed. **Hence *karma* is essential.** (Shl 7) Performing *karmas* prescribed by the *shrutis* results in corresponding *karma-phalas*. These *phalas* are 'visible' in nature (By this not only he benefits, his whole *vamsha* also benefits). A thirsty man performs the *karma* of drinking water & quenches his thirst. **Hence doing *karma* is better.** *Grihasthashrama* which incorporates it is also better. (One implication is: fruits of *karma* are 'visible/concrete' whereas fruits of *jnana* are not so). (Shl 8) **A *jnani* cannot be without *karmas*. There are *karmas* which have to be done in *jnana-marga* also. Therefore it is incorrect to say that *jnana-marga* is better than *karma-marga*.** It is pointless to say that *karmas* ordained by Vedas need not be done. Only the weak who cannot perform such *karmas* say this.
- (Shl 9) The *devatas* shine in *swarga* because of the *karmas* they have done. *Vayu* pervades the world according to his *karma*. Even Sun performs his daily routine without laziness and causes day & night. (Shl 10) Even Moon performs his routine without fail & causes *paksha*, *masa* etc. *Agni* is always devoted to his *karma* of burning. (Shl 11) The Earth goddess is dedicated to her *karma* & bears the huge burden. Rivers satisfy all life-forms and carry water continuously without getting bored. (Shl 13) The *karmas* he did are the reason for *Indra* getting his position. He renounced pleasure-seeking and objects of desire. He practiced *satya-dharma* without any negligence. Self-control, tolerance, equality for all, love towards all—it is only by practicing all these noble qualities he attained the highest position. (Shl 14, 15, 16) **It is so for all the great powers. It is only by virtue of their performing their *karmas* diligently that they have got those positions.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 29)
- Arjuna: (Shl 11) *Maharaja!* **This is *karma-bhumi*. Here doing *karmas* required for living is most appropriate.** Agriculture, business, cattle rearing, varieties of architecture & sculpting etc are means of obtaining *artha*. (Shl 12) **It is *artha* which enables practicing the rules and norms of all *karmas*. *Shrutis* have proclaimed that *dharma* & *kaama* cannot be accomplished without the support of *artha*.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 167)

Karmas are mix of good & bad

- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 50) **No work in this world will be full of only good qualities. Nor will it be full of only bad qualities. Both will be in some proportion.** Whichever has majority good quality will be said to be good and that with majority of bad quality will be called bad/wicked. Therefore in every act of man there will be mix of both good and bad qualities. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 15)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 28) Whether the person is totally faithful to *dharma*, or is a *grihastha*, or is a king, or is a *brahmachari*—**it is not possible to do his *karmas* in a perfect and complete manner.** There will be defects in the *dharma-karyas*. Because the path of *dharma* is very intricate and subtle it is very difficult for anyone to practice it in its complete form. (Shl 29) **Even if the work is small if it has 'substance or essence' in it, it is considered great work. It is better to do *karmas* than not doing it. Because there is no sinner greater than one who does no *karmas*.** Therefore relinquishing your *karmas* and going to forest is not right. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 75)

- Grandfather Brahma said to Vasishtha: (Shl 28) Even if there is some deficiency in the work done, if it is continued, accomplishment will happen. Particularly if *satkarmas* (virtuous deeds) are done, then *dushkarmas* (wicked deeds) done will not yield their fruits (Comments by publishers: If *satkarmas* are more and *dushkarmas* are less then the proportionate effect of bad deeds are subtracted from the fruits of *satkarmas* and the net balance will be of *satkarmas*. Similarly for doing more *dushkarmas* except the net result will be negative. Therefore whether *satkarma* or *dushkarma*, they do not yield fruits separately according to their proportion. GHV: This does not appear to be stated earlier anywhere else. The general understanding is that the fruits of karma have to be experienced and there is no 'netting' action. Because, at what point in time does the 'netting' take place?! In an earlier *adhyaya* it has been stated that those who do only *satkarmas* will go to *devaloka*, only *dushkarmas* will be born in *tiryag yonis* and those who do a mix of both will be born as human beings) (Shl 29) Even to *devatas* the ultimate refuge is *punya* (they gain *devatva* only because of *punya karmas*). All things are obtained only by *punya*. What can luck or *daiva* do to such a *punyavan* person? (His *punya* will automatically entitle him for good fruits. *Daiva* can do nothing independently). (Anushasana; Daandharma; 6)

Karma is impartial & independent

- Brahma to *rishis*: (Shl 30, 31) One sitting in the boat cannot travel on land. Similarly one sitting in chariot cannot travel on water. **In the same way, every distinct karma takes man to a different place. A person gets the fruits according to whatever path he chooses and karmas he does.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 50)
- Vidura: (Shl 10) **Happiness or grief is obtained by living beings due to their own good or bad karmas.** (Shl 11) According to the *paap* or *punya* karmas, man obtains *naka-naraka* and *sukha-dukha*. According to the *satkarma* or *dushkarma* of past births, men must suffer the burden of happiness and grief either with dependence on others or without any dependence. (Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 3)

- Vulture to parents & 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.

(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) Once having left the body here, relatives of the dead 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.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 153)

- Bhishma replied: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! Mind prompted by blemishes like *kaama* & *krodha* indulges in sinful deeds. **In this manner human being earns sins by his own karmas and suffers them.** (Shl 3) Those indigent who do only sinful deeds experience one dearth after the other. They go from one grief to another; from one fear to another; from one death to another. (Shl 4) Those who are faithful, *jitendriyas*, rich and perform auspicious deeds will go from one festivity to another. From one *swarga* to a higher *swarga*. From one happiness to another. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)
- Arishtanemi to Sagara: (Shl 21) Sometimes even when your own people are alive and you have the responsibility for their care & protection, you die leaving them all (You do not have the freedom or power to live at your choice till your responsibilities are fulfilled). (Shl 22) Sometimes your own people whom you love die. You will never know whether after death they are living happily or not. **This being so, should you not think about the extent of true relationship you have with them?** (Shl 23) **Whether you die or live, your own people will certainly experience the fruits of their own karmas.** Do not have the pride or ego that you must care for them & protect them. Even after your death their care & protection will happen as ordained by fate. **Therefore, it is your duty to engage in working towards your interests by giving up attachment towards them** without feeling that, 'I cared for & protected my people'. (Shl 24) **In this way you should churn all matters thoroughly and gain definitive knowledge about**

‘Whose? & Who is he?’ After deciding that ‘No one is related to anyone. Living beings are born somewhere according to their accumulated karmas and die at some point of time’, fix your mind on *moksha*. Keep mulling over these words of mine in your mind. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 288)**

- Narada to Shukamuni: (Shl 25) The *jeeva* who has no independence will get *devatva* due to the auspicious karmas it does, *manushyatva* due to mix of good & bad karmas and lower births due to engaging in only inauspicious karmas. (Shl 26) The *jeeva* who is chased by old age & death in a variety of births and by several kinds of grief will be cooked in the pan of *samsara*. Why haven't you understood this till now? (Shl 27) **Men get the feeling that benefit is in (in reality) non-beneficial karmas. They think impermanent things as being permanent.** They think that disastrous things are profitable things. Why haven't you understood that you have such a contrary intelligence? **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 329)**

Correspondence principle of karma

- Manu said to Brishapati: (Shl 1) *Devaguru!* When the five sense organs combined with their objects merge in the mind, then, just like the thread in a garland of beads, man realises Paramatma. (Shl 2, 3) The same thread holds a garland of beads whether they are beads of gold or pearls or coral or clay or silver. **In the same way, the one Paramatma pervades in cows, horses, human beings, elephants, deer, insects & worms and in bodies of all living beings. The jeevatma who is interested in objects of sense ‘wears’ different bodies according to its karmas** (Commentary: The thread is same irrespective of the material of beads. Paramatma is hidden (*antaryami*) like the thread. If the thread is holding coloured glass beads it will look the same colour as the bead. If in a clear crystal bead, it will also be seen clearly. In the same way, even though Paramatma is same in all his existence, he is not realised by the ignorant. Even if they find his existence it will be distorted. Only *jnanis* realise the true existence of Paramatma). (Shl 4) **Jeeva experiences the fruits of the karma through the same bodies through which he performed those karmas** (What happens if the birth is in the bodies of animals/insects/worms etc or the birth is from human body to one of these or vice versa?!). (Shl 5) Just as land having the same characteristic will give plants of different essences according to the seeds sown, **buddhi, though of essentially the same type and gets its sentience from Paramatma, follows the karmas of the past** (Commentary: Paramatma is *nirguna*; *nirvikalpa*. He dwells in everyone's heart. It is he who provides the *chaitanya* for *buddhi*. Even though it is he who illuminates the *buddhi* of all animals, the *buddhi* of one will not be like the other. This is due to the seed. Meaning, every *jeeva* when born in a body comes with a cover of its own *prarabdha*. Its *buddhi* is dependent on such past karmas. Paramatma does not become responsible for the change or differences in the *buddhi* of living beings. The *prarabdha karmas* which are of the nature of seed are the cause of this).

(Shl 6) Man first becomes aware of objects of sense. Then he develops a desire for possessing the objects. Then with the resolve to somehow obtain it, the effort starts. Then he gets the fruits of the karma (An interpretation: First awareness should dawn that Paramatma dwells in our heart. Then a desire to realise him should develop. Then a firm resolve should be made that somehow the realisation shall be obtained. Then karmas to accomplish this should be done. After all these, the fruit of realising Paramatma will be obtained). (Shl 7) **It should be understood that the fruit according to the karma is the real form of karma. Karma is of the nature of jneya** (to be known). **Jneya is of the form of jnana** (knowledge). That sentient is of manifest and unmanifest form (*vyakta-avyakta-swaroopa*). (Shl 8) Worldly knowledge, its fruits, knowable things, and karmas—after all these decay, the *jnana* established in Parabrahma that one obtains should be understood as the great fruit of *atma-jnana*. (Shl 9) Only yogis see this great *tattva* with their inner eye. **Those attached to trigunas cannot see the Paramatma who is within themselves.** **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 206)**

- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 6) Because all beings consist of the same five *maha-bhutas* there should have been no difference among them. **But Brahma, the creator of these five maha-bhutas, has constituted the beings with more or less proportion of these according to their karmas.** Therefore there will be difference in the quantity of the individual *maha-bhutas* in beings. Therefore there will be difference among beings as created by Brahma. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 247)**

- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 23) **Man who is driven by *sattwa*, *rajas* & *tamo gunas*, who is keenly interested in the fruits and desiring fruits does karmas which are of type *sattwa*, *rajas* & *tamas* will obtain the same kind of fruits corresponding to the nature of karmas.** (Commentary: There are three types of karmas: *sattwik*, *rajasik* & *tamasik*. Among men also there are same three types. *Sattwik* persons will have interest in *sattwik* karmas. They will engage in such karmas and obtain *sattwik* fruits. Similarly for the other two types. **Even among *devatas* there are these three types. That is why those interested in karmas choose different types of *devatas*.** They are attracted to the *devatas* which match their own nature. Even though the *Parabrahma-vastu* is one, three types of *devatas* have been created for this reason. This is a uniqueness of *sanatana dharma*). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 201)
- Then Shriman Narayan while remaining invisible said to all of them: Devas! (Shl 71) **This ancient *karma marga* has been published for the active (or action oriented) people. The powerful *purusha* who creates the *lokas* in accordance with *karma marga* is called *Aniruddha*.** (Shl 72, 73) Sana, Sanatsujata, Sanaka, Sanandana, Santakumara, Kapila and Sanatana—these seven *rishis* are also said to be *manasa-putras* of Brahma. They were *vijnanis* from the moment of their birth. Therefore they took to *nivritti dharma*. (Shl 74) All of them are knowledgeable about yoga. They are experts in *sankhya-jnana*. They are guides & teachers (*acharyas*) of *dharma shastras*. They are promoters of *moksha dharma*. (Shl 75) In the past, *trigunas*, *mahat* & *ahankar* were born from *avyakta Prakriti*. This *kshetrajna* is higher or greater than that *avyakta Prakriti*. (Shl 76) **I, who am such *kshetrajna*, am form of *nivritti marga*. I am difficult to attain by those who follow *karma marga* which results in repetition (or rebirth).** In whatever way a man engages in *nivritti* or *pravritti marga*, he will get great fruits according to those karmas. .. (Shl 81) **Great Suras! Ordain karmas for living beings. Grant states to them according to their karmas. Grant them full longevity.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 340)

Chetana, Prakriti and karma

- Bhagawan Prajapati Brahma said: (Shl 3) **Even though *purushottama* does not have a physical body, he resides in all bodies. Even then, he is not smeared with the *paap* & *punya karmas* done by the bodies.** (Shl 4) *Purushottama* is also the *antaratma* (inner soul) of you, me and all beings who are designated as *dehi* (having a body). He is the *sakshi* (witness) to everyone for all their karmas. But he cannot be grasped by anyone at anytime. (Shl 5) He has heads, shoulders, feet, eyes and nose everywhere. He moves happily alone in all *kshetras* as he pleases. (Shl 6) **The bodies of living beings are the *kshetras*. The auspicious & inauspicious karmas are the seeds (*beeja*) sown in that *kshetra*. Because the *purushottama* as *yogatma* knows both *kshetra* & *beeja*, he is called *kshetrajna*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 351)
- Vasishta said: (Shl 1) King Janaka! **In this way since the *chetana* does not know its true form it follows *ajnana*. It is for this reason that he keeps going from one body to thousands of bodies.** (Shl 2) Because he has association with *gunas*, he takes birth in thousands of *tiryag-yonis* due to the power of these *gunas*. He also takes birth as *devatas* due the power of the same *gunas*. (Shl 3) ***Chetana* goes from human *loka* to *deva-loka*. He falls from there and again obtains human birth. He also obtains unending *naraka* from human birth.** (Shl 4) **Just as the silk worm binds itself in the cocoon it builds from its own threads, the *chetana* who is *nirguna* (attributeless) binds himself with the *gunas* created by itself.**

(Shl 5, 6) Even though the *chetana* is free of dualities, he takes birth in different forms and experiences dualities like happiness & grief due to the power of *gunas*. He suffers many diseases like headache, eye pain, toothache, stiff neck, *jalodara* (dropsy), *trisha-roga* (always feeling thirsty), fever, tumour, vomiting & loose motion, white patches on the skin, leprosy, *agnidaaha*, white or black scabs, epilepsy etc. (Shl 7) **He thinks that not just these, but still many more types of peculiar dualities born from *Prakriti* have all attacked him.**

Chetana's identification with thousands of forms & practices

(Shl 8) *Chetana* who takes birth in thousands of forms of animals & birds feels that he is himself that bird or animal. Some times that same *chetana* is born as *devata* and thinks he is just a *devata*. **Because he has this attachment to the respective bodies (*deha-abhimaan*) he experiences the fruits of the karmas done through those bodies.**

(Shl 9, 10, 11) The *chetana* who is bound by the desire for fruits wears white cloth & dirty cloth. He sleeps on the floor. He sleeps like a frog. He sits in *veerasana*. He sleeps with *akash* as the

cover above. He wears rough clothes. He sits on bricks & flat stone slabs. He sleeps even on thorns. He sleeps on ash. He sleeps on the ground. He sleeps under the trees. He sleeps in the battle field. He sleeps in water also. He sleeps in mire also. He sleeps on a wooden plank. (According to the birth in *tiryak*, *manusha* or *devatas* he sleeps in different ways). (Shl 12, 13, 14) This *chetana* wears a waist band and a loin cloth. He remains naked. He wears silk clothes. He wears a deer skin. Wears a rough cloth. (When born as a tiger) wears tiger skin. Wears lion skin. Wears exquisite cloth of silk. Wears hide. Wears a cloth of thorns (porcupine). Wears the cloth of a worm/insect. Wears torn & tattered clothes. **In this way the *ajnani jeeva* according to its birth wears many other types of dresses and feels the pride that everything is his only.**

(Shl 15-19) According to the birth obtained the *jeeva* eats variety of & peculiar foods. He wears variety of precious gems. He eats at the interval of one night. Eats once a day. Eats in the fourth, sixth & eighth *muhurta* of the day. Eats after six nights. Eats after a lapse of seven days, eight days, ten days & twelve days. He fasts for one month and then eats. Eats only roots. Eats only fruits. Consumes only air. Drinks only water. Eats left over of oil seeds. Consumes only curds. Eats cow-dung. Consumes cow's urine. Eats only vegetables. Eats only moss. Eats just flowers. Drinks only rice porridge. Lives on dry leaves. Eats fruits that have fallen from the trees.

(Shl 20, 21) To find accomplishment (*siddhi*) the *chetana* takes refuge in variety of rigorous *vrats*. Implements *Chandrayana vrat* according to prescribed procedures. **Wears variety of symbols of dharma**; follows four types of *ashrama-dharma-margas*. **He also follows paths which are opposed to *ashrama-dharma*. He takes refuge in *upa-ashramas* like Paashupata and also has atheist opinions.**

(Shl 22, 23, 24, 25) He sits under a stone canopy, near fountains, sits near river spots that are lonely, lives in forests that are lonely & lives in auspicious temples. Lives near lonely lakes; lives in big caves which are like houses in mountains. In such places he undertakes a variety of *japa*, *vrata*, *niyama*, *tapas* as well as variety of other karmas. (Shl 26) The *chetana* engages in business. Becoming a *dwija* he does *brahmana-karmas*. Being a *vysya* he does *vysya karmas* and as a *shudra* does *shudra karmas*. He gives variety of charities to the poor, blind & miserable people. (Shl 27) **After giving thus to charity he develops the pride/ego that, 'I have given to charity'.** Similarly he considers as his own the *trigunas* and the *dharma, artha & kaam* driven by them. (Shl 28) **In this manner the *chetana* divides himself in various ways through *Prakriti*.**

(Shl 29) The *chetana* engages in *swadhakaar*, *vashatkaar*, *swahakaar* & *namskaar*. He performs *yajnas* & helps others perform them. He studies Veda & teaches it also. He gives to charity & accepts charity also. **In this way he engages in many karmas.** (Shl 30) *Chetana* takes birth. He dies. He quarrels. He engages in war. **Scholars say that all these transactions of *chetana* due to the contact with *Prakriti* are both auspicious & inauspicious and belong to *karma-marga*.**

Contact with *Prakriti* causes confusion in identity

(Shl 31) The goddess *Prakriti* does both creation & dissolution. Just as the Sun spreads his rays in the morning and withdraws them into himself in the evening, in the same way **Parabrahma who is *adi-purusha* spreads the *trigunas* all over the universe in the beginning of *kalpa* and then at the end of the *kalpa* merges them in him.** (Shl 32) In this way the *chetana* associated with *Prakriti*, before realising the *tattva (tattva-jnana)* **keeps repeatedly experiencing the objects of senses as if a game/sport and believes that experiencing these *gunas* is his duty.** (Shl 33, 34) In this way, the *chetana*, the lord of *trigunas*, controls the *trigunatmic Prakriti* which has the dharma of *pralaya*, and **getting attached to & engaged in *karma-marga*, believes that such and such karmas have such and such fruits.** (Shl 35) It is by *prakriti* that this whole *jagat* has been made blind. It is due to the association of *Prakriti* that all things are pervaded by different extent of *trigunas*. (Shl 36, 37, 38) In this manner due to the contact with *Prakriti* dualities like happiness & grief keep occurring. Because of *ajnana*, the *chetana* feels that, 'these griefs are born for my sake only. They come chasing me. I should avoid all these' and continues to experience them. Enveloped by *maya*, the *chetana* thinks similarly about good deeds also. 'I am now experiencing the fruits of good & bad karmas of past births. Since I have done much auspicious karma in this birth, I will enjoy their fruits in *devaloka* when I go there'. In this manner, **the pure *chetana*, though not related to any of these, due to the contact with *Prakriti* imposes everything upon himself.** (Shl 39) 'Now I should engage only in auspicious

deeds which are means to happiness. If **I do punya-karmas** even once, **I will** have happiness until death. Not only this, **I will** have happiness in many future births'. *Chetana* thinks like this. (Shl 40) 'If **I do** evil karmas in this birth **I will** have to suffer great grief till I am alive. This human birth is full of grief. Not only this, if **I do** wicked deeds **I will** have to fall into *narak*'. The *chetana* thinks like this too. (Shl 41) 'After spending a lot of time in *narak* as a result of **my paap-karmas**, **I will** gain freedom from there and be born as a human being. **I will** do good deeds in *manushya-janma* and obtain *devathva*. After all **my punyas** decay there **I will** be born as a human being' – the *chetana* thinks like this. (Shl 42) In this way, in a cyclical manner the *chetana* will be shuttling between *narak*, *devaloka* & human world. Because the *chetana* enveloped in formless qualities (*chetanatva*, *satyatva*, *sukhatva* or *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*) feels like this he resides alternately in these *lokas*.

