

Mahabharata Series

THREE PURUSHARTHAS – DHARMA, ARTHA & KAMA

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PREFACE

This work is a compilation on the topics of three *Purusharthas* viz *Dharma*, *Artha* & *Kama* (Pronounced as Kama), also known as **trivarga of purusharthas**. The fourth *purushartha* viz *Moksha* has been left out of the scope here. The contents are extracted from the great epic Mahabharata.

One of the famous claims about this great epic is: **Whatever has been said in this about dharma, artha, kama and moksha has been said elsewhere also. But what is not in this will not be found anywhere else also** (Swargarohana parva; adhyaya 5; shloka 50). Anyone who has studied Mahabharata in depth would have realised how true this statement is.

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.

I have left out **moksha** as it is quite extensive and may interest only a few. Those who are interested in dharma as related to *moksha* may get my other PDF called **Mokshadharma** (a companion volume of **Spectroscope**) and study the same.

Dharma appears in several flavours in Mahabharata. Some examples are: Adharma, Varna dharma, Ashrama dharma, Ahimsa dharma, Daan dharma, Raja dharma, Stri dharma, Putra dharma, Yati dharma, Swadharma, Yuddha dharma, Yuga dharma, Ritu dharma, Beeja dharma, Prakriti Dharma, Sankhya dharma, Pravrtti dharma, Nivrtti dharma, Moksha dharma etc. Hence understanding the underlying essence/principles & the specific variations becomes important to practice dharma.

While this compilation is perhaps not exhaustive in capturing everything in Mahabharata about the three *purusharthas*, I have tried my best to make it adequately comprehensive and have tried to capture all the important passages. Also I have not covered Varna dharma exhaustively as some of the contents are available in my other compiled work **Chaturvanas in Mahabharata**.

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

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

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Three Purusharthas – Dharma, Artha & Kama in Mahabharata

Dharma

Characteristic of dharma

- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: (Shl 57) **There is no doubt that any act which has no relation with violence is an act of dharma. Nonviolence is dharma. Maharshis have proclaimed dharma so that no violence is committed on lifeforms.** (Shl 58) **It is called dharma because it 'holds/bears' it** (*dharanaath dharmo ityahuh*). Dharma holds/bears all lives (*dharmo dhaarayathe prajaah*). **It has been decided that that which has the quality of holding/bearing is dharma** (*yatsyadhaarana-samyuktam sa dharma ithi nishchayah*). (Commentary: Holding/bearing implies holding/bearing what? It means holding/bearing the whole creation. It holds the planets and stars. It holds/bears all moving and unmoving objects. This dharma is present everywhere. It is because of the dharma that it is possible to know accurately the movement of planets and stars. That same dharma also holds life-forms. That which holds is called dharma. It is for this reason that the word 'dharma' also means 'Paramatma'). (Karna Parva; Adhyaya 70)
- Bhishma: (Shl 9) Yudhishtira! Analysing and understanding the form of dharma is a very difficult task. Propagating it also is very difficult. **Who can say decisively in the matter of dharma? It is not possible to say that at all times this will be dharma.** (Shl 10) **Dharma has been propounded for the sake of *prabhava*** (the basis or root of being or existence; progress and well-being of all). **Therefore it is clear that that which conforms to this principle is dharma.** (Shl 11) Because it bears up the whole world it is called 'dharma' (*dharanat dharmam*). People are borne by dharma. Therefore that which conforms to the principle of 'bearing' is surely dharma (*yah syad dharana samyuktah sa dharma*). (Shl 12) Dharma has been propounded so that 'animals' are not subjected to *himsa* (violence). Therefore that which conforms to *ahimsa* is surely dharma. (Shl 13) **According to some whatever has been propounded in Vedas alone is dharma. But some others do not agree with this. We do not find fault with either of these opinions. But everything related to dharma does not appear in Vedas. Veda does not ordain all dharmas.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 109)

- **Nature of dharma and adharma**

Maharaja! Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! **All people generally have doubts about dharma. What is that dharma? Where did it come from?** Tell me about this. (Shl 2) Are the karmas which bring benefits in this world called dharma? Do the karmas which bring benefits in *para-loka* get designated as dharma? Or is it for the karmas which bring benefits both in this world & in *para-loka* that the designation dharma applies? Tell me about this in detail.

Bhishma said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! *Sadachara* (virtuous conduct), *Smriti* (Hindu law book, body of remembered traditions) & *Vedas* are the three characteristics of dharma. Some scholars say that *artha* is the fourth characteristic. (Shl 4) Among the actions said in *shastras* some are categorised as main activities and some as not so important. **Maharshis have established dharma as limitations or restrictions only for carrying on the journey of this life.** (Shl 5) One who practices/obeys dharma will enjoy happiness both in this world & in *para-loka*. A sinner does not practice dharma of own volition and does sinful deeds repeatedly and suffers grief. (Shl 6) **A sinner does not give up sinful deeds even when in danger or difficulty. In the same way, a person interested in activities based on dharma will not engage in sinful deeds even in times of danger or difficulty. *Sadachara* is the pillar of dharma.** Yudhishtira! Therefore you will also understand the nature of dharma if you stick to *sadachara* & *shauchachara*. (Shl 7) **A thief even though does some 'dharma-karyas' (acts of dharma) will be snatching other's wealth and in countries where there is none to question or advise (no rule of law) will live happily even after thieving.** (Shl 8) But if the wealth of the thief is snatched away by someone else, he also desires the existence of a king who can protect. **At that time he desires the state of those who are content with whatever they have.** (Shl 9) The person who is free of thieving, bribery, cheating etc will go to the palace of the king without any fears because he sees no blemish in his inner conscience.

(Shl 10) Telling truth is a virtuous act. There is no dharma better than speaking truth. **It is truth that holds everything else.** Everything is established in truth. (Shl 11) Sinners of cruel nature

also many times swear on truth and behave accordingly. (Shl 12) **If even such cruel people were to deviate from the promise of truth they enter into mutually & secretly, they fight each other and get destroyed (Case of mafias & underworld dealings!!) It is sanatana-dharma that for no reason should other's property be snatched.** (Shl 13) Some mighty persons (due to the arrogance that they have due to power of people & wealth) feel that dharma is something practiced only by the weak. **But due to their bad luck (fate) if they become weak themselves, then the path of dharma appears very palatable to them.** (Shl 14) Yudhishtira! It cannot be said that the very powerful in this world are also the happiest. Therefore let your mind never stray towards crookedness. (Shl 15) That person who does no wicked acts to others and does not even wish ill to them, has no fear from the wicked or the thieves or the king. **The person with pure practices & thoughts will always have no fear.** (Shl 16) A thief is always suspicious of everyone just as a deer which has strayed into the town. He thinks that just as he deals with others with sinful intentions, others think of him the same sinful way. (Shl 17) Those who are pure in their practices & thoughts will receive respect from others. One who is always joyous/clear minded will also be fearless. **He does not think that even the tiny wickedness he may have exists in others.**

(Shl 18) *Mahatmas* who are always engaged in welfare of others have propounded that giving to charity (*daan*) itself is dharma. **But the rich think that this is a ploy started by the poor** (in their selfish interest). (Shl 19) But due to ill-fate if these rich people were to become poor, then that same dharma of *daan* will look very attractive to them. Moreover, the very rich are not happy (botheration of protecting/guarding the wealth). (Shl 20) **Whatever acts we dislike or find unpalatable for ourselves should not be indulged in for others also.** (Shl 21) What will one who is committing adultery with a married woman say to another similar person? I feel if someone adulterous calls another by that label, it will not be tolerated. (Shl 22) **How can someone who himself wants to live kill others? Man should think that others should get the same kind of happiness that he himself wants.**

(Shl 23) One who has more wealth than he needs should distribute it to the poor & unfortunate. **Brahma created the profession of lending money on interest with the purpose of enabling such sharing.** (Shl 24) When money is lent on interest and collected back *devatas* will be witnesses. This dealing should run that way according to the rules. **If profits are generated due to the interest earned, it is auspicious to get interested in dharma-karyas.** (Shl 25) Yudhishtira! **Scholars say that behaving with all with love is a great dharma. Opposite to this is adharm.** You can yourself observe this succinct difference between dharma & adharm. (Shl 26) Whatever *sadachara* & *sad-vyavahara* the God has made for *satpurushas* is done with the intention of welfare of all. Universal welfare is accomplished by that. (Shl 27) Kurushreshtha! I have given you this discourse covering the characteristics of dharma. Let your mind never stray towards crookedness. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharm; adhyaya 259)

Dharma is the root

- Vidura to Dhritarashtra: *Artha, Kama & Moksha* are rooted in Dharma; so should the kingdom be. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 4)
- Vyasa: (Shl 62) **I am shouting with both my arms raised: 'Oh human beings! It is from dharma that *artha* can be accomplished; *kama* can also be accomplished. In spite of this why do you not take shelter in such great dharma?' Even though I am saying this loudly, no one listens to me (*urdhvabahurviraumyasha na cha kashchit shrnoti me, dharmadarthashcha kamashcha sa kimartham na sevate*).**
- (Shl 63) **No one should give up dharma out of *kama* or fear or greed or for the sake of making a living. Dharma is eternal. Happiness and grief are temporary. They are not permanent. Jeeva is forever. The body which is the cause of his bondage is not permanent.** (Swargarohana parva; adhyaya 5)
- Vyasa said: (Shl 3) Oh insect! I know that you have got this birth because of your sins in past birth. If you think that dharma can uplift you, you will get such dharma again. (Shl 4) **The fruits of karma done on *karma-bhumi* will be experienced by *devatas* as well as animals & birds. Just like man can find accomplishment of *kama & artha* by virtuous qualities (*sadguna*), they can also be accomplished by dharma.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 118)

Dharma is made for all

After the drought ended the *rishis* again gathered at a place. They started investigating how to study Vedas. (Shl 42) Those *rishis* had completely forgotten Vedas in their long and arduous quest for food. There was no single *medhavi* who could remember Vedas in such extraordinary times. Coming to know of Saraswata *muni*, they all came to him. They requested him to teach them the Vedas. He said to them, 'Become my *shishyas* formally. Then I will teach you.' The *rishis* replied, "Son! You are still very young. How can we become your *shishya* when you are like our son?"

Saraswata said that 'my dharma also should not be violated'. (Meaning without *guru-shishya* system Veda's teaching & learning cannot be done). Saraswata said, "Those who do not teach Vedas in the prescribed way and those who do not learn in the prescribed way will both soon reach lowly states or will be destroyed. Otherwise they both become enemies. ***Rishis have not made their decisions on dharma keeping in mind people with older age or looking at grey hairs. They have not made decisions keeping in mind wealth and richness. They have not made it keeping in mind their relatives and friends. Whoever has done the study of Vedas properly, whoever is capable of teaching Vedas properly is great. He deserves to be in the position of a guru.*** (Questions of age, wealth, relationship etc do not arise)."

After hearing Saraswata *muni*, all the *rishis* became his *shishyas* (disciples) formally & learnt the Vedas. 60,000 *munis* accepted his tutorship formally. (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 51)

Dharma is greatest

- Draupadi to sootha who comes to take her to the assembly: (Shl 15, 16) Oh Sootha! When destiny is like this, no one can avoid it. Happiness & grief will come to all, whether wicked or noble, old or young. But *dharma* is superior. If we follow *dharma*, it will save us. (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 67)
- Vidura said: (Shl 13) **Dharma is eternal. Happiness & grief are not.** *Jeeva* is ever present. The body which is support for the *jeeva* is not eternal. Therefore do not bother about the impermanent happiness & grief. Remove *avidya*. Be established in eternal dharma. Be always contented. Being in a state of 'always contented' is the best gain. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 40)

Dharmas to be practiced

- Shaunaka's *upadesha* to Yudhishtira based on Janaka *maharaja*'s sayings: (Shl 75) The following are the *ashta-dharmas* (eight dharmas) to be practiced by human beings: *yajna*, *adhyayana* (study of Vedas & *shastras*), *daan* (giving to charity), *tapas*, *satya*, *kshama* (forgiving), *dama* (control of *indriyas*) and *alobha* (absence of greed). (Shl 76) The set of first four viz *yajna*, *adhyayana*, *daan* & *tapas*, are useful to obtain *pitru-lokas*. These four should be done without ego, with a sense of duty and without desiring fruits. (Shl 77) Practice of the remaining four results in obtaining *devaloka*. A pure hearted person obtains *mukti* with these eight dharmas. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)
- Dharma *vyadha*: (Shl 93) Their three main dharmas are: (i) not causing trouble to any at any time (ii) giving *daan* as much as possible or beyond capability (iii) steadfast on the path of *satya* (truth). (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Dharma *vyadha*: (Shl 40-41) Giving food in donation as per one's capacity, being patient, dedication to dharma, being kind to all living beings, treating respectfully all beings according to what they deserve—these good qualities are possible only to one who is rooted in sacrifice (*tyaga-sheela*). .. Helping others voluntarily & on own initiative is better than helping only those who come seeking help. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Dharma *vyadha*: (Shl 30-31) Kindness/mercy is the greatest dharma. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 213)
- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 9) A wise man should never have ego (*garv*). (Shl 10) Taking what has not been offered, giving to charity, study of Vedas, being immersed in *tapas*, nonviolence, truthfulness, not getting angry, performing *yajnas*—these are characteristics of dharma. (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*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

- Indrota *muni* to Janamejaya (this is an ancient king whose story appears here. Not the son of Parikshita who is listening to Mahabharata): (Shl 5) A wealthy man can become a great donor. A miser or a pauper can become *tapasvi*. There is not much surprise in this, because, for a rich man the act of donating and for a pauper doing *tapas* is not too far off (not very difficult). But for a pauper to become a donor and for a wealthy man to become a *tapasvi* is quite difficult. .. (Shl 7) It has been said that the following five are highly sacred: *yajna*, *daan*, *daya* (kindness), Vedas and truth. Sixthly, *tapas* performed with *sadachara* (virtuous practices). (Shl 8) For a king all these six are highly sacred. By practicing these with good faith you will attain very good *dharma-phala*. (Shl 9) It has been said that going to pilgrim centres (undertaking pilgrimage) is also a sacred act. (Shl 10) According to Yayati, one who desires long life should perform *yajnas* wilfully. Then he should push it aside and perform *tapas* (includes pilgrimage). (Shl 14) **Manu has said that among sacred deeds *tyaga-dharma* is said to be the highest.** Manu has also said that *Sanyasa-dharma* is the greatest dharma. (Shl 15) Just as a young boy has no attachments and hatred and is a personification of truth, does neither *punya* nor *paap*, *sanyasis* are also expected to be like them. This is their dharma. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 152)
- Bhishma: (Shl 19) The following are the characteristics of dharma: *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satyanishta* (truthfulness), *akrodha* (free from anger), *anrishamsya* (kindness), *dama* (*jitendriyatva*, restraint on senses) and simplicity. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 22)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 9) *Sadachara* (virtuous practices) characterises dharma. *Sat-charitrya* is the characteristic of great people. Therefore the behaviour of *sadhus* is the characteristic of *sadachara*. (Shl 10) **Even if they do not see, just by hearing the name, people love those who are engaged in acts of welfare to the society and have *dharmic* practices.** (Shl 156) Virtuous conduct has been stated to be great in all Vedas. Dharma is born from *sadachara*. Longevity increases due to dharma. (Shl 157) Brahma out of compassion for all *varnas* has taught this *sadachara*. This brings fame, longevity and *Swarga*. It is a great refuge for auspiciousness of man. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 104)
- Vidura said: (Shl 56-57) *Yajna*, *adhyayana*, *daan*, *tapas*, *satya*, forgiveness, kindness & non-greed—these eight are paths of dharma. Of these the first four are followed at least for show-off. But the latter four can only be found in *mahatmas*. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 35)
- *Rishi* Devasthana advises Yudhishtira: (Shl 10) Some praise killing the enemy, breaching the fort and gaining kingdom and then governing it with dharma. Some praise living without any contacts or communication. After analysing all these matters, scholars have come to the following conclusion. **That dharma which does not offend animals and which does not even think of offending them is the best dharma for *satpurushas*.** (Shl 11, 12) **Not offending any one; telling truth; by practicing various prescribed daily rituals (*nitya-naimittika-karma*) distributing the share due to all animals; being kind to all; gaining victory over *indriyas*; begetting good children from duly wedded wife (*dharma-patni*); behaving with softness towards all; feeling shy in doing wicked deeds; being free of *chapalyas* (fickleness/unsteadiness in respect of taste, sight, hearing and touch); these are best and desirable dharmas.** This has been said by Swayambhu Manu himself. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 21)
- Wife of Nagaraja to brahmana: (Shl 12) **Those who know dharma say that by doing work which is dear to one's heart (*abhipreta*), which has no touch of sins (*asamshlishta*) and is for the welfare of self (*atmahita*), no one goes to *naraka*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 360)

Basis for having different dharmas

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! (Shl 11, 12) **The physical body of all four *varnas* consist of same *pancha-bhutas*. They all have the same *atma*. Still there are distinct differences in their *loka-dharma* (worldly matters) and special dharmas.**

It is the intent of forming different dharmas that each one should practice the dharmas assigned to them due to their past karmas and yet achieve oneness. There are detailed references in this matter in *shastras*. (Shl 13) Child! Yudhishtira! If we agree that dharma is *nitya* (eternal), the question arises that how can the fruits such as *Swarga* etc obtained by practicing it be *anitya* (transient, temporary)? And If *Swarga* etc temporary things are obtained by dharma, then how can dharma be eternal? The answer to this is as follows: **Where the resolve for practicing dharma is related to the eternal Parabrahma vastu** (like *nishkama karma*), **there the dharma will also be eternal**. (Shl 14) In all beings having same (equal) bodies and *atma*, the eternal & temporary resolves (based on nature of dharma) are the ones which survive. (Differences are seen in beings due to this). The *kaal* which takes the form of resolves in beings is also the guru (*kaalo dharmena samyuktah shesha eva swayam guru*). (Shl 15) This being so, there is no blemish in beings following different dharmas. For the good and bad tendencies in lower forms of life (*tiryag yonis*) also, the *loka* controlled by *vidhi* is the guru (demonstration of good and bad deeds) (*tiryagyonavapi sataam loka eva matho guruh*). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 164)

Dama as dharma

Vidura on *dama* (*indriya nigraha* or restraint of the senses): (Shl 9) Elders who have clear & accurate knowledge say that for *shreyas dama* is the best tool. **Particularly for a brahmana dama is the best & ancient dharma**. (Shl 10) For one who has control over his external *indriyas* (i.e. is *jitendriya*), generosity, forgiveness and success become natural traits. It is *dama* that brings charitable disposition, dedication to *tapas*, *jnana* and *vidya*. (Shl 11) *Dama* increases one's *tejas*. With the practice of *dama* his *atma-tejas* increases and he understands Parabrahma who is designated as '*mahat*'. (Shl 12) One who is not a *jitendriya* is like a beast. Just as people are afraid of carnivorous animals, so are they afraid of the person who has no *indriya nigraha*. *Swayambhu Brahma created kshatriyas to keep such people under restraint & control*. (Shl 13) **Dama is considered best dharma for all the four ashramas such as brahmacharya etc**. I will tell you about the characteristics of a person with *dama*.

(Shl 14-15) One who has following qualities is considered a *daanta*: forgiveness, enthusiasm, ahimsa, equanimity in heat, cold, happiness, grief etc., simplicity, truth, control on *indriyas*, courage, softness, modesty/sense of shame, not being of inconstant mind/desire for sensory pleasures, generosity, absence of anger, happiness & faith. (Shl 16) A *daanta* does not even allow the following qualities to come near him: *kama* (*desires*), greed, haughtiness, excessive sleep, self-praise, too much ego, malice/jealousy and grief. Not being crooked or obstinate and being of pure heart are the characteristics of a person with *dama*. (Shl 17) A *daanta* is one who has no greed, is satisfied with less, does not even think of objects of desire and is dignified as the ocean. (Shl 18) He is full of *sadachara* & *sheela*, is of happy disposition, is an *atma-jnani*, and is respected by the whole world & attains *sadgati* after death.

(Shl 19) The person who has no fear from any living being and due to whom even the other animals lose their fear, such a mature person becomes famous as the greatest person. (Shl 20) Because he is interested in the well-being of all the living beings and looks upon all with a friendly attitude, people do not get disturbed about a *daanta*. He is satisfied with earning *jnana* and is always calm. (Udyoga; Yanasandhi; adhyaya 63)

Dama: The best among many dharmas

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! A person will be trying to do his *adhyayana* (study of Vedas and *shastras*). He has desire to do only *dharma-karyas*. Which is the best option for him for auspicious results? (Shl 2) **There are many philosophical systems (*darshana*) in this world (*bahudha darshane loke*)**. But tell me about that which is auspicious for both this world and other worlds. (Shl 3) **This path of dharma is very expansive. Moreover there are several branches (forks) in this. Among these innumerable dharmas, tell me that which must be practiced**. (Shl 4) **Which in reality is the most significant root of this many branched tree?** Tell me about all this fully.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 6) Yudhishtira! **As you said the practices of dharma are not the same. (*dharma-sya vidhau na eke*) There are many varieties. *Rishis* have stated different practices based on their own experiences and superior knowledge they attained**. But *indriya-samyama* (restraint of *indriyas*—the senses & mind) or ***dama*** is the basis for all dharmas. (Shl 7) Those who know the essence of dharma say that *dama* is *nishreyas* (happiness or leading to final beatitude).

Particularly for a brahmana *dama* is *sanatana dharma*. (Shl 8) It is only by *dama* that brahmana's goals are accomplished. ***Dama is superior to daan, yajna and study of Vedas.*** (Shl 9) *Dama* increases *tejas*. It is the most sacred place for accomplishing deeds. (Shl 10) ***We have not heard of any other dharma which matches with dama. For followers of all dharmas in this world, dama is the best and most commended.*** (Shl 12) One who has control over his mind and *indriyas* will sleep happily. Will wake up happily from sleep. Will travel the world happily. ***The mind of daanta (one who has dama) is always joyous.*** (Shl 13) One who does not have mind and *ijndriyas* under his control will frequently face difficulties and grief. He will be creating much harm due to his own blemishes. (Shl 14) It has been said that *dama* is the best *vrata* for all four *ashramas* viz *brahmacharya, grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa*. ***Now I will tell you the characteristics of mano-nigraha and indriya nigraha. This set of characteristics is called as dama.***

(Shl 15, 16) ***The following group of qualities are called dama:*** Forgiveness, courage, non-violence, equality, truthfulness, simplicity, victory over senses, efficiency, soft-nature, shame, not having fickleness, generosity, no anger, joy, speaking likeably, not troubling any living being, not having jealousy towards any (or finding faults in others). These are all characteristics or parts of *dama*. (Shl 17, 18) Kurunandana! A *daanta* has the nature of respecting and worshipping *guru-jana*. He will be kind towards living beings. He will not have the nature of carrying tales. He does not blame the world. He does not lie. He neither praises nor abuses any. He never lets the following qualities take possession of him: *kama, krodh, lobha, darpa* (haughtiness), impoliteness or stupidity or sloth, wasted talk (meaningless gossip), rage, envy and humiliating others. (Shl 19) No one blames or accuses a *daanta*. By virtue of having won his mind he will not have any desires in his mind. He will not spread his hands before others (beg) even for small help. He will not desire trivial sensual pleasures. Will not find fault with others. He will have depth and profundity of character like the ocean itself. (Shl 20) He does not attach with people who quote past relationships by saying, 'I am yours; you are mine. He is in love with me. I am in love with them' etc. (Commentary: As he has given up 'I & mine', he has no distinction of mine and others). (Shl 21) He does not take refuge in the normal tendencies of residents of villages or forests. He does not bother about other's blames or appreciations. Such a *daanta* will be freed from all sins.

(Shl 22) That person who is friendly towards all, who has impeccable character, is always joyous, is free from various attractions, who is *atma-jnani*, ***will attain the fruits of moksha after death.*** (Shl 24) Those which are auspicious deeds, which are practiced by *satpurushas* will be the way of life for a *muni* who has *jnana*. ***He will be performing those activities very naturally. He will never lapse from those auspicious karmas.*** (Shl 27) ***A daanta will experience all his prarabhdha-karmas and clear them. He will not accumulate any further fruits of good or bad karmas because he will have overcome the pride that he is doing them himself (no kartritva-abhimana), and will have no desire for the fruits of his karmas (no phalasakti).*** He will be moving around in this world with equality towards all living beings & will provide reassurance to all as a friend. (Shl 28) Just as the path of fish in water and flight of birds in sky leaves no traces, the path of a *jnani* remains invisible. It is not possible to know the path travelled by a *jnani*. There is no doubt in this. (Shl 29, 30) Yudhishtira! ***For that person who is an atmajnani and gives up completely all karmas, tapas, vidyas formally, leaves his home and seeks refuge only in moksha-marga, divine and tejomaya lokas will be ready for occupation for thousands of years.*** (Shl 31) Such an *atmavid* whose practices and thoughts are pure, *antahkarana* is clear, has pure intentions, has withdrawn from sensual pleasures & luxuries, will be honoured by all in this world and will attain *swarga* after death. (Shl 32) ***That place which is of Pitamaha Brahma born from Brahma-rashi is actually in the cave of our hearts. That Brahma can be obtained only by dama.*** (Shl 33) That *jnani* person who has no enmity or opposition with any living being and who is always joyously established in the *atma* who is *jnana-swaroopi*, has no fear of being reborn in this world and hence what fear will he have of the other worlds? (Shl 34) There is only one blemish in *dama*. There is no second. ***A daanta will naturally be forgiving. People therefore think he is weak.*** (Shl 35) Wise & learned Yudhishtira! ***This one defect of dama can also become a great quality.*** A forgiving person attains many *punya-lokas*. ***Moreover, forgiveness also inculcates tolerance.*** (Shl 36) What is the use of forest for a *daanta*? There is no need for him to go to forest. There is any way no use of forest for an *adaanta* also. Because wherever *daanta* lives is as good as forest and an *ashrama*. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 160)

Benefits of dharma

- Draupadi: (Shl 8) '*Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*'. (Dharma protects those who protect dharma). (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; adhyaya 30)

- Yudhishtira: (Shl 34) Fools are always dissatisfied & unhappy irrespective of how much they have got; and by not following dharma, they do not get happiness of other-*lokas* too. (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; adhyaya 31)
- Sri Krishna to Pandavas: (Shl 7) One who is always dedicated to the path of dharma will not be destroyed due to any reason. (Vana; Draupadiharana; adhyaya 263)
- Savithri to Yama: (Shl 47) Dharmaraja! **Satpurushas never deviate from the path of dharma.** That is why they are not destroyed & do not worry. (Vana; Pativratamahatmya; adhyaya 297)
- Bhishma: (Shl 55) Just as the person who lives on interest money looks forward to the increase in interest money as soon as day changes, in the same way a person covered in sins will again & again do sinful deeds. (Shl 56) But if he does more and more of acts of dharma, sins will be overpowered by it and will be destroyed due to increase of dharma. ... (Shl 61) Man should practice dharma alone (not for showing off to others). He should not merely be bearer of flag of dharma (*dharmadhvaj*). Those who make their living through acts of dharma are called 'sellers of dharma'. (Shl 62) *Devatas* should be worshipped without any hypocrisy. Elders should be served without any deceit. The wealth of *daan* should be accumulated for the journey of *paraloka*. All money earned for gaining *paraloka* should be given to charity generously. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 162)
- Vidura said: (Shl 40) **It is true that *devatas* are protectors of devotees & followers of dharma. But like cowherds they do not come with a stick & protect each individual. They give wisdom & right thinking to those whom they wish to protect.** (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 35)
- Vidura to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 52) Only dharma can help achieve highest good. Forgiveness alone can bring peace. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 33)
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: (Shl 31) One who has desire to always tread the path of dharma will enjoy happiness everywhere. He will have a delighted mind and will attain *uttama-lokas* after death also. (Drona; Jayadrathavadha; adhyaya 85)
- Manu: (Shl 26) Auspiciousness increases by following the path of dharma. Inauspiciousness increases by taking the path of *adharma*. The person who is attached to sense objects is forever in the Prakriti (this world). The *virakta* (person who is indifferent towards worldly objects) gains *atma-jnana*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 205)
- Parashara: (Shl 4) Man finds accomplishment (*siddhi*) when he cuts the rope of *adharma* & remains attached only to dharma and assures security/safety (*abhaya-daan*) to all animals.

(Shl 11) A dam built properly across the river will not breach for any reason. Such a dam will be full of water. Similarly the dam of dharma built with the framework of *shishtachar* (practice or conduct of the learned or virtuous) will never be destroyed. Because of such 'dharma-dam' *punya* will increase at every step. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 298)

Importance of following dharma in life

- Maharshi Vyasa to son Shuka: (Shl 18) This *loka* is being battered by death. It is being agonised by old age. Nights which are successful in reducing human being's life span are passing by. Realise this and cross this ocean of *samsara* with the boat of dharma. .. (Shl 21) **You have to enter the darkness of *samsara*. When doing so a lamp is very necessary. A *buddhi* dedicated to dharma is such a lamp. With a wilful effort bear that divine lamp whose flame will gradually increase.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 321)
- Sauthi: Let your minds always be firm in dharma. For one who wishes to go to the *paraloka* dharma will be the only relative. No one can escape death. Whether a pauper or a rich, one day he has to go to *paraloka*. **When living on earth, the clever may earn money; may enjoy with women freely. But when leaving this body, neither money nor women will come with you.** Those who are very dear when living will not remain so after death. **The truly dear one of man is**

dharma. This will always remain firm. Even after the end of the body, it stays with the *jeeva* and goes with it to *paraloka* and helps enjoy the fruits. Therefore the mind should always be absorbed in dharma. (Adi; Poushya; adhyaya 3)

- Sri Krishna to Arjuna:I have taken this *avatar* along with you only to kill Shishupala and such others enemies of *devatas* and for the welfare of the world.**Whoever does *dharma-lopa* (lapse of dharma) will be killed by me.** (Shl 29) Arjuna! I have made this unshakable vow only for the establishment of *dharma*. *Vedabhyas, satya-nishta, jitendriyatva, shuchitva, dharmacharan,* shame in doing sinful deeds, *satvik-sampath, dhairya, kshama-guna*—**I live wherever these qualities exist. Partha! I am making this promise vouching on *satya*.** (Drona; Ghatotkachavadha; adhyaya 181)

- **Jeeva's journey & dharma**

As suggested by Bhishma, Yudhishtira questioned Brihaspati who came to see Bhishma and others: When he dies and leaves behind this body that is equivalent to a lump of mud or piece of wood, who will follow him?

Brihaspati said: (Shl 11) *Maharaja!* Man is born alone. He dies alone. He overcomes great difficulties alone and obtains bad states also alone. (Shl 12) None of the people you mentioned can help him when he leaves this world and goes to *paraloka*. (Shl 13) Relatives will dispose the useless body in the graveyard, grieve for a while and then go away. (Shl 14) Family members also will leave the body and go away. **But only dharma follows the *jeevatma* which goes to *paraloka*. Only dharma is true help. Therefore human being should always serve dharma.** (Shl 15) **A life with dharma goes to *Swarga*. Similarly one who lived with *adharma* goes to *Naraka*.** (Shl 16) Therefore a wise & learned person **should practice/implement dharma in his life with money earned by just means.** It is only dharma that helps a man in *paraloka*. (Shl 17) One who is not learned may either under control of greed and attachment or kindness or fear commit wrong deeds for the sake of others. (Shl 18) **Dharma, *artha* & *kama* are the fruits of life. Man should accomplish dharma & *artha* without any contact with *adharma*.**

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

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

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

- Vidura said: (Shl 18) Even if the closest relatives part upon death, the *karma-phalas* of the person do not leave him. The *karma-phalas* 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; Adhyaya 40)
- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 19) **There is no atonement of any kind for those who give up the *varnashrama-dharma* (such as brahmana etc), *ashrama-dharma* (*brahmacharya*, *grihastha* etc), motherland, *kula-dharma* and who completely reject *dharma* itself.** They will not be purified by any atonement. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

Which dharma to choose

- (Shl 11) Indra as an eagle--Shhenapakshi: **If one dharma poses obstacles & hurdles to another dharma then it is not a dharma.** Such dharma is considered an evil path. That dharma which does not become an enemy or hurdle to another dharma is called a noble dharma. When two dharmas are in opposition one should weigh which is important & which is not. That dharma which causes lesser problems/hurdles should be followed. (Vana; Tirthayatra; adhyaya 131)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 34) Great among brahmanas! Even those who are well informed, are of noble birth and have very good character continue to perform the terrible karmas that have come down to them through generations in their family. Do they feel ashamed because of this? No. Even though it may appear as cruel deeds to others, for them what has come down from generations appears best thing to do. (Shl 35, 36, 37) **There is no single opinion even among *satpurushas*. Among them also there are followers of different schools.** The system of one is not acceptable to others. **It is the same even with the wicked.** They will not have unanimity. Even if they are of virtuous conduct, if they are not liked, they are not viewed cordially. **Meaning all people on earth take the stand that 'whatever they are practicing is right and whatever others practice is wrong'.** One can see fights among close relatives & friends. They do not tolerate someone among them being very prosperous. They will be envious of him. They hate him. There is anyway always jealousy and anger regarding the rich. The fools and those who think themselves to be very intelligent blame/censure the gurus who taught them. **Therefore we see only opposites/contradictions all around. It appears that *adharma* consists of *dharma*.** What is your opinion on this? (Shl 38) Kaushika! **One can talk in many ways about dharma & *adharma*. But it is my decision that one who is engaged in karmas prescribed for his family/tribe will achieve great success.** (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 208)

Dharma can change with time

- Hanuman: **The time & dharma changes in every yuga. Dharma declines from one yuga to next.** I do not have the same physical capabilities I had in Treta yuga. It has declined with the yuga. The ground, rivers, plants, and rocks, and *siddhas*, gods, and celestial sages conform to Time in harmony with the state of things in different yugas. (Vana; Tirthayatra; adhyaya 149)
- Markandeya *rishi*'s answers to Yudhishtira: (Summary)
 - (A) **The first humans created by Brahma were totally dharmic. They were like *devatas* on earth.** They were only interested in Brahma Samadhi & Brahmananda. They had no materialistic desires, though they could fulfil whatever they wanted by mere will power. Essence of all dharmas were simply (naturally) known to or realised by them. They lived as long as they wished. (Similar to Hanuman's description of Kritha yuga) (*There is no mention of lower forms of life like animal, insect etc!*)
 - (B) **After several thousand years, dharma started declining steadily.** Humans forgot *brahmananda* & started looking for pleasures due to self-efforts. Thus started *kama*, *krodha* etc. Sinful deeds followed & they started losing all divine powers. It also resulted in birth in many lower forms of life. (Shl 69-73)

(Shl 71) None of their wishes were getting fulfilled. **Their *jnana* was also limited to achieving worldly pleasures.** They had no concentration. **They were doing whatever the mind prompted; they were not acting with their mind under their control.** They would

suspect everything. They were afraid of everyone. They were busy troubling others. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 183)

Doubts on dharma

Yudhishtira raises several doubts on dharma

Paarikshita! Yudhishtira said: (Shl 1) Grandfather! You have explained very well the characteristics of the subtle dharma. But many more doubts have come to my mind in this matter. I am telling them to you with the assumption that they may be like that. (Shl 2) There were several questions in my mind. You have answered all of them suitably. Now I am about to ask another question. **But I am asking this question only with the intention of learning or knowing and not with any sophistry.** (Shl 3) Bhaarata! Beings live by their own efforts. They also generate other beings. Similarly they also end their bodies. All this happens naturally. **But by merely reciting Vedas it is not possible to know dharma.** (It is interesting to note that on several occasions Yudhishtira has expressed his scepticism of knowledge of Vedas based on mere recitation skills).

Dharma is undefined

(Shl 4) **One kind of dharma has been stated for those who are well off. Another type has been stated for those in difficulty.** How can one know the characteristics of *aapadharmā* (dharma when in distress) by mere recitation of Vedas? (Shl 5) Because it has been stated that, 'The practices of *satpurushas* itself becomes dharma. Those who show the characteristics of practicing dharma are *satpurushas*', *sadachara* & *satpurushas* become mutually dependent. **Because there are no clear or defined characterisations of *sadachara*, how can we say whether it can be practiced or not?** (Shl 6) We have many times observed that many ordinary people do *adharma* which appears to be dharma and many non-ordinary people do acts of dharma which appear like *adharma* (Resulting in the violators appearing to be followers of dharma and followers appearing to be violators of dharma).

Vedas are not standard for dharma

(Shl 7) Experts in *shastras* have directed that Veda is the proof for dharma. But we have also heard that Vedas decay from *yuga* to *yuga*. By saying this it is implied that the validity of Vedas as a standard/authority in respect of dharma changes from *yuga* to *yuga*. **Therefore it cannot be said that Veda is the proof or standard (*pramaana*) for dharma.** (Shl 8) There are different dharmas in Krita yuga. It is different from in Treta & Dwapara. In Kali yuga it will again be different from what it was in earlier *yugas*. **Therefore it appears that the system of dharma has been created according to the capabilities of human beings.** (Shl 9) **The statement that 'The sayings in Vedas are Truth' is only for pleasing people because it is from Vedas that several kinds of *smritis* have evolved in all directions.** (Shl 10) Some say that complete Vedas are authorities or standards. **We also see mutually conflicting statements in Vedas.** When we consider these one will be against the other as a standard. Then the 'non-standard' statements will end up opposing the 'standard' statements. **If so, how can Vedas gain the authority to be a *shastra*?**

Dharma is illusive & ever-changing

(Shl 11) When dharma is being practiced, powerful wicked people intervene/interfere and spoil the root or foundation of that dharma. Then that root or base of dharma is itself destroyed (dharma without its essence remains). (Shl 12) Whether we know the form of dharma or not, whether it is possible to know it or not, this much can be said about dharma: **Dharma is sharper/thinner than the edge of a sword and bigger than the mountain.** (Shl 13) Dharma, at first look, appears charming & beautiful like the *gandharva-nagara* (town of celestial musicians; like the peculiar shapes that clouds form in the sky). **But to the scholars who think especially about it, it is not seen at all.** (Shl 14) The water in the trough for cattle to drink and the water in the canal from which it is routed to the fields will never be the same (Since it is continuously used up & recharged, it changes). Similarly the *smritis* are also not the same and change from time to time. **Therefore there is no eternal dharma that is never destroyed.**

No uniform model of dharma

(Shl 15) Because at that time some do acts of dharma to fulfil some desires. They also do it with some other desires. Other people do acts of dharma for several other reasons. Some bad or wicked people also indulge in useless dharma just for the sake of appearance. (Shl 16) **In the later days to come that will itself become known as dharma.** The truer form of dharma practiced by *sadhus* & *satpurushas* will be considered mere chattering or prattling in the view of the fools. The ignorant & the

stupid will call the *satpurushas* as insane and laugh at them. (Shl 17) Many great persons (like Drona) have reverted from *swadharma* and have sought shelter in *kshatriya-dharma*. **Therefore there is no uniform and 'applicable to all' practice that is in vogue.** (Shl 18) Some attained greatness by practice of such dharma (like Vishwamitra etc). In the same way some others caused agony to others by virtue of their dharma of *tapas* (like Ravana etc). We also see that Kashyapa etc *maharshis* attained equality by grace of Ishwara through dharma only. (Shl 19) One attains greatness by dharma. Another agonises others with the dharma. **Therefore even if dharma is practiced, it is seen that there is no uniformity in the practice of dharma.**

(Shl 20) Grandfather! You have told about the dharma that scholars followed long back. It is by the practice of such ancient dharma that the honour of the society will be preserved for a long time. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 260)

Hypocritical dharma

(Shl 36) Shukra to Yayati: Oh son of Nahusha! Doing acts which should not have been done and then trying to colour it with dharma will be considered stealing of *dharma*. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 82)

Might and dharma

- Bhishma: (Shl 3) **No one has practically seen the fruits of dharma and *adharma*.** Therefore a king should try to become mighty because, this world is controlled by the mighty. (Shl 4) A mighty man obtains wealth, army and ministers. One who is a pauper is considered fallen. If one has very little money, it will be considered as left-over. (Shl 5) There will be many defects in a mighty person. But a mighty man can digest them. Because of the fear that he is mighty, others will not trouble him. **In case might and dharma are established in truth, then that might and dharma will protect the man from great fears.** (Shl 6) **I consider might as greater than dharma. Dharma increases due to might.** Dharma is established in might. (Shl 7) Just as smoke is under the control of wind, dharma follows might. Just as creeper grows only with the support of a tree dharma needs the support of might to grow. (Shl 8) Just as a person with many items of luxury and enjoyments derives happiness, dharma comes under the control of one who has might. **There is nothing that the mighty cannot accomplish. Whatever is done by the mighty will be considered as unblemished *karmas*.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 134)
- Bhishma to Draupadi: (Shl 15) **In this world whatever the mighty says is accepted as right by all.** If the weak tells definitively after understanding the intricacies of dharma, others do not honour it. This has become the situation today." (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 69)

Aapadharma (dharma when in danger)

What should/can be done

- **Saving one's life when in danger**
Hidimba to Yudhishtira & Kunthi: (Shl 13) Saving one's life is the most important duty of man in times of emergency/danger. It is said that those who follow dharma even in times of emergency/danger will surely be considered the best. (Shl 14) Times of danger/emergency create a lot of problems/challenges to dharma and those who follow dharma. (Shl 15) *Punya* will save our lives. *Punya* is also called '*pranada*'. Therefore any approach you follow for the sake of dharma will not be blamed. (Adi; Jatugriha; adhyaya 155)
- (Shl 63) One who is dying of hunger must save his life by any extraordinary means or any act. Once he is again normal, he should practice dharma...(Shl 65) By whatever means one should save his life. It is the duty of man to act ignoring shame and humiliation for the sake of saving one's life. It is better to eat that which should be eaten and live rather than die of hunger. Once he is alive, it is possible to do acts of dharma again. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 141)
- **Code of conduct in emergency: wife Vs money etc**
(Shl 26-28) **Those who know dharma say that wife, son, relatives, dear friends & money — all these are meant to help us free ourselves from emergency situations according to the applicable dharma.** Money should be saved for tiding over emergencies. Wife should be protected with that money. Or wife should be protected more than money. But when one is in danger or emergency situation, one should protect oneself even if by giving up wife or money. **It**

has been decided by scholars that wife, children, wealth, house—all these are gained by humans towards fulfilling the known & unknown results (*drishta-adrishta phala prapti*). (Adi; Bakavadha; adhyaya 158)

- **Niyoga system for getting children**

Bhishma: (Shl 6) Parashurama killed all the *kshatriya* warriors but he did not kill any of the *kshatriya* women. We have heard that such women, who were deprived of husband & sons, followed the *aapadharma* (dharma during emergency or extraordinary circumstances) and had children from brahmanas who were experts in Vedas & Vedangas. In such situations there will be no sexual desire to the man or woman. The rules & regulations to be followed will also be tough. *Shruthis* declare that such children are considered as children of the man she had married formally. This is how *Kshatriya kula* again grew after Parashurama annihilated them. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 104)

- **Bhishma explains *aapadharma*: dharma in emergencies or when in danger**

(*aapat*: distress, calamity, danger, misfortune)

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! For a king if there are many enemies, friends are deserting him, treasury is weakening and his army is declining or has no army, what is his future? What should such a king do? (Shl 2) What should a king do who has only wicked ministers to assist him, because of this factor who is deprived of the power of meaningful consultations, who is about to lose his kingdom for this reason and who is unable to find any solution for his improvement? (Shl 3) A king has attacked another enemy king and is destroying them. At that same time another mighty king attacks this king. At that time what should the weaker king do? Whom should he seek refuge in? (Shl 4) *Samopaya* will not be successful for one who cannot protect his own country and who does not know the significance of time & place (*desh, kaal*). Because he will himself be troubled, even *bhedopaya* does not help. At that time what should the king do? Should he protect/save his life? Should he try to achieve success in *artha*? By doing what will he benefit? Tell me about all these.

Bhishma replied: Yudhishtira! You have asked a very secret matter. If you had not explicitly asked this question I would not have spoken to you about *aapadharma*.

(Shl 6) Dharma is a very subtle matter. By studying *shastras* and using ones intelligence, we can know the secrets of dharma. **One who studies/listens to *shastras* and practicing *sadachara* serves dharma becomes *sadhu* (virtuous, righteous). But such people are very rare.** (Shl 7) By working intelligently man may become rich or he may not. Your question is of that nature. You can yourself think about this well and come to a decision. (Shl 8) Listen to the several methods based on dharma which can be adopted in times of *aapat* to save the king's life. **But in the interest of practicing dharma (because these may be against good dharma) I do not like to practice these.**

(Shl 9) **If taxes are collected in times of serious difficulty in a way that causes agony to citizens, then it becomes the cause for the destruction of the king.** This is the decision of all *satpurushas* who are worthy of consulting. (Shl 10) The knowledge of man increases in proportion to his study of *shastras*. He will also develop a taste for acquiring more knowledge. (Shl 11) **In times of *aapat* a man without knowledge of *shastras* will not be able to think of ways to overcome it.** Using appropriate solution is the way to increase wealth. (Shl 12) Listen to me without any jealousy and without doubting my words. **Decline of king's treasury causes decline of king's strength.** (Shl 13) Just as we dig wells in regions where there is inadequate water, faced with *aapat* king can collect taxes to the extent possible from even those who are not so rich and strengthen the treasury. When good times return, he should use the same money for the benefit of the people. This is *sanatana dharma*. Even in the past kings adopted this same approach to rule the kingdom. (Shl 14) **There is one dharma for those who are quite well to do. There is another for those in *aapat* (Distress, calamity).** Question of practicing dharma comes after collection of money in the treasury. Otherwise how can dharma be practiced? **Moreover, making arrangements for survival and living is more important than practicing dharma.**

(Shl 15, 16) **Even if a weak person practices dharma, he cannot lead a just life. It cannot be said that by practicing dharma one becomes strong. Therefore even *adharma* done during times of *aapat* will have characteristics of dharma.** According to scholars what is dharma in

normal times may become *adharma* in *aapat*. (Commentary: In times of distress taxes should be collected even if people are troubled. Though troubling citizens for taxes is *adharma*, doing so in times of distress will not be considered as *adharma*. Not doing so will become *adharma*). (Shl 17) What should the king do once the distress is overcome? Should he atone? Should he not take further taxes from citizens?—there could be such doubts. This can be resolved in the following manner. Once the times of distress are over, he should act such that there is no harm to dharma. He can also atone. He can perform *yajnas*. He should not become subordinate to the enemy. **He should be careful so that he does not again get stuck in distress conditions.** Scholars opine that doing these are the duties of the king. (Shl 18) **In times of *aapat* man should not bother about practice of dharma by himself or others. He should himself try everything possible to come out of such situation.** This is the opinion and decision of scholars. (Shl 19) Just as the decisions of *dharma-vid* show their expertise in dharma, working with his might to improve own position shows the expertise of a *kshatriya*. (Shl 20) If the life and living of a *kshatriya* is in doubt, does he not become eligible to take the property of anyone other than brahmanas and *tapasvis*? **A *kshatriya* is eligible to collect money for managing the kingdom from all except brahmanas and *tapasvis*.**

(Shl 21) When a brahmana is in times of distress and finds it difficult to live, he can cause *yajna* to be performed even by those who are not authorised to do it. He can eat even food he is not supposed to eat to save his life. Similarly, a king in times of distress can collect money from anyone other than brahmanas and *tapasvis*. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 22) Is there any path that is forbidden for a man in distress? Whatever way he finds to run out becomes the door for him. **For one who is in captivity, an unjust way becomes the way. He will try to save/protect himself even in wrong ways.** When man is agonised by distress, then he will try to run away (overcome/escape) from that door (unjust means) itself. (Shl 23) When *kshatriya*'s treasury and army is experiencing debility and due to that all people of the country are defeated, the *kshatriya* should adopt *aapadharma* as stated above. It is not befitting a *kshatriya* to Beg. It is not also befitting to live by the karmas of *vysya* and *shudra*. (Shl 24) **But if he is unable to live by practicing *swadharma*, if he cannot depend on his own people, then such a person can survive even by adopting a *vritti* not prescribed by *swadharma*.** In times of distress when a person has to give up his *swadharma*, the route of adopting *vrittis* of alternate *varnas* is also prescribed. (Shl 25) Those in distress live their lives in a way opposed to dharma. They will not be able to live according to the prescriptions of dharma. Even among brahmanas when they are unable to live according to their own *varna*, this practice is seen. (Shl 26) When brahmanas themselves can do acts which are opposed to dharma, where is the doubt whether *kshatriyas* can do so? He should not destroy himself (and kingdom) due to lack of money (refers to collecting money from all, even if forcibly).

(Shl 27) Scholars say that *kshatriyas* are both protectors and destroyers of people. **Therefore a *kshatriya* should collect money from people when he is protecting them.** (Shl 28) In this world, no one's life is devoid of violence. When the life of even a *muni* who lives alone in the forest is not completely devoid of violence, what to speak of others? (Shl 29) Kurushreshta! **It is not possible for anyone to carry on with his life passively with the feeling that whatever is written in our destiny will happen. It is particularly not possible for a king to passively await the happenings of destiny when he has the responsibility to govern the people.**

(Shl 30) In times of distress both the king and citizens have to help & protect each other. This is *sanatana dharma*. (Shl 31) Just as the king will spend plenty of money to care for the citizens when they are in trouble, the citizens will have to care/protect the king when he is in trouble. (Shl 32) Even if the king is troubled by hunger, even if he is struggling for a living, he should not allow the treasury, *rajadnada*, army, friends and other accumulated assets to decline. (Shl 33) It is the opinion of those who know dharma that man should save seeds even from the grains he uses to eat (even if he has to fast, he should not use up the seeds preserved). In this matter, scholars quote the opinion of *mahamayavi* Shambarasura. (Shl 34) Condemnation to that king in whose kingdom the citizens and guests from other countries struggle because they are unable to find a way to make a living.

(Shl 35) The strength of the treasury is the main foundation for a king. Treasury is the foundation for army. That army is the basis for protecting all the dharmas. Dharma is the foundation of citizens' life. Therefore, treasury, which is the root of all, should be nourished. (Shl 36) It is not possible to gather money without troubling others. If money cannot be accumulated, how can you build an army? Therefore even if the king troubles the citizens for money in times of distress, he

will not acquire any blemish. (Shl 37) In *yajna-karmas* certain acts not fit for accomplishing the *yajna* have to be done. But no one considers it as blemish. Similarly, if a king does some acts of troubling citizens in times of distress it will not be a blemish. (Shl 38, 39) In times of distress troubling the people for collecting money will be aimed only at improving financial resources and hence is *arthakari*. Not collecting money thus will be *anarthakari*. Similarly building an army during times of peace may appear to be *anarthakari*. But war is imminent, it becomes *arthakari*. They become means to victory. **An intelligent person should therefore think carefully and decide upon his duties.** (Shl 40) Several items are collected for the sake of *yajna*. *Yajna* is performed for the sake of *chitta-samskara*. The various items, *yajna* and *samskara* are connected to each other. All these are means for conducting a *yajna*. In the same way, *danda* is for treasury, treasury is for army, army for defeating enemy, and thus treasury, might and victory are all for making the country better.

Yudhishtira! I will tell you a simile which promotes dharma. Listen. (Shl 41) Brahmanas cut the long trunk of a big tree to form the *yupa* for the *yajna*. When bringing it to the place of *yajna*, they cut all other trees which come in the way. When such trees fall, they destroy many other smaller plants. (Shl 42) In the same way, without eliminating those who come in the way of collecting money meant for protecting the citizens, I have not seen anyone succeeding in this task. (Shl 43) **It is from money that man can win both this *loka* and *para-loka*. He also accomplishes *satya* & *dharma*. But a pauper cannot do these. A pauper has effectively no existence.** (Shl 44) Money aimed at performing *yajna* should be collected in every possible way. **When doing *karya* & *akarya*** (that which should be done and that which should not be done), **the associated blemish will not always be same.** In times of distress doing the *akarya* of troubling the citizens is not a defect. But in normal times it is a serious blemish. Not collecting money in order to survive in times of distress will be a blemish. Therefore, thinking that *akarya* will result in blemish or *karya* will not result in blemish is not always valid. ***Karya* or *akarya* depend on time and place.**

(Shl 45) *Maharaja*! It is impossible for the giving up of money and collecting money to happen in the same man at the same time. The great *mahatmas* who live in the forest after giving up everything have not been seen, so far, to become rich. (Shl 46) Whatever little wealth is there on this earth, people desire, 'let it be mine. Let it be mine.' (Shl 47) **For a king there is no dharma like protecting and nurturing the kingdom. What I have told so far is only to be followed in times of distress. It should not be followed in normal times.** (Shl 48) Some by giving to charity, some by performing *yajnas*, some by *tapas*, some by intelligence, some by efficiency and skill in work earn lot of money. (Shl 49) A man without money is said to be weak. Money makes a man strong. Rich obtain everything. One who has plentiful wealth escapes from all difficulties. (Shl 50) **It is only by accumulating money that *dharma-kama*, *iha-loka*, *para-loka* are accomplished. But money should be accumulated only by following dharma. For no reason should it be done by *adharma*.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 130)

- **Practicing ashrama dharma in emergencies**

Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 13) Grandfather! If in a very difficult situation either for the protection of the country or to make a living, let us say all have to take up weapons. At that time they will all fall from their respective dharmas. As you said if citizens lapse from the path of practicing *swadharma* it weakens the king. At that time how will the king who protects the world be a refuge for all? Please provide detailed clarification for this doubt.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 14) Dharmaja! Brahmana and all other *varnas* should desire their auspiciousness to come from practice of *daan*, *tapas*, *yajna*, *adroha* (not committing treachery towards any) and *jitendriyatva*.

(Shl 15) Among them, those brahmanas have the power of knowledge of Vedas will get up in all directions and will strengthen the might of the king through their *Veda-vani*. (Shl 16) Learned people say that brahmanas are the refuge for a weakening king. Therefore a king who weakens due to the citizens' lapse of dharma should gain prosperity only by *brahma-bala*.

(Shl 17) Once the king wins and re-establishes order in the kingdom, then he should ensure that all return to their dharmas. (Shl 18) Yudhishtira! If thieves and rogues are actively transgressing the limits of moral conduct set by society, if *varna-sankara* is happening then people of all *varnas* should take up weapons and destroy such offenders. **By all people taking up weapons in needed times, there will be no lapse of dharma. None of the four *varnas* will acquire any *doshas* (blemish) due to this.**

- **What if protectors of brahmanas become their tormentors?**

(Shl 19) Grandfather! In case *ksatriyas* themselves start harassing brahmanas in every way, which brahmana will protect that brahmana? What is the dharma of that brahmana at that time? What is his refuge?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 20) Dharmaja! At that time brahmana should bring the *ksatriya* under control by power of *tapas*, *brahmacharya*, weapons, might or by guileless ways or by guile. (Shl 21) If *ksatriya* (king) starts harassing the citizens and particularly brahmanas, it is brahmana who has to control him. Because *ksatriya* is born from brahmana.