(Shl 43) **Chetana in the grip of mamatva** (I & mine) **keeps going round in circles for thousand million years in different bodies which all die**. (Shl 44) **The person, who with the ahankar** (I, mine, for me, for my people) **does good & bad karmas, will don bodies appropriate to the three lokas and obtains fruits corresponding to the karmas he has done with voluntary resolves/desires**. (Shl 45) **In reality it is Prakriti which does auspicious & inauspicious karmas. It is the Prakriti which travels in the three lokas with immunity that experiences the fruits of karma** (But due to *ajnana*, *chetana* ends up thinking that he is the doer & experiencer). (Shl 46) **Tiryag-yoni, manushya-yoni & deva-yoni are the three places for experiencing the fruits of karmas. It should be understood that these are related to Prakriti**. (Shl 47) **Prakriti is said to be shapeless & formless. We have concluded that it exists by observing certain special signs. In the same way it is known that chetana exists from logic, inference & analogies**.

(Shl 48) The *chetana* who has no defects, obtains a body which is in fact related to *Prakriti*, **and depending on the indriyas which are the doors to defects, thinks that all actions of indriyas which are actually related to Prakriti, as being his own**. (Shl 49) The five *jnanendriyas* like ears, five *karmendriyas* like speech with their qualities/attributes are established in the body which also has qualities. (Shl 50) Even though the *chetana* does not have *indriyas* he feels that, 'I do all these acts. The ten *indriyas* are a part of me'. In this manner, **though free of all blemishes, thinks himself to be full of blemishes**. (Shl 51) *Chetana*, though he does not have a body, feels that he has a body. Though he does not have *marana-dharma* (dharma of death) thinks he has it (Though beyond time, thinks he is limited by time). Though free of *trigunas*, feels he has these *gunas*. Though free of *pancha-maha-bhutas* thinks he is associated with these. (Shl 52) *Chetana* though has no death, thinks he is in the grip of death. Though he does not move, thinks he moves. Though distinct from *kshetra* (body) thinks he himself is the *kshetra*. Though totally unrelated to creation, thinks he is born to such & such persons. (Shl 53, 54) *Chetana* never does any *tapas*. Still he thinks he does *tapas*. Though he has no motion, thinks that he comes & goes. Though he is not a *sansari* thinks he is one. Though he has no fear, thinks he is afraid. Though he is indestructible, thinks he is subject to destruction. In this way, without right *jnana* he develops ego/attachments. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 303)**

- Ashma replied to king Janaka: (Shl 19) Smell, form, taste, touch all these come and go according to nature. As the flower blossoms it spreads fragrance. As it slowly withers, its fragrance also reduces. Similarly, **happiness and grief come according to the rule of daiva in accordance with individual's karma-phala**. (Shl 21) Every single act of animals--sitting, sleeping, eating, drinking etc—is regulated by 'time'. Time is predefined for every event. **Karmas have to be done at the specified time only. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28)**

Character/nature and karmas

- Prahlada to Indra: (Shl 24) People feel that for obtaining good or bad fruits the past karmas alone are the causes. Therefore now I will tell you comprehensively about **karmas**. Listen attentively. (Shl 25) Just as when a crow is eating some cooked rice thrown somewhere other crows come near it caw-cawing, in the same way all karmas consist of *swabhava-lakshana* (natural attributes/qualities). (Shl 26) The person who knows only the actions that are taking place and has not understood the *para-prakriti* (the *swabhava* which is in the background) has the stupefaction of *ajnana*. **One who understands by experience that all actions are driven by nature & efforts are ineffective will not have any ego**. (Shl 27) To the one who has understood firmly that all actions happen due to nature, what will ego or haughtiness do? **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 222)**

- Drona to Duryodhana: (Shl 8) The nature & actions (*guna-karma*) of sinners and good-souls (*shubhatma*) are as follows: A sinner even when repeatedly stopped by good-souls from doing sinful deeds, still desires to do them. A good-soul will not indulge in sinful deeds even if encouraged by a sinner to do so but will do only good deeds. (**Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; 139**)
- Ashwatthama to Kripa and Kritavarma: (Shl 16) All men act in different ways depending on their intelligence and discrimination. They all feel that what they are doing is good. Parajapati Brahma has created people and has ordained their karmas. He has incorporated a unique quality for each *Varna*. (**Souptika parva; 3**)
- The brahmana replied with sweet and meaningful words thus: (Shl 10) Prahlada! See! Birth, growth, decay and destruction of all living beings are happening without any reason due to *sattwa-swaroopa paramatma*. Therefore I do not feel happy or sad about these. (Shl 11) **The nature of living beings will be in accordance with their past karmas.** It will be seen that all animals in the world act according to that nature. **All are engaged in/driven by their own nature.** Knowing this secret no one needs to feel elated under any circumstance. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 179**)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 45) Even though a person of mixed caste will be externally behaving like a person of virtuous origin, his nature will sooner or later show whether he is of higher birth or lower birth. (Shl 46) **In this world people are engaged in variety of behaviours and practices. They will be doing variety of karmas. But all of these will be aligned with their basic nature. Make-believe virtuous behaviour will not stay with them for long. Nature according to birth will be deeply ingrained in them. It will not go away.** (Shl 47) Even if persons of mixed caste have learnt *shastras* it will not pull them back from the qualities inherently built in the body. The body of human being consists of higher, medium and lower levels of nature. **It is only the karmas which are in sync with his nature that will make him happy.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 48**)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 22) The karmas of past births keep yielding their fruits in this birth. His mind/intellect will also be flowing in the appropriate directions of good or bad deeds according to his karmas of past births. (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209**)

Characteristics & Karmas of vile persons

- Yudhishtira said: (Shl 1) I have learnt what is kindness by meeting and serving *satpurushas*. But I have not understood the vile. I do not know what their *karmas* are. (Shl 2) **Just as people avoid thorns, wells, fire etc on the way and go bypassing them, they also avoid the vile and the cruel from a distance.** (Shl 3) A cruel person will be burned by the fire of troubles both here and in other worlds. Therefore tell me the dharma-karma of the cruel/vile persons (*nrishansa*).

Bhishma replied: (Shl 4-7) Dharmaja! Understand that persons with following characteristics will always indulge in cruel/base acts and are *nrishansas*: one who has only highly blameworthy/objectionable desires in his mind, **wishes to do only base acts of violence, blames others**, is blamed by others, thinks that *daiva* has cheated him, **repeatedly proclaims and publicises the donations/charities he has given**, whose mind is always filled with adversity, is mean, **destroys other's lives, enjoys objects of pleasures all by himself** (without sharing with anyone), is arrogant, is interested only in pleasures of the senses, **indulges in self-praise**, looks at all with suspicion, **speaks harshly**, has crooked sight like a crow, is miserly, proclaims that his opinion is the greatest, hates *varnasharmas*, **causes mix up of varnas, enjoys being violent towards others** (sadist), thinks that there is no difference between good and bad qualities, **is habituated to lying, is *ajitendriya*** (lacks control of senses) and is very greedy.

(Shl 8) An *nrishansa* considers a person who is steadfast on the path of dharma and having very good character as a sinner, who does not believe/trust anyone taking his character and behaviour as the ideal/standard behaviour and thinks all others are also like him. (Shl 9) **It will be his nature to publicise small defects in others which was unknown to public till then. He does not allow others to publicise similar defects in him and tries to destroy another offender like himself with the intent of continuing his own misdeeds.** (Shl 10) An *nrishansa* thinks that the person who has done some act of beneficence to him as someone who was cheated by him

(fell into my trap). If by chance he were to give some money to one who helped him, he will always be regretting it. (Shl 11) **Understand that the person who eats all kinds of good and luxurious food all by himself when others are looking is *nrishansa*.** Scholars should always avoid *nrishansas* and keep away from them. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 164)

Human initiative (*purusha prayatna*), *Daiva* (destiny) & Karma

Three factors

- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 19) Some say that for accomplishing karmas self-effort is the prime factor. Some brahmanas say it is *daiva*. The atheists say that everything is as per nature. (Shl 20) Some scholars say that the combination of self-efforts, *daivanugraha* (God's grace) and nature are responsible for accomplishments. They say that these three are always together. If they are separate no accomplishments are possible. It is not sensible to think that they are separate. (Shl 21) People who are mired in karma say that one of these is the cause. 'No, it is not so', is the opinion of some others. There are also some who says both of these are not causes. Some say that it is not that both are not causes. But *jnanis* who are established in *sattwa* regard all these impartially (*sama-darshinah*) (Meaning they are able to see impartially which of these are involved to what extent in each case and through their vision aided by *jnana* are able to see that Brahma is the root cause of all). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232)

Draupadi: Primacy of initiative

- Draupadi responding to Yudhishtira praises *Purusha-prayatna*: (Shl 1) As you know I do not reject dharma or blame it. Why should I blame Paramatma, the lord of all *chara-achara*? I only unburdened my grief to you in the context of many sufferings I am undergoing. I lamented; I will lament more. Listen to me with a kind heart.

(Shl 3) **Doing karma is the main duty of animals with intelligence.** *Sthavaras* (inanimate) cannot do any karma. Other than *sthavara* none others can live without doing karmas. (Shl 4, 5) Just as a newly born calf automatically goes for its mother's udders without anyone's direction and just as it finds a shade to rest, in the same way all animals live by doing their karmas. **But animals other than human being only do instinctive or nature driven karmas; they do not do karmas to enjoy other worldly pleasures. Only man is capable of performing karmas for his upliftment or fall in this and other worlds.**

(Shl 6) All animals know how to improve themselves. They are always enjoying the practical fruits of this visible world. (Shl 7) All animals take refuge in work that can help them grow/improve. A *baka* (crane bird) will be standing as if meditating near the lake. Has anyone taught it to do that? It is its natural/born karma. In the same way all animals perform their natural karmas to live and survive. Brahma has also re-created this world just as before. Creating the world again & again is Brahma's natural karma. (Shl 8) **Karma is associated by birth to all animals. No animal can live without doing karmas. As said earlier, karma follows man like a shadow.** Therefore you also do your karma. Do not be lazy. **There may not be even one in a thousand who can remember that the present happiness or difficulty is the result of a particular karma he did in the past (birth).** (Shl 10) Man should engage himself in work towards gain, increase and protection of his wealth. If he only spends without earning, even wealth the size of Himalayas will be spent in due course.

(Shl 11) **If people lived without doing any karma there was no possibility of their surviving. If there were no fruits for karma there would have been no progress for living beings.** (Shl 12) We sometimes see people doing fruitless karmas. But anyway people cannot have a livelihood without doing karmas. Therefore it is not possible to give up karmas. (Shl 13) **I consider the following two types as the worst among men—one who hopes to achieve everything by depending only on *daiva* and one who tests his luck. One who is always engaged in efforts is praiseworthy.** (Shl 14) **One who does no efforts and is sleeping depending on *daiva* will be destroyed just like an unbaked pot would melt in water.** (Shl 15) **A person who even though fit, does not engage in work but sits waiting only for luck/fortune, will soon be destroyed like a weak orphaned man.** (Shl 16) In case wealth comes accidentally, it is said to be gained by luck (*adrishtayattha*) and not due to anyone's efforts. (Shl 17) If wealth is gained by performing *mantra*, *japa* or *homas* it is called *daivayattha* wealth. (Shl 18) Wealth earned by hard work is called wealth earned by *Purusha-prayatna*. (Shl 19) If wealth is found when doing some effort, such as while digging the earth for some purpose, it should be treated as *swabhava-janya*. (Shl 20) **Wealth by all the above said methods is gained**

by virtue of karmas done in past births. (Shl 21) All pervasive God also gives their share of fruits of past karmas by ways described above.

(Shl 22) **Whatever auspicious and inauspicious karmas a man does are all done by virtue of his *karma-phalas* of past births and the promptings of *vidhatha*.** (Shl 23) This body which engages in karma is only a tool for doing the works ordained by Brahma. Therefore, even though the *shariri* (one who has the body—*jeeva*) has no freedom, thinks itself to be free and keeps working. (Shl 24) **The all pervasive Maheshwara is the director of all karmas in this birth. He causes all animals to work even though they have no freedom.** (Shl 25) **Man decides to do a karma driven by linkages of his past birth.** Then by using his intelligence he completes the work. **Therefore, man becomes the vehicle for completing work initiated by promptings of *daiva*.**

Yudhishtira! The number of works done by man in the past and yet to be done in future is innumerable. Huge buildings, the cities embedding them are all man-made works only. Man learnt to extract oil out of sesame by using his intelligence. He learnt to milk a cow and make curds out of it. He learnt to ignite the fire already present in wood and to cook food with it. Once he learns how to process materials, he puts together needed materials. **It is possible for him to live here only because he is able to get quick results for the work done by him.** But even when all the materials/ingredients are available, an unskilled person or one who does not know how to put them to use cannot obtain good results. By merely looking at an item we can make out whether it was made by a skilled or an unskilled person.

(Shl 30) **Maharaja! Even in works that are possible to be done by man, if we were to say that 'man is not the reason; *daiva* alone is the reason', then *yajna*, *yaagas*, constructing well, lakes etc water bodies and all such *dharmic-kriyas* would be useless.** There will be no scope in this world to discriminate between *guru* & *shishya* etc. (Shl 31) **Therefore man is the doer of his works.** If he wins in the performance of his duties he will be appreciated by all. If not, he will be subjected to infamy. If it were not established that man is the doer of his works, then why is he praised when he succeeds? Why is he blamed when he fails?

(Shl 32) **Maharaja! Some believe that everything is obtained accidentally. Some others say that happiness & grief are God-given. Some others say that results are obtained only by own efforts (*Purusha-prayatna*).** Thus there are three schools of thought. (Shl 33) There are some who are of the opinion that any one of these is not adequate. They feel that everything can be gained by accident (luck), past karmas, *daiva* and *Purusha-prayatna*. (Shl 34, 35) We see that man gets results in these three ways (*adrishtayattha*, *daivayattha*, *purushayattha*). There may be no fourth way. Even scholars dedicated to truth hold this same opinion.

(Shl 36, 37) **Maharaja! If *daiva* were not to give results of past karmas in suitable order why should those born here have happiness & grief? If there were no past karmas, all those born should have lived happily. All deeds done in this birth towards benefits/gains should have been successful. There would be no room for failure.** (Shl 38) Those who cannot understand these three causes are ignorant like ordinary humans. (Shl 39) Therefore man must do his karmas. Manu also says the same. **One who does not engage in needed works and just depends on luck or *daiva* will be destroyed.**

(Shl 40) **Generally a person who puts in efforts does succeed. One who is lazy, who does not do his duty will not get any fruits.** (Shl 41) If the efforts done do not yield results, one should try to analyse what was the defect and try again. If it fails even then, he cannot be blamed. He is cleared of his debts by having sincerely done his duty. (Shl 42) Only *daridra-lakshmi* (utter poverty) will grace the person who sleeps believing in *daiva* or luck. One who thinks it his duty to do the work and does so without laziness will undoubtedly gain *shreya* & *preya*. (Shl 43) It is meaningless to doubt whether results exist or not for a work done. **Those who engage in needed work without doubting will surely attain success. Those who are always doubtful will not do the work at all; they will not obtain any fruits also.**

Maharaja! Now we are facing difficulties. We must work towards overcoming this. If you work, we surely will avoid this situation. In case you have a doubt that efforts may not yield intended results, let Bhima-Arjuna-Nakula-Sahadeva try to regain the kingdom. If others can put in efforts and gain results (*karma-phalas*), can't we also try & succeed? **Is there a possibility of predicting that a certain work will give exactly a certain result? You can first do your efforts and then await/expect success or failure.** (Shl 47, 48, 49) Farmer first tills the land. Then he prepares the soil and sows the seeds. After all this effort he may not get any crop due to

failure of rains. The farmer does not become blameworthy because of this. He consoles himself saying, 'I did like all others. I did my job with sincerity. I have not lapsed in my duty. I did not get the crop because the rains failed. Overall it is not my fault.' There is no reason for him to blame himself for having ignored his duties. Just because he lost the crop once, he does not give up farming completely. Rains may fail once but may not fail every year. Farmer will again do all the tasks and will get the crop. **Therefore no one should give up or lose hope just because the first attempt failed.**

(Shl 50, 51) Yudhishtira! **To obtain the fruits of karma there are two more causes called *prarabdha*** (These are karmas which are part of *Sanchita* karmas, a collection of past karmas, which are ready to be experienced through the present body) **and *Ishwara-kripa*** (God's grace). Whether we see success or failure, there is no reason to lose hope. It is foolish not to even start work by thinking that the work may not yield result even if there is some defect in it. **If work is done, one can look forward to results. Our work will succeed only when all the factors become favourable.** (Shl 52) When all factors are not favourable, the results may be less than expected. Some times the effort may be completely wasted and we may not get any of the desired results. **None of the factors can favour one who does not start the work; nor will he get any fruits.**

(Shl 53) An intelligent person will also use his intelligence, will adopt suitable ways depending on time, place & context and with efforts added will find success in work. (Shl 54) **One who desires success/victory should have valour as the prime factor and do the work with care, alertness and caution.** Valour is the key factor for achieving success in our efforts. (Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 32)

Brahma: Primacy of initiative

- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Oh highly wise! Grandfather! Which is greater of the two—favourable *daiva* (fate, fortune) or *Purusha prayatna* (human initiative)?

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! In this matter scholars quote an ancient conversation between Vasishtha & Brahma. I will tell you the same. Listen. Once in the past Vasishtha questioned Brahma: Which is greater of the two—favourable *daiva* (fate, fortune) and *Purusha prayatna*? (This part looks somewhat suspicious. In Shloka 40, the example given of past cases is of Pandavas conquering Kauravas and regaining kingdom. This could also make some parts of this *adhyaya* suspect!!)

Answering it Grandfather Brahma said: (Shl 5) Child! Vasishtha! **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 crop corresponding to that. 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.** (Shl 11) One who works always gets fortune filled honour. One who does no work will suffer fall in the society and will suffer grief just like pouring salt on wound. (Shl 12) Man obtains good looks, fortune, variety of wealth etc by doing the *tapas* of karma. In this way everything can be obtained by karma. **But one who does no work and just waits idly for fortunate times cannot obtain any fruits.** (Shl 13) In this world it is only by human efforts that *swarga*, *bhoga* (enjoyments, luxuries), *dharma nishta* (dedication to dharma), *buddhi* (intelligence) can all be obtained. (Shl 14) *Nakshatras*, *devatas*, *nagas*, *yakshas*, *Chandra*, *surya*, *vayu* all these have obtained *devatva* from *manushyatva* only by self efforts. (Shl 15) A person does no work (or puts in no efforts) cannot enjoy money or friends or ancestral property or wealth which is difficult to get. (Shl 16) Wealth is obtained by brahmana by *shaucha*, *sadachara*, by *kshatriya* by valour, by *vysya* by working everyday and by *shudra* by serving others. (Shl 17) **Wealth does not serve the miser who does not donate. Wealth does not gather with the impotent, the idle, one who is**

not habituated to working, the coward and one who is not *tapasvi*. (Shl 18) That worship worthy Mahavishnu himself, who has created the three *lokas*, *daityas*, all *devatas*, is performing *tapas* in the ocean. (Shl 19) **In case no fruits were becoming available for the efforts made and all efforts of all were getting wasted, all people would have become disinterested in working and would just sit awaiting luck.** (Shl 20) The person who does no work and simply awaits luck will, like a woman having an impotent husband, reap no benefits. He will simply struggle uselessly.