(Shl 25, 26, 27) **If the power of brahmana also weakens, if the *ksatriya* who has to protect brahmana also is weakened, all *varnas* start acting wickedly towards brahmanas, then those thinkers who filled with anger and ready to sacrifice their lives go to war to protect brahmanas, dharma and themselves will acquire great *punya* and fame. All have a right to take up weapons to protect brahmanas.** (Shl 28) The valiant who protect brahmanas will get higher *lokas* than that attained by those who perform *yajnas*, who study Vedas, who undertake *upavasa-vrata* (ritual of fasting) and who enter fire for self-purification. (Shl 29) A brahmana who takes up arms for the protection of other three *varnas* will not be blamed. In the same way, scholars do not know of a greater sacrifice than giving up life in a *dharma-yuddha*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; *Adhyaya* 78)

What should not be done

- Brahmana to Kunthi: (Shl 11) Experts in *aapadharma* say that blameworthy actions and cruel acts should not be done even when in danger. (Adi; Bakavadha; *adhyaya* 161)
- Vasuki's children to Vasuki: We can never agree to *adharmic* suggestions. In times of emergency, it will be possible to overcome the danger only by *dharmic* ways. *Adharmic* attitude will ultimately result in destruction of the world. (Adi; Asthika; *adhyaya* 37)
- Responding to Sanjaya's strange advice, Yudhishtira said: (Shl 4) Sometimes a person born in a *varna* is unable to survive even according to that dharma. (A *brahmana* is expected to live by *yajana-yaajana*, *adhyayana-adhyapana* & *daanpratigraha*. But for some valid reason he may not be able to do so). What to do under such situation is the issue. Such times are called *aapat-kaal*. In such times he can take to other methods (weapons-- like a *ksatriya*, agriculture & animal husbandry--like *vysya* etc.) **But he should not live like a destitute under the belief that he should not do anything other than that which is ordained.** Therefore in times of distress he should adopt *aapadharma* & survive. But as soon as he is able to live according to the ordained dharma, he should return to it. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; *adhyaya* 28)

Adharma/Adharmi

Greed is root cause of sins

- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Where does *paap* (sin) reside? What prompts us to indulge in sins? Please tell me.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 2) **Greed alone (*lobha*) which is like a huge crocodile is the abode of sins. It is from greed that one is prompted to indulge in sins. (*eko lobho mahagraho lobhat-paapam pravartate*).** (Shl 3) **It is from *lobha* that *paap*, *adharma* and intense grief is born. *Lobha* is the seat of deceit and fraud. It is because of greed that people commit sins.** (Shl 4) It is from *lobha* that anger is born. It also gives rise to *kama* (desires). It is from greed that blemishes like deceit, error, arrogance, haughtiness and death are born. (Shl 5) Intolerance, shamelessness, destruction of wealth, decline of dharma, desire to snatch other's wealth and infamy are all result of greed. (Shl 6, 7) It is from greed that miserliness, excessive desire, tendency for karmas against *shastras*, arrogance regarding *kula* and *vidya*, intoxication about looks and wealth, treachery towards all, disdain towards all, not trusting anyone and not having straight dealings with anyone are born.

(Shl 8, 9, 10) The following are all the consequence of greed: snatching other's money, illegitimate relationship with other's wife, impetuosity in speech, in mind, in blaming others, rush in sexual organs, haste in eating, speeding towards horrible death (accidents), intense jealousy,

uncontrollable rush for telling lies, unavoidable rush for taste glands, uncontrollable rush for hearing, blaming others, self-praise, envy, sins, tendency towards wicked deeds, doing acts that should not be done and tendency for risky deeds. (Shl 11, 12) **Human being does not give up the temptation to indulge in above listed wrongful deeds whether upon birth, or childhood or boyhood or adulthood. Even though the body becomes emaciated, greed does not dry up.** Just as rivers flowing everyday cannot fill the ocean fully, it is not possible to satiate greed with obtaining an object (once something is obtained, desire for the next one is born). (Shl 13, 14) Even if a greedy person gains huge profits, he will not be satisfied. He is not content even with unlimited luxuries and sensual pleasures. It has not been possible to understand the true form of greed by even *deva*, Gandharvas, *asura*, *mahoraga* or the group of all living beings. (Shl 15) **One who is *jitendriya* should gain victory over greed along with over *moha* (delusion, folly).** *Lobhis* who are not *jitendriyas* will have qualities of arrogance, treachery, blaming, carrying tales, jealousy etc. (Shl 16) Highly learned persons would have memorised big works of *shastra*. They will clarify any doubts about the meaning of *shastra* or practice of dharma. But even they, under the grip of greed lose their wisdom and suffer difficulties (greed, instead of enlarging the mind, shrinks it). (Shl 18) Greedy persons are full of anger and hatred. They give up virtuous practices. **They speak nectar like words externally but will be cruel internally. Just as a well deceptively covered with grass, these mean people show-off dharma for the sake of impressing people but in reality loot the world.** (Shl 19) **They create several wrong and wicked paths using their intelligence. With dedication to greed and ignorance, they destroy the ways of the virtuous.** (Shl 20) **Dharma, distorted by these greedy persons, gets publicity (gets marketed: *vikriyate*) and fame as it is** (Alternate paths to *sanatana dharma* are born). (Shl 21) One whose mind is immersed in greed will have the following blemishes: Insolence, anger, arrogance, bad dreams, excessive joy, excessive grief and excessive pride. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; Adhyaya 158)

- Bhishma (Shl 143) *Maharaja!* Therefore man should give up greed under all circumstances. This is the best dharma. Therefore greed should be given up. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 93)
- Dharma vyadha's views: (Shl 58, 59) **Greed is the residence for sins.** Those without much knowledge, who are greedy & miserly, keep on committing sins. Such greedy persons are dharmic only for appearance sake. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)

Other causes of adharma

- A *chandala* to a king: (Shl 15) **When the three *adharms* of serving the mean & the wicked, *durabhimaana* (being disagreeably or intolerably proud) and committing adultery with friend's wife is weighed, *durabhimaani* will violate dharma most.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 101)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 130) Yudhishtira! **Others should not be reviled. One should not also do it to oneself. It has been said that *ninda* (reviling) leads to *adharma*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 104)
- Ashwatthama to Duryodhana: People in this world act against dharma either by *kama* or *krodha* or ignorance or gladness or due to immaturity. They humiliate elders for these reasons. (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 195)
- Shaunaka's *upadesha* to Yudhishtira based on Janaka *maharaja's* sayings: (Shl 34, 35) That person who is under control of passions gets pulled by desires. Desire encourages/incites one to obtain worldly objects. This desire is sinful and the root of all confusions/delusions. The desire for objects of senses incites man to acts of *adharma*. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)

Reasons for Lapsing/falling from dharma

- Shamika to his son Shringi: (Shl 5) Even if a *mahatma*, anger increases as power of *tapas* increases. Even *mahatmas* become incapable of controlling anger....But *tapasvis* should never give refuge to anger...If you control anger, the *dharma* in you will not be affected. The anger which comes at some moment for some reason, in an instant destroys the *dharma* earned with great efforts by *yatis*. (Adi; Asthika; adhyaya 42)

- Ashwatthama thinking to himself: (Shl 20) That person who, transgressing the suggestions of those who know *shastras*, desires to kill those who should not be killed, will fall from the path of dharma and adopting wicked paths will be destroyed. (Souptika parva; adhyaya 6)
- Shaunaka's *upadesha* to Yudhishtira based on Janaka *maharaja*'s sayings: (Shl 30) Just as a small fire in the hollow of a tree can burn down the whole tree, however small may be the defect of attachment, eventually it will become cause for destruction of *dharma* & *artha* of man. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 19) **If huge money accumulates with brahmanas it becomes a cause of their destruction. Constant company of wealth causes haughtiness and *moha* in a brahmana.** (Shl 20) It is certain that dharma will be destroyed if brahmanas become careless. If dharma is destroyed all living beings will be destroyed. There is no doubt in this matter. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 61)
- Vikarna: (Shl 20-21) As you all know the following have been declared as wrong addiction—hunting, drinking wine, gambling and excessive enjoyment of sensual pleasures. These addictions cause a man to lapse in dharma. Therefore the world does not honour/recognise the deeds of such a person. (Sabha Parva; Dyuta Parva; *Adhyayas* 68)
- Mahavishnu in the guise of Indra to Maandhata: (Shl 10) If a brahmana does karmas other than the ones prescribed for him, then he becomes undeserving of the *vritti* of a brahmana, because, **dharma grows only by doing the prescribed karmas. The nature of a person reflects his dharma.** If a brahmana has brahmana-dharma in him, he will shine as a brahmana. If he does karmas opposite to this, he will have a fall. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 65)
- Bhishma: ... **Those who do *punya* will be born in higher births and sinners in lower births.** Man experiences fruits corresponding to the sins he has committed. Oh *jeeva* which was an insect! Do not grieve out of any fear for any reason. **Always have the fear that carelessness can result in lapsing from dharma. With this fear in mind, practice dharma with care.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 119)
- Vidura: (Shl 65) Snatching others wealth, relations (unlawful) with other's wife, rejecting good hearted persons—these defects will destroy longevity, dharma & fame. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; *Adhyaya* 33)
- Bhishma: (Shl 31) When man is under the grip of *rajo-guna*, he starts doing many deeds of *adharma* and deeds desiring *artha*. He will develop keen & exclusive interest only in *artha* & *kama* and serves all kinds of pleasures of the senses. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 212)
- **How one becomes a sinner**
Bhishma: (Shl 3) First man gets a desire to enjoy the pleasures of the senses viz *shabda*, *sprasha*, *roopa*, *rasa* & *gandha*. Whichever of these five he experiences, he either develops an attachment or hatred towards it (One may develop attachment to listening to melodious music but hatred towards noise. In this manner even though there will be desire for the objects of senses some will be likeable and some not). (Shl 4) **An effort is made to acquire whichever objects of senses are liked. He undertakes major actions towards it. He tends to repeatedly enjoy these pleasurable experiences.** (Shl 5) **In the beginning he develops an attachment to these objects of senses. He develops hatred towards the disliked experiences. Then he develops greed towards the obtained pleasures. Then he immerses himself in these pleasures.** (Shl 6) **When he is enveloped in greed & delusion and united with attachment & hatred, his mind will not think of dharma. He will practice a semblance of dharma merely for the sake of showing off.** (Shl 7, 8) He will have greater interest in making money under some pretext. **Due to some reason if he succeeds in making money, he will continue in that path with all his heart.** Even if scholars and friends advise him not to do so he will continue the sinful way of making more money. **If anyone questions him, he will answer seemingly logically and base his answers apparently on *shastras*.** (Shl 9) Due to the influence of attachment and delusion three kinds of *adharma*s will grow in the person. He will always be thinking of sinful deeds; he will always be speaking sinful words; and he will always be engaged in sinful acts. (Shl 10, 11) **Satpurus has understand the blemishes in such a person** (And so they keep him away).

Other sinners with similar nature will develop friendship with them. In this manner, because sinners do not get the company of virtuous people, they will not find happiness in this *loka*. If he has no happiness here, how can he get happiness in *para-loka*?

In this way, attacked by *kama*, *krodh* etc man becomes a sinner. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 273)

Consequences of adharm

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 36) As *adharm* increases in the world people born will have odd shapes, will be short, ugly, big headed, impotent, blind, deaf, cock eyed etc. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Vidura said: (Shl 70) **Man tries to earn wealth by *adharmic* ways in order to overcome some situation. But the peculiarity of nature is that, not only that difficulty is not solved, another difficulty attaches itself due to following *adharm*.** (Udyoga; Prajaagara; *Adhyaya* 35)
- Vidura: (Shl 13) A fisherman ties a long thread to a stick & at the end of the thread ties an iron hook & to that attaches an attractive item of food/piece of meat. Fish, attracted by the food, tries to eat it and gets stuck to the hook. **Similarly, a greedy king keeps trying to expand the kingdom even if by *adharmic* ways without knowing the dangers ahead. But in the end will be destroyed just like the fish.** (Udyoga; Prajaagara; *Adhyaya* 34)
- Vidura: (Shl 28) The kingdom of that king who follows the path of dharma as established by *satpurushas*, will prosper every day. (Shl 29) **The kingdom of that king who rejects path of dharma & follows only *adharm* will shrink continuously like a piece of skin thrown in fire.** (Shl 31) In summary, kingdom should be gained by the path of dharma & it should be governed by the path of dharma. That wealth & kingdom which is gained by adopting the path of dharma will not be given up by the king. Nor will he face a situation whereby he loses the kingdom. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; *Adhyaya* 34)
- Dhritrashtra's advice: (Shl 11-12) Duryodhana! You are thinking that that reason due to which destructive war will become inevitable and will be the root cause of quarrel is actually wealth-bringing and auspicious. Once enmity takes its root for any reason, it becomes capable of generating sharp swords and sharp edged arrows. But you will have to repent for your misdeeds later, **because words of *adharm* and acts of *adharm* will never lead to good tidings in future.** (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 56)
- Shakuntala to Dushyanta: (Shl 96) People are more afraid of a person who has slipped from the path of truth and dharma than of a poisonous snake. A poisonous snake bites only those who trouble or harm it. It does not bite others. But a person who is devoid of dharma, who has fallen from truthfulness, keeps troubling even those who do not harm him. He will have no fear of sinning. Even atheists are afraid of such persons. This being so, where is the surprise in theists being afraid of them? (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 74)
- Yamadharma: The secret of dharma is: Just as the fruits of *daan* are infinite even though the *daan* is small, even though the sin committed is small its results can grow manifold and cause much grief. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 108)
- (Shl 2-13) Lomasha *maharshi's* clarifications to Yudhishtira on results of *adharm*; it gives good results & prosperity in the beginning, but is not lasting. (Vana; Tirthayatra; adhyaya 94)
- Parashara: (Shl 8) **Adharma patiently waits for the time of fruition for the person who takes refuge in it. It never deserts the person who works according to its promptings. Therefore the person indulging in acts of *adharm* shall eventually experience its fruits.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 298)
- Brahma to Mrityu: **The *adharm* in *mithyacharis* (acting falsely or hypocritically) will itself kill them. ... All beings will kill themselves.** Mrityu (goddess of death) does not kill anyone with a *danda* (staff) in its hand. (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; adhyaya 52)

- (Shl 31) That person whom the world fears just as it fears a serpent which has entered the house will not gain any fruits of dharma in this *loka* or other *lokas*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; *Adhyaya* 262)
- 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; *adhyaya* 95)

Acts of adharma

- Vyasa to Dhritarashtra: Fighting with own people is *adharma* & brings infamy. Therefore do not hate your own people and thus earn ill-reputation. (Vana; Aranya; *adhyaya* 8)
- Bhishma: (Shl 20) Those who travel around the earth praising dharma, and sing the praise of dharma through their discourses but do not practice that dharma themselves will be the ones who are interested in *dharma-sankara* (mixing/corrupting dharma). (Shl 21) That person who carried away by the hypocritical praises of *ahimsa* etc dharma of some persons and gives them charity of gold, gems, cows or horses will fall into *narak* and will be eating the faeces for 10 years. (Shl 22) Such persons who, whether they practice *ahimsa* etc dharma characteristics or not, always praise themselves out of self-love and delusion that they are full of such characteristics, will be born in such births who eat dead cow's meat, who are haters of brahma and are of despised mixed caste. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; *adhyaya* 22)

Understanding/knowning dharma

Subtlety of dharma

- Bhishma quotes from *gitas* of Brahma: ... (Shl 11) **Just as dust particles if ground with stone will keep becoming finer in size, as you keep thinking about the nature of dharma, it also becomes progressively subtler.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; *adhyaya* 136)
- (Shl 32) **Depending on *desh-kaal* (place and time or context) *adharma* can become dharma. Dharma can become *adharma*. It can also take both forms by appearing as dharma in one way and *adharma* in another way. Because the nature of *desh-kaal* dictates it. (33) Human beings who are friendly towards all, when time demands may indulge in cruelty (in order to suppress the wicked) and gain rights to *swarga*. Even *dharmatmas* when time demands may indulge in violence etc in order to protect others and still attain *sadgati*. If in these circumstances, thinking that *ahimsa* is the greatest dharma the person does not suppress the wicked then it would be *adharma*.** (Shl 34) If a brahmana takes up arms in self-defence or when people of other *varnas* harass or when he has to suppress the wicked, he will not acquire any *dosha*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; *Adhyaya* 78)
- Draupadi: (Shl 38) Mahatma Yudhishtira is sitting helplessly bound by dharma. Dharma is very subtle. Only true *jnanis* can understand what the subtlety of dharma is. I cannot forget the great noble qualities in my *dharmatma* husband and think that he has even an iota of defect in him; I won't even say it in words. (Sabha Parva; Dyuta Parva; *Adhyayas* 67)
- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: (Shl 28) Arjuna! **Dharma is very subtle. It is very difficult to understand. Particularly the ignorant just cannot understand the form of dharma.** (Karna; *adhyaya* 70)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: ... (Shl 30) **Those wicked people, who practice and propagate *adharma-marga* with the intention of terminating *dharma-marga*, have to be killed, just as *devatas* killed the *asuras*.** (Shl 31) If by killing one (wicked) person in the family it ensures welfare

of all others, it is better to kill him. If by killing an entire family (*kula*) it is possible to avoid danger to the whole country, then that family can be destroyed. Doing this does not amount to destruction of *sadachara* or *dharma*. (Shl 32) At some times the acts we do may appear like *adharma*. But upon close scrutiny they will be acts of *dharma*. Similarly, some sinful acts may appear like acts of *dharma*. But closer examination will reveal that they are acts of *adharma*. **Therefore an intelligent (skilled) scholar has to understand the subtle difference between dharma and adharma in a proper manner.** (Shl 35, 36) **According to shastras, sins are firmly and fully established in that person who has sinful intents, gradually gets influenced by these intents and indulges in sinful deeds, and having done such deeds does not feel any repentance. There is no atonement for such persons. Even if he performs various atonements, his sins will not reduce even by an iota.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 33)

- Janamejaya! Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1, 2) Grandfather! *Rajarshi!* In case due to the friendship or cordiality, if *mantras* are preached to person of low caste (*shudra*), will blemish accrue or not? I wish to understand this clearly. Therefore tell me this matter in detail. **The nature of dharma is very subtle. It is in these subtle matters that human beings get perplexed.**

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! I have heard the words of *rishis* in this matter. I will tell you the same properly. Therefore *satpurushas* should not take (**too much**) initiative to preach anything to any one. **The nature of dharma is very subtle. Those who do not have antahkarana-shuddhi (inner purity) cannot easily understand the subtleties of dharma.** (Shl 70) It is for this reason that *munis* remain silent and give initiations respectfully. **Out of fear that inappropriate words may come out, they do not speak anything with anyone.** (Shl 71) Even those who are *dharmiks*, possessed of good qualities, have virtuous conduct such as truthfulness, simplicity etc acquire sins by speaking words which are forbidden by *shastras*. (Shl 72) Brahmana should never give initiation to anyone. By doing so, the teacher will acquire the sins committed by the disciple. (Shl 73) The wise man who wishes to preach dharma should carefully examine the procedures stated in *shastras* and then preach. **Preaching done with a combination of truth & untruth will destroy the preacher.** (Shl 74) **When persons with genuine interest in acts of dharma question, the doctrines of shastra should be closely analysed and then preached. This will bring punya.** (Anushasana; Daandharma; adhyaya 10)

- Continuing to grieve, Yudhishtira said to Arjuna, “Arjuna! If we had thought properly in the beginning itself and decided to live by begging in the kingdom of Vrishni and Andhakas, we would not have come to this bad state by killing all our cousins and relatives.....Will we, who have become the cause for the destruction of our relatives, enjoy the fruits of dharma? What fruits of dharma will we obtain? Now we have obtained neither *yashas* nor *swarga*. We have lost on both counts. (Shl 5) My condemnation to the practices of *kshatriyas* and to anger! We are facing this danger today because of these. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 7)

Confusions/complexities/clarifications

- Bhishma: When it comes to fulfilling selfish intentions, even those who know dharma very well are bewildered. (Virata; Goharana; adhyaya 51)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 2) Dharma is a very complex/intricate thing & the path of dharma has many branches & is unending. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 209)
- Ashma to king Janaka: **Surely the actions of fate are very peculiar.** .. (Shl 26) Many times we see that one who has not violated dharma, who has not committed any sins, does not manage to come out of difficulties or dangers. Many other times we see that one who has violated dharma, who is a great sinner does not get caught in any difficulty or danger. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 28)
- Dhrishtadyumna to Satyaki: (Shl 44) **Overall it is not possible to know the best dharma. Similarly, it is not possible to determine what adharma is.** (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 198)
- The *munis* questioned Brahma: (Shl 1) *Deva shreshta!* Which among the dharmas in this world do you think is the best for practicing? Kindly tell this. **Because, we find that the different paths of**

dharmas are in conflict. (Shl 2) Some say that even after the death of the body *karma-phalas* exist and that the *jeeva* has to experience the fruits according to it. Some others say that after death the body dissolves back into the *pancha-bhutas* and nothing like *karma-phalas* survive it. Yet others say that all dharmas are full of doubts. Some others say there are no doubts in any dharma. (Shl 3) Some say dharma is impermanent. Some say it is permanent. Yet others say there is nothing called dharma. Some say there certainly is dharma. Some say same dharma is of two types. Some say dharma is a mixture. (Shl 4) Brahmanas who are *tattvijnas* and know Vedas say that, 'there is only one Brahma without a second'. Some say *jeeva* & *Ishwara* are separate. Some say Paramatma is of many types. (Shl 5) Some say *desh* & *kaal* (space & time) are eternal. Some others say they are not eternal.

Among the followers of dharma some have twisted hair and wear deerskin. Some shave their heads. Some others are naked. (Shl 6) Some say there is no need for bathing. Brahmanas who know Vedas and know *tattvas* say that it is best to take bath. (Shl 7) Some say eating meals is good. Some believe in not eating meals. Some praise karmas. Some praise ultimate peace. (Shl 8) Some praise *moksha*. Some others praise variety of enjoyments/pleasures. Some desire huge wealth. Some feel being poor is better. Some say that grace of *devatas* should be gained by worship. Some others say there is nothing like worship. (Shl 9) Some are devoted to non-violence. Some are always engaged in violence. Some are enriched with virtuous deeds and fame. Some others say that there is no such thing. (Shl 10) Some in this world are always engaged in virtuous feelings. Some are suspicious about everything. Some perform *tapas* which is severe on their bodies. Some suggest easy *tapas*. Some suggest only meditation. (Shl 11) Some brahmanas say that performing *yajnas* is best. Some others say *daan* is best. Some praise *tapas*. Some others praise study of Vedas. (Shl 12) Some say *jnana* itself is *sanyasa*. Materialists (*bhuta-chintaka*) say that nature (*swabhava*) is everything. Some praise all types of paths. Some others do not praise all.

(Shl 13) Great *sura*! Since dharma has been stated in various and mutually conflicting ways we are perplexed. We are unable to come to any decision. (Shl 14) Each one is opposing the other saying, 'this path is the best', 'this path is the best'. One who is practicing a certain dharma will always respect only that dharma. (Shl 15) Due to this reason our *buddhi* has become agitated. Moreover by engaging in many directions our mind has become unsteady. At this time we wish to know from you decisively which is the auspicious path for us. Kindly tell us. (Shl 16) Therefore be kind to tell us the most secret *tattva*. Tell us for what reason there is relation between *chetana* and *kshetrajna*. Thus when they all said this, *dharmatma*, wise/learned Brahma started answering all their questions properly. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 49)

- Dhritarashtra asks Sanatsujata: (Shl 22) In this world some practice *dharma*. Some others practice *adharma*. This being so, **does dharma get destroyed by *paap* or does dharma neutralise *paap*?**

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 *atma-dharma* is strongly established. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; Adhyaya 42)

- Yudhishtira responding to Sanjaya's strange advice: (Shl 2) **Sometimes *adharma* takes the shape of dharma and at some other times dharma appears completely as *adharma*. It is only some times that dharma shows itself up in its true forms. It is impossible for ordinary people to determine what dharma is & what *adharma* is.** Only learned scholars, using their subtle intelligence and after thinking through can decide this. (Shl 3) **Dharma & *adharma* are eternal; they do not change.** What exactly each is has already been decided. Still, in *aapat-kaal*

(in times of emergency/distress) they may undergo some changes. **Dharma starts with the birth of a person. The dharma of each varna is determined.** They have to be followed. Only in times of distress some dharmas may alter. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 28)

- Bhishma: (Shl 1) For a knowledgeable *kshatriya* both dharma and *adharma* are real and practical. (Shl 2) One should not delay the action to be taken worrying whether this is dharma, can this act be done, will it be *adharma* if I do it this way etc. **The fruits of dharma are not visible. Just as the footprints of a wolf can be confused with that of cheetah or dog it will not be possible to take clear decisions about dharma and adharma in times of danger.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 134)
- The great Vyasa said: (Clarifying to her about birth of Karna when she was still unmarried. This occurs towards end of Mahabharata) (Shl 23) Kunthi! **Understand that *daiva-dharma* does not defile/corrupt *manushya-dharma* (*manushya-dharmo daivena dharmena hi na dushyati*).** Therefore let your worries be set to rest. (Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; adhyaya 30)
- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: ... (Shl 30) **Those wicked people, who practice and propagate *adharma-marga* with the intention of terminating *dharma-marga*, have to be killed** just as *devatas* killed the *asuras*. (Shl 31) If by killing one (wicked) person in the family it ensures welfare of all others, it is better to kill him. If by killing an entire family (*kula*) it is possible to avoid danger to the whole country, then that family can be destroyed. Doing this does not amount to destruction of *sadachara* or *dharma*. (Shl 32) At some times the acts we do may appear like *adharma*. But upon close scrutiny they will be acts of dharma. Similarly, some sinful acts may appear like acts of dharma. But closer examination will reveal that they are acts of *adharma*. **Therefore an intelligent (skilled) scholar has to understand the subtle difference between dharma and adharma in a proper manner.** (Shl 35, 36) **According to *shastras*, sins are firmly and fully established in that person who has sinful intents, gradually gets influenced by these intents and indulges in sinful deeds, and having done such deeds does not feel any repentance. There is no atonement for such persons. Even if he performs various atonements, his sins will not reduce even by an iota.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 33)
- Bhishma: ... The practices of *sadhu-satpurushas* are always the important and main characteristics of dharma. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 45)
- Bhishma: (Shl 31, 32) A fool wishing to perform *dharma-karya* ends up doing *adharma-karya*. Or due to lack of appropriate intelligence, due to indiscrimination or out of grief, engages in dharma which is like *adharma*. Not being able to distinguish between dharma & *adharma-karmas* he does *adharma-karmas* while believing that he is doing *dharma-karya*. Or actually desiring *adharma* will engage in *dharma-karyas*. In this way the person who cannot understand the nature of dharma & adharma will repeat the cycle of birth & death. There is no *moksha* for such person. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 235)

Yudhishtira's answers to Yaksha (*Yaksha prashna*)

(Shl 50) What is the dharma appropriate to the *sajjanas*? Ans: *Tapas*

(Shl 66) Which dharma is *sanatana*? Ans: Moksha dharma or That which is eternal

(Shl 69) What is the most important factor for dharma? Ans: *Dakshya*: Skill, capability, fitness

(Shl 75-76) Which dharma is the best? Ans: Non-violence, no cruelty or kindness towards all. Which dharma gives fruits continually? Ans: Vedas

(Shl 87) What is the characteristic of *tapas*? Ans: Practicing *swadharma*

(Shl 93) What is *moha*? Ans: Ignorance of dharma

(Shl 94) What is *alasya*: laziness? Ans: Not practicing dharma.