(Shl 21) In the human *loka* there is not as much fear about good & bad deeds as in *devaloka* where even a small sin will cause great fear (*What are sins in devaloka?!*). (Shl 22) **The efforts of men yield results in accordance with the favourableness of *daiva*. But if no effort is made, *daiva* will not be able to give results.** (Shl 23) Even among *devatas* the positions like Indra etc are impermanent. They have to do *karmas* to retain their positions. This being so, how can *daiva* remain in its position without doing any work? How can it make others to remain in their positions? (When *devatas* themselves have to do *karmas* to retain their positions, how can *daiva* favour those who do not do any work?). (Shl 24) Even *devatas* do not encourage the works done by anyone here. They create obstacles to the *tapas* etc virtuous deeds of men fearing that they will be defeated. (*This is interesting. Even devatas have envy & fear of losing position. But according to Shl 21, this should have serious consequence for them*). (Shl 25, 26) There is always quarrel between *rishis* & *devatas* (*Devatas* create obstacles for the *tapas* of *rishis*— [*like sending apsaras to distract them etc., whereas asuras create obstacles in other ways!!*]). *Rishis* cause the *devatas* to lose their positions by using their power of *tapas*).

By whose words does *daiva* become *adaiva*? (Fortune or luck becomes useless or ineffective). **From where** (which point of time) **does *daiva* start its work? How is it born and in what manner does *daiva* engage in its action?** Many discussions of this type keep happening even among *devatas*. (Shl 27) **Man is his own relative; his own enemy too. He is himself the witness to the good and bad deeds he has done** (*atmaiva hi atmano bandhur, atmaiva ripur atmanah, atmaiva hi atmanah sakshi kritasya api akritasya cha*). (**Anushasana; Daandharma;; 6**)

Arjuna & Bhima in favour of initiative

- Arjuna's answer (opinion) to Sri Krishna: You appear to think that it is not fair to come to a compromise between us. Or perhaps you think that human effort is useless, that everything will happen according to *karma phalas* of past births and that just human effort cannot achieve everything. Whatever you have said in this matter is correct. It is certain that everything happens according to past birth's *karma phalas*. **But we cannot say that always things will happen according to this rule. 'Asadhyamapi kinchana' it is not possible to say that it is impossible to accomplish anything.** For those who do not have (favourable) fruits of past births, work done systematically will yield the fruits. (*This statement appears to have a few versions/interpretation*). **Any effort done systematically/properly/appropriately will certainly yield results.** (Udyoga; Yanasandhi; 78)
- Bhima to Yudhishtira: (Shl 26) **Mountains, trees and animals are not *karma-yonis*. 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. **In respect of our fortunes, we have to do our *karma* and obtain the 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)

Brahma on Supremacy of self-efforts

Brahma to Vasishta: (Shl 36) Even though king Janamejaya killed *dvija* women, he obtained refuge of Indra and went to *swarga*. Did *daiva* stop him at that time? (Shl 37) Brahmarshi Vaishampayana had acquired sins due to killing brahmana & a boy due to ignorance. Still he went to *swarga* due to his efforts. Did *daiva* stop him at that time? (Shl 38) In the past *rajarshi* Nriga

was a great donor. Once when he was giving away cows (to charity) due to temporary loss of memory he gave away the same cow twice. Just because of this one sin he had to take birth as a kind of ant. (Shl 39) A *rajarshi* called Dundhumara grew old performing *yajnas*. But he rejected the boon given by *devatas* and happily slept in Girivraja. (Shl 40) Mighty children of Dhritarashtra snatched away the kingdom of Pandavas. But Pandavas regained their kingdom. They did not do so due to the support of *daiva*. They were able to do this due to use of might.

(Shl 41) Do *munis* who are always in *tapas*, observe restrained living and practice severe *vrats*, ever curse others based on *daiva bala*? Don't they do it only based on the power obtained by *tapas*? (Shl 42) One who does many many *punya karmas* will possess all difficult to get things and will keep giving up sins. Even *daiva* cannot save a person who is greedy and in darkness from dangers. (Shl 43) Even if the spark of fire is small when encouraged by a breeze of wind it can grow into a huge fire. In the same way, **if accompanied by karma, *daiva* prospers well.** (Shl 44) **Just as the flame in an oil lamp extinguishes when the oil is exhausted, in the same way if no karma is done (idling) there will be no help from *daiva* also.** (Shl 45) Even if an idling man (having no work) has enormous wealth – variety of things of enjoyment, women etc. – he will not be able to enjoy them. But a person always engaged in work will get & enjoy wealth even if it is kept safely or is protected by *devatas*. (Shl 46) Even *devatas* seek support of the person who has the quality of spending wealth by way of giving to charity. For this reason his house in the human world will be more like a house in *devaloka* (*devatas* will reside in such house). But that house in which there are no acts of dharma or charity will look like a grave yard to *devatas* even if it has enormous wealth. (Shl 47) In this human world, a person with no work will never prosper. *Daiva* does not have the power to stop a person going in the wicked path and turn him towards path of virtuousness. Just as disciples follow the guru who leads them, *daiva* follows the karma which leads it. **It is the accumulated human effort (*Purusha prayatna*) which takes *daiva* wherever it wishes.**

Brahma said: Vasishta *muni*! Because I am always seeing the result of efforts I have told you all this factually. (Shl 49) By doing *karmas* started with the rise of *daiva-bala* and by following correct procedures (*vidhis*) man attains the path of *swarga*. (**Anushasana; Daandharma; 6**)

Kripacharya: Both factors are needed

(Shl 2) **All men (human beings) on earth are bound by two types of *karma*—*daivaukula* (favourable destiny/God) and *Purusha-prayatna* (self-efforts, hard work). Other than these, man is not bound by anything else.** (Shl 3) Success does not come by luck alone. Similarly it does not come by self-efforts alone. Tasks will be successful when both these combine. **All works we do, the best to the worst, are controlled by these two.** All deeds related to *pravaritti* and *nivritti* (our natural tendencies to engage or disengage in activities) are also regulated by these two factors. (Shl 5) Does *Parjanya* (rain god) gain any benefit by pouring rains on mountains? Would the same rain god not get benefit by pouring rains on well tilled and fertile land? (Commentary: The falling of rains is activity of *daiva*. But rains on mountains is not combined with human effort and hence is wasted. *Daiva* can give rains, but *Purusha-prayatna* is necessary to grow crops. Hence for any work to succeed both are required). (Shl 6) **Self-efforts without favourable destiny and favourable destiny without self-efforts are both a waste.** But it is sure that without favourable destiny, efforts are useless. (Shl 8) Of these two, *daiva* decides the consequences and acts on its own. Wise persons, who depend on wisdom and skill, always engage themselves in self-efforts. (Shl 9) It appears that all activities of men begin and stop only due to the influence of these two factors. (Shl 10) If you keep making your efforts towards a task it will succeed due to help of destiny. **Even the prompter of the task is the *daiva*. If you keep working from your end as prompted by *daiva*, that same *daiva* will help complete the work and yield desired fruits.**

(Shl 11) It is seen in many circumstances that actions done with foresight and systematic efforts fail if not supported by *daiva*. (Shl 12) But the lazy and the ones who are not *jitendriyas* make this a pretext to blame the need to make efforts. But the wise do not agree with this opinion. They do not find it palatable. (Shl 13) The reason the wise give for not giving up/stopping self-efforts are these: Perhaps it has not been seen in this world that efforts have completely failed. There may be delay in reaping the fruits. By trying repeatedly, fruits of efforts will certainly become available, even though with some delay. Therefore man should engage in needed efforts. **If efforts are not made with a doubt that *daiva* may or may not be favourable, there is no possibility of obtaining any fruits.** Not doing our work will lead to great grief. Therefore it is better to be

engaged in one's efforts. (Shl 14) A hard working, clever/skilled man will be able to live happily. But the lazy will not enjoy any happiness or comforts. In this world those who are skilled and put in efforts will perhaps also be *hitaishis* (benevolent, well-wishers). (Shl 16) If a skilled man starts the efforts and continues it sincerely, even if he does not get the results he will not be blamed. If he continues his efforts steadily, he will eventually surely get the desired fruits. (Shl 17) One who puts in no efforts and gets some results only due to luck will be criticised by others. Everyone hates such a person.

(Shl 18) One who acts by ignoring or disrespecting this co-operation of efforts and *daiva* will bring worthless or evil results upon himself. It is the *neeti* of the wise that efforts should be made continuously and also try to obtain the favour of *daiva*. (Shl 19) **Men face failure due to two reasons: Not making efforts but waiting only for luck; putting in efforts but not having favourable *daiva*.** (Shl 20) Nothing can succeed in this world without self-efforts. A person who is efficient, has good qualities like generosity etc., does all his works systematically & nicely and also prays to gods for their support will never suffer from failure. (Shl 21) Those who are capable of such integrated effort are: those who serve the aged, who find out from them what is best for them, and who follow the advice of the aged. Only they can make this integral effort.

(Shl 22) Everyday in the morning, one should approach aged (experienced) scholars and ask them what the best thing is for achieving well-being, because, aged scholars are the key factor for achieving success in tasks. The methods they suggest will be the root cause for success. (Shl 24) Whoever desires to gain prosperity (*artha-siddhi*) by *raga* (coloured feelings, envy) *krodha* (anger), *bhaya* (fear), *lobha* (greed) will not only become incapable of getting it, but will also be subjected to humiliation. He will also be very quickly deprived of the wealth....(Shl 35) **If actions are not initiated, there will be no benefit of any kind. In case self-efforts are made but results are not obtained, it should be understood that it is impaired by *daiva* (*daivopahata*).** There is no need to further analyse in this matter. (Sauptika parva; 2)

- Bird Poojani to King Brahmadutta: (Shl 82) ***Daiva* and *Purusha-prayatna* are inter-dependent. A generous man will always be doing good deeds. He will be always engaged in doing his karmas wilfully. Those without any *paurusha* (virility/vitality) will do nothing and sit idly depending on *daiva*.** (Shl 83) Whether harsh/difficult or easy, works which are good for self (*atma-hitam*) should be done. One who is not dedicated to working, does not do anything even for the good of self will become a pauper and be subjected to all kinds of losses. (Shl 84) **Therefore man should push aside *kaal*, *daiva* and *swabhava* (nature) (not trust them too much) and should indulge in sincere efforts. Even if everything has to be sacrificed, he should do works which are good for his self.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 139)

Draupadi on the supremacy of *daiva*

- Draupadi: Just as a *sutradhara* moves the limbs of a wooden doll so does Paramatma with our lives. He, like the *akasha*, is all-pervasive & thus directs our lives. Ishwara is the supreme *prabhu* & none other. Man can do nothing independently etc. Mentions several important concepts of vedantha & raises pertinent doubts an ordinary person would have.

(Shl 24) Just as the sky is all pervasive, in the same way Paramatma being all pervasive directs the happiness & unhappiness of *jeevas*. (Shl 25) Like a bird tied to a string, all *jeevas* are under the control of Ishwara. There is no lord other than Ishwara. (Shl 26, 27) Every *jeeva* is subject to the will of Ishwara just as beads in a string, ox tied by the nose rope and tree caught in the middle of a flood. This man can do nothing independently. (Shl 28) **Man is ignorant. He alone is not responsible for his happiness & grief. He does his karmas as prompted by *daiva* and goes to *Swarga* or *Naraka*.** (Shl 29) Just as a blade of grass flies in the strong wind helplessly, man does good or bad deeds prompted by the mighty *daiva*. (Shl 30) Yudhishtira! One peculiar thing about this is this: it is sure that *daiva* resides in us. It is also sure that living beings do good or bad deeds due to its promptings. **Still no one considers that these deeds are prompted by *daiva*.** (Shl 31) This body designated as *kshetra* is merely a pretext for Brahma. He makes the body perform karmas yielding auspicious & inauspicious fruits as he wishes. (Shl 32) **See the greatness of the *maya* of Paramatma, Yudhishtira! He makes this foolish man believe that this body, which is actually a pretext, to think it is 'me & mine' and causes this *kshetra* to kill another which is similar to it.** (Shl 33, 34) Matters understood by *maharshis* who know *tattva* will change at another time like the direction of wind. **Man thinks/understands something; *daiva* does something quite different.**

(Shl 35) Yudhishtira! To cut an insentient tree, an axe is used which has a piece of tree itself as its handle. Stone is broken using stone itself. Iron can be cut with a tool made from iron only. **The insentient cannot do things. It is *daiva* that does everything.** (Shl 36) Yudhishtira! In this manner that Almighty, *swayambhu*, *devadeva Bhagawan* kills animals through animals by his *maya*. (Shl 37) Just as children play with dolls, that God plays this game of creating and destroying lives as he wishes. (Shl 38) **This *daiva*, like a mother would be affectionate towards all children, does not behave with affection towards all *jeevas*. It acts like someone who is not our own and is an enemy full of rage.** (Shl 39) Because, we have seen that in this world due to the mischief of this *daiva*, the *satpurushas*, the truthful, the followers of dharma etc suffer only difficulties and the wicked live happily. I feel very sad seeing this. (Shl 40) I certainly do not agree that the Paramatma is the greatest, seeing the difficulties you are experiencing and the pleasures that Duryodhana is enjoying. **He is not impartial.** (Shl 41) What great fruits does the *daiva* enjoy by giving that wicked, arrogant and greedy Duryodhana all the wealth? What is the benefit to the *daiva* by doing this?

(Shl 42) **If it is true that, 'the karmas done follow the doer and no one else can share it', then this Sarveshwara who prompts all karmas will also have to share the sinful deeds.** If this is not so and it is said that the fruits of good and bad deeds do not go to the Paramatma who prompts everything, then, I have to conclude that strength and weakness are the causes for happiness & unhappiness and I pity the weak. (**Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 30**)

Others on Power of destiny

- Namuchi to Indra: (Shl 20) **Man cannot obtain the unobtainable whether by *mantras* or might or valour or intelligence or self-efforts or character or virtuous practices or monetary wealth. Where is the reason therefore to grieve?** (Shl 21) **I, who am born in accordance with my karmas, am following whatever rules & methods have been arranged for me by the important & unseen creators.** What can death do to me who believes that everything is the rule of fate? (Shl 22) **Man will get whatever he has to get as ordained by fate. He will go where he is destined to go.** If he has to get sorrow that is what he will get. If it is happiness that is what he will get. (Shl 23) The person who, understanding this secret, does not get deluded about happiness & unhappiness that come cyclically will be cheerful under all unhappy circumstances and will gain all wealth. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 226**)
- Samaga to Narada: (Shl 8) ***Devatas* with disease free bodies, the mighty, and the weak — all these are living according to their *prarabdha-karmas*. In the same way, even though I have no particular profession, I live depending on my karmas.** Therefore do not disrespect us as *nishkarmis* (who do nothing) but respect us. (Shl 9) Those who have a thousand gold coins or cattle also live. Those with just a hundred gold coins or cows also live. Some live just on roots. In the same way, see us the way we are living. (Shl 10) Respected Narada! Because we have overcome ignorance and have no grief, what use is dharma or worldly karmas which yield their fruits? Whether happiness or grief, since they are under control of *kaal* what is the need to worry about them? Happiness and grief appear and vanish according to the will of *kaal*. **These which are transient cannot scare us who are *jnanis* knowing its secret.** (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 286**)

Karmas to prevent/avoid hurdles

- Sri Krishna took bath to purify and then performed some *shantikarmas* to overcome any hurdles that may occur during his journey.....He started from Indraprastha to Dwaravathi on a day with *Shubha-nakshatra*, *Shubha-thithi* and *Shubha-muhurtha*. (**Sabha; Sabhakriya; 2**)
- Yudhishtira to brahmanas: Great *vipras*! Please perform whatever karmas that are needed to be done on whichever day and whichever *nakshatra* you consider auspicious for starting the work about bringing the wealth. Decide what will help accomplishing the task quickly and do the needed karmas.
Brahmanas said to him: (Shl 14) *Maharaja*! Today itself is an auspicious day with a sacred *nakshatra*. Therefore we will start the karmas today itself. Today we will live only on water. We will not take any other food. You should also observe fast today. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 64**)

- Kanika to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 85) One who desires success should do any work according to the demands of time & place (*desha, kala*). He should perform *mantra* based karmas to correct the destiny. Time & place have a great impact on human life. They alone are causes for good & great things. This is the dictum of *neeti-shastra*. One should try for *dharma-artha-kaama* as dictated by time & place. (Adi; Sambhava; 140)

Liberation from karmas/its bondage

Giving up 'I am the doer' feeling

- Siddha purusha to Kaashyapa: (Shl 7) One who has no interest in either dharma or *adharma*, who will let the accumulated fruits of karma decay by experiencing them, has a calm mind because he has given up the objects of senses and is beyond dualities will be liberated from the ocean of *samsara*. (Shl 8, 9) **One who does not consider himself to be the doer of karmas (*akarmavan*)**, has no desires/expectations, realises that the world is impermanent, that it is like the *ashwattha* tree, is unfavourable for *atma sadhana*, consists of birth, death & ageing and hence develops an indifference (*vairagya buddhi*) and realises his own defects will liberate himself soon from this *samsara*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 19)
- Thus questioned by Janamejaya, Vaishampayana, who was skilled in speaking, great among *dvijas*, disciple of Vyasa and great orator said: (Shl 4) **Nareshwara! It is clear that unless fruits of all the performed karmas are experienced, they will not be destroyed.** *Jeevatma* gets bodies (*sharira*) and forms (*akrti*) based only on karmas. (Shl 5) The *pancha-maha-bhutas* are permanent due to the support of *Bhutanatha* (God). All the time these cohabit/come together in the transient body. Destruction of the impermanent body results in separation of *pancha-bhutas* from the body but not their destruction.

(Shl 6) **The karmas done readily/easily without the pride or attachment that 'I did it' yields great fruits of *mukti*.** The *jeevatma* gets bound by the karmas done with the pride of doing it (I did it) and with effort (implying, I struggled) and hence experiences happiness and grief. (Shl 7) **Thus, even though the *kshetrajna* is apparently associated with karmas, in reality he is indestructible.** This is certain. But since *jeeva* has developed oneness with *pancha-bhutas*, it cannot be separated from them without *atma-jnana*. (Shl 8) As long as the *prarabdha* karmas (that part of the fruits of karmas already accumulated & ready to be experienced now) of the body do not decay, the *jeeva* will have oneness with the body. Once it decays, the *jeeva* takes on another form. (Shl 9) *Pancha-bhutas*, *indriyas* and such other many things acquire a body and gain oneness. Those who realise the body as being different from the *atma*, to such yogis *bhutas* & *indriyas* become permanent forms of *atma* (*bhavanti te tatha nitya prthak bhavam vijanatam*). (Ashramavasika; Putradarshana; 34)

- Bhishma: (Shl 14) The method for practicing *japa-yoga* is as follows: The doer of *japa* should sit on a *kushasana*.....(Shl 15) Should bid good bye to the attractions of sensory pleasures. They should never be thought about. Should achieve equilibrium of *trigunas* and merge the mind in the mind (*manasyeva mano dadhat*). (Shl 16) While doing *japa* of *samhita* which brings all round auspiciousness, *paramatma* should be meditated upon through the *buddhi*. Once the *samadhi* state is reached *japa* can be given up. (In that state only *brahma-bhava* remains & everything else drops). (Shl 17, 18) He becomes purified by *tapas* and gains complete victory over *indriyas*. He becomes free of *kaam*, *krodh*, *lobh* & *moha*. He will transcend dualities. He will neither feel sorrow for anything nor will he be interested in anything. **He will never consider himself as the cause for karmas or as doer of deeds. Whatever he does, will be done without the feeling of 'I'.** (Shl 19) He will never develop *ahankara* at any point of time. (Believes that everything happens according to god's will). He will not get interested in accumulating *artha*. Even when he is humiliated he will not humiliate others. **Will never become *akarmanya*** (not doing karmas). **Will be engaged in *karma-yoga*.** (Shl 20) He will always be interested only in actions relating to *dhyana*. He will know the truth only through *dhyana*. By attaining the state of *samadhi* through *dhyana*, he will gradually give up *japa* & *dhyana-karma*. (Shl 21) In that state he will experience the indescribable ultimate bliss. At that time he does not desire *ashta-siddhis* etc. He will become totally & always free of desires and will enter *Brahma*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 196)

Jnana marga

- Brahmana to his wife: (Shl 4) My *buddhi* has understood whatever kingdom is there on this entire earth and in *Swarga*. Therefore *buddhi* itself is my money. (Shl 5) **Brahmanas who know Brahma walk only the path of *jnana*** irrespective of whether they are in *brahmacharya*, *garhastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sanyasa ashrams*. (Shl 6) Whatever insignia they may have, their *buddhi* will remain unagitated. Whatever *ashram* or insignia they may have, their *buddhi* will be firm in the *sadhana* of highest peace. Just as all rivers join the sea, whatever be the *ashram* they are in, they will attain *brahma bhava* only. (Shl 7) **This path can only be attained by *buddhi*. It cannot be achieved with body. All karmas have beginning and end. Body is bound by karmas.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 33)
- Brahma to *rishis*: (Shl 37) For such *mahatmas* who are dedicated to *jnana* and are *jeevan-muktas*, the ultimate state is *atma-darshan*. **Because, they would have realised that in all karmas in *pravrtti marga* there are auspicious & inauspicious consequences.** (Shl 38) This is the ultimate refuge for disinterested *sadhaks* (*esha gativiraktaanam*). This is itself also *sanatana dharma*. **It is also the place *janis* have to obtain.** It is the practice without any defects. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 51)
- 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 fried seeds (*beeja*) 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)
- (Shl 17) Dhritarashtra to Sanatsujata: Vedas have said that the eternal & *punya lokas* that would be attained by brahmanas by performing *yajna-yaagas* are also the *parama purusharthas* for them. Despite knowing this why doesn't a *brahmaavid* scholar indulge in these karmas consisting of *yajna-yaagas*?