(Shl 95) what is *sthairya*? Ans: Staying steadfast in *swadharma*

(Shl 97) Who is a *pandit*? Ans: One who knows dharma

(Shl 99) What is *dambha*: *conceit, vainglory*? Ans: Dharma done to deliberately show-off to everyone

(Shl 101-102) Dharma, *artha* & *kama* are mutually opposed. One does not harmonise with the other. How do these three 'forever opposites' combine or in other words how can anyone implement all three harmoniously? Ans: If *dharma* & wife combine together harmoniously, then these three can combine harmoniously. Note: Only a *grihastha* can practice or attain all four—dharma, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*.

(Shl 112) What does one who is devoted to *dharma* gain? Ans: *Sadgati*

(Shl 112) Which is the way? Ans: There is no end to intelligent arguments & theories. Vedas have different interpretations. Hence the secret of dharma is hidden in a cave. The path walked by *mahajana* is the right path.

(Vana; Araneya; adhyaya 312-313)

How to determine/clarify doctrines of dharma

Yudhishtira again questioned Bhishma: (Shl 2) Grandfather who knows all dharmas! **When trying to clarify matters related to dharma, should we take refuge in direct evidence** (or evidence of the senses) (*pratyaksha pramana*) **or authority of Vedas** (or traditional doctrines) (*agama pramana*)? **Which of these two become important in determining doctrines of dharma?**

Bhishma said: Wise man! You have asked a very good question. I will answer it. Listen. In my understanding there is no doubt at all in this matter. **Doubts arise quite easily in matters of dharma. Deciding them is quite difficult also.** There is no end to both these types of evidences/proofs. Both can lead to doubts. *Hetuvadis* (sceptics) who consider themselves to be very wise & learned take a firm stand that only direct evidence is important and reject all indirect evidences. Even though what is established by *agamas* is also truth they do not believe them. But their stand is not proper/sensible. If it is asked, 'How can a single unseen Brahma be the cause for everything?', the answer is as follows: **To realise that Brahman declared by *agama* as the root cause, man should give up lethargy/unwillingness and should practice yoga for a long time.** Man who is engaged in various inhalation & exhalation acts **can realise the *tattva* only if he is devoted to realising it.** It cannot be realised by any other way. (Shl 8, 9) **Only after crossing the ends of logic can the best and plentiful *jnana* be gained** (*hetunam antamasadya vipulam jnanamuttamam*). It is that *jnana* which is the source of light to the entire world. The *jnana* obtained by logic is not true *jnana* at all. **Therefore *jnana* obtained by mere logic/reasoning should not be honoured. That which is not propounded by Vedas should be rejected.**

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 10) Grandfather! From the point of view of people, direct evidence is well known. There are many other kinds of evidences like *anumana*, *agama* & *shishtachara* (practice or conduct of learned or virtuous). Which of these is strong? Tell me about this.

Bhishma said: (Shl 11) **If mighty wicked persons start to harm dharma, all efforts of the ordinary will fail in a short time.** (Shl 12) Just like a well covered by grass, *adharma* will be covered by a thin veil of dharma. At that time the wicked damage the *shishtacharas*. I will tell you more about this. Listen. (Shl 13) Those foolish haters of dharma who have no good practices/conducts and who have rejected Vedas & *shastras*, seriously damage the dharmas & *shishtacharas* of the virtuous. (That is why we develop doubts in the evidences of *pratyaksha*, *anumana* & *shishtachara*). (Shl 14, 15) At such times worship/serve and question those who have the attitude of making the *sadhus* feel satisfied, who believe in practicing karmas stated in Vedas and who consider the evidence of Vedas as the greatest. **Serve the scholars who have pushed *artha* & *kama* to the background and consider dharma as the greatest and ask them about dharma.** (Shl 16) The virtuous conduct or auspicious acts of *yajnas* etc of such *satpurushas* will not be destroyed or damaged. **Their practices (*achara*), the *agama* (which tells them about it) and dharma all unite into one.**

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 17) Grand father! Even though you have explained so much, still my mind is deeply confused with doubts. I wish to see the end of this sea of doubts. However much I try I am unable to do so. (Shl 18) **In case Vedas, direct evidence and virtuous practices – all three are evidences for dharma then dharma also will have to be different according to them. But 'dharma' is only one. How can it become three different things?**

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! If you think that when dharma is being damaged by the wicked, the nature of dharma will change based on the variations in the evidence/proof, then it is not correct. **In reality dharma is only one. But it has to be examined through three types of evidences.** (Shl 20) **Understand clearly that dharma is only one. Through three types of evidences you get a comprehensive/integrated understanding of that single dharma. I do not think that they propound three different dharmas.** (Shl 21) **Follow that path of dharma which is propounded by the three evidences/proofs. It is not correct to discuss/explore dharma based on mere logic/reason.** (Shl 22) Great among Bharatas! May you have no doubt in what I am saying to you! Follow it like a blind or stupid person without any doubts. (Shl 23) **Always serve (practice) the**

following four: non-violence, truth, no-anger and *daan*. This is *sanatana* dharma. (Shl 24) Have the same conduct & attitude that your forefathers had towards brahmanas, **because, it is they who preach dharma.** (Shl 25) **Do not believe/trust the person who proves that proof is not a proof using power of logic, because, he always creates disputes.** (Shl 26) You should especially honour and serve brahmanas. Understand that all these worlds are established in them. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 162)

Who cannot know dharma

Vidura to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 101-102) the following ten types of persons will not know dharma and will not be in a position to discern dharma-*adharma*. A drunkard, one who is arrogant due to possession of wealth, who is mad, very angry person, very hungry person, who attempts to do a job in great hurry, greedy, scared and the lustful. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 33)

Contrary view on dharma

- Draupadi: (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. (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; adhyaya 30)
- (Shl 5-7) Balarama to Krishna in the presence of Pandavas in Prabhasa *tirtha*: I do not accept that dharma brings good tides & *adharma* brings bad tides. Yudhishtira is a living example that it does not happen so. Ordinary folks will get confused whether to follow dharma or not by the examples of what has happened to Yudhishtira & Duryodhana. (Vana; Tirthayatra; adhyaya 119)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: Narendra! Due to the effect of the brahmana's curse his chariot wheel sank in the earth. Karna felt distressed at that moment....Unable to withstand all calamities occurring at the same time (within a short span of time), Karna shook both his hands and started blaming dharma. "(Shl 86) ***Dharmavids* say that dharma protects those who practice it steadily and all the time. I have always tried to live as prescribed in books of dharma. Now my experience is that dharma itself is destroying us. In times of need dharma does not save those who serve it. Therefore I believe that dharma will not always protect/save those who practice it."** (Karna; adhyaya 90)

Ahimsa dharma (Non-violence)

Ahimsa is a great dharma

- (Shl 14) Dumdubha to Ruru *rishi*: *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* (Ahimsa—non-violence—is the greatest dharma) (Adi; Pouloma; adhyaya 11)
- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) *Devaguru!* Among *ahimsa* (non-violence), *karmas* prescribed in Vedas, *dhyana* (meditation), *indriya samyama* (restraint of senses), *tapas* and *guru shushrusha* (serving the guru) which causes especially more auspiciousness/welfare to man?

Brihaspati replied: (Shl 2) All the six *karmas* you listed are related to dharma. Each of these is like a door to accomplish dharma. Whichever door you go through you can accomplish dharma. I will explain all these six. Listen. (Shl 3, 4) **Now I will tell you one of the best methods for the *shreyas* of man. One who practices dharma of *ahimsa*, is steadfast in the rule that he will not commit the three mistakes (*aparadha*: Offence, crime, *apachara*: fault, misdeed, *apakaar*: harm, hurt) towards any being and controls *kama* & *krodh* will have *siddhi* (accomplishment).** (Shl 5) That person who with the desire that he should have happiness/comfort, hits with a stick animals which are not hurting/harming any one will never enjoy happiness in *paraloka*. (Shl 6) That person who considers others as being like himself, who gives up punishment (*danda*) realising that just as he would get hurt if anyone were to hurt him so would others if hurt, and has gained victory over anger will have happiness in *paraloka*. (Shl 7) One who considers that his *atma* is also the *atma* of all beings (*sarva bhutatma bhutasya sarva bhutani pashyatah*) and hence treats all beings as equal, the path taken by a *jnani* who desires such state with no foot prints (having no coming & going or birth & death) is found to be attractive even by *devatas*. (Shl 8) That which is unfavourable to oneself should not be done to others. This is the subtle or brief characteristic of dharma. All behaviour or transactions different from this are produced by *kama*

(desires). They are not rooted in dharma. (Shl 9) One should understand and feel that just as humiliation, *daan*, happiness & grief, liked and disliked things/events cause joy & sadness to oneself, they will cause the same to others also. One who feels like this will obtain true experience. (Shl 10) The way a person behaves towards others, the same way others will behave towards him in future. Keep this as an example and behave properly towards others. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 113)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 20) **But there is no dharma greater than ‘there should be kindness towards all animals’.** (Shl 21) There is no fear in this *loka* to one who is kind hearted. Both this *loka* and other *lokas* bring happiness to *tapasvis* who are kind. (Shl 22) **Knowledgeable people say that *ahimsa* (non-violence) is the characteristic of dharma.** One who has controlled his mind should do only non-violent karmas. (Shl 38, 39) *Ahimsa* is the greatest dharma. *Ahimsa* is *dama* (restraint of *indriyas*). *Ahimsa* is great *tapas*. *Ahimsa* is great *yajna*. *Ahimsa* is the best fruit. *Ahimsa* is the best friend. *Ahimsa* brings ultimate happiness. (Shl 40) Giving *daans* in all kinds of *yajnas*, bathing in every *tirtha* and fruits of all types of *daans* cannot equal *ahimsa vrat*. (Shl 41) The *tapas* of one who does not commit violence towards living beings becomes undecaying. *Ahimsak* gets the fruits of performing *yajnas* all the time. *Ahimsak* is like father & mother to all animals. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 116)
- Brahma said: (Shl 1) Great *rishis*! I will answer all the questions you have asked me. I will give you the same answer that a guru gave to a deserving disciple. Listen. Listen to everything I say completely and bear it in you. (Shl 2) **Not hurting/not causing violence to any living being (*ahimsa*) is the highest duty of human being.** Achieving this is the best and brings serenity. **Non-violence is a main characteristic of dharma.** .. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 50)

Give up eating meat

- Yudhishtira again questioned: *Rishis*, brahmanas and *devatas* propound *ahimsa dharma* with Vedas as the evidence. How will a person who causes violence to animals by speech, mind and act free himself from that sin?

Bhishma said: (Shl 4) **Those who *brahma tattva* have directed that *ahimsa vrat* should be practiced in four ways. Not causing violence to any living being through mind, speech and action and not eating meat. These four are the ways they have directed for following *ahimsa dharma*. Even if one of these is not followed it will not be considered *ahimsa vrat*.**

(Shl 5) Just as a quadruped cannot stand on three legs, *ahimsa vrat* practiced with any three ways only will not be complete. (Shl 6) Just as if other animals keep their footprints where the footprint of elephant already exists it will be subsumed it it, in the same way as it has already been said earlier all dharmas are included in *ahimsa dharma*. (Shl 8) Man is smeared with the blemish of violence by way of mind, speech and action. Therefore first the idea of eating meat should be thrown out of the mind. He should not even say that he will eat meat. Then he should not eat meat. In this manner one who gives up violence in these three ways will find freedom from sins. (Shl 9) Those who know *brahma tattva* give three reasons for the blemish of eating meat. Mind which wishes to eat meat, speech which declares the desire to eat meat and the act of actually eating meat -- these three blemishes are the basis for violence to animals. (Shl 10) It is for this reason that scholars who are engaged in *tapas* do not eat meat. I will tell you the defects in eating meat; listen. (Shl 11) The person who, in spite of knowing that there is no difference in the flesh of his son and other animals, eats the meat of animals should be considered as the worst among men. (Shl 12) Just as son is born due to the union of father and mother, in the same way the man who eats meat under the influence of *indriyas* will be born as greater and greater sinner. (Shl 13) Tongue is attracted towards the *rasa* (taste) that it enjoys. Once meat is eaten, attachment to it grows. *Shaastras* have also said that by enjoying the objects of senses attachment to them grows. (Therefore it should never be tasted). (Shl 14) In meat according to the liking of the eater, there is processed, unprocessed, boiled, boiled and salted, unsalted etc varieties are there. To non-vegetarians the desire to eat that variety or this variety keeps germinating in the mind. That is why their mind is bound by it. ((Shl 15) How can foolish meat-eaters ever hear the sounds of drums and *veena* in *Swarga*? (Sinners can never go to *Swarga*). (Shl 16) It is impossible to even imagine the state obtained by those who enamoured by their love of meat are always interested in it and are singing its praise. They will get such bad state that it

can neither be imagined nor described in words. (Shl 17) Even praising meat results in same sin as that of eating it. (Shl 18) Shibi and other virtuous people gave their own flesh to save others flesh (lives) and went to *Swarga*.

Maharaja! Thus I have told you the four ways of *ahimsa dharma* which contains all other dharmas. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 113)

- Yudhishtira said: (Shl 1) Grandfather! You have many times said that *ahimsa* (non-violence) is a great dharma. I have developed a doubt now about the dharma of giving up eating meat. What blemish does a meat eater obtain? What is the advantage to one who does not eat? Kindly clarify this. (Shl 2) What blemishes do the one who himself kills animals & eats, one who eats meat given by others, one who kills on behalf of others and one who buys and eat meat get? (Shl 4) How does human being gain long life? How does he become mighty? How does he develop auspicious characteristics?

Bhishma said: (Shl 6) All those *mahatmas* who desire good looks, complete & well developed organs/ limbs, long life, good intelligence, *sattva*, strength and memory power give up violence completely. In this matter there have been many questions and answers among the *rishis*. I will tell you the doctrine they have arrived at in the end. (Shl 8) The fruits obtained by one who regularly practices *vrats* & performs *Ashwamedha yaaga* every month and the person who completely gives up meat & wine are same. (Shl 10) That person who does not eat meat, does not kill animals and does not make others kill them will be the friend of all animals. This has been said by Swayambhu Manu himself. (Shl 11) One who gives up meat will not be rejected by any living being. He will be trusted by all animals. He will be honoured by great people. (Shl 12) **Dharmatma Narada has said that one who desires to grow his own flesh & muscles by eating the meat of other animals will be destroyed soon.** (Shl 13) Brihaspati has said that one who gives up wine & meat will get the *punyas* of a *daani*, *yaajaka* and *tapasvi*. (Shl 16) The great *punyas* gained by one who gives up eating meat even though he was eating it earlier, cannot be obtained even by study of all Vedas and continuous performance of *yajnas*. (Shl 17) **It is quite difficult to give up eating meat & practicing this *vrat* which gives assurance to all animals once you have started liking its taste.** (Shl 18) **That scholar/wise man who extends assurance to all animals through the *vrat* of *ahimsa* will undoubtedly be the giver of life to all.** Yudhishtira! This is how scholars have praised this dharma of *ahimsa*. (Shl 19) **Just as one's own life is very dear, similarly all animals value their own lives.** (Shl 20, 21) Intelligent persons and *punyatmas* should treat all living beings like themselves. All those who desire their own welfare will surely have fear of death. This being so, will not the animals which also wish to live, are disease free, and have done no sins not have fear of death? (Shl 22) *Maharaja!* **Therefore understand that giving up meat is the foundation for dharma, *Swarga* and happiness.** (Shl 23) ***Ahimsa* is the ultimate dharma. *Ahimsa vrat* is the best *tapas*. *Ahimsa* is great truth. It is by *ahimsa* that dharma exists** (*Ahimsa paramo dharmah tatha ahimsa param tapah, ahimsa paramam satyam yato dharmah pravartate*). (Shl 24) Meat does not come from grass or wood or stone. It can be obtained only by killing an animal. That is why eating meat is highly sinful. (Shl 25) Those who consume the *havya-kavya* given with *swadhakaar* & *svadhakaar*, drink *amrita* and love truth and honesty are *devatas*. Those who are engaged in crookedness and untruth and eat meat regularly are *rakshasas*. (Shl 28) One who does not eat meat becomes guardian of all animals. He will be trusted by all animals. He does not cause anxiety/agitation to anyone. He himself will also not be anxious & agitated.

....Yudhishtira! Therefore, this dharma of non-violence is greater than all other dharmas. Those who practice *ahimsa dharma* will reside in *Swarga* after death. Those *dharmic* men who give up honey, meat and liquor from the time of their birth are considered *munis*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 115)

- **Importance of giving up eating meat**

Bhishma: (Shl 53) It is my opinion that the fruits obtained by one who performs severe *tapas* for a hundred years and one who completely gives up meat is the same. (Shl 54) Particularly, meat should be completely given up in the *Shukla paksha* of *Kartika masa*. Dharma *shastra* has ordained so. (Shl

55) The person who gives up meat in the four months of rainy season (*chaturmasya*) will gain fame, longevity, success and strength. (Shl 56) Or one who gives up all kinds of meat for at least

one month in a year will be free of all griefs and will live disease free and happy life. (Shl 57) Those who do not eat meat for a month or a fortnight and gradually give up eating it, and thus withdraw from *himsa* will attain *Brahma loka* itself.

Yudhishtira! Therefore this dharma of non-violence is greater than all other dharmas. Those who practice *ahimsa dharma* will reside in *Swarga* after death. Those *dharmic* men who give up honey, meat and liquor from the time of their birth are considered *munis*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 115)

Censuring *yajna* & *dharma* involving violence

Janamejaya asked: (Shl 1) Oh powerful Vaishampayana! Kings are interested in performing *yajnas*. *Maharshis* are engaged in *tapas*. Brahmanas who are interested in *shama* wish to gain *shanti*. *Dama* is achieved by restraining the mind. But it is my opinion that the fruits obtained by performing *yajnas* cannot be obtained by any other karmas. I do not see any doubts in this. But why did the mongoose censure the *yajna* performed by Yudhishtira?

Vaishampayana said: I will explain to you. Listen. Once in the past Indra was performing a *yajna*. ... Time for sacrificing animals was imminent. When the animals were brought in, the *maharshis* were overcome by kindness. Looking at those pitiable animals, they met Indra and told him that *yajna* involving their killing was not auspicious. (Shl 13) Purandara! You have desired to acquire great virtue by this *yajna*. But due to ignorance you are engaging in violence to animals. **We do not find in *shastras* this practice of offering animals in *yajna* (*na hi yajne pashugana vidhidrshta purandara*). (Shl 14) This *yajna* involving *alambhana* of animals causes hurt to dharma. It will not be a *yajna* consisting of dharma. Violence can never be dharma. (Shl 15) If you wish, let brahmanas perform this *yajna* according to *shastras*. You will get great *punya* by doing so. (Shl 16) Oh thousand eyed! Perform *yajna* with three year old seeds (grains). This is great dharma and fetches you great fruits.**

Indra did not accept this due to his pride. He was overcome by *moha*. A great argument ensued among the *tapasvis* present there. Some supported the view of using *jangama pranis* (like animals) and some others using *sthavaras* (like grains). Janamejaya! They all approached Uparichara vasu for clarification. Without listening to and evaluating the two sides of the arguments, he simply directed that *yajna* can be performed with whatever is available at that time. Because he gave an untruthful answer he had to go to *patala loka*.

(Shl 24) **Therefore, when there is a doubt in matter of *shastras*, even if one knows many *shastras*, unless he is Swayambhu Prajapati, one should not give a decision without thinking carefully.** (Shl 25) The *daan* given by such dim-witted, sinful person who inflicts violence to animals will be destroyed. (Shl 26) **The person who is given to *adharma* tendencies, who is wicked and inflicts violence on animals will not gain fame both here and here-after.** (Shl 27) That fool who repeatedly earns money in illegal ways (*adharmic* ways), and thinking that to be dharma performs *yajna* with such money will not obtain the fruits of dharma. (Shl 28) **That sinner and mean person who is given to violence and performs acts of dharma merely to show off, gives *daan* to brahmanas to gain the trust of the world.** (Shl 29) That brahmana who is given to libertine ways and is under control of *raga* & *moha*, will in the end get bad states. (Shl 30) The person who is under control of greed and *moha* has the intent of earning money in whatever ways. He causes agitation and anxiety to living beings with his sinful and impure intents and acts. (Shl 31) Thus the person who under delusion earns money in illegal/immoral/unethical ways and gives it to charity or performs *yajna* will not get their fruits after death. Accumulating money in sinful ways is the reason for this. (Shl 32) Many *maharshis* have gone to *Swarga* by giving *daan* of grains collected after harvesting, roots, fruits, vessels for carrying water etc. (Shl 33, 34) This alone is dharma. It is *maha yoga*. ***Daan*, kindness to animals, *brahmacharya*, truthfulness, kindness/mercy, courage, forgiveness – these are the roots of *sanatana dharma*.** We have heard that Vishwamitra etc kings gained accomplishment by these. **Among *brahmana*, *kshatriya* and *shudras*, any one who depends on *tapas* and becomes pure by the fire of *daan dharma* will go to *Swarga*.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 91)

Exception situations

- **Story of Balaaka**

Sri Krishna: Arjuna! There was a *vyadha* (hunter) called Balaaka. He used to kill animals only to support his family and not with the intent of eating them. He had aged parents and many relatives who lived with him. He was caring and supporting all of them. He was committed to *swadharma*, was truthful and had no jealousy. One day when he went as usual to hunt animals he did not find any. When he was roaming about looking for an animal, he saw carnivorous animal drinking water and which was blind, would find its food only by power of smell. He had not seen such an animal till then. Next moment he killed that animal. As soon as he killed it, flowers rained on him from the skies. A beautiful *vimana* with singing and dancing *apsaras* appeared to take him to *swarga*.

Arjuna! That animal had done *tapas* and had obtained a boon that it can destroy all animals on earth. Brahma had made that animal blind. In this way Balaaka, who killed the animal which had decided to kill all animals, went to *swarga*. (Commentary: This is an answer to the question 'Is it dharma to kill animals, even if they are cruel ones?' The general dharma is not to kill animals. But it does not mean that no animal should at all be killed at any time. It sometimes becomes necessary to kill animals which are indulging in violence (*himsa*). By killing that animal which was like the god of death for all animals, *vyadha* attained *swarga*. Even though he killed a wicked animal he accrued *punya*. Not only he did not accumulate sins by killing an animal, but contrary to common notion he even gained *punya* and went to *swarga*. This is what Sri Krishna refers to as *dharmah sudurvidah*, dharma is very difficult to understand). (Karna; adhyaya; adhyaya 69)

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 24, 27) It is said that agriculture is a good profession. But does not one who is doing agriculture kill several small insects & worms when tilling the land. Is this not cruelty to them? **Aren't even the seeds carriers of life?** This world is filled with life-forms which have to survive on lifeforms. Big fish eats small fish. Therefore, it appears to me that all the animals in the world live only by eating some life-form. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 208)
- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 13) Grandfather! **A conflict arises between the body and dangers for a strict follower of non-violence.** When a thief breaks into the house the mind says he should be apprehended and punished. But his mind may say that he should not be hurt. In this way conflict arises between the two. Secondly, in times of danger the body suffers. The body desires to escape it by destroying the danger. To avoid or to overcome danger violence may be necessary. If agriculture is not started for the reason that it will harm the worms etc under the soil, how can one live?
Bhishma said: (Shl 14) Yudhistira! Avoiding violence does not mean avoiding agriculture. Even while practicing non-violence activities should be done such that the body does not decay or untimely death does not occur. **Only one who is fit enough physically can practice dharma.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharm; adhyaya 265)

Avatar & dharma

Sri Krishna to Uttanka *muni*: (Shl 6) *Muni!* The well known dharmas of the four *ashramas* and the karmas prescribed by Vedas are all my forms only. (Shl 12, 13) Bhargava! **I am with all those who are engaged in *pravrtti dharma* & *nivrtti dharma*. For defending/protecting/saving dharma and to establish it I take birth in the three *lokas* in different forms and disguises and behaviours.** (Shl 14) I am Vishnu, I am Brahma and I am Indra. I am the cause for the birth and destruction of all beings. The creation and dissolution of all the living beings happens through me alone. (Shl 15) **It is I who punishes all those who take to path of *adharma* and I never deviate from the dharma.** Whenever *yugas* change, I take birth in different forms and taking the body appropriate to that form I build the bridge of dharma for the welfare of living beings. (Shl 17) *Bhrigunandana!* When I take birth as *devata* I do all my dealings/acts as a *devata*. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 18) When I take birth as Gandharva I do all dealings/acts as a Gandharva. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 19) When I take birth as *naga* I do all dealings/acts as a *naga*. Similarly for *yaksha* & *rakshasa* births. (Shl 20) Now I have taken birth as human being. That is why I humbly begged Kauravas to compromise with Pandavas. But since they were under influence of *moha* they did not accept my well meaning suggestion. (Shl 21, 22) I frightened Kauravas by describing the fearful consequences of war. Then I became angry and described to them the horrible consequences. **But since they were *adharmis* and in the grip of *kaal*, they did not listen to my advice. They were all killed in the war according to *yuddha dharma* and entered *Swarga*.** There is no doubt about this. (Shl 23) Great *dvija!* **Pandavas became famous in all three *lokas* by their practice of dharma.** I have told you everything as asked by you. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 54)

Daan dharma

Charity is great dharma

- (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. (Anushasana; Daandharma; adhyaya 6)
- Mahamuni Vyasa to Pandavas: (Shl 28-30) On the difficulty of people willing to give to charity: all are desirous of & thirsty for wealth & money; also money is obtained with much difficulty & struggle. They will even stake their lives for it; they will enter seas or dangerous forests; they take up agriculture, animal husbandry or even slavery etc. Thus having earned money from various difficult ways, they find it very difficult to donate money voluntarily. Therefore there is nothing more difficult than giving money to charity. That's why '*daan dharma*' is more precious than *tapo dharma*. (Vana; Vrihidraunika; adhyaya 259)

Who are eligible to receive charity

- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 36, 37, 38) A *dharma* should not give to charity with the desire to gain fame or out of fear. Charity/donation should not be given as a way of repaying for the good deed done by someone. **Charity should not be given to those who have dance and music as a way of living and who are professional comedians.** *Daan* should not also be given to: the intoxicated, the mad, who has no lustre in the face, the physically handicapped, a thief, who abuses others, the dumb, a midget, the wicked, one born in wicked lineage, who has not obtained *samskaras* by *vrata* and brahmana who has no knowledge of Vedas. (Shl 39) **The following acts will bring danger to both the giver and receiver: Not giving charity in the prescribed manner with faith but as one pleases (with nonchalance?), and taking *daan* even if not deserving it.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

(Shl 42) **If one is not steadfast in *sadachara* (virtuous practices) he does not become respectable by merely studying Veda-Vedangas, all the *shastras* or by being a great orator.** Just as water even though pure if kept in a skull is not considered so, even though milk is a good thing but if kept in bag made of dog skin it becomes impure, **if Vedas are in a man of wicked practices, they have no value. Things obtain their values depending on the good/bad qualities of where they are placed. (This is meant to identify right and wrong receivers for charity).** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

(Shl 43) That brahmana who, even though not learned in Vedas and *shastras*, is always contented and does not find fault in others, deserves to be given *daan*. Even if someone is not doing any *vrats* but is really destitute, then out of compassion he can be given *daan*. (Shl 44) **If someone is destitute but has the nature of doing evil to others, he should not be given charity out of compassion either because he does what one likes or out of a misplaced sense of dharma.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

(Shl 46) Just as an elephant carved in wood is an elephant only for namesake, a stuffed deer skin is only a deer for namesake (and has no qualities of an elephant or deer), similarly a brahmana who is devoid of *Vedadhyayana* is one only for namesake. He does not have any essence (*sattva*) that a brahmana should have. (Shl 47) Just as a eunuch cannot beget a child from a woman, a cow cannot get a calf from another cow, a bird without wings cannot fly, a brahmana without knowledge of Vedas is useless. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 36)

About yajna & daan

Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 1, 2) **Between *yajna* & *daan*, which will give greater benefits after death?** The fruits of which of these are considered great? To what type of brahmanas and when *daan* should be given and how should *yajna* be performed? (Shl 3) Which of the two types of *daan* viz one given in the *yajna vedi* and one given outside the *vedi* causes greater auspiciousness? Tell me about these.

Bhishma said: (Shl 4) Yudhishtira! A *kshatriya* has to be doing terrible deeds most of the time. Therefore, in this *loka yajna karmas* and *daan dharma* are holy/purifying deeds for him. (Shl 5) **Satpurushas do not accept daan given by kings who sin. That is why kings should worship gods with yajnas in which huge dakshinas (donations to priests & brahmanas) are given.** (Shl 6) In case *satpurushas* accept the *daan* given by the king, then he should keep giving *daan* everyday, **because, daan given with faith is the best means of self purification.** (Shl 7) You should satisfy brahmanas who are engaged in *yajnas*, have virtuous conduct, are *tapasvis*, know Vedas, are friendly to all and are *satpurushas* by giving them money etc. (Shl 8) If *satpurushas* do not receive from you then you will not gain virtuosity. Therefore for the sake of *satpurushas* perform *yajnas* which include tasty & good food, drinks and huge *dakshina*. (Shl 9) Think that you performed *yajna* and *daan* as *daan karma*. (If *satpurushas* were to accept *daan* without any hesitations, then there would be no need for *yajnas*. When they hesitate, then at least by performing *yajnas* they should be given *daan*. *Satpurushas* do not reject *daan* & *dakshina* when given as a part of *yajna*). Honour the *ritvijs* & *purohits* in this manner. Then you will also get a share of the auspiciousness of the *yajnas*. (Shl 10) You should care for the living and nourishment of brahmanas who are helpful to many and have to care for their children. (Shl 11) **As long as satpurushas are striving to improve dharma, the king should support them in every way. Because, such great men cause great benefit to the loka.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 61)

Daan of land (bhu-daan) is the greatest daan

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! Shruthi has prescribed many things to be donated by saying, 'give this', 'give this' (*idam deyam, idam deyam*). Even *shastras* have ordained that king must donate in various ways. But I wish to know which the greatest form of *daan* is.

Bhishma said: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! **They say that bhudaan exceeds all other kinds of daan. This earth is immovable and inexhaustible. It gives all kinds of enjoyments.** (Shl 3) **It is earth that gives clothes, gems, cattle, paddy, grains etc. One who donates land will gain more prosperity than others.** (Shl 4) **As long as earth exists one who donated land will find prosperity birth after birth. There is no daan superior to that of bhudaan.** (Shl 7) One who donates this inexhaustible land as *dakshina* will be born as human being in next birth and will be a land lord. (Shl 8) **It is the doctrine of dharma shastras that one would enjoy luxuries and comforts in proportion as one donates.** A *kshatriya* should either sacrifice his body in a war; or donate land. Scholars say that this brings them great wealth. (Shl 9) We have heard that the land given in donation will purify the donor. Goddess earth will wash away the sins of one who is always sinning, who has killed a brahmana and one who is a liar and frees them from sins. (Shl 11) **Satpurushas accept land in donation even from kings who are sinners. But they do not like to take any other kind of daan from them. Because, goddess earth is most holy/pure like mother herself.**

Those who know *puranas* sing the *gita* said by *Bhudevi* herself. It is after listening to this that sage Parashurama, the son of Jamadagni, gave away the entire earth to Kaashyapa. I will tell you the same, listen. (Shl 35) Donate me, accept me as donation. **By donating me, you will again get me back. Whatever man donates in this loka, he will get the same thing back in this & other lokas** (Shl 39) As soon as a king is enthroned this *Bhumi gita* should be sung before him. After listening to it, the king should donate land. **But he should never snatch the land possessed by sadhu-satpurushas.** (Shl 40) All matters related to *bhu-daan* have to do with brahmanas and *kshatriyas*. There is no doubt in this. A king is skilled in dharma. **Giving daans is the first characteristic of being rich.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 62)

Greatness of anna daan

Bhishma said: I had heard the same matter from *devarshi* Narada in the past. I will repeat the answer he had given. Listen. (Shl 5) Both *devatas* & *rishis* praise *anna daan* (donation of food; particularly cooked and ready to eat food or rice) **because this world runs due to anna. It is due to anna that inspiration comes to the mind. Everything is established in anna.** (Shl 6) There was no *daan* comparable to *anna daan* in the past nor there will be one in future. (Shl 7) *Anna* increases the strength of body. **The lives of living beings are dependent on anna. The whole world is borne by anna.**

(Shl 30) Offspring are born because of *anna*. It is only due to *anna* that sexual pleasures can be enjoyed. **Both dharma & artha are accomplished only because of anna.** Many diseases are cured by eating *anna* regularly and in a disciplined way. Understand this very well.

(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 63)

Anna daan: Story narrated by mongoose

(Extracts)

Yamadharma to Brahmana: ... (Shl 93) One who likes to give to charity will not suffer loss of dharma. You did not care for the hunger and thirst of even your wife and son considering dharma as most superior. (Shl 94) **It is a subtle truth that first man should learn just & legal ways of earning. The second is to determine with discrimination the deserving and then give daan. Giving daan at the right time is even more important. Giving daan with faith is even more important than that. The door to Swarga is very subtle/minute. Those who are under moha cannot see it.** (Shl 95) **The seed of lobha (greed) is the bolt (which locks) to the door of Swarga. It is protected by raga (longing, passion). It is very difficult to enter in it. Those who have given up anger, who are jitendriyas, are dedicated to tapas, and who give daan to the best of their abilities can give up lobha & raga and see Swarga.** (Shl 96) If a person has a thousand things to donate and donates even hundred of them with faith, he will get the fruits of donating thousand things. If a person has a hundred things to donate and donates even ten of them with faith, he will get the fruits of donating hundred things. **If someone who is not capable of giving to charity anything gives even water to a thirsty person to the best of his abilities he will get the same fruits as the person who donated hundred or ten things.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 90)

Five types of daan

Next day morning Yudhishtira finished all the morning ablutions, came to Bhishma, prostrated to him and said: (Shl 1) In respect of daan I wish to know about these dharmas. (Shl 2) How many varieties are there in daan? From which kind of daan what fruits are obtained? To whom should how the daan be given? In what situations for what reasons should daan be given? I wish to know about all these.

Bhishma said: I will tell you how people of all varnas can give daan. Listen. (Shl 5) **Bharata! For the following five reasons one gives daan to the other: dharma, artha (for gain, profit), bhaya (fear), kamana (desire, wish) and daya (kindness, pity).** I will tell for what reasons daan have to be given. (Shl 6) 'Daani (the giver) will obtain fame here. He will also get great happiness in paraloka'. Thinking so daan should be given to brahmanas without any blemished mind (without jealousy). (This daan is said to be rooted in dharma). (Shl 7) Hearing the praise of the daani from receivers like, 'He will give daan', 'He will give daan in future', 'He gave me such and such daan', (to increase one's own fame) he gives away everything to the seekers. (This is called daan rooted in artha). (Shl 8) 'I am not related to him; he is not mine. Still if I do not give him anything he may think that he was disregarded and may cause harm to me'. Out of such fear a pandita gives daan to a fool. (This is daan rooted in bhaya). (Shl 9) Thinking that, 'He is dear to me. I am dear to him', an intelligent man with joy and without any lethargy gives to his friend. (This is rooted in kamana). (Shl 10) Thinking that, 'He is asking as a very poor man. He will be happy with even small daan', daan is given with pity. (This is daan rooted in pity).

In this way there are five kinds of daan which increase punya and fame. Daan should be given to the best of one's abilities to the worthy recipients. Prajapati himself has specified these five kinds of daans. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 138)

Planting & growing trees

Bhishma said: ... (Shl 31) Therefore, those who desire auspiciousness should plant and grow trees around water - bodies they have constructed and protect them till they grow and become strong. **In the eyes of dharma the trees are also considered as children.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 58)

Dharma: Its Varieties

Sri Krishna to Bhishma: "Bhishma! You who are a jnana-vridhha know past, present and future. All shastras and all Vedas and puranas are integral in you. When does the annihilation of life take place, **what is the result of practicing dharma, when dharma rises**, you know all these matters.Gangeya! Yudhishtira is feeling quite distressed due to the killing of all relatives. Please help him overcome this grief. **You know all the dharmas of chatur-varnas.** You know everything that has been said in Rig, Yajur, Atharva, Sama vidyas. You know the duties of the four hotras. You have learnt with detailed commentaries and interpretations **all the sanatana-dharma** stated in yoga-shastra and sankhya shastra. **You also know the dharma to be followed by those who are born**

in *pratiloma* and are of mixed *varna* (mother of a higher caste than father). You know the characteristics of *desh-dharma*, *jati-dharma* and *kula-dharma*. You know the dharmas propounded by Vedas, dharmas stated by *shishtas* (learned and wise) and *shishtachara*. You know from beginning to end the ordinary meanings and secret meanings of *itihasa* and *purana*. All these *dharma-shaastras* reside firmly in your mind...(Shl 37) Only a person like you with greatest and widest knowledge can clear the minds of men and bring peace to it." (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 50)

Governance/King & Dharma

Importance of King's dharmic rule

- Shamika to his son Shringi: King follows dharma. If king is destroyed, dharma is destroyed. If King does not protect us while we are living in the forest, we cannot avoid dangers. We will not be able to carry on our dharma related activities without anxieties. Protected by the king who is focussed on dharma, we are able to do many acts of dharma. The king gets a share of the fruits of our activities of dharma. Therefore it was our obligation to forgive the king even if he committed an offence against us.
(Shl 27) Several *doshas* will crop up in a kingdom without the king. The king punishes those who exceed the boundaries of dharma. Due to the fear of such punishment, the troubles caused by wicked & arrogant people are reduced.
(Shl 29) The king establishes dharma. By following the path of dharma, we gain *swargaloka*. *Yajnas* & *yaagas* are performed & protected by the king. By this, *devatas* are pleased.
(Shl 30-31) Once *devatas* are pleased they give timely rains. From this crops grow well. This causes prosperity & happiness to people. Therefore the king is the main cause for the happiness of citizens. A king who rules with dharma becomes responsible for the fortunes of his citizens. It is for this reason that Manu has said that a king is equal to ten *shrotriyas*. (Adi; Astika; adhyaya 41)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 35; 37) If king himself becomes sinner, commits wrongful deeds, ignores dharma & rules as per his whims, then dharma is corrupted & people also mix up their *varnas* & dharma. As a consequence of the *adharma* of the king, the people are put to trouble & later their happiness & prosperity declines. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Gandhari advising Duryodhana: (Shl 25) Lokeshwara! Kingship/lordship (*prabhutva*) is a very significant thing. A kingdom may become available easily. But the kingship is very significant. It is not easy to get kingship as it is to get a kingdom. Kingship means protecting/governing the kingdom by following dharma. Everyone may desire lordship of the kingdom. But the wicked cannot govern the kingdom by dharma. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 128)
- Bhishma in response to Yudhishtira's question: (Extracts) (Shl 4) **The dharma that is honoured or practiced by the king will be honoured by all. Whatever the king practices will appear good to the citizen.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 75)
- Narrated as discourse given by Uthathya, the son of Angirasa to Maandhata, the son of Yuvanashwa.
(Extracts)
(Shl 3) Maandhata! **A person becomes a king to practice and to propagate dharma. He does not become a king to enjoy sensory/worldly pleasures.** A king is the protector of the whole world. You should understand this important matter. (Shl 5) All life stands on the foundation of dharma. Dharma is established in the king. That king who properly practices/follows dharma and rules according to dharma will become lord of the whole earth.
(Shl 7) **It is seen that those who are steadfast in their dharma fulfil their desires. That is why the world follows this auspicious dharma.** (Shl 8) When the king does not stop sinful deeds then *adharma* becomes rampant everywhere. All dealings of dharma will be destroyed. As a result people will be filled with fear day and night. (Shl 14) If sinful deeds are not prevented, human beings will become like de-energised old animals.
(Shl 17) **If dharma thrives all animals will prosper at all times. Similarly, if dharma declines all animals will be destroyed. Therefore there should be no deficiency in dharma.** (Shl 18) Dharma is born from money. **It is called as *dharma* because it bears everything** (*dharanadveti*)

nishchayah). **Scholars have said that dharma sets a limit for wrong deeds and prevents wrong deeds from spreading everywhere.** (Shl 19) Brahma created dharma for the benefit of people. Therefore the king should propagate dharma in order to show favour to them. (Shl 22) Brahmana is the founding father of dharma. Therefore he should always be worshipped. Their desires should be fulfilled without any jealousy. (Shl 24) **Virochana's son Bali was jealous towards brahmanas since childhood.** That is why *Rajalakshmi* left him. (Shl 27, 28) **There is a saying in *shruti* that *darpa* (arrogance or haughtiness) was born from *adharma* in *shree* (wealth, richness) (commentary: If wealth and *adharma* join together, arrogance or haughtiness is born). *Darpa* by his power destroyed many *devatas*, *asuras* and *rajarshis*. Maandhata! You must understand this very well. One who gains victory over this wicked *darpa* becomes a king. One who loses out to him will become a slave.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 90, 91)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 41, 42) The citizens of that kingdom where the king does not know dharma and is an atheist cannot sleep happily. They cannot be happy even when awake. Citizens will always be upset because of his misdeeds. No prosperity will be seen by such kingdom. (Shl 43) Those citizens who have a wise and *dharmaic* king will sleep peacefully. They will also be happy when awake. (Shl 44) The people will be happy due to such king's illustrious rule and auspicious deeds. The people there will see prosperity due to the care of the king, grace of gods and their own auspicious deeds. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 62)
- Kunthi sends her message through Sri Krishna: **I bow to that great dharma. It is dharma alone that holds the citizens.** (Udyoga; Bhagavadhyana; adhyaya 137)
- Bhishma continued his discourse and said: ... (Shl 19) The king will get one fourth share of all *dharma-karyas* done by his citizens when they are well governed and protected by him.....(Shl 22) In hot summer, we get comfort by sitting in water, sitting under the shade of a tree and by fanning ourselves. In winter we get comfort by sitting near fire, by wearing warm clothes and by sitting in the sun. (Commentary: But in a kingdom where the king does not follow dharma, there will no comfort on any account. The fear of lack of protection is the reason for this). (Shl 23, 24) **Mind of man is interested in sensory pleasures. But a scared man cannot enjoy any of these. That person who gives him assurance of protection (and removes his fear) will gain huge auspicious results.** There is no *daan* comparable to *prana-dana* in all three worlds (King is the guarantor of fearlessness and hence also life; hence his greatness). (Shl 25) Raja alone is Indra; he is Yama; he is Dharma. It is by raja that this whole world is upheld. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 72)
- Bhishma: (Shl 15) **If a king does not govern a country with dharma**, in this world it would not be possible to have wife, children, money, houses etc. It would not have been possible for any citizen to say that something is 'mine'. All the wealth all around would be destroyed. (Shl 18) **If a king does not govern a country with dharma, wicked people would have harassed mother, old father, *acharya*, guest, guru etc due to the thirst of money and perhaps even have killed them.** (Shl 22) If a king does not govern a country with dharma, there would be no *yajnas* performed, there would be no auspicious events like marriage and no social activities would happen. **There would have been no organised society.**

(Shl 32) **If a king is ruling the country with dharma**, women could deck themselves up with all ornaments and walk on the main streets (*raja-marga*) without fear even when not accompanied by a man or husband. (Interestingly this is still the benchmark for safety in public places!!) (Shl 33) **If a king is ruling the country with dharma, the citizens will also practice dharma.** They will not quarrel with each other. They will live with an *anugraha-buddhi* (mutually co-operative spirit). (Shl 36) When a king takes up the heavy responsibility of the kingdom and rules it with dharma with the help of a large army, then the people will be very pleased. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 68)

- Vamadeva: (Shl 1) **Maharaja! In a country where the mighty king acts with *adharma* upon the weak people, even his relatives will make a living doing the same.** (Shl 2) **The king's followers will also copy the king. In this way the kingdom will be filled with harsh people and will be destroyed soon.** (Shl 3) The same people, who were supporting the misdeeds of the

king and had taken refuge in him, will not tolerate him when he faces bad times. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 93)

- **It is king who causes the characteristics of yugas and not time!**

Bhishma said, (Shl 75) Bharatanandana! Listen to my explanation of how by *danda-neeti* great fortunes and prosperity can be brought about to both king and citizens.

(Shl 76) If the king applies the *danda-neeti* well and in proper ways, all the four *varnas* will remain within the bounds of their respective *varnas*. *Danda-neeti* which is whole and proper will prevent *varna-sankara* and people not following *varnashrama-dharma*. It prevents people from following the path of *adharma*. (Shl 77, 78) ...All citizens will live without fear and will be skilled. Then all three *varnas* will try for peace. Therefore understand clearly that everyone's happiness is in *danda-neeti*.

(Shl 79) Yudhishtira! Do not have doubts on whether the king will be as driven by 'time' or will time be driven by king? Do kings change due to the vagaries of time? Is time the factor responsible for all the happiness and difficulties in the country? Is it right to say, 'bad times have come & therefore things are like this'? Can the king be responsible for the bad or good times? **Whether for contrariety (*vaiparitya*) or goodness/satisfactory/healthiness state (*swasthya*) of time, the king alone is the cause in every way. If bad times have come, it clearly implies that the king is ruling with *durneeti*. Good times or bad times will come in accordance with the wholly and properly applied or not applied state of *danda-neeti* and time has no independent control on this.** If the king practices *dharma*, time will also be *dharmic*. If the king is *adharmaic*, the times will also be full of *adharma*. **Therefore undoubtedly it is the king who is responsible for the nature 'times'.** (This is clearly a very powerful statement in general and particularly in the light of Dhritarashtra's repeated saying '*kaalo duratikramah*' and Sanjaya repeatedly reminding him that everything has happened as a consequence of his ill thought out & greedy intentions!). (Shl 80) **The four *yugas* or *yuga-dharmas* change according to the *danda-neeti* followed by the king. When the king applies it wholly and properly and without defects, then due to its influence 'time' will change to '*Krita-yuga*' which will be full of only *dharma*.** (Shl 81) In such times, there will be no *adharma* at all in anyone's heart or at any place. None of the *varnas* desire to indulge in *adharma*. Their mind just does not turn towards *adharma*. (Shl 82) Due to the *suneeti* of the king time will change to *Krita-yuga* and will bring prosperity and happiness to citizens. All kinds of *vedokta-karmas* will flourish. (Shl 83) All seasons will only be happy seasons for man. All will be strong and disease free. Men will have pure minds, clear and deep voices, calm minds and joyous countenances. (Shl 84) In *Satya-yuga* there will be no diseases. There will no *alpayu* (persons with low longevity). Women will not become widows. There will be no miser. (Shl 85) Crops will grow without resorting to agriculture. Medicinal plants will grow by themselves (Why do you need them if all are disease free?!). Tree bark, leaves, fruits and roots will all have excellent essence and nutrients.

(Shl 87, 88) **When the king does not apply the *danda-neeti* fully and applies only three fourths of it, then time changes to *Treta-yuga*.** In this *yuga* to grow crops and medicinal plants one has to resort to agriculture. Only such 'tilled' land will yield crops. (Shl 89) **When the king applies only half of *danda-neeti* then time changes to *Dwapara-yuga*.** (Shl 90) In that *yuga*, half part of *punya* will follow half part of *paap*, crops will grow only by agriculture and the yield will also be half compared to *Treta-yuga*. (Does it hold good in spite of several successful researches done for increasing the yield or do these techniques succeed only where there is better *danda-neeti* in force?) (Shl 91) **When king completely gives up *danda-neeti* and causes difficulties to the citizens in unworthy ways, then time changes to *Kaliyuga*.** (Shl 92) In *Kaliyuga* there will be rampant *adharma*. All *varnas* will slip from their prescribed *dharmas*. (Shl 93) *Shudras* will live by begging or will take to *sanyasa*. *Brahmanas* will live by serving professions. *Yoga-kshema* of citizens will nose dive. *Varna-sankara* will happen with no holds barred. (Shl 94) Since the *vedokta-karmas* will not be happening as prescribed, they will lose their quality. None of the seasons will be really happy ones. All seasons will bring diseases. (Shl 95) Voice and facial glow will be affected. Mind will be dirtied. Diseases will trouble men very badly. People will die at young age also. (Shl 96) Number of widows will increase. (See <http://theloombafoundation.org/international-widows-day/> ; Today there are **245 million** widows in our world, and approximately **115 million** live in extreme poverty. Through armed conflicts and the AIDS epidemic, their numbers continue to disproportionately increase. Jun 23, 2011) People will become cruel (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/22/pet-cruelty-rising-rspca-warns-0>

). Rains will fall only in some places. Crops will grow only in some places. (Shl 97) When king does not desire to focus on implementing *danda-neeti* and protecting citizens then times will change to Kaliyuga and all juices will dry up on earth.

For these reasons king is the creator of *Satya*, *Treta*, *Dwapara* and *Kaliyugas*.....

(Shl 103) If a *danda-neeti* which makes people stick to their *varnashrama-dharmas*, which will ensure that they do not cross the limits set by dharma and is capable of protecting the world is systematically implemented, it will protect, nourish and nurture citizens as children are cared for by parents. (Shl 104) All animals in this world are established in *danda-neeti*. They live their lives dependent on *danda-neeti*; they live without trespassing the expectations of moral conduct set by the world; will be interested in their respective *dharmas*. You must understand this matter thoroughly. A king must have a *danda-neeti*. He should use it in a proper way. This alone is his best dharma. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 69)

Implementing/Practicing dharma

- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 26, 27) If a king does not take another's money how will he practice/implement dharma related activities? Even in Vedas & *shastras* scholars have come to the same decision in the matter of dharma. A king should study Veda every day. He should become scholar. He should accumulate money in every way. He should conduct *yajnas* with a wilful effort. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 8)
- Vyasa: (Shl 18) In matters of dharma, he should appoint only those who have studied all *shastras*. ... (Shl 21) If, in spite of undertaking the tasks after due thinking about achieving welfare of the people, using *neeti*s rooted in dharma, with all sincere human efforts, the tasks fail, the king will not accrue sins. No one will consider him as not being a follower of dharma. (Shl 22) Works started may fail or succeed due to factors of fate. It is *daiva* alone which gives results for all human efforts. But it is the duty of the king to make every effort in the interest of the people. Sins do not touch a king who undertakes tasks with such sincerity and faith. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 24)
- Yudhishtira questioned: Governing by which special dharma can the king gain eternal love and fame?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! **That king who has clean practices, has internal and external purity and is dedicated to governing the people with love will achieve both dharma and fame and gain both this world and other worlds.**

(Shl 15) **The king who does not govern his people and rules with *adharma* will be filled with fear in his heart.** Even *para-loka* will be unfavourable to him. (Shl 16, 17) Whether the king or minister or the prince, if they rule with *adharma* while sitting in *dharmasana* (seat of dharma) they will go to *naraka*. **If the associates of the king do not discharge their duties properly, they will lead the king into *naraka* and fall into it along with him.** (Shl 18) At such times, orphan citizens who cry for help harassed by the powerful should be protected by the king.

(Shl 23) **That king who investigates a case thoroughly, and after confirming that the person is an offender awards punishment suited to him and who is always careful about his duties will not acquire any sins by killing or arresting the offender. It will not be *adharma* to award such punishments.** Awarding appropriate punishment for the offences is *sanatana dharma*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 85)

- ... (Shl 18) King should always honour those who practice dharma and suppress those who are *adharmic*. The king should with an effort ensure that all *varnas* are engaged in their prescribed *karmas*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 86)
- Bhishma's explanations: (Shl 2) Dharmaja! A king who desires to follow the path of dharma to govern and is dedicated to the welfare of people should govern according to the circumstances of *desh-kaal* and his intelligence and might (*yatha desham, yaatha kaalm, yatha buddhi, yatha balam*). (Shl 3) The king who thinks that the welfare of citizens is his welfare, should behave in that way in all matters and should publicise all works undertaken.

(Shl 23) Those who have no money or stock of grains or have no right to receive will have to beg in times of emergencies as they have no other option. To such people monetary help should be given out of compassion as a cause of dharma and not out of fear. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 88)

- Bhishma: (Shl 17, 18) You should suitably **honour all people who appreciate you as well as criticise you** from among: those knowledgeable about dharma (*dharmajna*), the courageous, those who do not turn their back in battlefield, those residing in your kingdom, the ministers and those with neutral stand. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 89)
- Discourse given by Uthathya, the son of Angirasa to Maandhata, the son of Yuvanashwa: (Shl 30) Stay away from these four: one who is intoxicated, who has no power of discrimination, boy in the age of 5 to 10 and the insane. Even if all these come together to serve you, do not let them even come near you. (Shl 33) Do not mate with unknown women, barren women, prostitutes and virgins. (Shl 34) If the king follows *adharma* then *varna-sankara* will occur. Because of this sinners & *rakshasas* will be born in noble lineage. Eunuchs, physically disabled, those who stammer, idiots etc peculiar persons will take birth. Therefore in the interest of people at large, the king should especially remain committed to the path of dharma. (Shl 37) If king follows *adharma*, there will be such things as unseasonal cold and heat and no rains and excessive rains in some places. Several kinds of diseases will trouble human beings. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 90, 91)

- **Devarshi Narada's Questions Yudhishtira on Governance**

(Shl 34) Are the princes & main soldiers getting training from scholars who are experts in all *shastras* & can propound dharma effectively & with reasons?

(Shl 81) **In every village there should be five persons who are honest, just, brave, know their duties and have knowledge of dharma.**

(Shl 117) **Are you every day listening to words which expound meaning of dharma from persons with good understanding of dharma & aged persons with special experience?** (Sabha; Lokapalasabhakhyana; Adhyaya 5)

(Shl 125) You have another important duty: **Have you, who are knowledgeable about dharma, taking care of the blind, dumb, lame, physically challenged, orphans & sanyasis as your own children.** (Sabha; Lokapalasabhakhyana; Adhyaya 5)

- **Raja dharma**

Narrated as discourse given by Uthathya, the son of Angirasa to Maandhata, the son of Yuvanashwa.

(Shl 31) When the king distributes his wealth to those under his refuge suitably and he also enjoys it, when he does not disrespect his ministers, when kills a mighty and arrogant enemy, then the dharma of such a king is called *raja-dharma*. (Shl 32) protecting all life with words, body and deeds, and not excusing offences even if done by own son has been said to be *raja-dharma*. (Shl 33) If the king makes available essential commodities to the weak and the he also enjoys, the weak will become strong. Doing so is called *raja-dharma*. (Shl 35) **Even if someone is very dear to you, is constantly indulging in sins or speaking sinful language he should not be excused. He should be punished just as anyone else would be.** Doing so is called *raja-dharma*. (Shl 38) when the king wipes the tears of the miserable, orphans and aged and brings joy in their lives, he becomes a *dharmatma*. Doing these and causing happiness to people is *raja-dharma*.