Sanatsujata: (Shl 18) Those who take the route of such karmas are surely *ajnanis*. It is for such people that Vedas have prescribed various karmas & their *phalas*. **But a *brahmaavid* will not indulge in such karmas that yield transient results.** He overcomes all worldly desires, stays fixed in Paramatma *bhava* and attains the Paramatma; **he also destroys all useless methods or approaches with his *jnana*.** (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42)

- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 26) By achieving '*chitta prasannata*' state, **the *jnani* destroys *paap* & *punya karmas*;** this state can be compared by example to the state of a lamp burning steadily in a room without any breeze. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 213)
- (Shl 22) Dhritarashtra to Sanatsujata: In this world some practice *dharma*. Some others practice *adharma*. This being so, **does *dharma* get destroyed by *paap* or does *dharma* neutralise *paap*?** (There is also an alternate version of this *shloka*)

Sanatsujata: (Shl 23) **It is possible that *dharma* may bring freedom from *paap*. It is also possible that *dharma* may be destroyed due to increase of *paap*. Both ways are possible.** (Shl 24) A *vidwan*, even if he is performing all the prescribed karmas & *dharma* related karmas, lives such that *paap* & *punya* do not attach to him. This is well known & established. If, on the other hand, **karmas are being performed without the ultimate knowledge (*jnana*), he will get the fruits of those karmas.** (*Paap or punya phalas* according to the karmas & the way they are performed). This is also well known & established. (Shl 25) The *jeeva* which is bound by the thinking that *deha is atma* (*dehatma buddhi*) will enjoy the fruits (*paap or punya*) of karmas in other lokas. Both these are transient. Once the fruits are exhausted, another birth is certain. **But a *jnani* or *vidwan* is beyond *paap* & *punya*. He burns the fruits of *paap* & *punya* with the fire of his *jnana*.** The karmas done by him do not accumulate *paap or punya*. In him *atmadharma* is strongly established. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42)

- Vidura: (Shl 17) All *pranis* (life-forms) may be born in this world according to their past *karmas* or they may not take birth. When the law of nature is like this, why do you grieve? (Shl 18, 19) When an animal or man is swimming in a river to cross it, sometimes it will remain under water (hence will be unseen) and sometimes will be seen on water. In this world which is characterised by being above (birth) and being below (death), fools with low intelligence are bound by experiencing *karma* (*karma-bhoga*) and also suffer grief due to it. (Shl 20) **The wise and the knowledgeable (*prajna*) develop *sattva-guna* and desire good of all life-forms, realise the secret of this coming together under the control of *karma* and attain best *sadgati*.** (Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 3)
- Bhishma: (Shl 25) The *viragi* who performs *karmas* only for sustaining the body will achieve **balance of *gunas* (*guna-saamya*)** through the mind, will prompt the *prana* to move in the upward direction (*urdhwa-gati*) at the time of death and will be freed of the bondage of the body. (Shl 26) **The mind which has accomplished *guna-saamya* gains *jnana*.** Such glowing mind free of *rajo-guna* brings about *mantra-siddhi* to the *mahatmas*. (Shl 27) **Therefore man should do only blemish free *karmas* in order to keep the mind under restraint.** Only after giving up the *rajas* & *tamo gunas* can a man attain the desired *gati*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 214)
- Bhishma: (Shl 22) Yogi will be careful until death and will be liberated after death. The birth & death of living beings always occurs due to *ajnana*. (Shl 23) **After Paramatma *sakshatkara*, the *prarabdha karmas* do not follow him.** As against this, one who believes that the body etc *anatma-vastus* are the *atma* (Truth) gets stuck in the cycle of birth & death which are controlled by *prarabdha karmas*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 217)
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 29) The dualities like heat & cold, happiness & grief etc that the *jeeva* believing in body as the 'I' experiences are obtained through *karmas*. The person who attains *atma-siddhi* with the power of *tattva-jnana* gives up these dualities. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232)

Karma tyaga (renouncing karmas)

- Bhishma: (Shl 46) That *muni* who **gives up all *karmas* related to *Prakriti* (*samsara* related)** and is dedicated to realising *atma* will attain the great *gati* by becoming *atmabhuta* for all beings. (Once he has *atma-jnana*, such a *jnani* will see in everyone only the *chidatma*. He will feel that he is in them and they are in him). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 194)
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 15) The *jeevatma* who takes shelter in *paap* & *punya karmas* will be dragged in the path of *karmas* repeatedly and keeps experiencing the fruits of *karmas* in the form of happiness and unhappiness. (Shl 16) The *vishayas* retract from one who starves. The pleasures of *shabda* etc leave him. But the interest or desire for them would not have gone away. By realising the Paratpara Paramatma, the desire for them will also go away. (Shl 17) **When *buddhi* becomes free of the qualities of engaging in *karma* (*karma-gunair-hina*) and stays in the heart, then *Brahmabhava* is attained and everything merges in that *bhava*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 204)
- Panchshikha: (Shl 11) It is said that the *chetana* which has *vijnana* (consciousness) and is eternal is of three kinds: *adukha* (free from evil or trouble, propitious), *asukha* (unhappy) and *sukha-dukha*. (Shl 12) The six viz *shabda*, *sparsha*, *roopa*, *rasa*, *gandha* and the materials for these are the means for the *jeeva* throughout life to gather knowledge generated by *indriyas* (Knowledge of different subjects/objects comes after the *jananendriyas* come in contact with the objects of *indriyas*). (Shl 13) **Not doing *karmas* for the *indriyarthas* becomes a means for *moksha* which is definitive form of all *tattvarthas*.** This *tattva-nishchaya* is also said to be *moksha-beeja*, *buddhi* and *avyaya*. (Shl 14) Those who consider this body which is assemblage of all *gunas* as *atma* will obtain sorrow due to false knowledge. (Shl 15) Contrary to this, how can griefs afflict those who have understood that this perceptible world is *anatma*, who have no attachment to this world and who are egoless (*nirahankari*)? What can be the basis, even, of grief for them? (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 219)
- Panchshikha: (Shl 16) Now I will preach you *tyaga-shaastra* known as *samyagvadha*. Listen carefully. It will help you attain *moksha*. (Shl 17) **Those who try for *moksha* should renounce all desires for the *karmas* (*ahankara*, *mamakara*, *vishaya-askati*).** Those who are engaged in

shama, dama etc *sadhanas* without renouncing are fake *sadhaks*. Such persons will have sorrowful troubles. (Shl 18) **In *shastras yajna-karmas* have been prescribed to renounce material wealth, *vratas* for renouncing pleasures of senses, *tapas* for renouncing bodily comforts and practice of yoga to renounce everything. If everything is renounced one can obtain *mukti*.** (Shl 19) Practice of yoga (*yoganushtaan*) which requires renouncing everything is the only way to overcome/avoid sorrow. One who acts contrary to this will only obtain misfortunes. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 219)

- Panchshikha: (Shl 44) **One who understands this *moksha vidya*, and without being negligent seeks the *atma-tattva* will not be smeared by *karma-phalas* just like water on a lotus leaf.** (Shl 45) **When human being, freed from the strong shackles of *sakama-karmas* done for begetting children or to please different *devatas*, renounces both happiness and sorrow—when he transcends duality—then he will give up the pride or attachment to the subtle body (becomes *alinga*) and attains the great state.** (Shl 47) Just as spider weaves its web all around and sits in the centre of that web, the *jeeva*, who is under control of *avidya*, **sits at the centre of the house that is web of karmas.** Just as a lump of mud when banged on a stone breaks into pieces, when this web of karmas is destroyed all his grief will be destroyed. (Shl 48) Just as the animal called *Ruru* loses its old horns and goes away happily, a snake loses its old skin and goes away without bothering, in the same way man without pride/affection for his body or ego will be freed of the bondage of *samsara* and will give up grief. (Shl 49) Just as a bird seeing the tree in which it lived for long falling into river abandons it and goes away without any attachment to it, the liberated man will abandon both *sukha* & *dukha* and leaving his subtle body will attain the great state. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 219)
- Prahlada to Indra: (Shl 28) Shakra! I am aware of all the *dharma-vidhis* & the transientness of living beings. Knowing very well that all these are perishable, I do not grieve about the kingdom & wealth. (Shl 29) Without any 'I & mine', free of all bondages, free of attachments and established in *atma*, I have been observing the birth & death of all living beings. (Shl 30) I do not feel any difficulty in having lost kingdom and wealth as I with a cultured *buddhi*, with control on *manas* & *indriyas*, free of *trishna* & desires/expectations am observing the imperishable *atma* and perishable *loka*. (Shl 31) **I have neither love nor hatred about the *Prakriti* and its actions.** I do not consider any one as my hater or as being close to me. (Shl 32) Indra! I do not expect or desire anything whether above or below or at same level or at any place. **I have no karmas to do for the sake of *jnana* (Knowledge), *vijnana* (worldly knowledge or any specialised knowledge) & *jneya* (to be known).** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 222)
- Kapila to Syumarashmi: (Shl 56) *Yatis* who desire to attain the ultimate state (*parama-gati*) will see the hurdles in the *karma-marga* and reject both *punya-karma* & *paap-karma*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 269)
- Sulabha to Janaka: (Shl 131) **The *trivarga* of *dharma, artha* & *kaam* shows itself in seven ways (*dharma, artha, kaam, dharma-artha, dharma-kaam, kaam-artha* & *dharma-artha-kaam*) in the karmas of this world.** How can there be signs of *jeevan mukta* in someone who is interested or trapped (not detached) in these even without his knowledge? (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)
- Narada to Shukamuni: (Shl 54) **That same animal (human being) which is suffering from grief because of its karmas of many births (human being) kills animals in several ways to overcome grief** (Causes grief to them; Does this refer to animal sacrifice?!). (Shl 55) Then that man again engages in more and more new karmas and again feels tormented by those karmas just as a sick person eats the forbidden food and suffers. (Shl 56) The man who is blind with *moha* has the feeling that he is happy with grief causing *bhogas* (enjoyments). **He is bound by his own karmas.** And he gets churned like the churning-stick. (Shl 57) Man bound again & again by generation of new karmas, gets some birth in this world according to his karmas and suffering a variety of agonies, will be turning like a wheel. (Shl 58) **Therefore you should find accomplishment by retiring from all karmas,** by freeing yourself from all bondages, by being victorious over everything and by being free of the worldly feelings. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 329)

- Yajnavalkya to Vishwavasus: (Shl 54) Thinking about the unending births & deaths, and understanding that the *karmas* stated in the *karma-kanda* of Vedas & their fruits lead to destruction, they should be given up and refuge should be taken in the undecaying *Sankhya dharma*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 318)**
- Sanjaya to Yudhishtira: (Shl 15) Relinquishing karma means relinquishing of *dushkarma*. **Even if karmas are done, it should be done without any desires.** Even if you end (burn) all karmas with *jnanagni*, do not give up *satya*, *dharma* & *rjutra*. Do not stop performing *yagas* like Ashwamedha, Rajasuya etc. Do not go anywhere near sinful deeds. (Shl 23) Anger is not a type of disease. But it is very bitter. It comes unknown to us. Soon it rises to our head. It is as if we have a kind of disease in the head. It takes away fame. **An angry man forgets humanitarian concerns. It gives *paap-phalas*. But noble persons swallow such anger. The wicked cannot do it. Therefore please swallow your anger.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 27)

Yoga marga

- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 14) Those whose *buddhi* is fixed in transient happiness think that tomorrow is too far and eat all forbidden things without any concern or fear. **These fools have not understood the greatness & significance of *karma-bhumi*.** (Shl 15) **Hold on to the ladder of dharma and keep climbing slowly but steadily. Just as the silk worm builds a cocoon around itself and becomes a prisoner in it, you have created a cocoon around yourself with your *karma-phalas* and have become a prisoner within it. But you have not realised that this has happened.** (Shl 16) Without any fear reject/relinquish, as you would a bamboo grove which has been uprooted, the atheist who is like the flood which breaks & exceeds its banks and rushes everywhere & knows no limits. (Shl 17) Cross the river which has water of *kaam*, *krodh*, death and five *indriyas* with the boat of *dhriti* (*Sattwic dhriti*: Restraining *manas*, *prana* & actions of *indriyas* through yoga and not getting interested in objects of senses). Cross in this manner and escape from the difficult to cross agony of birth & death. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 321)**
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 39) Child! When you are about to leave this body, your grief filled/perturbed body will lose its memory too. Therefore, practice the great *samadhi yoga* before that happens. (Shl 40) **In the past you have committed karmas which cause you pain due to your carelessness. Therefore you are required to experience the good & bad fruits of those karmas in this birth.** Before you repent recollecting them, stop doing such karmas and start accumulating *jnana*. By doing so you will not have to repent. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 321)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 17, 18) Just as weak birds caught in the fine net of a hunter are destroyed, people without *yoga-bala* caught in the net of fruits of their karmas are also destroyed. Just as strong birds free themselves from the fine net, persons with *yoga-bala* cut through the bondages of karma and become liberated. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 300)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 39, 40, 41) Oh the unlimited valiant! The yogi who is focussed in the great *vrat* of yoga practice merges the subtle *jeevatma* with *Paramatma* by *dhaarana* in following places: navel, throat, head, heart, chest, two sides, eyes, ears & nose. Such a yogi, if he desires, can burn to ashes mountainous fruits of auspicious & inauspicious karmas and can become liberated soon using yoga. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 300)**

Other approaches

- King Janaka to Sulabha: (Shl 38) **Those who are great among the knowers of paths of *moksha* have found that there are three kinds of dedications to *moksha*. The greatest of them, *jnana*, is of the form of giving up all karmas.** (Shl 39) Some among those who know *moksha shastra* say that dedication to *jnana* (*jnana-nishta*) alone is the means to *moksha*. Some other *yatis* with a subtle vision say that *karma-nishta* is the means to *moksha*. (Shl 40) Mahatma Panchashikha taught me a third dedication (*nishta*) which is other than *jnana-nishta* only or *karma-nishta* only. (Shl 41) Those who follow this third *nishta* will be just like *grihasthas* in respect of *yama* (self-restraint), *niyama* (rule, restraint of mind), *kaam* (desire), *dwesha* (hatred), *parigraha* (acquisition, possession), *maana* (pride), *dambha* (hypocrisy, deceit) & *sneha* (affection, friendliness). **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)**

- Narada to Shukamuni: (Shl 36) *Vidya*, **karma**, sacredness, wide *jnana* – all these are followed/practiced for obtaining Paramatma. **As soon as man becomes *siddhartha* (accomplished in this goal), they will also drop out. Man also becomes liberated (*mukta*). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 329)**
- Bhagawan Prajapati Brahma said: (Shl 10) The same or single *agni* burns bright in several forms. The same *Surya* is the cause for different kinds of light. The same *vayu* flows in the *loka* with different shapes. Ocean is the birth place for water in different shapes & forms. Similarly the one *Purusha* is *nirguna* & *vishwaroopa*. All forms merge or dissolve in that *nirguna parama-purusha*. (Shl 11) **That *sadhak* who gives up attachment to all objects including *indriyas* that consist of *gunas*, who gives up good & bad karmas as well as *satya* & *anrita* (truth & falseness) becomes *nirguna*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 351)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 92-96) Yudhishtira! Parabrahma Paramatma pervades comprehensively through his *gunas* the *sattwa-gunas*, *rajo-gunas*, *tamo-gunas*, *gunas* of *buddhi*, *guna* of *manas*, *akash's gunas*, *vayu's gunas*, *tejas' gunas*, *water's gunas* and *prithvi's gunas* and resides in *kshetrajna*. (Parabrahma *tattva* pervades everything). **Just as a disciple follows his guru wherever he goes, *manas*, *indriyas* and fruits of good & bad karmas follow the *jeevatma***. When the *jeevatma* merges in itself the *manas* & *indriyas* which come to it and exceeds *Prakriti*, then he joins Paramatma Narayana who is beyond *maya*, beyond dualities, is undecaying & is great. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 301)
- Maheshwara replied to Uma: (Shl 4) *Dev!* Your question can sharpen the thinking and is for the welfare of all. Listen to the appropriate answers. (Shl 6) Such *satpurushas* who have cleared all doubts, who know the *tattva* of creation and dissolution, and who see everything (all-seeing) are not bound by dharma or *adharma*. (Shl 7) Those who do not harm/hurt anyone by action, mind or speech and are free of *raaga* (love, affection) & *dwesha* (hatred) will be liberated from the bondages of karma. (Shl 8) Those who are not attached to anything, who stay away from taking life, have virtuous conduct, are kind, who treat friend & foe equally, and are *jitendriyas* will be liberated from the bondages of karma. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 144)
- Parashara said: Maharaja! I will tell you about the actions that you have asked. I will tell you karmas which are non-violent and protect the human beings at all times. (Shl 37, 38) Those who do the transference of *agnis* and take up *Sanyasa*, look at all with (philosophical) indifference, are free of all kinds of worries, who progressively walk the path of *karma-marga* culminating in *moksha*, are obedient, humble, are enriched with qualities like *indriya-nigraha*, practice harsh *vrats* **will be freed of all karmas and attain indestructible state. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 296)**

Sakaam karma/Nishkaam karma
(Karma with desire & free of desire)

About sakaam karma

- Panchashikha: (Shl 22) Janadeva! **Practicing dharma with desires/expectations and obtaining fruits from such karmas are all transient.** They give momentary happiness. **It is not right to have interest in these *kaamya-karmas*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 218)**
- Tuladhara to Jajali: (Shl 34) Those who perform *dharma-karyas* desiring *swarga* etc will gain those fruits and be fortunate. But these same people will fall from *swarga* once their *punya* decays/is used up. Knowing that the fruits of *kaamya-karmas* (actions seeking desires) will decay with time wise persons develop disinterest/disgust for such karmas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 262)
- Bhishma: (Shl 7) Harsh *vrats* should be practiced while fasting. **The karmas for fulfilling desires (*kaamya-karmas*) stated in Vedas should be given up.** *Sakaam* karmas should be treated as *anachara* karmas (forbidden). They should not be indulged in. Only the mean perform karmas desiring fruits. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 265)