(Shl 42) Maandhata! By punishing the wicked the king becomes the god of death for them. By protecting the virtuous he becomes Parameshwara for them. A king will be able to rule as long he has his *indriyas* under control. When he becomes a slave to his *indriyas* he will have a fall.

(Shl 45) King compared to thousand eyed Indra in all respects. Therefore whatever the king decides as Dharma becomes best dharma.

(Shl 46) You should always be careful and alert and understand when and how to use forgiveness, intelligence, *dhriti* (fortitude) and *mati* (understanding). He should always keep learning what is good and what is not for the people.

(Shl 48) **An inefficient king will not be capable of protecting his people. Governance is a very difficult and heavy burden.**

(Shl 53, 54) If you respect people, they will be prepared to even give up their wives and children out of love for you. Building love of people, *daan*, sweet speech, not being careless and purity—these earn a lot of wealth to the king. You should never lapse from these qualities. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 91)

- Kalakavrikshiya to Videha *raja*: Give up inappropriate greed and focus on dharma. Never give up dharma out of *kama* or treachery. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 106)
- *Loka-palakas* to Manu when handing over the divine sword to him: (Shl 70, 71) **Those who violate the limits set by dharma for the sake of pleasures of this gross body and the subtle mind, should be punished justly and separately for each of the offences.** All animals should be protected in accordance with dharma. You should never act arbitrarily in regard to anyone.

Punishing with harsh words is called *vagdanda*. Punishing by taking gold coins from him is *artha-danda*. Cutting off any body part is called *kaaya-danda*. Killing the person due to a major offence is called *prana-danda*. All these four are forms of the invincible sword. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 166)

- **Acceptability of righteous anger**

Ourva to *pitru devatas*: (Shl 3) That person who suppresses the anger arising due to just reasons and does not react to it fittingly will not be able to protect dharma-*artha-kama*. (Shl 4) Not getting angry about offenders/criminals and not punishing them is not dharma. Kings who win the world use anger appropriately—to punish the wicked and protect the decent. Getting angry with the wicked is considered dharma. (Adi; Chaitraratha; adhyaya 180)

- **Respect to Brahmanas**

Jarasandha: *Kshatriya*, even though an expert in *neeti-shaashtra*, acquires sin if he tortures *brahmanas* who are the basis/guides for *dharma-artha-kama-moksha*. Such persons will not achieve any prosperity or *punya*. (Sabha; Sabhakriya; adhyaya 22)

- **Punishing the wicked**

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: **You should not turn away from your oath of destroying the enemies and governing the people with dharma. ... When protecting the virtuous, the powerful *danda* you take up to punish the wicked is considered as *saddharma* (good dharma).** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 148)
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 13) In *kshatriya-dharma*, using *danda* (punishment) appropriately is the most important dharma. **The strength and might of a *kshatriya* is established in *danda*.** There is a *shloka* (verse) of Brihaspati in this matter: (Shl 14) **Just as a serpent swallows rats in holes earth swallows the king who does not stop the enemy** and a brahmana who does not travel the country. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 23)
- Dyumatsena said: (Shl 17) Child! Dharma says that wherever and whenever people can be bound within the boundaries of dharma, it should be done so. As long as dharma is not trespassed, it will survive. (Shl 18, 19) If those who trespass dharma are not punished all administrative systems of the state will be defeated. **Not punishing the wicked results in harm to the virtuous.**

Satyavanta said: (Shl 25) People dedicate themselves to virtuous deeds only out of fear of punishment. **It is the intent or purpose of punishment to create fear and make the people stick to the path of dharma.** Good kings never just kill the offenders to satisfy their whims. **Great kings rule the citizens more by good deeds and virtuous behaviour.**

- (Shl 29) A king should first gain control on his mind if he wishes to prevent wicked deeds in his kingdom. Secondly, without forgiving he should punish even his own cousins & close relatives who have committed offence. (Shl 30) In that country where persons who commit heinous sins do

not suffer intense grief, the sinful deeds will keep increasing and surely dharma will decay. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 267)

- Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 9) Such people who indulge in snatching others wealth in unacceptable ways will be punished by the king (just as hunters stop the animals with their arrows) who has to maintain dharma. Youth who may start such activities at the age of 20 or 30, will not survive till 100 (will be caught and punished by king). In this way their being pauper becomes the reason for their reduced longevity.
(Shl 57) The fame of a king who treats all citizens equally (like children), **governs the people with dharma**, collects the taxes in proportion to the income from citizens, will spread in all *lokas*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 28)

- *Maharshi* Vyasa again talks to Yudhishtira: (Shl 2) **Governing the people with dharma is the primary duty of kings**. For those who follow dharma all the time, it is the standard/authority....Veda has decided that for a brahmana *tapas* is the dharma. *Tapas* for a brahmana will be permanent and standard dharma. *Kshatriya* is the protector of the entire *brahmana dharma*. (Shl 5) **The person who attracted by sensory pleasures/worldly objects violates the rules of dharma, destroys the boundaries of honour set by the world**. A *kshatriya* should suppress such persons with the might of both his arms. (Shl 6) One who due to *moha* (confusion/delusion/folly/ignorance) argues that the standard of dharma is not the standard/authority (*pramaana*)—whether he be servant, son, *tapasvi* or anyone else—should be destroyed by all methods or such persons should be suppressed. (Shl 7) If the king does not do this, he will be a sinner. **A king who does not punish the sinners will himself be a sinner**. (Shl 9) **You, who were a follower of dharma, have destroyed along with their supporters those who were saying that dharma is not an authority. Why do you grieve for this? Why do you repent for having done your necessary duty? A king should kill the enemies, should donate to the deserving and should govern with dharma**.

(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. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 32)

- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: ... (Shl 30) **Those wicked people, who practice and propagate *adharma-marga* with the intention of terminating *dharma-marga*, have to be killed** just as *devatas* killed the *asuras*. (Shl 31) If by killing one (wicked) person in the family it ensures welfare of all others, it is better to kill him. If by killing an entire family (*kula*) it is possible to avoid danger to the whole country, then that family can be destroyed. Doing this does not amount to destruction of *sadachara* or *dharma*. (Shl 32) At some times the acts we do may appear like *adharma*. But upon close scrutiny they will be acts of dharma. Similarly, some sinful acts may appear like acts of dharma. But closer examination will reveal that they are acts of *adharma*. **Therefore an intelligent (skilled) scholar has to understand the subtle difference between dharma and *adharma* in a proper manner**. (Shl 35, 36) **According to *shastras*, sins are firmly and fully established in that person who has sinful intents, gradually gets influenced by these intents and indulges in sinful deeds, and having done such deeds does not feel any repentance. There is no atonement for such persons. Even if he performs various atonements, his sins will not reduce even by an iota**. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 33)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 25) Donating, studying Vedas, performing *yajnas* and governing people are the *karmas* which are attached to you from birth. **Though you feel that governance is *adharma*, it is dharma for you. Having been born a *kshatriya* you cannot give up these dharmas. Giving up these dharmas thinking they are *adharma* is itself *adharma*...**(Shl 27) That person who controls his mind and *indriyas* from all sides and discharges his responsibility of ruling without defects will not acquire any *doshas* **because it is said in *shastras* that *karmas* have to be done**. By discharging the responsibility of ruling the country you will accomplish the dharma you wish to achieve by going to forest. (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. (Shl 30) When a person of eminent descent and who knows dharma takes up ruling of the kingdom then the *yoga-kshema* of the king will be for the good of the kingdom only. (Shl 31) After accepting the ruler ship, he should bring people under his control by giving charity or donations to some, some by might and some by sweet words. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 75)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 11) **As long as *satpurushas* are striving to improve dharma, the king should support them in every way. Because, such great men cause great benefit to the *loka*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 61)
- Sri Krishna to Sanjaya: (Shl 24) For a king, care & protection of citizens is the primary dharma. He should be vigilant at all times and govern the kingdom with dharma. Should give *daan* to the deserving. Should perform *yajnas*. Should study all Vedas. Should get married & being in *grihasthashrama* should perform karmas which bring punya. By following thus the dharma appropriate for a *kshatriya* and always treading the path of dharma, he can go to *Brahmaloka* by his own will.
(Shl 27) Protecting & caring for the other three *varnas* is the responsibility of the *kshatriya*. He should not only do this diligently, he should also ensure that the respective *varnas* are engaged in karmas prescribed for them. He should not be attached to mere pleasure-seeking. He must treat all citizens equally. **He should never have desires or wishes which are not conformant with dharma.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 29)
- Bhishma: (Shl 16) While ruling the kingdom with dharma, he should also make compromise with kings who are *satpurushas*, are good natured, are very enthusiastic and who are knowledgeable about dharma. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 69)
- **Classification of friends/associates of king**
Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) **There are four types of associates or friends to a king.** Persons who make friendship by setting mutual benefit condition by saying, ‘I will help you now. In return you should help me in this manner at such time’. This is called *sahaartha-maitri*. Friendship that comes from generations by belonging to same lineage (*vamsha*) is called *bhajamana-maitri*. Friendship that comes by being together from birth, by studying together, by working together etc is called *sahaja-maitri* and happens due to similar thinking or nature. Acting as a friend depending upon circumstance even though there is no such feeling in the heart is called *kritrima-maitri*.

(Shl 4, 5) Apart from these four there can also be a fifth type. **He is a *dharmatma*.** He does not take any one side. Nor does he make money by saying he is a friend of both sides. He always supports that side which has *dharma*. Or he seeks refuge with that king who is dedicated to dharma. **King should not reveal to such friend, who is always interested in dharma only, the actions he will not like. If it is revealed to him, he will come in the way, that is, will obstruct. Moreover kings who desire victory/success may have to depend on both dharma and *adharma*. They will have to take to either path depending on the circumstances.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 80)

Qualities of a dharmic king

- **Kunthi’s advice to Yudhishtira conveyed through Sri Krishna**
(Extracts):
(Shl 6) Do not waste your time postponing the duty that you have to do. The more you delay, more is the task of governance of people spoilt. You are like a *shrotriya brahmana* who has all his attention only on learning the Vedas by-heart (only to memorise & recite). Your mind is fully absorbed only in dharma. A *shrotriya* should learn to recite Vedas. Similarly you should also be interested in dharma. But the *shrotriya* should also understand the meaning of Vedas. He should not spend time in mere rote learning. Realise which dharma Brahma has created for you.

Kshatriyas were created from the arms of Paramapurusha. Therefore they have to live by might of arms/valour. They should be ready for cruel acts like punishing the wicked as also for governing the people. (Shl 12) One fourth of the *phala* (fruits) of the dharma followed by people will accrue to the king who governs them.

(Shl 14) If the king applies the *danda-neeti* appropriately and in a timely manner, it enables the four *varnas* to follow their respective *dharma*s & prevents them from falling into *adharma*.

What can be greater dharma than when a *vidwan* (scholar) born in a good family, having no livelihood, struggling & suffering without a solution, by going to a generous & brave king fulfils his desires/ambitions? (This also implies that such situations for *brahmanas* were not uncommon. Drona himself is an example)

(Shl 31) A king living by begging is totally forbidden. Living by agriculture & trading is also not worthy of you. *Kshathath*—others from agony, *tratha*—who saves; one who saves others from difficulties—this is the meaning of the word *Kshatriya*. It is your duty & dharma to take care of your citizens so that they have no problems. This is the way you have to live. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 132)

- Draupadi to Yudhishtira: (Shl 16) *Duhta-nigraha* and *shishtha-palana* and not running away in a war are the great dharmas for a king. A king who has following qualities is considered a *dharma-vid* or one who knows *raja-dharma*: who has anger against enemies, forgiveness towards *satpurushas*, who gives charity to the deserving as well as collects (taxes and gifts from subordinate kings, and *rajaadaya* (levies) from citizens at specified intervals), who can create fear among the enemies, who can give assurance (of no fear) to those seek refuge, who can subdue the enemy and can confer benefits to the weak and poor. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 14)
- *Rishi* Devasthana to Yudhishtira: (Shl 13, 14, 15) That enthroned king who—has his *indriyas* under control, views pleasant and unpleasant things with equanimity, eats *vighasa* after performing *yajnas*, knows the meaning of *shastras* (*raja-neeti*), punishes the wicked, protects the good, makes all citizens follow dharma and he also remains steadfast on the path of dharma, hands over the kingdom to his son in old age, goes to forest and lives on roots and fruits and without becoming lazy even in forest practices the *karmas* learnt from *shastras*, such a king will be recognised as the *dharma-prabhu* who has understood dharma in its true essence and who has implemented it practically. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 21)
- Bhishma: (Shl 98) If the king has good qualities and is a staunch follower of dharma, wife, country, friends, sons, relatives will all have good qualities. (Shl 99) Citizens will be destroyed by the overly wrathful administration of that king who does not know dharma. The king is the root cause for obtaining *dharma-artha-kama*. Therefore he should govern with great care. (Shl 106) Because he makes available money, gold, things, vehicles etc to his dear ones he is like Kubera. By preaching dharma or arranging for the preaching of dharma to citizens from time to time he is like a guru. By governing the people with dharma he is also the protector. (Shl 107) The kingdom of that king who pleases the people in towns and villages with his qualities will not be shaken (will not be dethroned). Because, the king will himself be a practitioner of dharma. (Shanti parva; adhyaya 139)
- Vikarna to his brothers on what is adharmic for kings: (Shl 4) As you all know, elders say that the following four are evil addictions of kings—hunting, *surapana* (drinking wine), gambling and excessive enjoyment of sensory pleasures. These make the man *dharma bhrashta*. Therefore the world does not recognise/honour acts of such persons. (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 68)
- **Bhishma counsels Yudhishtira**
He said, (Shl 15) Grandfather! **I will not seek happiness through the kingdom. I do not desire the authority and power of the kingdom even for a moment for the sake of the pleasures it provides. I desire kingdom only for the accomplishment of dharma.** But after consolidating all that you have said so far, I think it is not possible to attain *siddhi* of dharma by ruling a kingdom. (Shl 16) I do not want a kingdom which does not help me accomplish dharma. I have no need for this kingdom. Therefore to achieve *siddhi* of dharma I will go to forest.

Bhishma again consoled and counselled him: Yudhishtira! I know that your heart is full of only kindness. True! **It is not possible for a person filled with total kindness to rule the country. But you cannot escape this responsibility also.** After being born in the *vamsha* of kings, if you do not govern the kingdom with dharma, all will blame or criticise you. Even though your thinking is very soft, you are a great *satpurusha*, most *dharmatma* and very kind, because your qualities are quite opposite to the expected qualities of a king, the world will consider you a eunuch... (Shl 22) Neither your father Pandu nor your mother Kunthi desired for what you intend to do after thinking with your intelligence and learning. (Shl 23) Your father Pandu used to say about you the following: 'My son should be valorous; mighty and truthful'. Your mother Kunthi desired that, 'my son should be a *mahatma* and very generous.' **Your behaviour is quite opposite to what they wanted you to be.** (Shl 25) Donating, studying Vedas, performing *yajnas* and governing people are the karmas which are attached to you from birth. **Though you feel that governance is *adharma*, it is dharma for you. Having been born a *kshatriya* you cannot give up these dharmas. Giving up these dharmas thinking they are *adharma* is itself *adharma*...**

(Shl 27) That person who controls his mind and *indriyas* from all sides and discharges his responsibility of ruling without defects will not acquire any *doshas*. **Because it is said in *shastras* that karmas have to be done.** By discharging the responsibility of ruling the country you will accomplish the same dharma you wish to achieve by going to forest. (Shl 28) Whether the person is totally faithful to dharma; or a *grihastha*; or a king; or 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; adhyaya 75)

- Bhishma: (Shl 4) **A king should first gain victory over his mind.** Mind, which can be the cause for any kind of danger/accidents, should first be brought under control. Should not try to do the *raja-karyas* whichever way the mind pulls it. Mind which by nature is very volatile & changing, should be reined in by *dharma* & *viveka*. Then he should try to win the enemies. How can a king who has no control over his own mind gain victory over enemies? (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 69)
- Bhishma: (Shl 30) King who follows *danda-neeti* with discrimination everyday will earn *punya*. **Protecting the virtuous (*shishta*) and punishing the wicked (*dushta*) using *danda* is the greatest dharma of a king.** This will be praised by all. (Shl 31) King should be an expert in Vedas and Vedangas. He should be learned and wise. He should know all *shastras*. He should be a *tapasvi*. He should be *daan-sheela* (interested in giving to charity) and also *yajna-paarayana* (interested in performing and given to performing *yajnas*). (Shl 32) These qualities should be established in the king fully and at all times. **These are essential to conduct transactions justly.** If he is devoid of these qualities, just transactions will not happen. Then where is the question of fame and success? How can he attain *swarga*? **A king whose dealings are not just will neither earn fame here nor gain *swarga*.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 69)

Governing with dharma

- **Personal attention of king towards the unfortunate**
Janamejaya! Listen to the way your father (Parikshita), who was a *dharmatma*, *mahatma* & good ruler of his people conducted his administration. He had made arrangements such that the people of four *varnas* could carry on with their own dharmas. He was a *dharmavid* (knew *dharma*) and *dharmamurthy* (personification of dharma) & looked after his citizens as if they were his children, without showing any partiality or treating them unequally in any way. He was directly supervising the care of widows, orphans, physically challenged etc. (Adi; Astika; adhyaya 49)
- **Yayati as king**
Yayati regained his youth. But even though he had regained youth only to enjoy sensual pleasures, he was not doing anything against the principles of dharma. He was performing his daily religious rituals and satisfying the *devatas*. He was giving away whatever poor and unfortunate requested. He was caring for *brahmanas* & guests with food & drinks, *vysyas* by

protecting their wealth and *shudras* with kindness. He was giving exemplary punishment to the wicked that troubled the citizens. In administration also he was punishing the bad & rewarding the good and was ruling the country with dharma like the Indra himself. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 85)

- **Killing of certain animals & birds banned**

When Shantanu was ruling the kingdom, killing of cattle & pigs and birds & animals was banned. No animal was being tortured by resorting to *adharma*. He was both king & father to the grief stricken, orphans, animals & birds and all beings. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 100)

- **Bhishma's rule**

(Shl 5-7) Agriculture was flourishing with good crops. Rains were always timely. Trees, plants & creepers were full of flowers & fruits. Animals & birds also enjoyed happiness. Flowers were fragrant & fruits were juicy. Towns were filled with traders & artists. People were courageous, well learned, trustworthy and always happy. There was no trace of thieves, liars and *adharmis*. It was as if *Krita yuga* had returned. People of all *varnas* lived happily & harmoniously. There was no enmity or malice. Aim of people was to make others happy. All were committed to *dharma*. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 109)

- **Dharma vyadha about Janaka's rule**

(Shl 28-31) He will punish the guilty even if he is own son; will not punish those who follow dharma. With dharma as the only principle, he cares for all people without any partiality. Wealth & administration is the portfolio of King. Punishing the bad/evil and protecting the good/noble is his main dharma.

- **King Ushinara's principle**

King Ushinara to Galava: (Shl 13, 14) I could have given you the equivalent value of 200 horses. But the wealth with me is for the benefit of my citizens and not for my personal pleasures. It is my duty to spend the wealth only for the welfare of my citizens. Money in the treasury should not be spent for personal enjoyment & luxuries. One who decides to spend other's wealth for own enjoyment will gain neither dharma nor fame. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 118)

- **Suhotra's governance**

Suhotra had obtained his kingdom by the path of dharma. He was governing his kingdom as per the advice of *ritwijas*, *brahmanas* and *purohitis*. He believed that the following were the path to *shreyas* (welfare, fortune, bliss): Caring for the citizens, living in accordance with dharma, giving to charity, performing *yajnas* and conquering enemies. He wanted to earn money only by following the path of dharma. (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; adhyaya 56)

- **Yudhishtira's priority**

After taking over the kingdom, Yudhishtira, as his first job organised for all the four *varnas* to live according to their respective dharmas. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 45)

- Bhishma: (Shl 3) 1. A king Should not speak harshly to anyone and should practice dharma. 2. Should be a believer in God. Should have cordial interactions with all. Should not hate anyone. 3. Should accumulate money by being kind. Should not accumulate money by adopting cruel ways. 4. **Should enjoy pleasures without exceeding the *loka-maryada* and without going against *dharma & artha*.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 70)

- Bhishma: Therefore a king should understand that the path of *dharma-artha* is very intricate and complex and should appoint a well read, scholarly brahmana as his *purohit*. In that country which has a brahmana who is a *dharmatma* and an expert in providing consultations as a *purohit*, and the king is also a *dharmatma* and knows importance of consulting a scholar, the people will always be happy. (Shl 3, 4) If both king and *purohit* are dedicated to dharma, are committed to the prosperity and safety of people, are *tapasvis*, have mutual cordiality and have similar minds, then they will together improve the country and its people. They will please the *pitrus* and *devatas* with *shraadhas* and *yajnas*. They will be responsible for the development of children and citizens. By honouring such a king and *purohit*, the people will also gain happiness and comforts. (Shl 5) On the other hand by disrespecting them, people will destroy themselves. It is said in *shastras* that *brahma-kshatra* are the source of all *varnas*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 73)

- (Shl 5) Those brahmanas who are devoid of the knowledge of Vedas and *shastras* and are not performing *agnihotra* are indeed equal to *shudras*. **A dharmic king should not only collect taxes from them, he should make them serve him without paying wages.** (Shl 11) King should never ignore brahmanas who have lapsed from their dharma. With the intention of supporting dharma he should punish them and separate them from the group of genuine brahmanas. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 76)
- **Selecting the prime Minister**
(Shl 24) The prime Minister should know even your deepest secrets. Secret matters should be consulted with him. He should know your country's *Prakriti* of *artha-dharma*. **You must trust your Prime minister just as you trust your father.** (Commentary: *Prakriti* is of three types: *artha-prakriti*, *dharma-prakriti* and *artha-dharma Prakriti*. *Artha-prakriti* consists of agriculture, trade, fort, dams, place where elephants are captured in the forest, metal mines, taxes and *shoonya-sthana*—these are resources which lead to generation of *artha*. *Dharma-prakriti* consists of: fort-in-charge, *baladhyasda*, dharma-in-charge, Commander-in-chief, *purohit*, doctor and astrologer. The rest are called *artha-dharma prakriti*. A minister supervises all these).
(Shl 26, 27) **Let that person who gives prominence to fame, lives within boundaries of *neeti* & *dharma*, who does not hate others who have capability in administration, who does not take up wasted and harmful actions, who does not give up dharma due to *kama*, *krodha*, fear or greed, who is efficient and speaks less become your Prime Minister.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 80)
- **Maharshi Vamadeva on importance of following dharma at any cost**
Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! **How can a king who wants to stay on the path of dharma remain so after accepting responsibility of ruling which is full of several defects?**
Bhishma narrates a conversation between *maharshi* Vamadeva and the great ancient king Vasumanasa. Vasumanasa's question was: "By being firm in what kind of practices will I not lapse from *swadharma*?"
Vamadeva replied: (Shl 6) *Maharaja*! Practice only dharma. There is nothing greater than dharma. Kings remain in the path of dharma and win this world. (Shl 7) **That king who believes that accomplishments in dharma is higher than accomplishments in *artha*, and uses his mind and intelligence to strengthen dharma, will shine brighter by his practice of dharma.** (Shl 8) On the other hand that king who has only the path of *adharma* in his sight, and indulges in it forcefully, loses first and second *purusharthas* viz *dharma* and *artha*. (Shl 9) **That king who harms dharma with the help of the wicked men and sinful ministers will become fit to be killed.** He will be destroyed soon along with his company. (Shl 10) That king who makes no effort for *artha-siddhi*, is libertine and given to self-praise, will be destroyed soon even though he has won the whole world.
(Shl 12) **A king should never consider himself complete in matters of *dharma*, *kama*, *artha*, intelligence & wisdom and about friends. He should always consider himself incomplete and try to gain more & more of these.** (Shl 14) In this way a king who is always keen in matters of dharma, who thinks about *dharma-artha* and 'serves' *artha* after careful examination will surely attain great benefits. (Shl 15) A king who is given to misplaced courage, who is not generous in giving to charity, who repeatedly harasses citizens by use of punishments will be destroyed soon. (Shl 16) That foolish king who even after doing sinful deeds does not correct himself by introspection, or does not punish the sinner, will not only gain ill-fame, he will fall in *naraka* after death. (Shl 18) **A king who has no *guru* to impart knowledge about dharma, who does not listen to others about dharma, and who indulges only in enjoying pleasures upon gaining *artha* cannot be happy for long.** (Shl 19) That king who gives a prominent place to his guru in matters of dharma and acts according to his preaching, who personally does all works related to *artha*, and considers dharma of prime importance in all kinds of gains, will enjoy happiness eternally. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 92)
(Shl 9) King should completely give up telling lies. **Even if not requested/prayed, he should do likeable things to others. He should not give up dharma out of anger or hatred.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 93)

(Shl 23) **All things in this world will be destroyed in the end. No thing is without diseases or is indestructible (Only dharma is eternal). Therefore the king should adhere to the path of dharma and govern people with dharma.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 93)

Dharma of a citizen

Bhishma: (Shl 48) A person who is an expert in all tasks, capable of accomplishing tasks easily, who is desirous of leading a dharmic life and who is without jealousy **should not indulge in blaming or reproaching the king who is like Ishwara.** (Shl 49) Whether a son, a brother, a friend or an equal, one who works against the king will face difficulties. They will not see happiness. (Shl 51) **Man should stay away from all things under the protection of the king.** He should not even go near it. Just as man fears death, he should also fear stealing property of/things belonging to king. (Shl 52) Just as an animal gets caught in the trap the moment it touches it, man who touches king's belongings will also be destroyed. **Just like protecting one's own property, king's properties should also be protected.** (Today we talk of nation's property). (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 68)

Justice & dharma

How to behave in an assembly & as witness

- **Vidura: Kashyapa's clarifications to Prahlada**

(Shl 74) If a person knows the right answer to a question and yet remains silent due to anger or fear or greed, he will be bound by a thousand *Varuna-paashas*. (Shl 75, 76) If a person who was an actual witness when brought to give his statement, loses firmness of mind – like the loose dangling ears of a cow -- and gives his statement in a suspicious way such that it suits both parties, he will also be bound by a thousand *Varuna-paashas*. These *paashas* will release one per year. Therefore one who knows the matter should speak the truth without ever hiding it. ... (Shl 84) To be a witness he must have seen the incident. Should have listened to what the accuser & defendant have said. He should know the truth. Such a witness should always tell the truth & never lie; nor should he be silent. One who gives his evidence truthfully will never lose his *dharma* or *artha*.

(Shl 77) When dharma, pierced by *adharma* like a spear, enters an assembly of people, it is the duty of assembled members to extract the spear and protect dharma. If not done so, that spear will later trouble the decent persons also. (Shl 78) If an *adharma* is happening in an assembly and the perpetrator is not condemned & members remain silent, then half of the sin attaches to the presiding person, a quarter to the perpetrators and the rest to the members. (Shl 79) On the other hand if the perpetrator is condemned, the presiding person & members are freed of the sin and the entire sin attaches to the perpetrator alone.

(Shl 80) Prahlada! When a question is raised about dharma, if it is answered against dharma (or lie is uttered) then the *punyas* acquired by him & his seven previous generations by having performed *ishtapoortha* etc yaagas are destroyed.

(Shl 81-84) *Devatās* opine that grief suffered by each of the following are equivalent: who has lost all his wealth, who has lost his son, who is struggling with the burden of debt, who did not get benefit proportionate to his effort, a widow, who has lost everything due to anger of the king, woman who cannot bear a child, who is caught in the jaws of a tiger, whose husband has other wives, **who has lost everything by giving false evidence. All these grief will afflict the one who lies.** (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 68)

Death as punishment

- Krishna: (Shl 7) Those who cheat deserve to be killed. This is *sanatana dharma*. (Vana; Arjunabhigamana; adhyaya 12)

- **Firmness in punishment**

Draupadi to Sri Krishna expressing her anguish & opinion: (Shl 16) Any person who is a slave of greed irrespective of whether he is *kshatriya* or not should be killed by a *kshatriya* who honours his *swadharma*. (Shl 17) Except for a *brahmana*, whatever be the *varna* of a greedy person, he should be killed by a *kshatriya* who believes in *swadharma*. Even if a *brahmana* indulges in several kinds of wrong deeds, he should not be killed. *Brahmana* is a guru to all *varnas* & is

worthy of worship. (Shl 18) According to those who know dharma, just as *dosha* is acquired by killing an innocent, *dosha* is acquired also by not killing one who deserves to be killed. Krishna! Let your actions not smear you with this *dosha* (of not killing those who deserve to be killed). (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 82)

Juvenile law

Ani Mandavya: (Shl 14) Proclaims new Juvenile justice law: “Yamadharm! For twelve years since birth whatever act done is not considered *adharma*. Such children will not have any clear directions (*no knowledge of right & wrong acts*)..... I will proclaim a new law from today. You will have to honour it. **From now on crimes committed by children under fourteen will not be considered as *adharma*.** After completing the age of fourteen it will not only be considered a sin, it will also be punishable.” (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 108)

Some Other dharmas mentioned

Dharma & adharma exist everywhere

Karna to Shalya: (Shl 36) Shalya! The *mlecchas* belonging to *yavana* class know everything. Moreover they are all very valorous. **But they are dedicated to their own symbols of dharma** (they do not honour *vaidika dharma*).

Shalya to Karna: (Shl 44) Everyone is an expert when finding fault in others. They never understand their own defects. Even if they do, they behave as if they do not know. (Shl 45) Kings who follow their *swadharma* are everywhere. They punish and subdue the wicked. **There are *dharmic* persons everywhere.** (Shl 46) **Just because one lives in a certain country, everyone does not indulge in sins.** Even in such countries there will be persons with exemplary character and good nature. (Karna; adhyaya 45)

Yati dharma

Then Yudhishtira thought of cremating Vidura's body there itself. By then a formless voice said: (Shl 32, 33) Yudhishtira! **You should not burn this body called Vidura here. Vidura was practicing *yati-dharma*. It is a very old custom not to burn bodies of such persons.** Therefore you should not even grieve for him. Since he had conquered his *indriyas* he will get *lokas* called Saantanika. After hearing this he returned to the *ashram*. (Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; adhyaya 26)

Daiva dharma & Manusha dharma

Kunthi's confession; Vyasa's explanation & consolation

Paarikshita! Kunthi said: (Shl 1-17) **She briefly tells the way in which Karna was born.** (Shl 18) Worship worthy! I do not know if this act of mine is holy or sinful; I have told you the secret. Be kind enough to clear this anguish that is burning me. (Shl 19) You also know the desire of Dhritarashtra. Please show the kindness so that he fulfils it.

The great Vyasa said: (Shl 20) Daughter! Whatever you said is correct. **It had to happen that way.** (Shl 21) There is no mistake of yours in this. At that time you were still a young virgin (*kanya*). **Devatas have *siddhis*. Therefore they can enter other's bodies.** (Shl 22) **There are many groups of *devatas* who can cause children in five ways – mental resolve, speech (grace), sight, touch and union.** (Shl 23) Kunthi! **Understand that *daiva-dharma* does not defile/corrupt *manushya-dharma* (*manushya-dharma daivena dharmena hi na dushyati*).** Therefore let your worries be set to rest. (Shl 24) **All the acts (which are compliant with dharma) of the mighty are for the welfare only. All acts of the mighty will be sacred. All acts of the mighty will be *dharma-karyas*. All the things belong to mighty (*sarvam balavatam pathyam sarvam balavatam shuchi sarvam balavatam dharmah sarvam balavatam svakam*).** (Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; 30)

Nivrtti Dharma

Maheshwara: *Parvati*! *Nivrtti dharma* is different from *pravrtti dharma*. Now I will tell you about *nivrtti dharma*. Listen attentively. (Shl 81) **Main dharma of *nivrtti marga* is being kind to all living beings.** One who is in *nivrtti marga* or *moksha marga* should not live in a single place. **He should be free from the bonds of desires.** These dharmas are expected of *mumukshus* (those who desire *moksha*: liberation, salvation). (Shl 82) The person who desires *moksha* **should not have any attachment to**

the hut, or water (pilgrim centres) or clothes or seat or *tridanda* or bed or *agni* (for heating in winter season) or the place of refuge. (Shl 83) **He should always be thinking of *adhyatma marga*. Should constantly be engaged in *manana*** (reflection on spiritual matters). **Should be always engaged in practice of yoga and should be thinking about the *tattvas*.** (Shl 84, 85) **One who is *mumukshu* should be free of all kinds of attachments and bonds of friendship** (interests) and should spend his time in abandoned houses or under a tree or river banks or sands of river. **He should establish Paramatma in his *atma* and should be in meditation all the time.** (Shl 86) One who has mind fixed in Paramatma, does all karmas with only *moksha* as the aim, who is still like a rock during meditation, who lives without food, and does not stay at any one place practices the *sanatana moksha dharma*. (Shl 87) He should not be attached to any single place. Should not live in the same village/town for too long. Should not sleep on a specific mound of sand everyday. **Thus one who is free of all kinds of attachments will be liberated from all bondages and will be moving about freely.** (Shl 88) *Umadevi!* This is the dharma propounded in Vedas by *satpurushas* who knew *moksha dharma*. Those who follow this path will attain *Brahma pada*. (Shl 89) There are four types of *sanyasis*. *Kutichaka, Bahoodaka, Hamsa and Parama-hamsa*. Among these, the later ones in the sequence are greater than the earlier ones (increasing order of greatness). (Shl 90) **There is nothing superior to the *jnana* obtained by *Paramahansa dharma*.** Such dharma is not inferior to any other dharma. **For a *Paramahansa dharmi*, *atma-jnana* will never disappear.** This dharma is free of dualities. Is auspicious (*saumya*). Is without old age and death and is indestructible. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 141)

Rishi dharma

- (Extracts)
(Shl 108) The main aim of all *rishi dharmas* is to become *jitendriya* and obtain *atma jnana*. *Kama & krodh* have to be completely conquered. This is my opinion. (Shl 109) Performing *agnihotra*, being engaged only in *dharma karyas*, performing *Soma yaaga*, knowing the procedures of *yajnas*, giving of *dakshina* in *yajnas* – these five dharmas should necessarily be practiced by all *rishis*. (Shl 110) Doing *yajna kriya* daily is a dharma; he should also be interested in the worship of *pitru devatas*. It is a very important dharma of *rishis* to show hospitality to guests with *unccha vrtti* (gleaning or gathering of grains for food). (Shl 111, 112) Retiring from the consumption of *gorasa* (milk, curd, ghee & buttermilk), interest in peace and restraint on the mind, sleeping on the floor, practicing yoga, eating vegetables & green leaves, eating fruits and roots, consuming air, water and *shaivala* (moss) are all the regulations to be followed by *rishis*. By practicing these rules *rishis* obtain a great state that is not obtained by others. (Shl 115) **One who is not proud, who always has a clear mind, who does not feel amazed whatever he sees (*na vismitah*), who has equal feelings towards friends & enemies and is friendly towards all is the one who knows dharma and is a great *rishi*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 141)
- Yudhishtira said to Arjuna: (Shl 6) **For those who live in forests (*rishis*) forgiveness, *jitendriyatva*, inner purity, outer purity, indifference to worldly matters, lack of malice, non-violence, steadfastness in truth are the great dharmas.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 7)

Practicing dharma

Unwavering/unflinching adherence to dharma

- Draupadi to Yudhishtira: Just as shadow always follows the animal, your mind always follows dharma.
Just as shadow & the animal cannot be separated, you & dharma cannot be separated. You have dedicated your body-mind-wealth for dharma alone.
You have never rejected persons who are your equals or your elders or younger to you. Even though you are *chakravarthi* for the whole earth, ego (*ahankara*) could not find a place in you.
(Vana; Arjunabhigamana; adhyaya 30)
- **Sri Krishna's address to the kings**
(Extracts)
Having completed their terms & conditions they are again lords of the kingdom they had ruled...We all have to discuss what is good for Dharmaraja. Not only that, we also have to discuss what is good for Duryodhana. Please put your head together on which solution will benefit both.

The approach we take should be in conformance with dharma as well as bring fame for both. **Even if *Swarga* itself can be obtained also, if it is not by *dharmic* path, Yudhishtira will not agree. If only one village can be obtained in the path of dharma, then Dharmaraja will be content with that.** He does not wish to be the king of the three worlds....Wicked Duryodhana had the only aim of snatching the kingdom they had legally gained as a legacy from forefathers...We have to find out how much greed for kingdom the children of Dhritarashtra have. We have to note that this greed is increasing day by day. **We have to also note how Dharmaraja is bound to dharma & for its sake has tolerated every difficulty...**Therefore it is just solution that Dhritarashtra's children return the kingdom due to them. (Udyoga; Senodyoga; adhyaya 1)

- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: I have never found Pandavas lying. Even though I have examined them very carefully, I am unable to see any defects or mistakes in them. **They do all acts in conformity with *dharma* & *artha*. They do not deviate from *dharma* due to the attraction of *kama* & related comforts & enjoyments...** I believe that Arjuna is equivalent to Indra himself. Sri Krishna is the ancient Mahavishnu. **Dharmaraja finds happiness only in the practice of dharma.** (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 22)
- Sri Krishna speaks to Sanjaya: (Shl 20) Pandavas have been following the *swadharma* to the best of their abilities. They are always engaged in *satkarmas*. If fate brings them death, it will be auspicious only. It is certainly better to die while performing all *karmas* as per *swadharma* than to save one's life & live while indulging in all unacceptable *karmas*. If you die in a war fighting according to *swadharma*, it is certainly auspicious. (Shl 21) Do you think that maintaining peace is better than any other option? Then let me ask you a question. Is *rajadharma* in fighting a war to establish dharma or in running away from war to establish peace? Tell me for sure. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 29)
- Dharma vyadha: Dharma should not be given up due to fear, hatred or desires. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Yudhishtira consoling Bhima who was ready to fight with Hidimba: However angry you may be, never kill a woman. Protecting *dharma* is more important than protecting body. Therefore under the illusion that later our bodies will suffer danger, a woman should not be killed as it would be *adharma*. Always defend *dharma*. (Adi; Jatugriha; adhyaya 155)
- **Do not be silent spectator**
Sri Krishna: If we take a neutral stand we will become partners in your cruel deeds. Since we know dharma, protecting it becomes our main responsibility. If, while being capable of stopping your deeds of *adharma*, we do not do it, it would be like assenting to the deeds. (Sabha; Sabhakriya; adhyaya 22)
- Sanjaya about Dhritadyumna: He does not give up his steadfastness towards truth & dharma at any time whether in anger or fear or greed or with selfish interests or logic. (Udyoga; Yanasandhi; adhyaya 50)

Qualities of dharmic persons

- Vidura's sayings: (Shl 73) These qualities will only be found in *satpurushas* & not in the mean: *Atmajnana*, no anger, tolerance, **dedication to dharma**, keeping one's words or not going back on promises made and donating to the deserving. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; adhyaya 34)
- **Dhritarashtra about malice & hatred**
Dhritarashtra consoling Duryodhana: One who hates others is always unhappy. He will not have peace of mind. As hatred increases he will experience death like agony....
(Shl 6) Envy towards others wealth is not honourable behaviour. **That person who is content with the wealth he has and is dedicated to *swadharma* will be a happy man.** (Shl 7) Signs of luxury are: not trying to steal others wealth/property, carrying on one's own duties with dedication and avoiding misuse and wrong spending of money earned. (Shl 8) One who does not grieve when troubles accost him **but remains dedicated to the *karmas* ordained by his *swadharma*,** who does not lose balance by falling prey to *mada* & *moha*, is always polite & decent, will become highly successful and enjoy all auspicious happenings. (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 54)

- Markandeya maharshi: Whoever one may be, just because he has great valour, he should not indulge in *Adharma*. (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; adhyaya 25)
- Karna to Shalya: Even if a hundred persons like you try, you cannot make me turn away from war just as a *dharmajna* cannot be made to turn away from dharma by an atheist. (Karna; adhyaya 40)
- (Shl 11-12) Dharma vyadha on the qualities of *dharmic* person: One who has understood by discriminative thinking the pitfalls *such as raga-dwesha*, and what is real happiness & grief, will listen to the great noble souls & practice their preaching regularly. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 210)
- Mahamuni Vyasa to Pandavas: (Shl 18) **The following are holy qualities for the virtuous:** Truthfulness, absence of crookedness, not getting angry under any circumstance, sharing own money with others, restraint on senses, peacefulness, absence of jealousy, not hurting any and internal & external purity.

(Shl 19) The above said qualities will not be palatable to the ignorant. They have a taste only for *adharmic* activities. They are always interested in walking the wicked path. As a result of their wicked deeds they are born as birds & animals in subsequent births. True happiness will elude them over several births. They do not think even once that the fruits of their wicked deeds are behind them all the time. (Vana; Vrihidraunika; adhyaya 259)
- Dharma Vyadha explains: (Shl 46) A wise *shishya* feels joy by living on the path of dharma. He earns money by following ways of dharma and performs *dharmakaryas* with such money. Therefore in each of his acts, dharma will be prominent. (Shl 47) **A dharmatma will have a clear & happy mind both in happiness and unhappiness.** A *dharmatma* lives happily with his relatives and friends and after death obtains higher *lokas* and will be happy there also. (Shl 48) He will obtain the objects of sense pleasures and will also gain mastery over them (will not be a slave to them). Elders say that such mastery is gained only by practicing dharma. (Shl 49) He will never be content with mere worldly happiness gained by practice of dharma. He will realise from *jnana* that there is something superior to this and will develop disinterest in them. (Shl 50) In order to be an ideal to the world, the *mumukshu* does not develop detachment (*virakthi*) from dharma *marga* (path of dharma). (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 209)
- Yudhishtira to Sri Krishna: (Shl 35-36) If man is conscientious he will study/depend on *shastra* to know what his duty is. One who owes strong allegiance to *shastras* will only do karmas recommended by them. Sense of shame is a prominent factor for practicing dharma. **Dharma & sense of shame do not exist separately.** A man who has shame hates sinful deeds. By hating sins & not indulging in sinful deeds, his wealth will gradually grow. When he becomes lustrous & full of virtues, he becomes a '*purusha*'. (Shl 37) One who is always engaged in *dharmakaryas* will remain calm & perform only *satkarmas*. Such a person will not let his mind dwell on *adharma-karya*. He will not indulge in sinful deeds. (Shl 38) One who has no shame & is a fool is not even considered as a '*stree*' (woman); nor is he considered to be a '*purusha*'. Such a person will not even have the right to perform *dharmic kriyas*. He is equivalent to a *shudra*. (Shl 39) Person who has shame will protect himself by performing karmas acceptable to *devatas* & *pitrus*. He protects himself by performing good deeds prescribed in *shastras*. He will also attain immortality. That will be a great end to such *punya-karmis*. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; Adhyaya: 72)
- Yudhishtira to Draupadi: (Shl 12) Moreover, a person with discrimination (*viveka*) even if strong, even if being troubled by the angry, does not attempt to take revenge, will attain *uttama-lokas*. He will enjoy happiness in the other world also. (Shl 13) Therefore a learned man, whether strong or weak, should forgive the person who troubled him even when in danger. (Shl 14) **Krishne! Therefore those who adhere to dharma praise those who have conquered anger.** *Satpurushas* believe that true victory is achieved by the forgiving. (Vana; Arjunabhisaman; Adhyaya 29)
- Savithri to Yamadharma: .. (Shl 24, 25) **It is not possible for those who have no control on their *indriyas* to live in forest and practice dharma, *tapas* or living in guru's *ashram* etc.**

Mahatmas practice dharma by discriminative thinking. They exemplify dharma through *atma-jnana*. Saints say that such dharma based on special *jnana* is main dharma. (Vana; Pativrata-mahatmya; adhyaya 297)

- Vidura said: (Shl 2) That person will be free of all grief & will live happily who rejects a lot of wealth/money because it is illegal (*not dharma*) even when there is no one to object. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 40)
- 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-vridhdhas* 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; adhyaya 177)
- Bhishma: (Shl 7) Those for whom dharma is not the main purpose are among men like chaff among grains and like wingless female moth (*puttika*) among birds. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 181)
- Bhishma: (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; adhyaya 214)
- **How one becomes a *dharmatma***
Bhishma: (Shl 12) Man obtains auspicious fruits in accordance with the auspicious deeds. He attains desired *sadgati* by virtue of such safe dharma. (Shl 13, 14) **One who understands the problems of *raag* & *dwesha* beforehand and does not become slave to them will become skilled in treating happiness & grief with equanimity. Such a clever person will serve the *sadhus* & *satpurushas*. By virtue of doing *satkarmas* & *satsang* and by regular virtuous practices his intelligence grows.** (Shl 15) **His mind finds happiness in dharma. It takes shelter only in dharma. His mind engages only in money earned by dharma.** (Shl 17, 18) A *dharmatma* due to virtuous friends and money earned in the path of dharma will find joy in both this world & other worlds. He gains mastery over the experiences of *indriyas* viz *shabda*, *sparsha*, *roopa*, *rasa* & *gandha* (He will not be entrapped by these pleasures). **Scholars believe that not becoming slave to the pleasures of the senses is the result of following the path of dharma.** A *dharmatma* does not feel elated even if he gets the fruits of his acts of dharma. (Shl 19, 20) A *dharmatma* does not feel contented by the auspicious & inauspicious fruits and by virtue of his *jnana-drishhti* develops *vairagya*. **When his mind does not get attached to the pleasures of the senses then he becomes free of all kinds of desires.** (Shl 21, 22) That wise person realises that the worldly life is impermanent and tries to renounce all attachments. Not by unfit methods (like performing a *yajna* to obtain *swarga* and then giving up its fruits) but he tries to attain *moksha* by right methods (by giving up good & bad deeds). In this manner the *sadhak* gradually develops detachment and completely gives up *paap-karmas*. He thus becomes a *dharmatma* and attains *moksha*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 273)

Hurdles to practicing dharma; their effects; managing them

- A brahmana who was intelligent and skilled in speaking was travelling in a lonely area of forest. A *rakshasa* who lived there caught him with the intention of eating him up. This brahmana was caught in a life & death danger. But since the brahmana was enriched with knowledge of *shastras* and intelligence, he did not get fazed or sad seeing the demon. He spoke to the demon in conciliatory tones. The demon praised the words of brahmana and asked him some questions.

(Shl 7) Oh great brahmana! If you answer these questions of mine you will gain freedom from me. Why am I blanched and weak?

Brahmana answered: (Shl 34) Your words are timely and appropriate for the accomplishment of *dharma*, *artha* & *kama*. But others show no trust in it. For this reasons you have become pale & weak. ... (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 124)

- Kanika: (Shl 72) In times of misfortune, by good or bad or cruel or mean karmas, overcome the misfortune. Once misfortune is overcome (after regaining wealth & fame) then dharma can be practiced. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 140)
- Sri Krishna to Vidura: (Shl 6) The effort done to one's best abilities towards *dharma-karya* may not succeed; it may even be interrupted midway. But the mere sincere attempt towards *dharma-karya* will bring him *punya*. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 93)
- (Shl 24-28) Durvasa *muni* to Mudgala: Hunger is a terrible thing. It drives away dharma. **A hungry person has no discrimination of dharma & adharma.** Tolerance is simply absent. The tongue is always driven by tastes. By its influence, it draws the man to tasty food. Life is dependent on food. Mind is inconstant & difficult to control. **Concentration of the mind & control of the senses are the main tools for *tapas* or they are themselves *tapas*.** It is very difficult to give away hard earned things to charity. But you have transcended all these. (Vana; Vrihadraunika; adhyaya 260)
- Yamadharma to Brahmana: (Shl 92) **Hunger destroys wisdom (*prajna*). It drives away *dharma-buddhi*. Due to destruction of *jnana* man becomes confused. One who conquers hunger which is responsible for all these dangers will surely gain *Swarga*.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 90)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 29) Protect *tapas* from the grip of anger; **dharma from jealousy**; *vidya* from pride & humiliation; *atma* from '*pramada*' (inadvertent, carelessness). (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 213)
- Sanjaya responds to Yudhishtira as Dhritarashtra's ambassador: (Shl 4) **Desire for kingdom, wealth & women are something which always attracts a man towards them. An intelligent man should understand that all such desires are obstacles to dharma.** A wise man should rid his mind of such desires. Only then a *dharmaatma* who is free of desires can earn fame without a blemish. (Shl 5) Longing for wealth is itself bondage. Those who focus on wealth lose dharma. He is a *jnani* who makes dharma prominent in life and pushes aside *artha-kama*. He is called a *buddha*. One who gets attached to acquiring worldly pleasures & longs to earn wealth in order to get it, loses dharma. **The attachment to *artha* takes a man away from dharma.** (Shl 6) That person who performs his karmas by making dharma prominent among dharma, *artha* & *kama*, becomes famous, successful and shines bright as the Sun. One who lacks dharma, even if he is lord of the world, being sinful, will be destroyed. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 27)
- Vidura said: (Shl 50) **Jealousy destroys practice of dharma..** (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 35)

Clarity in understanding/clarifications

- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 34) An act which appears as if dharma but in reality is *adharma* should not be done. (Adi; Viduragamanarajyalamba; adhyaya 213)
- Sri Krishna to Vidura: (Shl 7) Someone may be thinking about sinful deeds in his mind. Scholars who know dharma know that if he does not execute them, fruits of the sin will not attach to him. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 93)
- Ambe to Shalva: (Shl 12) Rejecting a devotee (or lover) is not appreciated in dharma. Dharma does not support rejecting devotees. (Udyoga; Ambopakhya; adhyaya 175)
- (Shl 87) One's *atma* (conscience) is the guide and observer to say which acts are dharma for one born in particular *kula*. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 141)
- **Misuse of forgiveness**
Dhrishtadyumna to *Satyaki*: (Shl 25) I am patiently listening to all that you are saying. I am forgiving thinking, 'let him speak whatever non-sense he wants to.' But in this world this one habit has become rampant. Under the assumption that, 'a *satpurusha* tolerates his abuse; and forgives

also' a sinner has a desire to blame/abuse a *satpurusha* all the time. (Shl 26) It is true that forgiveness is a great quality. But sinners do not deserve to be pardoned. A sinner thinks that the forgiver is defeated (or incapable of protesting). (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 198)

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 34) One can be in cruelty related profession & still lead a pious life without cruelty. Even if a man has bad character, by constant meditation of the supreme lord he can become noble. Even if one is cruel to animals, he can be *dharmic*. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)
- Bhishma: ... (Shl 23) **Any act of dharma done with money that comes by *adharma* will not yield desired fruits.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 45)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 3) It is not necessary to have the same intelligence after completely making a pot as the intelligence that was used while making it. In the same way, after achieving the goals (like *chitta-shuddi*) with dharmas like *yajnas* etc that dharma is not needed for other goals (like *moksha-sadhana*). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; Adhyaya 274)
- **Causes of confusion and ways to gain clarity**
Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! If unacceptable acts like telling lies etc become duty even to *mahapurushas* in critical times, then how can we set any limits on unacceptable acts for thieves and robbers? I certainly wish to reject such concessions in critical times. (Shl 2) Having heard this episode from you I am very confused and also depressed. I am unable to feel enthused about following such dharma, because, even in times of danger I cannot bring myself to practice such dharma.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! **I am not limiting my preaching only to what I have heard as propounded in Vedas and *shastras*. This matter, decided in discussions by several different scholars, is acceptable to all like nectar collected by bees from different flowers. Such collected information will be useful to at least some in times of danger. They have not been put together with the intention that everyone must practice it. Therefore there is no compulsion that you have to act as in the last episode. You don't have to regret having heard it also.** (Shl 4) **A king should collect *jnana* of different kinds from several sources. He should not stick to just one branch of knowledge. When king is in danger, practical knowledge collected from different sources will be of use. A suitable idea will occur for saving himself.** (Shl 5) **Dharma and practices of *satpurushas* are always productive of *jnana*.** Therefore these should be learnt. Understand this well. (Shl 7) King with a single stream of knowledge cannot practice raja-dharma. How can a king who was weak during the learning phase be wise?

(Shl 8) The same dharma or karma can at times appear as both dharma and *adharma*. This dual state is called '*dvaiddha*'. One who does not know the paths of *dvaiddha* and enters it will be confused. Therefore an intelligent person should understand this beforehand. Otherwise he will have doubt in whatever he tries to do. (Shl 9) A wise king should anticipate dangerous times and collect more taxes forcibly from citizens. If he does it in times of emergency people will consider it dharma. Only fools will consider it otherwise. (Shl 10) Some in this world will have correct knowledge, some false knowledge. The king should realise this and learn from those who have truthful knowledge. (Shl 11) **Some who are opposed to dharma and are poor will interpret contrary meanings to *dharma-shastra* and declare them unacceptable.** (Commentators: In their view *artha* is always opposed to dharma). They will propagate that *artha* related *vidya* are *adharma* or that they are not standards. (Shl 12) Those who educate themselves only for the sake of making a living and desire to achieve all-round success and fame only on the strength of that education and want to acquire all desired material things are sinful and commit treachery with dharma. (Shl 13) **Dim-witted people with unripe intelligence would not have understood *tattva* correctly. Not being experts in *shastras* they depend on illogical thinking in all matters.** (Shl 14) Those *dharma-drohis* who always find faults in *shasstra* and look for holes or cracks in them produce wrong interpretations. They reject the *vidyana* of *artha-vidya* as not being proper. (Shl 15) **Acting as if they have extracted and drunk the wholesome juice of the fruit of learning (*vidya-phala*), these fools convert their words into arrows, blame the knowledge in others and claim that their knowledge alone is the best.** (Shl 16) Think of them as

merchants of knowledge and *rakshasaas*. The dharma prescribed by *satpurushas* if practiced by fraud or pretence will be destroyed.