- Brahma to *rishis*: (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 becomes a subject to grasping 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*). (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 51)
- Bhishma replied: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! **One who has following five qualities in him will be considered a happy person:** equality towards all, not struggling for useless worldly comforts & enjoyments, being truthful, detachment towards *samsara* and **disinterest in *kamya-karmas*** (works desiring fruits). (Shl 3) The *jnana-vriddhas* say that these five rules are the steps to achieving peace. It is their opinion that this alone is *swarga*, is *dharma* and the ultimate happiness. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 177)
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 29) The *jeeva* who takes shelter in another body with all the *janendriyas* depends on the *karmendriyas* in that body which are constituted of *pancha-bhutas*. **It is not possible to realise Parabrahma by only *kamya-karmas* while leaving aside *jnana* & *upasana*.** One who is engaged only in *kamya-karmas* is deprived of realising the greatest Parabrahma who is *avyaya*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 206)
- Bhishma: (Shl 5) Men who are desirous of *dharma* will be performing karmas with desire, in accordance with *shastras*. But if they do not have the qualities given next they cannot obtain the desired fruit. (Shl 6) **Purity of speech, mind and body (*trikarana-shuddhi*), *kshama*, *satya*, *dhriti* and *smriti* --- these qualities are said to be auspicious for all dharmas.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 214)

About nishkaam karma

- Bhishma: (Shl 15) By performing *tapas* which lights up the inner being, all three *lokas* will be brightened. Even the Sun & Moon are shining due to the influence of their inner *tapas*. (Shl 16) The word '*tapas*' is world famous. The fruit of inward looking *tapas* is the resulting brilliance of *jnana*. **The karma which destroys *rajo-guna* & *tamo-guna* (that *nishkaam karma*) is the characteristic of *adhyatmic tapas*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 217)
- Sanatkumara to Vritra & Shukra: (Shl 24) **Understand that *sattwa*, *rajas* & *tamas* are *Narayanatmak* (belonging to or forming the nature of Narayana). He alone is the fruit of all *ashrama-dharmas*. Scholars say that he alone is the fruit of all karmas.** (Shl 25) The fruit of *nishkaam-karma* (desireless action) is also that imperishable Paramatma. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 280)
- Bhishma: (Shl 61) **One who does karma with *nishkaama-bhava* (attitude of karma without desire) will wipe out the past sins by virtue of such *nishkaama-karma*. The karmas of past births or present birth will not yield good or bad fruits to him.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 194)
- Yayati: (Shl 14) **One who renounces all desires & all desire oriented karmas, is a *jitendriya*, and practices *mouna vrata* attains *siddhi* (*moksha*).** (Adi; Sambhava; 91)
- Tuladhara to Jajali: (Shl 17) We have heard that if there are blemishes/defects in karmas they will not yield fruits, will lose their quality and will become dangerous to all beings. **But if the same karma is performed with no desires (*nishkaam-karma*) it becomes great karma.** Therefore a person engaging in karmas should always be restrained in respect of fruits. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 263)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 1) Yudhishtira! Now I will tell you the way to *moksha* from the point of view of *shastra*. **Man attains *parama-gati* by practicing the karmas prescribed in *shastra* with *nishkaam-bhava* (desireless attitude).** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 214)

Combined

- Manu said: (Shl 10, 11) Brihaspati! **Knowledgeable people say that that which is liked/loved is the thing which makes them happy. That which is disliked causes sorrow.** *Karma-vidhis* (prescribed acts/rules for karmas) have emerged only to fulfill the desire that 'only what I like should happen; what I dislike should not at all happen.' **By practice of such *karma-vidhis* the desired can be obtained and the undesired can be kept away.** *Jnana-vidhi* has emerged to accomplish 'I do not want desired or undesired.' (Shl 12) **Most of the karmas prescribed in the Vedas are generally *sakaama-karmas* (karmas with desires)** One who has freed himself from such *sakaama-karmas* will attain Paramatma. **Man who desires pleasures of this world and is engaged in *sakaama-karmas* cannot attain Paramatma.**

Brihaspati questioned: Bhagawan! Man always like happiness. He does not like unhappiness. All desire happiness and not sorrows. Such happiness is obtained by doing the karmas prescribed in Vedas (So why do you then say that such happiness yielding karmas should be given up?).

Manu answered: (Shl 13) Brihaspati! The person who does *nishkaam-karma* (karmas free of desires) will attain Parabrahma-paramatma. It is for this reason that the system called *nishkaam-karma-yoga* has emerged. ***Sakaama-karmas* always entice those who want pleasures here. They keep rewarding people with such pleasures and prevent the mind from turning towards the Paramatma.** But these pleasures are impermanent; subject to decay. By attaining Paramatma you get permanent happiness. (Shl 14) The *mumukshu* (one who desires *moksha*/liberation) will free himself from *raga*, *dwesha* etc by doing *nishkaam-karmas*, will become clean & bright like a polished mirror, will be illuminated by the light of *sat-asat-viveka* (discrimination of Truth & Untruth) and will attain Parabrahma-Paramatma who is other than the *sakaam-karmas* and worldly desires.

(Shl 15) **Brahma has created people who are constituted of *manas* and *karma*.** Therefore these two are the virtuous paths served by the world (It is these two alone that prompt human beings into the virtuous path also). **There are two kinds in karma: Permanent or eternal and that which has an end & is subject to destruction. Mind is the cause for both these.** Karmas can be done either with *sakaam* or with *nishkaam* attitude. Karmas that are done by giving up the mind (or the desires of the mind) yield permanent & eternal fruits. **Such *nishkaam-karma* leads to realisation of Parabrahma-Paramatma. The other type viz *sakaam-karma* leads to destructible fruits.** (Shl 16) Just as when the night ends the eye can lead the body past any obstacles, the *buddhi* accompanied by discrimination finds out which karmas are inauspicious and worthy of being given up.

(Shl 20) *Shabd*as (sounds), *roop*as (forms), sacred *ras*as (tastes), pleasurable *sparsh*as (touch), and likeable *gandh*as (smells) can all be accomplished on this earth, the *karma-loka*. But by doing *sakaam-karmas* man cannot approach the Paramatma, because one who gains proximity to the Lord gains the same characteristics as the Lord and becomes the Lord, whereas a *sakaam-karmi* cannot become such Lord. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharm; 201)**

- Bhagawan Shri Hari to Arjuna: (Shl 33, 34) You have heard that I have four types of devotees viz *artha*, *jijnasu*, *artharathi* and *jnani*. Among them such *jnani bhakts* who worship me with single minded devotion and not any other *devatas* are greatest. **To all of them who do all *karmas* with *nishkaam bhava* (with no desires) I am the ultimate refuge (*ahameva gatih*).** (Shl 35) **The other three types of devotees are said to be desirous of fruits. They will all fall from *swarga* after experiencing their *punyas*. But *jnani* will obtain the greatest fruit of realising *bhagawan* (*prati buddhastu shreshhtabhaak*).** (Shl 36) Whether *jnani bhakts* worship Brahma or Shiva or any other *devata*, in the end they will attain me. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharm; 341)**
- Brahma to *rishis*: (Shl 5) **Those who practice *sakaam-karmas* (auspicious/sacred karmas done to fulfil some desire) without any laziness will be born again and again in this world and will live joyously.** (Shl 6) Those scholars who perform *nishkaam-karmas* (karmas without desiring anything) with faith and are engaged in *yoga* (*dhyana yoga*) will be *dhiras* and have great *jnana*. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 50)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 4) Man who identifies himself with the body (*dehabhimani*) goes on accumulating all kinds of things as he is gripped by *krodh*, *lobh* etc *rajas* & *tamas bhavas*. (Shl 5) Therefore one

who desires to be freed of the shackles of the gross body should not indulge in impure practices. **He should open the doors to moksha through nishkaam-karmas** (actions without desires). **He should never wish to gain swarga etc punya-lokas by performing kaamyas-karmas.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 212)

Karma – phalas

General

- Yudhishtira replying to Draupadi: How do karmas acquire *paap* or *punya phalas*? **And how do pravritti and nivritti** (engagement & disengagement) **happen in karmas is a deva-rahasya** (secret of gods). Common people do not understand this subtlety of dharma, get confused and mistake *vidya* for *avidya* and vice versa and hence are unable to achieve *shreyas* and keep taking birth in different forms. The *maya* of *devatas* is secret. They guard these secrets. Yogis who are calm (*shantha*), *daantha*, *alpa-santhushta* (easily contented), who have given up desires, who have cleared their sins with *tapas* can understand this subtlety or secret by deep & focussed meditation. (Shl 38) Just because you don't see the results of dharma immediately enough do not doubt dharma or *devatas*. Draupadi! *Yajna* & *yagas* must be performed as duties and *daan* (charity) should be done without any jealousy/malice.

(Shl 39) **'Fruits for karmas certainly exist. This is the command of dharma.'** **Brahma has said this to his sons.** Kashyapa came to know of this secret in this manner. Let your doubt melt away like the morning mist with this discourse of mine. By thinking about all that I have said to you, let atheism in your mind be destroyed and let theism thrive. (Shl 41, 42) Krishne! Do not blame/abuse Paramapurusha who is the witness to all beings, is in everyone and is lord of all. Learn how to attain him by *daan-tapas-yajna*. Surrender to him. Never disrespect Paramapurusha due to whose grace only mortals can become immortals. (Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 31)

- Yudhishtira-Markandeya Conversation:**

Yudhishtira's Questions: If man is the doer of all karmas, where does Ishwara come in? Are the karma *phalas* enjoyed in this birth or do they carry over to/carry over from other births? Where do karma *phalas* remain when no physical body is associated & how do they follow the dead person? (Background is: I have & practice unshakeable faith in dharma but am suffering whereas Duryodhana though a sinner is enjoying all comforts: this issue generalised is the context)

Markandeya *rishi*'s answers: (Summary extracts)

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 suited for enjoying & suffering the *karmaphalas*). (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 183)

(His answer has mention of *Sthoola*, *Sookshma* & *Karana sharira*, mention of 25 *tattvas*, list of *sapta dhathus*, six *vikaras* & ten *doshas*; constituents of *sookshma sharira*; persistence & continuance of *sookshma sharira* until moksha; inability of *jeeva* to overcome the consequence of karma *phalas*).

(Some explanations by editors: *Sookshma sharira* consists of five *jnanedriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, five *pranas*, *manas* & *buddhi* (17 *tattvas*). This is the means for experiencing the fruits sins & virtues. This is invisible to the *indriyas*. This exists until *moksha*)

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 14) When the birth, nature and happiness & unhappiness are all based on the *karma-phalas* for even such beings as fly, insects & ants, why do you worry so much about it? Have a firm mind. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 162)
- Brahmana to Senajit: (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). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 174)
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 24) Just as fish swims with the current, man also flows in this *samsara-sagara* in accordance with his past karmas. The *jeeva* which has taken on this great human body rejoices when he obtains happy results as a consequence of past karmas and grieves when bad

results are obtained (The *jeeva* does not think/understand even once that he is experiencing the fruits of his own karmas and hence there is no need to rejoice or grieve). **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 201)**

- Bhishma: (Shl 13) Honour & dishonour, profit & loss, rise & fall—these things keep happening according to the karmas of past births again and again. **After the *karma-phalas* are experienced, they all retire.** (Shl 14) Grief is the result of our own karmas. Happiness is also similar. **The moment *jeeva* enters the foetus in the womb it starts experiencing the fruits of past karmas.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)
- *Siddha purusha* said: (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/decrease. But the fruits of karmas done in this birth also 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)
- Brahma to *rishis*: (Shl 19, 20) If a traveller proceeds on his journey without packing food needed on the way he will be subject to great difficulties. He may even face destruction on the way. *Karma-phala* should be understood in the same way. If one packs fruits of auspicious karmas he will be happy in *para-loka*. Else he will be subjected to troubles and will be destroyed. Similarly for human beings it should be understood that it is auspicious deeds that will be helpful for one's own welfare and not inauspicious karmas. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 50)**
- Syumarashmi to Kapila: (Shl 45) Just as a ship tied to the enemy ship will be carried away in floods, how will *nishkarma* (giving up karmas) uplift those wicked minded who are bound by the enemies like *kaam* & *krodh* and *karma-phalas* of past births and are floating away in the flood of *samsara*? **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 269)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 9, 10) Oh king! This *jeeva* is not free to experience the joys & griefs which are fruits of good & bad deeds in the way it wants. That is why the *jeeva* is enveloped in darkness in the form of *sanskars* born from *punya* & *papas*. Air which looks like a black lump when filled with smoke, becomes red when mixed with powder of red stone and makes all directions appear red. In the same way, *jeevatma* which by nature is pure gets covered by ignorance (like smoke) which is *tamo-maya*, gets coloured by *karma-phalas* and accepting different *sharira-dharmas* moves in all bodies according to time. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 279)**
- 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 *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 (*bhogayoga*) and remains in the cycle of birth & death. **(Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42)**
- Vidura: (Shl 35) Man is his own relative; he is his own enemy (Commentary: Whether something good or bad happens to oneself, do not make others responsible for it). He is himself the witness for his good or bad deeds (Commentary: One may say verbally that he has not committed a mistake. But his conscience knows if he has done or not and it will be indicating the truth at every instant. But man, for the sake of a transient benefit/advantage, even though is at fault will cheat the conscience and say that he is not at fault). (Shl 36) Good deeds bring happiness. Bad deeds cause grief. All *karmas* done will have their fruits. But there can be no fruits for *karmas* not done. **(Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 2)**
- 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* undergoes a change of body. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 187)**
- Sanatkumara: (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; Mokshadharmā; 280)

- Arishtanemi to Sagara: (Shl 17) Man obtains food, dresses & jewellery and wealth accumulated by parents according to his *karmas* of past births. **Everything in this world is obtained only based on the *karmas* of the past births and nothing against it.** (Shl 18) All living beings go about in this world according to the fruits of past *karmas*. Whatever food fate brings to them at suitable times according to *prarabdha karmas* will only be obtained by them. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 288)
- Parashara to Janaka: (Shl 10) Living beings (humans) which are constituted of *pancha-bhutas* do *punya* & *apunya karmas* in various ways and obtain various states according to that. (Shl 11) **Just as when silver or gold coating is given on a copper vessels, they appear as if they are silver or gold vessels, living beings under the control of *karmas* of past births are enveloped by the fruits of those *karmas* and appear to be virtuous or sinners.** (Shl 12) **Nothing germinates without seed. Similarly without doing *punya-karmas* (auspicious deeds) no one can obtain happiness.** After death, he obtains *punya-lokas* only by virtue of good deeds done here.

(Shl 13) King Janaka! In this matter the **opinion of atheists is as follows:** 'I do not see what you call *daiva*. Moreover there is no impact of *daiva*. Various types like *devas*, *gandharvas*, *danavas* etc births are naturally existing' (*svabhavato hi sansiddha*). (Shl 14) This can be answered as follows: **People never remember their actions of past births after death. But these same people when experiencing the fruits of past births recollect four types of *karmas* as causes** (these four are: mind, speech, eyes and actions). (If there is a slip between the cup & the lip, they say I must have snatched someone's food in past birth. If the son is not obedient they may say I must have been disobedient to my father in last birth etc. Thus by guesswork they recollect that they might have done some such auspicious or sinful deed. If it were not so, it is not possible to explain why someone who is a sinner now enjoys great happiness and a now virtuous person will suffer grief. One may have to explain these only with the help of past good & bad deeds). (Shl 15) King Janaka! It is the opinion of atheists that 'The reference or authority of Vedas has been stated for livelihood and peace of mind. But whatever *karmas* have been stated in Vedas for a livelihood, are all stated only for the incapable. **Past births are mentioned only to give courage to the grieving or to bring some peace of mind**'. But this is not the opinion or preaching of the aged.

(Shl 16) Man obtains the fruits of the *karmas* done with mind, speech, eyes and actions in accordance with the way he did them. (Shl 17) According to the *karma-phalas* he sometimes obtains happiness, sometimes grief and sometimes mixed results continuously. **Whether fruits of auspicious deeds or sinful deeds, they are not destroyed until they are experienced.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 290)

Mystery of or lack of our control over *karma phalas*

Narada to Shuka: (Shl 9) **The fruits of karmas done by human beings are always under the control of someone else (*praradhina*). If it were not so, whoever works with some desire should have found it fulfilled.**

(Shl 10) We find that even those people who have *indriyas* under control, who are efficient and who are intelligent are rejected because of their karmas and become unsuccessful. (Shl 11) Some are fools. Some lack good character. There will be some who will be worst among men. They will not have the blessings of the elders. But all the tasks they take up will be successful. We see that all their desires are being fulfilled. (Shl 12) Someone else will always be engaged in hurting other living beings or human beings. He will always be interested in cheating people. But he will grow old enjoying every kind of pleasure or luxury. (Shl 13) Sometimes wealth comes chasing a person who does nothing and sits idle. But someone else, even though he struggles hard, does not get what he struggles for.

(Shl 14) Understand that in this the defect is naturally in man himself. Semen takes birth somewhere and goes & joins somewhere else. (?! Implication not clear. Is *karma phala* being linked to genes?!) (Shl 15) The semen which enters the female uterus may or may not cause conception. It may be sometimes wasted like the flower in a mango tree. (Shl 16) Some desire to have children. Some want children for their children too. They keep making a variety of efforts to get children. But still not even one egg (child) is born. (Shl 17) Some get angry and scared if wife gets pregnant. But still they get a long lived son. He lives as if he will not die at all. (Shl 18) Men & women desiring children and reaching a pitiable state worship *devatas* to get children. They perform variety of *tapas*. Woman bears the pregnancy for ten months. In spite of this, son who is a disgrace to the family (*kula pamsana*) is born. (Shl 19) But some sons born after such auspicious acts of worship will be enjoying money, grains, ancestral property & such luxuries/prosperity.

(Shl 35) In this manner, this *loka* which is drowned in *moha* & *shoka* has been thrown in the river of *samsara* and pulled strongly by its floods continues to go on without any shouting or screaming. (Shl 36) **Human beings who are appointed/ordained by fate to experience their *karma-phalas* cannot transgress *prakriti* whether by using money, kingdom or rigorous *tapas*.** (Shl 37) **If we were to obtain results corresponding to all our efforts men would have neither grown old nor died. They would not have seen unpleasant events. Everyone would have fulfilled all their desires.** (Shl 38) Everyone wants to go to higher & higher *lokas*. They even try their best. But it does not become possible. **Every effort made does not bear fruits.**

(Shl 39) For several and different reasons even persons who are very careful, valorous, brave etc, serve those intoxicated with wealth or wine. (Shl 40) The troubles faced by some are overcome without worrying about them or making any efforts. For some others all their wealth will also be of no use. (Shl 41) **Even in matter of fruits of karma we see stark contrasts. Due to the *karma-phalas*, some carry the palanquin and some others sit in it & enjoy.** (Shl 42) All men naturally desire wealth & prosperity. Among them only a few sit and travel in a chariot. Some do not get pleasure or happiness of woman. Hundreds of others enjoy multiple and variety of women. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 331)**

- Yudhishtira to Sanjaya: (Shl 1-2) Fate knows no differences. Whether a noble or a wicked man, boy or aged, weak or strong, it has control over all. Brahma, the master controller of all animals, gives *phalas* according to their karmas in previous births. Therefore he can give scholarship to a fool or make a fool out of a pundit. **(Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 31)**
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 8) **If it is said that accomplishment is dependent only on self-efforts and not dependent on fruits of karmas, then in this world whoever has whatever wishes or desires should all have been fulfilled, Isn't it?** If the results of self-efforts were not in some one else's hands, everyone would have obtained whatever they wanted. (Shl 9) Many will have self-control; efficient; make continuous efforts; will be intelligent; will be virtuous. But all their efforts will be wasted. They will be in all kinds of troubles/difficulties. We see this also. (Shl 10) Even as we observe, we find that some are always troubling others. Hurting/violence, cheating etc will be their daily routine. Even then they will be happy. Some gain wealth even without doing any great work. (Shl 11) On the other hand many others will be working hard day & night and still will be poor. They do not get results commensurate with their efforts.

(Shl 12) Some who do not have children worship in variety of ways. They observe many difficult *vrats* & fasting. **Many times children who are born after ten months due to their efforts become a blot on the family.** (Shl 13) **Some other children born due to various kinds of *tapas* and worships bring name & fame to the family, will be rich & prosperous and enjoy all kinds of comforts.** (Shl 14, 15) Oh brahmana! **All the physical & mental illnesses that man gets are consequences of karmas of the past births.** There is no need to doubt this in the least. Men are agonised by these diseases just as hunters agonise lowly animals. Just as fowlers/hunters drive away cruel animals, **skilled doctors cure diseases which are result of past karmas with excellent medicines.**

(Shl 16) Great among *dharmatmas*! **I will tell you about another peculiarity in this world, listen.** Many who have plenty and variety of foods before them to eat, suffer from indigestion and are unable to eat it. (Shl 17) Many of those who are strong, have good digestion power and are healthy will not get food to eat; they struggle even to find a square meal. (Shl 18) Therefore helpless people of this world drown and float in the strong floods of karma and manage their lives sometimes with grief and sometimes in confusion. Oh great brahmana! Just in case humans had all the freedom (independence)?! (Shl 19) they would not have died; nor become old. All would have fulfilled their desires. They would not have experienced anything that is unpalatable. (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.** Because, (Shl 22) 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)

Bhumi, Swarga, Naraka

- *Siddha purusha* to Kaashyapa: (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 a better place. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 17)

- (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 Brahmaloaka. 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)**

- Sanjaya to Yudhishtira: (Shl 14) This is how *karmaphalas* are. The duration of stay in *swarga* or *naraka* due to *karmaphala* is limited. According to the *punya* accumulated man can enjoy *swarga*. Once the *punyaphala* is used up, again he has to take birth on earth. One who commits sins has to suffer in *naraka*. **My suggestion to you is that don't desire to be in either of them. Both these lokas are transient. Do not give up the permanent *moksha-marga*. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 27)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 79) Whatever good & bad karmas are done in the path of karma, the fruits will be obtained according to them. One who engages in mean acts will obtain *naraka*. One who engages in practice of dharma will obtain *swarga*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)**

Assignment/Allocation of phalas

- 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.** (Shl 41) ...Therefore he should constantly do more virtuous deeds so that they are much more than the sinful deeds. ...

(Shl 45) **The sinful act may be only one. If it is done knowing that it is sin, then great *paap* accumulates. If the same act is done unknowingly, then less sin accrues.** The atonement should be determined after finding out whether the act was done knowingly or unknowingly. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 35)**

- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 11) **Same act depending on time & place (*desh-kaal*) can be dharma or *adharma*.** Stealing, lying, violence etc *adharmic* acts can in certain special circumstances, depending on time and place, be considered as *dharma-karyas*. (Shl 12).... **In worldly affairs and Vedic affairs there are two categories: *aprarivitti* and *pravritti*.** (Shl 13) By *aprarivitti* (not being interested in worldly affairs) one attains immortality. Acts done by *pravritti* (deeper interest and attachment to worldly affairs) result in this *samsara* which is characterised by cycles of birth and death. Even in this *pravritti* 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 (this is subject to the statement in Shl 11).** (Shl 14) In matters relating to *daiva* (god) which include god (like temples), own life, one who saved our life—even if an *ashubha-karya* is done to save/protect these four that karma will yield *shubha-phala*. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 36)**
- Umadevi said: (Shl 41) Maheshwara! I have a doubt about human beings. You have to explain this matter to me with expertise. (Shl 42) **Prabhu! By what karmas does man get long life? By performing which *tapas* will he get long life? (Shl 43) By doing which kind of works does he become short lived?** Kindly tell me the consequences of auspicious and inauspicious deeds. (Shl 44) In this world some are highly fortunate. Some are unfortunate. Some are of noble lineage and some are its opposite. (Shl 45) Some are painful to the sight as if made of wood (scary wooden dolls?!). Upon seeing some we feel pleased. They will be charming whom we feel like seeing again. (Shl 46) Some have wicked minds. Some are scholars. Some are very wise & learned and know *jnana* & *vijnana*. (Shl 47) Some appear to be in a little difficulty. Some are in deep trouble. *Deva!* Kindly tell me the reasons for these anomalies.

Maheshwara said: *Devī!* I will gladly tell you about these effects of karma. I will tell you how all the people in this world which is subject to death experience karmas. (Shl 49, 50) *Devī!* The 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, such cruel person 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, that great man who is of noble lineage, has rejected violence to 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, does not also kill, does not encourage any killer, is friendly towards all beings, considers others as himself will attain *devathva*. He will enjoy all the happiness provided in *devaloka*. (Shl 59) If such a person were to be born here as human being, he will be long lived 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**)

- Parashara: (Shl 14) As far as I am concerned, I see it **clearly** this way: **Whether the karmas done are sinful or virtuous, whether done publicly or privately, whether done knowingly or unknowingly, they necessarily give their corresponding results.** (Shl 15, 16) *Dharmajna!* For gross or subtle acts done after thinking about them and done quite willingly, the appropriate fruits will certainly be obtained. Similarly if gruesome deeds such as violence etc are unknowingly being done regularly, they will also yield corresponding fruits. **But unknowingly done actions yield lesser results than those done knowingly. This is the only difference.** (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 291**)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 26) A child grows (even as we see) based on the efforts of parents and the nourishment given as food. I have a disagreement with the view that, similarly, the karmas done systematically & with self-efforts will yield (good) *phalas* now itself. **However systematically the effort may be done, the *phalas* are given by *daiva*—this is my opinion.** (That is karma itself does not give *phalas* (particularly as we expect it to be) but *daiva* decides the *phalas*). (**Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 32**)

Inevitability of experiencing the fruits

- Dhritarashtra: (Shl 27) There is no way that the fruits of karmas done by us can be destroyed. This is certain. (**Vana; Ghoshatra; 236**)
- Shukra to his daughter Devayani: (Shl 30) Child! All people in this world experience the joys & griefs only in accordance with their own *karmas*. Others are never responsible for our joys & griefs. Therefore, you must have committed some offence to suffer this kind of grief. (**Adi; Sambhava; 78**)
- Draupadi: (Shl 22) Just as God has stored (deposited) the tree & fruits in the seed, He has readied all the difficulties & happiness, likeable & disliked deeds etc before the birth of the person. (**Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 30**)
- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 7) The fool, one who does not believe in rebirth, the cruel and the lusty will all be experiencing changing cycles of happiness & grief. They all feel elated in happiness and weak-minded when facing grief. Not believing that happiness & grief are results of our karmas is the reason for this. Human being has to experience the fruits of his good & bad karmas. **It is not possible to lose karma-phalas of past by being wise/knowledgeable or by good ethics/morals or by valour.** (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209**)

- Dharmaraja to Duryodhana: **Every human being has to suffer the fruits of his past sinful deeds.** (Shl 23) Our desiring to kill you at this time and your desiring to kill us are all the painful fruits given by Brahma for the past impure karmas. **(Shalya; Gada; 59)**
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 5, 6) Whether man does good or bad deeds, he will get fruits corresponding to them. There is no doubt about this. But a fool does not think so. **When he gets happiness he thinks that it happened due to his efforts and praises himself. When difficulties come, he blames *daiva*. He does not have the understanding that both are consequences of his own past karmas.** (Shl 7) Whether the person is a fool or has no belief in rebirth or is cruel or is fickle minded, he will undergo these changes of happiness and grief. He feels elated when there is happiness. When unhappiness befalls him, he shrinks unable to withstand it. Not having the belief that both are consequences of past karmas is the reason for this. **Man has to experience the fruits of own karmas. It is not possible to avoid this by being wise or having good morals/ethics or by prowess.** (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)
- Ashma replied to king Janaka: (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. (Shl 17) These **happiness and grief** are unavoidable whether man is young or middle aged or old. **They cannot be relinquished. They have to be experienced.** But men always desire happiness and not grief. These keep changing in man's life. (Shl 18) Company of the unwanted, separation of the loved ones, gaining wealth, facing loss (*anartha-prapti*), happiness, grief, all these come according to their karmas. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28)**
- Indra in the guise of a fox to a brahmana: (Shl 35) Many who are like slaves suffer pain, captivity etc from the opulent (but they do not commit suicide). Even those sufferers please others, feel happy and laugh. (Shl 36) (Merely becoming wealthy does not bring fulfilment in life. There are many defects in opulence also). People who are mighty, learned and *manasvi* (thoughtful, great-minded) live by heinous, blameworthy and sinful occupations. (Shl 37) **They will be keen on giving up such sinful occupations and taking up other professions. But it will be inevitable for them to be engaged in occupations determined for them by their *prarabdha-karmas*.** (Shl 38) Whether a *pulkasa* (despised mixed tribe) or a *chandala* (degraded tribe, outcaste), they do not wish to commit suicide just because they are of a very low birth. He will be content about his birth. Look at the *maya* of the lord, Kashyapa! **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 180)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 8, 9) **The karmas done by man always follow/shadow him. It is impossible to escape from them.** If the doer runs fast, they also run equally fast. If he is sleeping, they also sleep with him. If he is standing, they also will stand with him. If he is walking, they will also walk with him. Even when he is doing some work they are with him. Just as a shadow, *karma-phalas* always follow the doer. (Shl 10) **Whichever person has done good and bad deeds in his past births in whichever way, he will get suitable fruits of those karmas done by him and will experience it alone** (cannot share with others). **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)**
- Parashara: (Shl 28) Just as a *vysya* (trader) travels over the seas for trading and earns profits according to the capital he has invested, *jeeva* which is travelling on the ocean of *samsara* for trading will obtain profits & state according to the karma & *vijnana* he has. (Shl 30) *Jeeva* takes birth here and experiences the fruits of its own karmas. **It does not experience any pleasant or unpleasant fruits without already having done *punya* or *paapa karmas*.** (Shl 31) **Whether man is sleeping, moving sitting or engaged in satisfying the senses, the fruits of good & bad karmas keep following him incessantly.** (Shl 41) All the auspicious & inauspicious karmas done in the past births are always following the being. Realising that the happiness or grief that has come to it is the result of its *karma-phala* the inner soul prompts the *buddhi* towards *atma*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 298)**
- Vidura: (Shl 18) Even though 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)**
- Vidura: (Shl 32) **The *karmas* of past birth sleep with the sleeping man. They stand with the standing man. They run with the running man** (Commentary: The fruits of past karmas—*punya*

or *paap*--does not leave the man for any reason. The fruits of *karma* come attached from the foetus stage. Man experiences those fruits in this birth). (**Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 2**)

- *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** (*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) (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18**)

Fruits of karma cannot be shared

- Yama to king Somaka: One cannot enjoy/suffer the fruits of someone else's karmas. (Somaka insists on sharing the *naraka* with the *purohit* though he need not have done it. The overall time in *naraka* for both is reduced!! Later Somaka shared his *punyas* with the *purohit* & both enjoyed *uttamalokas*). (**Vana; Tirthayatra; 128**)
- Parashara to Janaka: (Shl 22) Man does not experience the fruits of other's good or bad deeds. He experiences the fruits of whatever types of karmas he has himself done (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 290**)
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 47) Just as the dowry given to son-in-law cannot be shared with others, it is not possible to share the *karma-phalas* earned here with others in *para-loka*. He alone will experience the fruits of his karmas. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 291**)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 24-26) 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, however close he may be as a relative or friend, can share this.** (**Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209**)

When do karmas yield fruits?

- Uthathya, son of Angirasa to Maandhata: (Shl 21) The sinner may not experience the consequence of his sin immediately. Just as seed sown in the soil germinates after some days, grows into a plant, then a tree and yields fruits much later, the karmas of men may yield fruits in his son or grandson or son of daughter. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 91**)
- Shukra to Vrishaparva: Oh king of Asuras! Earth may yield crops a few days after sowing the seeds but sins do not yield their fruits immediately. But in due course the sins will destroy the family of the sinner without your knowledge. It cannot also be said that the sinner himself will experience the fruits. His children or grandchildren may also experience them. But overall the sins shall yield their fruits. Just as food eaten excessively cannot be digested, it is not possible to escape the consequences of sins. (**Adi; Sambhava; 80**)
- Yudhishtira sending his message through Sanjaya: Meet & enquire about the welfare of male & female servants of Kaurava princes and **the lame & dwarfs** who are dependent on them (servants)...meet thousands of ***mahuts*, lame, blind, aged etc unfortunates** and tell them I am all right & further tell them thus: Do not feel depressed for your current abhorrent life. **You have got this due to the bad karmas of some past births.** I will vanquish my enemies in a few days and take good care of you and will give food & clothes & nourish you. (**Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 30**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 18-20) A sinner feels very happy while earning wealth in sinful ways. Prospering by this method, he indulges in more such deeds. He feels very pleased with himself looking at his prosperity and makes fun of those who adhere to dharma saying, 'What is dharma?

Where is it? There is no dharma or karma'. He will have no faith in acts of dharma. He considers himself deathless: *amar*. In the end bound by *varuna-pasha* he will lose everything and be destroyed. (Shl 21) Just as a skin bag puffs up when filled with air, a sinner puffs up due to his sins. That sinner will not shift to doing *punya-karyas*. Just as a tree on the banks of the river gets uprooted and is carried away by the flood, **when his pot of sin is full, he will be totally destroyed**. (Shl 22) Just as an earthen pot when smashed on stone breaks into pieces, he will be completely destroyed. Others will blame him after this happens. Therefore a king should gain victory and wealth according to the ways of dharma. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 95)

- Indra to Yudhishtira: 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*. (Swargarohana parva; 3)
- Parashara to Janaka: (Shl 18, 19) **The fruits of good deeds sometimes remain completely inactive** (like a still person) **till the fruits of bad deeds are exhausted. After the fruits of sinful deeds are experienced, he starts to experience the fruits of good deeds. Once the fruits of auspicious deeds are completed again the fruits of bad deeds have to be suffered.** Understand this very well. (Shl 21) A learned person should not spend all his life satisfying his interest in sinful or auspicious deeds alone but should try to focus his mind in meditation on *Paramatma*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 290)
- Yudhishtira: Our previous karma *phalas* follow us in this birth also. *Karma-phalas* do not get exhausted in that birth itself. (Vana; Tirthayatra; 141)
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 5) Dharmaja! **The desired items are not obtained merely by performing the relevant karma.** It is not even obtained by always thinking/worrying about it. There is no donor who gives everything man wants. **Man obtains everything he has to by turns** (*pariyaaya*, wheel of destiny) **according to the rule of Brahma when the corresponding yoga comes.** (Shl 6) It is impossible for man to get extraordinary/special/out of turn fruits of efforts by intelligence or study of *shastras* until the time is ripe. When the time is ripe, even a fool who has not done any studies of *shastras* can get plenty of wealth. **Therefore for success in tasks, generally it is only time which is the main cause and not intelligence or foolishness.** (Shl 7) **When man is experiencing a downfall, mantras, medicines or statues do not give any special results. But when he is having favourable time, these same things will, due to the promptings of time, help him gain success in everything and also increase in gains.** (Shl 8) A storm blows only at its time. Rains fall only in their times. It is only at the right times that lakes become beautiful with lotuses. It is only at the appropriate times that trees blossom or grow in the forest. (He gives more examples of nature's cycles and events which happen only at the designated time and not otherwise). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25)
- Bhishma: (Shl 11) **The fruits of karmas done will be in the form of a deposit. That deposit will be guarded by vidhi. When the relevant time to experience it comes, kaal (time) will pull that deposit towards the doer.** (The fruits of good and bad karmas are never destroyed. But they do not become effective immediately. Which being should experience what effects is known only to *kaal*. This is the movement of *kaal*. It is a deep secret not known to any). (Shl 12) **Flowers and fruits show up in the trees without any prompting. They do not disobey time in the least. In the same way the karmas done in the past, will become effective at the exact time they are due.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)
- 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.** (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)

- (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*). (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 17)
- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 37) When there is happy time one becomes egoistic & thinks that it happened due to his efforts. But this is only apparent happiness & not permanent. The new karmas & pending bad karmas can again alter the state. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)
- Bhishma: (Shl 15) **The good and bad karmas done as a boy, an adult or in old age will yield the corresponding fruits in the same stage of life in the next birth.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)
- 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. (Shl 12) **In that region the fruits of the karmas done will become available directly/visibly.** ... (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 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.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 192)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 9) One who obtains bad results due to his own bad acts should not make *kaal* (time) or *devatas* responsible for the results. ... (Shl 14) Man is not the doer of *shubha* & *ashubha karmas* (auspicious & inauspicious/good & evil acts). Just like the wheel of a machine (*daaruyantravat*), man who is not really independent, is driven by another 'doer' to do such karmas (Understand this and steady your mind) (**Apparently contrary to Shl 9, but should be read along with Shl 15 below!**). ... (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*).** **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-niryan; 159)
- Parashara: (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)
- Sri Krishna to Jarasandha: Whoever does karmas in whatever states (*avasthayam*) will get corresponding fruits in corresponding states. (Sabha; Jarasandha; 22)
- Sanatsujata: (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)

How are they experienced?

- Vaishampayana to Janamejaya: (Shl 18) This *jeeva* which has no independence, experiences the fruits of karma in whatever kind of body in which it did those karmas. **It experiences fruits of**

mental karmas through mind and physical karmas through physical body. (Ashramavasika parva; Putradarshana; 34)

- Bhishma: (Shl 36) Just as a person who censures another becomes the subject of anger and hatred of the censured person, similarly one who kills or eats animals will be killed by the same animals in subsequent births. (Shl 37) **Whatever karmas one does with different bodies, he will experience the fruits of those karmas in bodies matching those karmas. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 116)**
- Vidura: (Shl 33) **Whatever good or bad deeds have been done in the past births in different states, the fruits of those karmas are experienced in the same respective states** (Commentary: If sins were done in youth in the past births, in this birth the fruits of those karmas will be experienced in youth only). (Shl 34) With whatever bodies (physical forms) a man has done good or bad deeds, he will experience the fruits of those karmas with the same bodies. **(Stree parva; Jalapradanika; 2)**
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 21) **Whatever good and bad karmas the jeevi does with the body, the fruits of those karmas have to be experienced through the body only. Body is the mainstay for experiencing the fruits of karmas.** For this reason whether for happiness or sorrow, body is the mainstay. The body keeps experiencing these two cyclically. (Shl 22) **If man does some karmas through speech, he will experience all its fruits through speech only. Speaking sweetly to someone is vak-karma. The fruits of that karma are that the listener will also speak sweetly. Similarly if any karma is done through the mind, its fruits will be experienced in the mind only.** (Another interpretation: The karmas done through speech & mind have to be experienced through those media and speech & mind cannot experience Brahma-vastu). **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 201)**
- Vritra to Shukra: (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, likes and dislikes 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*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 279)**

Good phalas: How they come?

- Karna to Shalya: (Shl 18) if we examine closely, you will not get a share of people's *punya*. Because you are not protecting them (governing them) (you are not ensuring that they all practice their own *varnashrama* dharma). You will be a partner in their misdeeds. Only one who protects/governs people will have a right to share their *punya*. Therefore you will never share their *punya-karmas*. **(Karna; 45)**
- Uthathya: (Shl 30) That king acquires great *punya* who sees the good karmas of his citizens or officials, listens to their sweet words and appropriately rewards all of them. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 91)**
- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! What are the duties towards virtuous conduct here and fame in *paraloka*? How should one behave in this world and with what type of character?

Bhishma said: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! Three karmas related to the body, four related to speech and three related to mind should be given up (or avoided). (Shl 3) **Three sins related to body** are: Killing others, stealing and mating with other women (Adultery). These should be completely given up. (Shl 4) *Rajendra*! Speaking bad words, harsh words, tale bearing and telling lies are the **four sins of speech**. Therefore these should neither be used in speech nor thought in the mind. (Shl 5) Not planning and thinking about snatching/stealing others property, being cordial to all living beings and believing that there is *karma phala* for actions done should be practiced in the **mind** (Opposites of these are sins of mind and should be given up). (Shl 6) Yudhishtira! Therefore man should not commit these sins of body, speech & mind, because, man will always experience the good and bad fruits of karmas done through these. **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 13)**

- Yayati recounts to Indra the advice he gave to his son: (Shl 7) One who does not revenge an offence is prudent. One's anger can burn him. The moment anger enters the heart man suffers a lot of agony. Secondly, if the person who is the subject of anger does not get angry in return and shows tolerance, all the good *karma-phalas* of the angry person will accrue to the tolerant. This being the intricacy of *dharma*, whatever be the offence of the opponent it is better to have tolerance. **(Adi; Sambhava; 87)**

Neutralising/mitigating/balancing *phalas*

- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 46) Sins can certainly be cleared by atoning in ways prescribed in *shastras*. But the person should be a believer. **He must have faith in the karmas** (acts of atonements). **Only for such persons these methods are applicable. If there is no faith/belief it is useless to do these.** (Shl 47) These methods are not seen to be used by those who are atheists, who lack faith, who are pompous and who are hateful. They do not even do these atonements. Even if they do, it is useless. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 35)**
- Yudhishtira asked Bhishma: (Shl 1) There is no dharma more sinful than *kshatriya* dharma, because, the king wages war against other kingdoms and kills several people there. (Shl 2) The king becomes a sinner by killing with the pretext of war. This being so, by doing which karmas does he acquire *punyas*?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) Dharmaja! By doing the following the kings wash away their *doshas* and become pure: by suppressing the sinners, by encouraging *satpurushas* respectfully, by performing *yajnas* and by giving to charity. (Shl 4) The same kings who desiring victory cause trouble to people and animals in times of war, become responsible for their prosperity after the war.

(Shl 7) **The farmer who removes the weeds in his land, while doing so also removes a few genuine saplings. But he does not completely spoil the genuine ones. He removes the weeds so that paddy can grow well. In the same way, king while fighting uses his weapons and kills many who deserve to be killed. A few who did not deserve may also get killed in the process. But that sin is cleared by his governing the people well after the war.** **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 97)**

- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 14-15) Oh brahmana! All the mental & physical diseases that human being gets are due to his karmas of past births. There is no reason to doubt this in the least. People are tortured by these just as animals are tortured by hunters. Just as hunters drive away wild/cruel animals, skilled doctors can cure diseases acquired due to past karmas by their amazing medicines. **(Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)**
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 21-22) **It is possible to nullify the results of bad karmas by doing good karmas.** I am doing the same. I give *daan* as much as possible. I do not lie even for a joke; I am steadfast in truth; I care for my parents & serve them well. I treat the brahmanas well. I practice the dharma of my *varna*. I have given up ego & arrogance. I do not speak much. I do not get into arguments with anyone on any matter. , I carry on with my dharma with these practices (karmas ordained for me). **(Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 208)**
- Sri Krishna to Bhima: (Shl 9) It is however possible to overcome problems posed by *daiva* by human effort. Examples are cold (by covering properly), heat (by fanning air) & rains (by umbrella). Similarly hunger (by eating food) & thirst (by drinking water) can be overcome. **It is also possible to neutralise effects of some bad karmas of past lives by doing karmas for repentance in this birth.** There are many examples for this also. **(Udyoga; Yanasandhi; 77)**
- Parashara said: (Shl 6) **Sins done unknowingly can be driven away by *tapas*.** The sins done will yield only grief. Therefore one should never commit sins which result in grief-filled consequences. (Shl 7) **Even if an act/work may result in great worldly benefits, if it is related to sin or is likely to increase accumulation of sins, a wise person should just not do it.** Just as a clean person stays away from barber, a scholar should stay away from such sinful deeds. (Shl 8) **A person who thinking that, 'What troubles have I got because of sinful deeds?'** (After all I am earning lot of money and am quite happy etc), **continues with sinful deeds will not find thinking about *atma* palatable.** (Shl 9) **The fool on whom *tattva-jnana* (or *vairagya*) does not dawn in this world will experience only great grief even when he goes to**

paraloka. (Shl 10) A cloth which has no colour can be washed and made bright. But however much you wash, a black cloth cannot become white. Similarly sins committed unknowingly can be washed by certain efforts like *tapas*. **But sins done knowingly out of greed for *artha* cannot be gotten rid of.** (Shl 11) **One who commits sins knowingly and then as repentance or atonement as objective does many virtuous deeds will experience the fruits of these two types of karmas separately.** (Shl 12, 13) *Brahmavadis* have said that according to *shastras* sins done unknowingly and involving violence can be washed away by *ahimsa-vrat* (dedication to non-violence). But sinful deeds done knowingly or willingly and involving violence cannot be washed away thus. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 291)**

- **Examples of *punya* compensating & overwhelming *paap***

Brahma to Vasishtha: (Shl 30) In the past Yayati lost his *punya* and fell from *swarga*. But he was lifted back to *swarga* by his grandchildren by using their *punyas*. (Shl 31) Similarly *rajarshi* Pururava who was famous as Aila performed many *punya karmas* as suggested by brahmanas and attained *swarga*.

Examples of *paap* compensating & overwhelming *punya*

(Shl 32) Even though Saudasa, the king of Kosala had performed many *yajnas* and was well honoured, he became a cannibal *rakshasa* due to the curse of *maharshi* Vasishtha. (Shl 33) Both Ashwatthama and Parashurama were children of *munis* and were archers (had taken up *kshatra dharma*). By virtue of the *punya karmas* they had done they remained here as *chiranjeevis* (living eternally). They will not go to *swarga* at all. (Shl 34) Even though Uparichara vasu had worshipped *devatas* by performing hundred *yajnas* and had become as powerful as Indra, because of one lie he told he had to go to the bottom of *rasatala* (lower worlds). (Shl 35) *Devatas* tied up Bali, the son of Virochana, with ropes of dharma (*dharma pasha*). By virtue of Mahavishnu's efforts he had to reside in *patala* (lower regions of earth). **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 6)**

- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 15) One who fulfils the desires of even one brahmana and does not publicise that he gave *daan* to the brahmana will also be cleared of all sins. (Shl 25) One who has snatched another's wife or has stolen another's property, should perform harsh *vratas* for one year to be cleared of the sins. (Shl 26) **One who has stolen other's property/wealth, should return the equivalent value to the victim in various ways. This also clears him of the sin of stealing.** (Shl 30) **If one suspects that wife is indulging in adultery, intelligent husband should not mate with her till her next periods. Woman becomes purified after her periods.** ... (Shl 37) One who sits in a sacred place, eats small quantity of food (*alpahara*), remains committed to non-violence, has given up *raga-dwesh-maana-apamana*, remains silent, and recites Gayathri *mantra* (*japa*) will be cleared of all sins.

(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. Same applies 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. Same applies if he has done more virtuous deeds & less sinful deeds. He can enjoy the good results of the excess virtuous deeds.** (Shl 41) ...Therefore he should constantly do more virtuous deeds so that they are much more than the sinful deeds. ...

(Shl 45) The sinful act may be only one. If it is done knowing that it is sin, then great *paap* accumulates. If the same act is done unknowingly, then less sin accrues. The atonement should be determined after finding out whether the act was done knowingly or unknowingly. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 35)**

- Vyasa to Maitreya: (Shl 14) One who gives to charity and one who does not will both obtain fruits according to their karmas. After death, according to the fruits of their karmas they will go to higher or lower *lokas*. (Shl 18) Just as we wash away the dirt on the body with water, and fire destroys darkness, with *daan* & *tapas* man can clear all sins. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 122)**

- King Bali to Indra: (Shl 9) Vajrapani! Just as sea is the end for all rivers, death is the ultimate destination of all living beings. Those who have understood this well are not confused. (Shl 10) Those who do not understand this but are under control of *rajo-guna* & *tamo-guna* will lose their thinking when difficulties grip them and are destroyed. (Shl 11) **The person who has the advantage of intelligence/wisdom will get rid of all his sins by doing *sat-karmas*** (virtuous deeds). Having become devoid of sins he will become rich in *sattwa-guna*. One who is so established in *sattwa-guna* will attain *prasannata* (be soothed, settle down quietly). (Shl 12) The unfortunate ones who fall from that *sattwa-guna* will take birth repeatedly and suffer agony subject to the promptings of *rajo* & *tamo-gunas*. (Shl 13) Whether the desired things happen or the opposite happens; whether life is obtained or death; whether fruits which are happy are obtained or unhappy are obtained — I do not desire them specifically nor do I hate them. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 224)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 14) The karmas done by a discriminating person (*viveki*) with the attitude of *nishkaam-karma* (actions without desires) wipe out the bad fruits of past inauspicious deeds. In this way to the *sadhak* who does *nishkaam-karma*, karmas do not cause favourable/agreeable results or opposite kind of results in this *loka* or *para-loka* (karmas do not bind him). **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 249)**
- Parashara: (Shl 11) **One who commits sins knowingly and then as repentance or atonement as objective does many virtuous deeds will experience the fruits of these two types of karmas separately.** (Shl 12,13) *Brahmavadis* have said that according to *shastras* sins done unknowingly and involving violence can be washed away by *ahimsa-vrat* (dedication to non-violence). But sinful deeds done knowingly or willingly and involving violence cannot be washed away thus. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 291)**

Illustrative stories

Conversation among *mrityu*, *brahmani*, *kaal*, hunter and serpent

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 among *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? **I who have no independence and was careless was prompted by *Mrityu* 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* (death) **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* (*kaaltmikam 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 kaaltmakam 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)**

Bad/Wrong karmas

Wrong karmas: What prevents them?

- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 5, 6) **All will not have good/noble qualities** like, 'do not snatch other's wealth', 'do not cheat others' etc. **It is because of the fear that the king will punish that some who have natural tendencies for wicked and sinful acts do not indulge in it. Some do not indulge in sinful deeds due to the fear of '*yama-danda*'** (god of death). Out of fear that 'there is a hell. There Yama will punish all justly without discrimination' some do not commit sins. *Yama-danda* is responsible for people not committing sins here also (fear of inescapability of punishment for karmas done here). **In some others there will be mutual fear** (fear of retribution by the affected person/group). **Therefore, in this world that expects some form of punishment to stay within limits, all actions of king are established in proper *danda-neeti*.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 15)
- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 38) **If *danda* were not to rule the limits of behaviour, there would have been lapse of dharma-karma everywhere.** All kinds of 'limits' would have been broken. There would have been no discrimination of what belongs to me and what does not. Everyone would have assumed everything to belong to himself and there would have been mutual fights and destruction. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 15)

Wrong karmas which are not sins

- *Maharshi* Vyasa to Yudhishtira: The acts for which he will not accrue sins even though they are apparently sinful deeds: (Shl 17) Killing a brahmana who though has studied Vedas & vedangas comes to the battle field with weapons to kill you; (Shl 22) while it is sinful to mate with wife of guru, if it is done under instruction/order from guru then it is not sin; Uddalaka got his son Shwetaketu by this method. (Shl 23, 24) Stealing is of course always forbidden. But in times of emergency, stealing for the sake of guru is permitted. **Stealing when *guru-dakshina* has to be given or when ones life is in danger is not a sin; If one steals only in times of danger/emergency or for the sake of guru it is not a fault;** however there should be no desire while stealing and it should not be done repeatedly, and it should not be something belonging to a brahmana. **One who steals but does not use it for himself (personal use/benefit) will not accrue sins.**

(Shl 25) Lying is a great sin. **But in times of danger to life and when lying is necessary to save ones life, then it is not sinful. Even when others can be saved when their life is in**

danger, lying is not a sin. (Shl 27) Younger brother marrying before the elder does is a sin. But if the elder brother has become *patita* (morally fallen) or becomes a *sanyasi* then he can marry. Mating with *para-stree* (woman who is not formally married to you) is sinful. But if a woman prays for help in begetting a child, then just for that purpose mating is not sinful if it is done as per prescribed procedures. (Shl 29) Donating /giving to charity to an undeserving person (*apatra-daan*) is sinful. But if the donor does not know that the brahmana is undeserving then it is not a sin. Similarly if the donor does not know that someone is a deserving person & hence does not donate then also it is not a sin. **Knowing that someone is undeserving one should not donate. Knowing that someone deserves one should not reject donating.** (Shl 30) Wife should not be rejected/abandoned. But if she is adulterous, then rejecting her is not sin. One should have no contact with her and should not eat with her. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 34)

Good/Auspicious karmas

- Maheshwara replied to Uma: (Shl 4) *Dev!* Your question can sharpen the thinking and is for the welfare of all. Listen to the appropriate answers. (Shl 5) Those *satpurushas* who enjoy *artha* earned by following dharma, have given up all desires and are devoted to truth & dharma will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 9) *Satpurushas* who are kind towards all living beings, who are trusted by all and have given up completely all practices which harm/cause violence to others will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 10) Those who have no interest in other's possessions, who stay away from others wives, and who eat only what is obtained by the path of dharma will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 11) Those *satpurushas* who treat others wives as mothers if they are elder and as sisters or daughters if younger will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 12) Those *satpurushas* who stay away from thieving, who are content with whatever money they have, and who carry on their lives with whatever prosperity they have will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 13) Those *satpurushas* who are attached only to their wives, mate with wife only during her period of fertility, and have no interest in lowly pleasures will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 14) Those whose eyes are closed towards others wives, such *jitendriyas* will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 15) *Dev!* This path has been formed by *devatas*. Men should take to this path. **This path has been created to neutralise passion & hatred. Therefore the wise & learned should adopt this path.** (Shl 16, 17) **This path consists of *daan, dharma, tapas, Sheela, shaucha* and *daya*. Man should adopt only this path for a living or for earning *punya*. There is no better path for those who aspire to live in *Swarga*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 144)**
- Siddha purusha: (Shl 14) Kaashyapa! **I will tell you by practicing which karma, this being which takes different kinds of births, will find happiness.** Listen. (Shl 15, 16, 17, 18) *Daan, vrat*, study of Vedas in prescribed ways, control of *indriyas*, calmness, compassion for all living beings, control on mind, kindness, not snatching others wealth, not even thinking ill of living beings, care & service of parents, worship of *devatas*, hospitality to guests, respecting & caring elders, mercy, being clean, making others engage in virtuous deeds – **these are said to be the practices of *satpurushas*. Dharma happens due to these. That dharma protects all people.** (Shl 19) We can see such practices in *satpurushas*. This dharma will be permanent in them. **Virtuous practices show presence of dharma.** Persons with a calm mind are always engaged only in *sadachara*. (Shl 20) These virtuous deeds have been preserved in *satpurushas*. **That which consists of such virtuous practices is well known as *sanatana dharma*.** One who takes refuge in such dharma will never obtain bad states. (Shl 21) When a person is slipping away from the path of dharma, this *sanatana dharma* or practice of *satkarmas* will prevent him from falling from dharma. **One who is yogi or *mukta* (liberated) is greater than those who practice these virtuous deeds.** (Shl 22) One who always acts with dharma will get auspicious fruits irrespective of his situation. **But he will be liberated from the bondages of *samsara* after a long time. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 18)**
- Maheshwara to Umadevi: (Shl 24–28) Such a person will go to *Swarga* who is not 'puffed up', not arrogant, worships brahmanas, is respected by all, bows to those who are worthy of it, is polite, speaks sweetly, is liked by people of all *varnas*, is always interested in the welfare of all, speaks to all welcomingly and in friendly manner, does not cause harm to any being, honours all as they deserve, makes way for persons who are worthy of it, respects gurus appropriately, is engaged in showing hospitality to invited guests and suitably honours those who come on their own. Then when he takes birth on earth he will be born in great families. (Shl 29) In that birth also he will have plenty of wealth and enjoyments. He will possess nine kinds of gems. Will be devoted to practicing dharma and will give suitable *daan* to brahmanas. (Shl 30, 31) He will be acceptable to

all and will be of great lineage and will have grand and great grand fathers. He will be saluted by all. **In this manner man experiences the fruits of his own karma.** I have told you these things about dharma which has been said by Brahma himself.

(Shl 37-40) That person who is kind hearted and looks upon all beings with kindness, has only friendly feeling towards all, is fatherly figure for all and therefore he will have no enemies. He will be a *jitendriya*. He will not cause anxiety to beings. He will not hit them with his hands or legs. He will be trusted by all. He will not beat the animals with any weapons. His karmas (acts) will be soft and clear. Person with such virtuous conduct will go to *Swarga*. There he will reside in divine houses like a *devata*. (Shl 41, 42) In case all his *punya* decays and he has to again take birth as human being, he will be born in a noble family. He will have very few worries/difficulties. He will be leading his life happily, without strain and anxieties. This is the path of *satpurushas*. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 145)**

- Dharmavyadha: (Shl 42-43) What type of karma gives what results (in brief): (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. **(Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 209)**
- Yayati: (Shl 24) Four karmas always give what is desired by the doer. They are always protecting him and blessing him. But these four should be practiced without any ego. If done with ego (*ahambhava*) the same karmas will become fearsome. **These four great karmas are—*agnihotra*, *mouna* (silence, quiet: this is not merely for speech but more importantly also for the mind), *adhyayana*, *yajna*.** (Good explanation of these given by commentators). **(Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 6) Those *punyatmas* who look upon guests and devatas with love, who are generous, who look upon *satpurushas* with love by doing *daana* etc good karmas will take to the safe path of *atmadarshis*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 10-13) Following types of ***satkarmas*** increase *tejas* and destroy sins: *dhyana* (meditation), *vedadhyayan* (study of Vedas), *daan* (giving to charity), *satya-nishta* (dedication to truth), *lajja* (modesty), *saralata* (simplicity), *kshama* (forgiveness), *shoucha* (cleanliness & purity), *achara-shuddhi* (clean practices), *indriya-nigraha* (control of senses) etc. **All desires are fulfilled for one who is engaged in *dhyana* & *adhyayan*. He will also gain the special knowledge about Brahma. A yogi should have same feeling towards all.** Whether he gets something or not, he should be content with whatever he gets without efforts. He should desire to attain the *brahma-pada* by clearing all sins, become *tejaswi*, eat modestly and have control over *kaam* & *krodh*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 240)**
- Narada to Galava: (Shl 15, 16) **That *sadhana* which causes *nishreyas* (supreme happiness or gives best results) is always without doubts.** Scholars say that showing *anugraha* (favour or conferring benefits) to friends or *satpurushas*, suppressing enemies and gathering *dharma*, *artha* & *kaam* are ways to *shreyas*. (Shl 17) Undoubtedly, staying away from sinful deeds, always engaging in *punya-karmas* and practicing virtuous conduct by being in the company of *satpurushas* are karmas which bring *shreyas*. (Shl 18) Behaving with all beings softly, having simplicity & honesty in dealings, speaking sweetly are all undoubtedly methods for *shreyas*. (Shl 19) Offering *bali*, *tarpana* & *bhojana* to *devatas*, *pitrus* & *atithis* at the right times, **not abandoning those who deserve to be cared & nurtured** are again undoubtedly paths to *shreyas*. (Shl 20) **Speaking truth is the path to *shreyas*. But it is very difficult to know the truth clearly. I say that whatever is in the best interest of the welfare of beings is truth.** (Shl 21) Giving up *ahankar* (ego), restraining carelessness, being happy always and living alone are undoubtedly causes of *shreyas*. (Shl 22) There is no doubt that study of Veda & Vedantha together with practice of dharma and exploring matters relating to *jnana* are ways to *shreyas*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 287)**

- Narada to Galava: (Shl 36) One should desire to always live with *satpurushas* who always practice dharma and with generous minded persons engaged in *swadharma*. (Shl 37) One who desires *shreyas* should not live in environments where there will be *dharma-sankara* (mix up or corruption of dharma). (Shl 38) **If a person who does not initiate any karmas desiring fruits & who is content with whatever he gets lives in the company of *punya-purushas* he will also get untainted *punyas*. If he lives with sinners, he will gain sins.** (Shl 39) Just as contact with water, fire & Moon causes feeling of cold, hot and pleasant touch, in the same way *punya* & *paap* will be directly experienced respectively in the company of such persons. (Shl 40) Those who eat the remains of food offered in *yajna* (*yajna-shesha*) consume it as *prasada* (residuum of offering as grace of god) and not as pleasurable things to the taste buds. But those who consume food as objects of pleasure for senses will be subjected to karmas. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 287)**
- Parashara said: (Shl 39) King Janaka! If people of all *varnas* completely give up fearsome sinful deeds, engage in karmas appropriate for their *varnas*, and are truthful, then they will all enter *swarga* after death. There is no need to think further in this matter. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 296)**
- Hamsa bird to Saadhyas: (Shl 37) *Devatas* are not pleased with the karmas of a person who lacks in *sattwa-guna*, who has the habit of eating indiscriminately whatever he comes across and that of a sinner. *Devatas* keep close company of those who are truthful, who are grateful and are devoted to dharma. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 299)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 60) Human beings who are sinless & of pure heart do auspicious karmas and accordingly they will take birth in noble families and enjoy fruits of such good karmas. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 85) Both I and you have had thousands of fathers, mothers, wives & children in our past births. In future also we will obtain many more like them. This being so to whom do they all belong? To whom do we belong? (Shl 86) I am alone, there is none related to me. I do not belong to anyone either. I have not so far seen the person to whom I belong. Nor have I seen so far the person who is mine. (Shl 87) **They do not need anything done by you. Neither do you need them to do any work for you. All those beings have gone away with their karmas.** Similarly, you will also go. (Shl 88) In this *loka* own people behave like own people with the rich. But with the poor not only own people do not behave so, they will escape from their sights even when the poor are alive. For the poor, own people are as good as not being there. (Shl 89) Man generally keeps committing inauspicious deeds for the sake of his wife & other relatives whom he has to protect. By doing so, he suffers both in this *loka* and in *para loka*.

(Shl 90) Oh son! Man sees that the *jeeva loka* is fractured due to its karmas. Therefore do everything exactly as I have preached. (Shl 91) **A person should understand clearly that this *loka* is '*karma bhumi*' and if he wishes *paraloka* he should engage only in auspicious karmas.** (Shl 92) The cook called *kaal* is forcibly cooking living beings with the firewood of day & night which are witnesses to the *karma-phalas*, with the fire of Surya and keeps turning them upside down with the spatula of seasons. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 321)**

Right ways/Attitude to perform karmas

- Shaunaka to Yudhishtira: (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)**
- Yudhishtira to Draupadi: *Yajnaseni*! **I do not do my karmas with an eye on the fruits of those karmas.** I donate thinking it is my duty. I perform *yajnas* as my duty. I do as many of the karmas are prescribed for one in *grihasthashrama* by *smritis* to the best of my abilities. I perform these karmas prescribed in *shrutis* & *smritis* without bothering whether they would or would not yield intended results. Panchali! **I do not practice dharma with an eye on its fruits.** I do so because I want to be following the path of Vedas and want to follow the path of *satpurushas*. **By nature my mind depends on/practices dharma.**

(Shl 6) **One who practices dharma with a desire of its fruits will be considered a ‘trader’** (or businessman). Such a person’s nature will also be lowly. There is no possibility of admitting him in the company of *dharmatmas*. That person, who follows dharma with an eye on the fruits, will not even gain *dharmaphalas*. (Shl 7) **The person who has doubts about *karmas* will not gain the *karma-phalas* even if he does the *karmas*.** I am saying this with Veda as the authority. The Vedas are the authoritative guides for us all. Never doubt about dharma which has the authority of Vedas. ... Those who practice karma while being *jitendriyas* and without desiring much will surely get the fruits of *karmas*. (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; 31)

- Nakula to Yudhishtira: (Shl 16) **Any karma done with a sense of huge ego will not yield fruits. If karma is done without attachment to self (I and mine) and with sense of ‘sacrifice’ (*tyaga-buddhi*), then it yields great fruits.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 12)
- Yudhishtira to Bhima: (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. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 17)
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 25) One should eliminate the cause due to which grief or acute anguish or extreme exhaustion/fatigue has occurred. If by chance these are due to an organ in the body, such organ itself should be removed. (Shl 26) **Whether happiness or grief, pleasant or unpleasant, we should happily experience whatever comes to us according to our *karmas*.** When negatives besiege us, one should not feel defeated. They should be faced with courage. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 13) **Man does auspicious or inauspicious acts as directed by Ishwara. Therefore when man does good or bad deeds, its fruits also go to Ishwara.** (Shl 14) (Vyasa answers the possible question, ‘would it not be a sin, then?’) A man cuts a tree in the forest with his axe. **It is true that sin is accrued by cutting a tree.** In this instance it is also true that the axe cuts the tree. But the accrual of sins is to the man who uses it and not to the axe. Even though it is the axe which cuts the tree, it does not claim ‘I cut the tree’. Though the man cuts the tree with the axe, he makes no mention of axe when he says he cut the tree. Therefore one who does works by the promptings of Ishwara should be like the axe. **‘I-mine’ should be completely rejected. The *paap-punya* of all acts done by such persons will go to Ishwara himself.** (Shl 15) Moreover, ‘Axe is an inert object. It has no freedom to act. Therefore it cannot have any smear of *paap-punya*’. This is also natural. If you were to say, ‘The man who holds the axe becomes the doer. Hence he should experience the fruits of the karma’, then one who made the axe becomes eligible to accrue sins, because without him the tree could not be cut. Therefore, is it not possible to say that one who cut the tree **does not** get any sins? (Shl 16) It is not right to make someone else responsible for the act of a person. It is not acceptable to transfer the sins to the maker of the axe (Moreover this chain will not stop. It can keep going backwards). **Therefore deposit (*niveshaya*) the fruits of good or bad *karmas* with Ishwara. Surrender the fruits of *karmas* to Ishwara.**

(Shl 17) Suppose you believe that man himself, and not *daiva*, is responsible for all acts, good or bad, 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.

(Shl 19) If you think that, ‘the world runs by natural laws and accidents, inauspicious events happen due to them’, then you don’t have to worry about what occurs naturally. Whether you like or not these events will happen. **Such acts will not be connected to happenings in the past, present or future. Everything happens by itself. There is no cause or effect.** Similarly the war was such an event. Fruits of these attach to none.

(Shl 20) If it were to be said that in matters of *punya-paap*, *dharma-adharma* one should act taking into consideration the limits (expectations of moral conduct) imposed by the world (*loka-maryada*), (but then) these are related to *prarabdha-karmas*. *Shaastras* decide which are *dharma-*

adharma and auspicious-inauspicious deeds. *Shaastras* also say how to stop *adharma* or inauspicious deeds, and how to punish perpetrators of such deeds. It is universally accepted that the king's *danda* is always ready to punish the violators. Therefore you need not grieve for having punished the wicked.

(Shl 21, 22) In spite of these, in this world good and bad acts keep rotating like the wheel. **However much awareness may be there, fear of punishment may be there, it cannot be said that all the time good deeds only will be done. It cannot also be said that only sinful deeds will be done.** It is my opinion that persons who do good or bad deeds accrue corresponding fruits.

Dharmaja! Therefore, do not do karmas which are sinful. **Even now it is my firm opinion that you have not done sinful deeds. Therefore do not grieve.** (Shl 23) Yudhishtira! There are flaws in each *varna-dharma*. There could be some flaws in *kshatriya* dharma also. Therefore, you who are devoted to *swadharma*, should certainly not commit suicide for insignificant reasons. (Shl 24) **For all sinful acts there is atonement.** If you keep your body fit, you can perform atonement as prescribed in *shaastras* for any sin and overcome its results. **If you give up life assuming that you have committed sins, even after death you will face great loss and not any happiness.** (Shl 25) The possible results of sins, if any, will be remedied if you perform prescribed atonements when you are alive. In case you give up your life without doing this, you will have to suffer in other worlds also. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 32)**

- Vyasa to Maitreya: (Shl 23) Scholars say that in this world there are three types of practices: meritorious/good or auspicious practices (*punya maya karmas*); sinful practices; and practices free of both *punya* & *paap*. (Shl 24) **The person absorbed in contemplating Brahma does not think that he did the karma whatever be the karmas he does. Therefore he does not acquire paap or punya generated due to his karmas. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 120)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 20) **Nothing will be gained by blaming/criticising others or discussing the offences of others. It is best to keep doing the karmas that are to us pleasant, convenient and in own interest. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 181)**
- Birds to Jajali: (Shl 6) Karmas done inspired by non-violence and kindness will yield good fruits both in this loka and in *para-loka*. If there is a feeling of violence in the mind, it destroys faith and the destroyed faith destroys the man who did the karmas. ... (Shl 9) If the karma is done with faith it overcomes such defects as errors or inaccuracies of pronunciation when reciting *mantras* and even unsteadiness of mind. On the other hand, even if *mantras* are recited perfectly & mind is kept under restraint but there is no faith, the karmas do not protect the doer. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 264)**
- Parashara to Janaka: (Shl 23) **A discriminating person will reconcile/merge both sinful & auspicious deeds in himself and by adopting path of moksha will attain sadgati** (auspicious state). Those who are interested only in women, children & money will take other paths (*karma-marga*). As a consequence they struggle stuck in the cycle of birth & death. (Shl 24) **One who criticises others for indulging in bad deeds, should himself also not do them.** One who criticises others but himself indulges in them will be laughed at & face humiliation. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 290)**
- Parashara said: (Shl 3) Oh king! **Man does not easily obtain longevity. It is quite difficult to get. Having got such priceless longevity one should not bring upon himself a fall. He should constantly try for utkarsha** (self improvement) **through punya-karmas.** (Shl 4) The person who indulges in wicked deeds and falls from his *varna* is not worthy of honour. One who remains a *sattwik*, is honoured by all but then takes up *rajasic karmas* is also not worthy of honour. (Shl 5) Man takes birth in better/higher *varnas* by doing *punya-karmas*. It is almost impossible for a sinner to do so. A sinner loses such opportunity and destroys himself.

(Shl 17) **If a forbidden act has been done by devatas or rishis it should not be repeated by a person dedicated to dharma;** nor should he blame or criticise the *devatas* or *rishis* for having done such acts (Sometimes such acts will not be sinful for them. Many times they may have the power to annul them. But if we with limited or no powers do it, we will have a great fall. Further if we blame or abuse such great personalities we may ourselves acquire sins). (Shl 18) King

Janaka! The person who thinks carefully, understands that he is capable of doing a work and does that auspicious work, will see increase of auspiciousness. (Shl 19) Water stored in a new clay pot that has not been fully baked will be lost soon. But if stored in a properly baked pot it will stay for long. Similarly, **man with unripe mind will suffer difficulties. Man with ripe mind will enjoy happy results.** (Shl 20, 21) If more water is poured into a well baked pot already having water in it, the quantity of water will increase. The pot will also hold more water. In the same way *punya-phalas* accumulated by doing auspicious works with intelligence backing it, will increase further when additional auspicious deeds are done. By doing so, the person can acquire great *punya*s. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 291)**

- Parashara: (Shl 8) Even though certain karmas which are against dharma appear to be highly fruitful, a wise person should not engage in them. It is not beneficial to take up such karmas. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 293)**

Karmas needing atonement

- *Maharshi Vyasa* to *Yudhishtira*: (Shl 2) One who does not perform karmas prescribed in Vedas and *shastras* and who does karmas banned in these needs to do atonement for having gone against the stated karmas. (Shl 4-8) The following should do *prayashchitta* (Atonement): elder brother who is unmarried though younger brother is married; younger brother who married before the elder brother; One who blames/abuses others; a woman who has married a second time or has an *upapati* (another husband); one who has killed a brahmana; **one who has donated to the undeserving; who has not donated to the deserving;** who has destroyed villages; who sells meat; who sells Veda (teaching them for money); **who has killed women or shudra;** who causes to burn down someone's house; **who makes a living by lying;** who humiliates the guru; who does not honour his oath;

(Shl 10-12) Following acts are against Vedas and accepted norms of the world: giving up *swadharma*; adopting *paradharma*; eating what should not be eaten; forsaking those who have come under refuge; not caring (nurture & nourishing) for those who deserve to be cared (wife, children, servants etc); killing animals and birds; **selling salt and jaggery;** snatching the property/belongings of brahmanas (Shl 14) following are also considered *adharmic*: son who quarrels with father; student who mates with wife of guru; husband who mates with wife during her periods. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 34)**

Karma & Jnana

Yudhishtira! *Shuka* questioned: (Shl 1) Father! **In Vedas we find statements which say 'do karma' as well as 'leave karmas'.** In this respect I wish to ask two questions. Where do *sadhaks* go with *jnana*? Where do those who do karma go? (Shl 2) I want to ask this matter. Kindly tell me. These two statements in Vedas oppose each other rather than supporting each other.

Bhishma said: *Yudhishtira*! Thus questioned by *Shuka*, *Vyasa* the son of *Parashara* replied to his son as follows:

(Shl 3) Child! **This karma-marga** (path of karma) **is destructive. The path of jnana** (*jnana-marga*) **is imperishable.** I will explain both. (Shl 4) Child! I will tell you what state is attained by *jnana* and by karma. Listen attentively. **The difference between these two is quite deep.** (Shl 5) *Shastras* declare that dharma exists. If it were to be said that the same *shastras* also say that 'there is no dharma', then hearing these two contrary statements the theist will feel quite agonised. **Similarly the statement that there is opposition between karma & jnana has caused anguish to me.**

(Shl 6) **The path of dharma leading to pravritti and the path of dharma leading to nivritti are both propounded by Vedas.** (Shl 7) **Sakaam-karmas** bind man. But he is liberated by *jnana*. **Therefore yatis who have found the banks of samsara** (crossed the ocean of *samsara*) **do not perform karmas.** (Shl 8) **The human being who does karmas will again be born after death with the physical body consisting of 16 tattvas. But by the power of jnana the jeeva becomes nitya** (eternal), **avyakta** (unmanifest) and **aksharatma** (imperishable *atma*).

(Shl 9) **The unwise interested only in the jnana of indriyas praise karmas.** For that reason they get interested in enjoying variety of sense pleasures and thinking that being in different bodies is an enjoyable experience keep taking on different bodies. (Shl 10) **But jnanis who have understood quite well the tattva of dharma, who have great buddhi, do not appreciate karma** just as those who drink river water do not praise well water. (Shl 11) Birth & death, happiness & unhappiness etc

are the fruits of karmas. But through *jnana* man goes to such place where he does not have to grieve. (Shl 12) Through *jnana* the *jeeva* goes to such state after which he neither dies nor is born and neither decays nor grows. (Shl 13) Through *jnana* man attains that state in which there is the *Parabrahma-vastu* which is unmanifest, unmoving, stable, unchanging, has no exertion and is without separation. (Shl 14) In that ultimate state man is not bothered by dualities. He will not have troubles arising from resolves. He will only be interested in the welfare of all beings, will have friendly feeling towards all and will treat all equally.

(Shl 15) Child! **One is a *jnani* & the other is a *karmata*** (eagerly engaged in actions). **The difference between the two is as follows:** Think of *karmata* as the Moon which loses its *kalas* (brightness) gradually in the *Krishna-paksha*, has only a minute *kala* on new Moon day and again starts collecting its brightness step by step and shines fully on Full Moon day. **A *karmata* will always be stuck in the cycle of decay & growth.** (Shl 16) This same matter has been expanded by a *maharshi*. Seeing the Moon just the next day of *amavasya* (New Moon day) when it looks like a curved thread they have imagined/compared as follows: (Shl 17) Think that the man interested in karmas as born like the Moon on next to *amavasya* day with eleven *vikaras* (ten *indriyas* and mind). He has a body acquired due to *karma-phalas* which is driven by *trigunas*. Just as decay & growth are everlasting for Moon so it is to such a man.

(Shl 18) Just like the drop of water on lotus leaf does not stick to it though resting on it, a *deva* has taken refuge in the human body. Understand that *deva* as *kshetrajna* who is eternal and realisable by practice of yoga. (Shl 19) **It should be understood that *tamas*, *rajas* & *sattwa* are the *gunas*** (quality, attribute) **of *jeeva*. The *jeeva* is the *guna* of *atma*. Understand that *atma* to be the *guna* of *Paramatma*.** (Shl 20) They say that the sentient *atma* is one who has *jeeva* as its *guna*. It is that *atma* who works through the body. It endows all beings with life. It is said by those who know *kshetra* that *Paramatma* who has created these seven *lokas* is greater than the *jeevatma*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 241)**

Some interesting arguments

- Kunthi to Sri Krishna: Draupadi who is always doing *sadachara*, has *sadvritti*, is *pati-parayana* could not enjoy unlimited & continuous happiness in proportion to her *satkarmas*; this being so it is not true that man enjoys happiness & comforts by doing *punya-karmas*.

If it is true that *punya-karmas* decline as you enjoy their fruits, it should also be true that *paap-karmas* should decline as you suffer them out (In reference to Kauravas & Pandavas after 13 years of exile). **(Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 90)**

- Bird Poojani to king Brahmadutta: (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?** (Shl 57) If time is responsible for everything then why do people weep bitterly out of grief? **If 'time' is responsible for all the karmas done by all living beings, why should there be dharma in the form of dos & don'ts and a rule that it should be followed?** (Shl 58) Oh king! **It is not just in the nature of living beings to not punish offences thinking that everything is influenced by time.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 139)
- Panchashikha: Secondly, if it were to be said that the *atma* is destroyed with the body, then the karmas of that body also will have to get destroyed. **There will be nothing like experiencing the fruits of good & bad deeds. According to this doctrine there will be no 'cause' for the happiness & grief experienced by the persons born. If the human being were merely a combination of *pancha-bhutas*, then just as machines made by same technology and components will all work alike, human beings also should have been doing the same kind of actions and experiencing the same kind of happiness & grief.** But it is not so and because each one is experiencing happiness & grief differently, even though the *chetana* comes with the body, the *chetana* is different from the body; that he has come with the burden of his own *karma-phalas* becomes evident. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 218)**
- Panchashikha: (Shl 35) According to your opinion both the body and *jeeva* are transient. ***Jeeva* and body are changing every moment without the conscious knowledge of man. Due to this reason even though there may be resemblance with the person, yesterday's person is**

not the same as today's person. Today's person is not tomorrow's person. The person of previous moment is not the one of this moment. The person of this moment is not the same next moment. Every moment body, form, *jaati*, dharma, benefits etc are changing. **If human beings were to be changing like this every moment, if they were actually becoming different persons continuously, how could the persistence that 'I am he' have remained? Since man is changing every moment there would be no karma, *karma-phala* or experiencing or enjoying of *karma-phalas*. It will have to be concluded that all happiness and grief are accidental.** Or it will have to be concluded that the one who desires fruits is someone else (different person); one who works for it is different; and one who experiences the results is quite another. **Therefore your argument is not acceptable.**

(Shl 36) Moreover, if this theory of moment to moment were to be accepted, then who will have any love for *vidya*, *daan*, *tapas* & *bala*? **The fruits of somebody's karma are experienced by someone else. If so, why would human being have interest in doing any karma?** (Shl 37) Even if this *kshanika-vijnana* is not complied with, it is not seen that one who gave to charity only experiences the fruits of giving to charity. If it is said that he experiences it in another birth, any way the one who gave to charity did not experience the fruits. In the next birth someone else has to experience. If it were to be said that this supports the *kshanika-vijnana*—that is, the doer and the experiencer are different—then it will also be true that the fruits of someone's sins will have to be experienced by someone else and similarly for the *punya-karmas*. Someone completely different may have to experience the happiness & grief due to the deeds done by someone else. In the same manner conclusions will have to be drawn about the *drishya* & *adrishya* (visible & invisible). That person who was visible the previous moment has become invisible this moment. Similarly one who was invisible last moment has now become visible. (Shl 38) The *jnana* of these two will be different. It is not continuous. **To be able to obtain the fruits of karmas it should be continuous-jnana. Therefore it is not possible for someone else to experience the fruits of karma.**

If it were to be said that therefore the blemish stated earlier is not valid, we question as follows: In your *mata* (opinion, doctrine) continuous-vijnana does happen. What is the root of this *vijnana*? **If it were to be said that the *vijnana* of previous moment itself is appropriated, it will not fit because the *vijnana* of previous moment is already destroyed.** If it were to be said that the *vijnana* of previous moment itself is responsible for the birth of next moment's *vijnana*, then: some kill a person with a heavy stick. This is the *vijnana* of previous moment. According to your doctrine a new body will have to arise from the old dead body. Therefore from whatever point of view you consider, this *kshanika-vijnana* does not look acceptable. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 218)**