(Shl 18) We have heard that decisions about dharma cannot be done by mere *shaashtra-vachana* (statements of *shaastras*) or mere intelligence. It can be made only by the combined application of both these. This is the opinion of Brihaspati. (Shl 18) **Shaashtra does not state anything without reasons. But some do not practice even what has been directed by convincing and reasoned shaastras.** (Shl 19) In this world some scholars opine that those practices of virtuous people which are useful for our lives here as dharma. But a *pandita* should decide by logical thinking even the dharma demonstrated by the virtuous (Commentators: Only then he should practice them). (Shl 20) The discourses on *shaastras* by those who are intolerant, who are deluded about *shaashtra-vachana* and who have not clearly understood them will make no impact on the listeners (will vanish). (Shl 21) *Shaashtra-vachanas* stated with full knowledge of Veda and *shaastras* as well as incorporating logical thinking will be appreciated by all. Some say that *shaashtra-vakya* alone is great because it informs what one does not know. This is an indication of their ignorance (essence is that both *shaashtra-vakya* and logical understanding is needed). (Shl 22) Some give importance only to logic and say that, 'by this logic this statement of *shaashtra* is destroyed. *Shaashtra* is full of wrong meaning.' This also is rooted in ignorance. **Mere logic does not help decide shaashtra. The meanings of shaastras have to be decided by an integral approach consisting of both logic and shaashtra-vakya.** In the past Shukracharya has made this statement to *daityas* thereby clearing the doubt in this matter. (Shl 23) **Knowledge with doubts is as good as not having it.** There is no use of it. Therefore uproot your knowledge filled with doubts. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 142)

- **Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna on practical approach to truth and dharma**

(Shl 16) It is now clear that you have not served the aged. The fact that you got angry at inappropriate time shows you have not served the aged. (Shl 17) Dhananjaya! While you have fear of dharma (*dharma-bheeru*) you are also a fool. Someone who knows which dharma should be followed when would certainly not have done like you did. (Shl 18) **Akarya** (improper acts) **should not be done. Duties that should be done should not be ignored or given up—this is the general rule. But in extraordinary circumstances, improper acts will have to be done; must be done duties will have to be avoided. One who simply mixes up these two without discriminative thinking will be the worst among men** (*purushaadhama*). (Commentary: It is dharma for Arjuna to honour his vow. But if fulfilling this dharma leads to another major *adharma*, that is killing of his elder brother then fulfilling that vow is not an acceptable option. If he were to kill his brother just to fulfil his vow he would be a *purushaadhama*).

Acharyas served by *shishyas* who follow and practice dharma teach the secrets of dharma to them. You do not know the decisions in matters of dharma of *gurujana* who have understood matters related to dharma in brief as well as detailed form. (Shl 20) Arjuna! In deciding what is action and what is inappropriate action, people without clear knowledge like you are without discrimination and are arbitrary and get confused. (Shl 21) It is not at all easy to determine what is the right thing to do and what should not be done in a given circumstance. All these matters become known by *shaashtra-jnana*. You just do not know the secret of *karya-akarya*. (Shl 23) I believe that not committing violence on lives is the greatest of dharmas. **One can even lie to save a life.** But for no reason should killing be done.

(Shl 25-26) **Satpurushas do not approve killing of one who is not fighting, who has no enmity, who is running away from battle, who has surrendered, who has come with folded hands seeking refuge and who is inattentive/distracted** (*anavadhana*). (Karna Parva; Adhyaya 70)

(Shl 36) If one who has the right sense of what should or should not be done, then even if he is cruel he can earn great *punya-phala* like Balaaka who killed a blind animal and still gained *punya*. Where is the surprised in this, Partha?! (Shl 37) One who merely has the desire to be a *dharma-nisht* (staunch practitioner of dharma) but is ignorant about the discrimination needed about *karya-akarya* will only acquire sins just like Kaushik *muni* who was sitting at the meeting point of rivers (*sangam*). Where is the surprise in this, Arjuna?!

One who does not have much *shastra-jnana*, who is lacking in discriminative capability, who does not know the intricacies of dharma, should serve the aged and learn from them secrets of dharma when in doubt. I will briefly tell you a few *lakshanas* (characteristics/attributes) of dharma-*adharma*. Some try to get this knowledge by logic. Many are of the opinion that whatever is said in Vedas is dharma; dharma is stated only in Veda. **I have no objection to dharma which can be decided by logic or Vedas. But all kinds of dharmas are not ordained by Vedas alone.** (Commentary: Some times other supporting documents like *smrithi*, *puranas* also will have to be depended upon. Veda ordains, '*Satyam vada*', speak truth. If we accept this as the only directive then what Kaushika did will have to be considered as being right, but he should have thought of the consequence. He could have also taken refuge in *smrithi-puranas* which clarify the secrets of Veda). Therefore, *maharshis* in the know of dharma have proclaimed this dharma in the interest of all living beings. there is no use of dharma that is adopted purely for selfish purposes; it is not dharma also. (Karna Parva; *Adhyaya* 70)

- Bhishma: (Shl 7) *Sanatana dharma* says that one who takes to wrong path out of sheer arrogance without understanding which work to do and which not to do, deserves to be punished even if he is *acharya*. (Shanti Parva; Rajanushasana upa-parva; *Adhyaya* 57)
- **Acceptability of righteous anger**
 Ourva to *pitru devatas*: (Shl 3) That person who suppresses the anger arising due to just reasons, who does not react to it fittingly, will not be able to protect dharma-*artha-kama*. (Shl 4) Not getting angry about offenders/criminals and not punishing them is not dharma. Kings who win the world use anger appropriately—to punish the wicked and protect the decent. Getting angry with the wicked is considered dharma. (Adi; Chaitraratha; *adhyaya* 180)
- Savithri to Yama: .. **Once it is accepted that the four *ashram-dharmas* are for the purpose of *atma-sakshatkara*, the *pravrttis* & *nivrttis* of these *ashram-dharmas* will not apply to one who has had *atma-sakshatkara*.** If not within the boundaries of dharma, the second one viz *artha* and third one viz *kama* will not be desired. I only desire that dharma viz *atma-dharma* which the *satpurushas* consider the main dharma. (Vana; Pativratamahatmya; *adhyaya* 297)
- 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. (Anushasana; Daandharma; *adhyaya* 1)
- Vidura said: (Shl 7) **Behave with a person the same way he behaves with another.** This is dharma. With a cheat behave as a cheat. With *sadhu-satpurushas* behave like a *sadhu-satpurusha*. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; *Adhyaya* 37)
- **Some principles of dealing/Transacting**
 Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 20) If a mean/lowly person comes asking for alms for the sake of dharma and desiring success of others, after promising that you will give help, you cannot reject later even if you come to know that he is a mean person. If that person uses the aid received for his selfish interests, then he will become punishable. (Shl 21) If someone walking the path of dharma falls from it and takes refuge in sinful ways, he should be punished by death. (Shl 22, 23) That wicked person who has fallen from the path of dharma, is practicing *asuri-vritti* and having given up *swadharma* is living by sinful deeds should be killed by every possible method. **If the virtuous (*punyatma*) decide that dharma is the best and greatest, the sinners come to the decision that money is everything. They do not hesitate to indulge in any sinful deed just to make money.** (Shl 24, 25) **Such mean people become impossible to tolerate for the virtuous.** They are unworthy of even being fed. They fall by their deceit. Devoid of *yajna-tapas*, they fall from both the world of men and *devatas* and become like *pretas* (spirit of the dead) without a place/direction. **May you not have any contacts/relations with such people!**

(Shl 26) Yudhishtira! You should make an effort to tell this to the wicked: **"Loss of life causes greater grief than loss of money. Therefore give up your craving for money. Let this *sanatana dharma* be palatable to you."** (Shl 27) **It will be the decision of sinners that there is nothing called dharma. One who kills such sinners will not earn any sin.** (Shl 28) **The sinners are killed by their own deeds. Others kill them only as a pretext.** Therefore by killing

sinner's sin attaches to you. One who takes an oath to kill such 'pre-killed' (*hata-buddhi*) sinner is a *dharmatma*. (Shl 29) Even people who live by deceit and fraud like crows and vultures also live. After death they will all be born as crows and vultures.

(Shl 30) **A man should transact/behave with another person the same way he does with him. That is dharma. One who deals with you with crookedness and deceit (*mayachara*) deserves to be treated with the same methods (pay back with the same coin). One who deals with virtuous conduct and practices should be accepted through the same ways.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 109)

- Bhishma to Parashurama: (Shl 48) A *shloka* stated by *mahatma* Maruttha is well known in this matter. I will quote it here. Even a guru, if he is *ahankari* (highly egoistic), has no discriminative thinking and is going in the wrong path, should be rejected. (Shl 51-52) According to dharma *shastras*, killing even a brahmana, if he fights with bows & arrows like a *kshatriya* & without running away, will not accrue *brahma-hatya-dosha*. Therefore by killing you who have come to fight with me voluntarily will not result in any sin to me. (Shl 53) If you act with someone in the same way that he has acted with you, it will not result in *adharma* (cheating a cheat etc). (Udyoga; Ambopakhyana; adhyaya 178)

Inaction/inadequate action on dharma

- Vidura: If a person who knows dharma attends an assembly and remains silent when a question on dharma is raised, he acquires half the sin accrued by telling lies. If knowing dharma, answers against dharma, he will accrue full sin of a liar. Prahlada! If a person knows the right answer to a question and out of anger or fear or greed remains silent, he will be bound by 1000 *varuna paashas*. (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 68)
- Vidura: (Shl 63-64) If someone who has understood dharma attends an assembly and remains silent on questions of dharma, he gets half the sins accrued by telling lies. But if he, knowing dharma well, answers against dharma, he acquires the full sins of telling lies. (Sabha Parva; Dyuta Parva; Adhyayas 68)
- (Shl 48) Sri Krishna addressing Dhritarashtra & other kings present: Unworthy, inappropriate & adharmic act should never take place in an assembly where those present know dharma. In such an assembly when truth is defeated by falsity and *dharma* by *adharma*, it is deemed that the members in the assembly are as good as dead. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 95)
- Dhritarashtra! Baladeva was not satisfied with the kind of (*vyaaja-roopa*: crafty?) explanation given by Keshava. He again said, "(Shl 27) Bhima, who has killed Duryodhana by adopting path of *adharma*, will become known as one who uses deceit in fight. (Shl 28) On the other hand Duryodhana was fighting in straight-forward ways and hence will attain permanent *sadgati*...." Saying thus, Rauhineya sat in his chariot and went away to Dwaravati. But the Panchalas, Sri Krishna and Pandavas did not feel happy with his departure.

At that time Vasudeva said to Yudhishtira who was looking pathetic, sitting with bowed head, worried and broken-hearted due to grief, "(Shl 33-34) Dharmaraja! Why did you encourage the act of *adharma*? (Act of Bhima stepping on Duryodhana's head)... Why were you watching passively in spite of knowing dharma quite well?"

Yudhishtira said, "(Shl 35) I also did not like that act of Bhima done in anger. The entire *kula* has decayed. Whatever be the reason for this, because of this *kula-kshaya* I have no happiness even though I have won. (Shl 36) Dhritarashtra's children cheated us regularly. They were deceiving us for one reason or the other. They spoke to us very harshly and even drove us to forest. **'This grief has taken deep roots in Bhima's heart. To neutralise that grief he is doing it.'** Thinking so, I ignored his *adharmic* act. (Shl 37) I also thought thus: 'Let Bhima fulfil his desire by killing Duryodhana by fair or foul means as he was not *jitendriya*, extremely greedy and a slave to desires.'

Dhritarashtra! After Dharmaraja said this, Vasudeva with much difficulty said, 'Let it be as you wish'. (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 60)

- Vidura said: (Shl 58) **An assembly without aged persons is not worthy of being considered an assembly. But if it has aged persons who do not recommend path of dharma, then it really has no aged persons.** Sometimes they may speak the path of dharma. But if such dharma deviates from truth, then it is not dharma. Truth which has an element of cheating is only for show-off & is not truth. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 35)

Faith in practicing dharma

Bhishma said: (Shl 1) Yudhishtira! **When man does an auspicious or inauspicious deed or has it done, he should have the faith that auspicious deeds will result in good. But he should not believe that by doing inauspicious deeds nothing bad will happen.** (Shl 2) When time comes, *kaal* (Time) itself punishes or graces (*nigraha-anugraha*) beings and **by entering their minds (*buddhi*) sets in motion fulfilment of *dharma-artha*.** (Shl 3) When you see that a person's mind follows dharma or *artha*, then you should know that in the past birth he was practicing dharma. **One who behaves/acts as he pleases without a firm mind should not be believed to be a *dharma*matma.** (Shl 4) **It is characteristic of intelligence of a being to have faith in dharma and practice it.** One who knows the fruits of dharma & *adharma* should, even if under the stress of (bad) times, practice appropriate dharma only. (Shl 5) Those who are *dharma*matmas, even if very rich, will not be born with *rajoguna* in next birth. In this way those who practice dharma uplift themselves with their own efforts. (Shl 6) **Kaal will never grant fruits of dharma to an *adharmi* for any reason.** To one who is practicing dharma, *kaal* gives the tendency to practice the same in next birth also. Therefore one who practices dharma should be considered *shuddhatma* (pure soul). (Shl 7) *Adharma* cannot even touch dharma which is like fiercely burning fire and is protected by *kaal*. (Shl 8) Dharma protected by *kaal*, does both these tasks. Dharma gives victory. It is dharma which is the light in all three *lokas*. It is dharma which is the cause of all. (Shl 9) **But whoever be the wise & learned man, he cannot hold hands and take someone to the path of dharma.** Man may turn to the path of dharma if the fear arising due to transgressing dharma and the fear caused to the *lokas* by transgressing dharma is made a pretext/pivot to explain it. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 164)

Practicing dharma

- Parashara: (Shl 17) **No one has decided that man should perform *dharma-karyas* only at some specific time. Moreover death does not wait till man has done his *dharma-karyas*. Since man is always & steadily progressing towards death, it is better for him to do *dharma-karyas* at all times.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 298)
- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: ...(Shl 24) Ancient *munis* have said that only the person who rescues someone in danger is his *bandhu* (relative). He alone is cordial friend. This is the dharma practiced by *satpurushas*. (Karna; adhyaya 68)
- Sri Krishna to Bhishma: (Shl 38) **If those who have sincere interest in dharma, ask a scholar who knows dharma, it becomes the dharma of the scholar to preach it. If, in spite of knowing dharma, the secrets of dharma are not parted with to the faithful seeker of knowledge, it will be a sad defect in the scholar.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 54)
- **What a utopia!!**
Sanjaya about Shaaka *dwipa*: (Shl 39) The amazing thing about this *dwipa* is that **in that *dwipa* there is no king, no punishment, no one to implement the punishment, no one to award a punishment, no one to suffer a punishment, no one to protect, no one who wants protection. All of them being knowledgeable in dharma, they practice it and take care of their society by themselves.** (Bhishma; Bhoomi; adhyaya 11)
- Sanjaya: Now I will tell you about Pushkara *dwipa* (island).In these islands, generally there is only one nation (or community). **Even in *dwipas* with more than one country, there is only one *dharma*.** (Bhishma; Bhoomi; adhyaya 12)
- **Prime importance of parents and guru**
Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 1) Grandfather! This path of dharma is huge. It has many branches. Among these which is the *maha-dharma* that must be practiced? (Shl 2) Among all dharmas

which important action do you find to be the best? I will also practice it and obtain fruits of both this and the other worlds.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) Dharmaja! It is my feeling that care of father, mother and guru is the most important practice of dharma. One who is dedicated to this will obtain higher *lokas* and great fame. (Shl 4) **If your parents or guru who are well respected by you order you to do something—whether that act is aligned with dharma or against it—you must simply do it.** (Shl 5) If you are always following the orders of these three, there is no need to practice any other dharma. **It has been decided that whatever they order you to do is dharma.** (Shl 6) They are the three *lokas*. They are the three *ashramas*. They are the three Vedas. They are the three *agnis*. You should think of them in this manner. (Shl 8) You will win all the three worlds if you nurse and care for them without becoming careless. You will win this *loka* by serving father, *paraloka* by serving mother and *brahma-loka* by serving guru.

(Shl 10) You should not try to exceed them and behave as if superior to them. You should not eat food better than theirs. You should not find faults with them. You should always be engaged in their care and service. By caring for these three you will obtain fame, *punya*, success and higher *lokas*. (Shl 14) The fame of those who disrespect these three will not shine anywhere. (Shl 15) Yudhishtira! I used to perform all auspicious actions and would surrender the fruits to my parents & guru. That is why all the *lokas* are shining before me clearly. (Shl 17,18) *Acharya* is above ten *shrotriyas*. *Vidya-guru* is superior to ten *acharyas*. Father is superior to ten *vidya-gurus*. Mother has more significance than ten fathers. **The whole earth cannot be more respectable than mother. In weight, Mother can outweigh even the earth. Therefore there is no guru who can equal mother.** (Shl 19) **But in my opinion, *adhyatmic-vidya-guru* is more significant than even parents because, parents are useful only to give birth to this body.** (Shl 20) Parents give birth only to this body. But the rebirth that you get by the preaching of *acharya* has no ageing and is eternal.

(Shl 21) **Even if parents commit an offence they do not deserve to be killed (or punished) because, if son or student makes a mistake, parents or guru do not consider him as an offender.** (Shl 22) One who graces the student by way of *satya* & *dharma*, who preaches Veda which are forms of Truth, such a guru should be considered as mother and father. Always remembering the benefit bestowed by the guru, no treachery should be committed against him. (Shl 23) The sins of one who does not respect the guru after learning (receiving knowledge) from him, not serving him by speech, mind and action in spite of being near him will be greater than the sins of killing a foetus. **Just as it is the duty of guru to put the *shishya* (disciple) in the path of *atmonnati* (self-improvement), it is the duty of the student to serve him with respect.** (Shl 24) Therefore those who wish to enjoy the fruits of *sanatana-dharma* should worship this trio of father-mother-guru. With a conscious effort they should provide them whatever they need. (Shl 26) By serving and caring for the guru it is like worshipping Brahma himself. For this reason guru is more worship worthy than father & mother. (Shl 28) Lost in some duties, one should not ignore guru. Parents should never be ignored or disrespected. Just as guru is respectable so are parents. (Shl 32) **We have not heard of any atonement for one who commits treachery against a friend, who is ungrateful, who kills a woman and who hurts the guru.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 108)

- **4 types of *rinās***

(Shl 18, 20) Man is born with four types of *rinās*. *Pitru rina*, *Deva rina*, *Rishi rina* and *manava rina*. According to those who know dharma, if he does not discharge these *rinās* in proper time he will not get good *lokas*.

Deva-rina is discharged by performing *yajna-yaagas* and *homa-havans*. By doing *adhyayana*, *adhyapana* *rishi-rina* is discharged. By performing *shraadhās* *pitru-rina* is cleared. *Manava-rina* is discharged by living with kindness towards all beings. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 120)

- Bhishma said: .. (Shl 16) Everyday one should get up in *brahma muhurta* (about 90 minutes before Sunrise) and should think about dharma & *arth*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 104)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 28) If a sinner hides his sins they will grow. It leads to additional sins later. If a *dharmisht* (righteous person) hides his *dharmic* deeds his dharma will grow. It becomes the

reason for his later more *dharma-karyas*. In any case the dharma he practiced will result in his increased practice of dharma (Declaring of sins by a sinner decreases its magnitude. If a person who has virtuous deeds announces it/publicises them the magnitude of *punya* will reduce).

(Shl 31) Dharma done with a sincere mind is considered the best dharma. Therefore one should always desire welfare of all. (Shl 32) **Dharma should be practiced alone. No one's help is needed to practice *swadharma*. How can other's help matter in our practicing our *swadharma*?** (Shl 33) Dharma is the birth-place of human beings. That same dharma is like *amrita* for *devatas* in *swarga*. **Men who are followers of dharma enjoy eternal happiness after death only on the strength of dharma.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; adhyaya 193)

- Bhishma: (Shl 16) **Dharma should be followed and practiced from youth itself** (Do not be disinterested thinking time for practicing dharma has not yet come). Life is impermanent. By practicing dharma man can be famous here and happy in other worlds. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; adhyaya 175)
- Dharma Vyadha explains: (Shl 44) One should follow the dharma practiced by *satpurushas*. Should do things done by the virtuous. Should remain engaged in his karmas without any worries or agitation in the mind. **Should not grieve or worry by constantly thinking whether his job is demeaning or not. Should do the karmas prescribed for *swadharma*. Should desire a job that does not cause grief to the world.** (Shl 45) There are many *shishtas* (persons with virtuous conduct) who have expertise in many *shastras* and have studied Vedas & Vedangas completely. One should do his karmas as preached by them so that it does not cause *varna-sankara*. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 209)
- Vidura: (Shl 60-61) **If someone who is agonised enters an assembly highly worried, then it is the duty of the members of the assembly that he should be calmed by truthful words & preaching of dharma.** When the person who has come in is questioning about his freedom based on principles of dharma, the members should keep aside their *kama-krodha* etc and answer impartially. (Sabha Parva; Dyuta Parva; Adhyayas 68)
- Yayati recounts to Indra the advice he gave to his son: In my opinion, mainly, man should give up anger. (Shl 6) A man without anger is always superior to one with anger. Similarly one capable of forgiveness is better than an intolerant person. Human being is superior to other animals. A knowledgeable person is superior to a fool. (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.** (Shl 10) **We must always consider *satpurushas*, dharmic persons and persons capable of sacrifice (*tyaga*) as our ideals.** By comparing all our acts to their acts, we should correct our remaining defects. We should ignore the bad sayings of the wicked. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 87)
- Ashwatthama to Duryodhana: It is surely not appropriate for those who practice *arya-dharma* to indulge in self-praise. (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 195)
- Shaunaka's *upadesha* to Yudhishtira based on Janaka *maharaja*'s sayings: (Shl 56) What an *atithi* (guest) needs are: happy looks on face of host, good mind & good words and the gesture of getting up, welcoming with joy and offering a seat. This is *sanatana dharma*. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)
- Savithri to Yamadharmā: (Shl 35, 36) It is the dharma of *satpurushas* to not commit treachery towards any living being by way of speech, actions or mind and gracing living being by being kind to them and giving them what they need. Perhaps in this world all human beings are powerless. ***Satpurushas* show kindness even to their enemies if they seek help.** (Vana; Pativrata-mahatmya; adhyaya 297)
- **Action, speech & mind based on dharma**

Umadevi said: (Shl 1) Bhagawan! Deva! Be kind enough to tell me about dharma and *adharma* of men so that no doubt left in the matter. (Shl 2) **Man consists of three things: action, mind and speech. These three can bind him to the world or liberate him.** (Shl 3) Lord! With what kind of character, conduct, karmas, practices and qualities can man go to *Swarga*?

Karmas based on dharma

Maheshwara replied: (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, who have given up all desires and are devoted to truth & dharma will go to *Swarga*. (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) & *dvesha* (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. (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 will go to *swarga* who have no interest in other's possessions, who stay away from other's wives and who eat only what is obtained by the path of dharma. (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*.**

Speech based on dharma

(Shl 18) *Anagha!* Mahadeva! By saying what kind of speech will man get bound in this world and by what kind of speech does he find liberation?

(Shl 19) Those who either for their own sake or for others sake or for humour or fun do not lie will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 20) Those will go to *Swarga* who do not lie whether for a living or for the sake of *dharma karya* or with an aim for some fruits. (Shl 21) Those who speak friendly, sweet, free of anxiety and sinless words with a welcoming and respectful attitude will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 22) Those *satpurushas* who do not speak bitterly, roughly, harshly, and do not carry tales will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 23) One who does not do tale-bearing with the intent of creating differences between two friends, and who speaks only truthful and friendly words will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 24) The person who has given up speaking in a way that hurts others, who does not commit treachery towards others for any reason, and who treats all beings with equality will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 25) Those who do not speak like rascals, who have given up speaking words which cause people to oppose, are always with a soft demeanour and speak sweetly will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 26) Those who do not speak piercing words out of anger, who speak soothingly even when angry, will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 27) *Dev!* **These are the dharma to be practiced through speech. It is auspicious to always speak truth. Wise men should always reject lies.**

Mind based on dharma

Umadevi said: (Shl 28) *Pinaki!* *Devadeva!* By having what kind of mind or karmas related to mind does man get bound to *samsara*? Tell me about this.

Parameshwara said: (Shl 29) Those people who always think of dharma in their mind will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 30) **If man has a mind which has wicked thoughts, his acts will also be wicked.** I will tell you what binds the mind. Listen. (Shl 31) **When someone finds a treasure belonging to others in a lonely forest and does not even think of running away with it then he will go to *Swarga*.** (Shl 32) That person whose mind does not encourage him to take away the treasure

of others kept in village or house or in a lonely place will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 33) Similarly, the person who does not even desire in his mind a *para-stri* (wife of another person or an unmarried woman dependent on others) who desiring sex meets him when alone will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 34) Those will go to *Swarga* who behave in a friendly manner with all, mix with all harmoniously and treat friends & enemies equally. (Shl 35) Those will go to *Swarga* who are knowledgeable about *shastras*, are kind hearted, are pure, are truthful, are content with the money they have. (Shl 36) Those will go to *Swarga* who do not harbour enmity with others, do not struggle for the sake of physical pleasures, who have a heart full of friendliness and are kind towards all beings. (Shl 37) Those will go to *Swarga* who are filled with faith, are kind, are pure, who love pure persons and know dharma & *adharma*. (Shl 38) *Devi!* Those who know the consequences of accumulating the fruits of good & bad deeds will go to *Swarga*. (Shl 39) Those will go to *Swarga* who are just, have good qualities, are devoted to gods & *devijas* and who have attained heights in acts of dharma. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 144)

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 43) You should not be affected differently by happy or unhappy events or news. When in financial trouble, you should not get confused or confounded and depart from the path of dharma. (Shl 44) If a mistake is done or defective act is done & realised so, the same should not be attempted repeatedly. Those actions which are not against dharma and are compliant with *dharma-artha-kama*, such acts only should be done by using discretion.

(Shl 53) **If one who is dedicated to dharma commits a sin knowingly or unknowingly he can clear its effects by constantly following the path of dharma.** (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 207)

- Brahmana muni to Prahlada: (Shl 24) If by god's grace I get enjoyable **things obtained by way of dharma** I do not hate them. I enjoy them. I do not expect or desire such things. I never desire to obtain such difficult to get objects of pleasure. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 179)
- Bhrigu to Bhardwaja: (Shl 6) Those focussed persons who are dedicated to practice of *swadharma* will obtain *swarga*. Those who live against *swadharma* will be under control of *moha* (There are three answers in this: (i) Practicing *swadharma* itself is all dharmas. (ii) Characteristic of dharma is practice of *varnashrama-dharma* which leads to *swarga* (iii) There are as many dharmas as there are *varnas* & *ashramas*). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 191)

Hypocritical practice

- Bhishma: (Shl 20) Those who travel around the earth praising dharma, and sing the praise of dharma through their discourses but do not practice that dharma themselves will be the ones who are interested in *dharma-sankara* (mixing/corrupting dharma). (Shl 22) Such persons who, whether they practice *ahimsa* etc dharma characteristics or not, always praise themselves out of self-love and delusion that they are full of such characteristics, will be born in such births who eat dead cow's meat, who are haters of brahma and are of despised mixed caste. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 22)
- Yudhishtira said: (Shl 59) **Perhaps all humans when themselves are in danger quote *dharma-shastra*. But when the same man is in a high position or in good situation thinks that the door to the other world is permanently closed. They do not think about *dharma-adharma*.** (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 32)
- Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: Narendra! Due to the effect of the brahmana's curse his chariot wheel sank in the earth. Karna felt distressed at that moment....Unable to withstand all calamities occurring at the same time (within a short span of time), Karna shook both his hands and started blaming dharma. "(Shl 86) ***Dharmavids* say that dharma protects those who practice it steadily and all the time. I have always tried to live as prescribed in books of dharma. Now my experience is that dharma itself is destroying us. In times of need dharma does not save those who serve it. Therefore I believe that dharma will not always protect/save those who practice it.**" (Karna; adhyaya 90)

Sri Krishna's response to him later: Hearing Karna's words to Arjuna, Sri Krishna said to him (Karna), "(Shl 1) **Radheya! Fortunately now you are remembering dharma, isn't it? That's the nature of mean persons. When faced with disaster mean people generally blame *daiva*.**

But they never blame all the evil acts they did. (Shl 2) You along with Suyodhana, Dushasana and Shakuni had Draupadi, who was in single cloth, forcibly dragged to the assembly. **Karna! At that time dharma did not appear in your memory, isn't it?** (Shl 3) King Yudhishtira did not know *aksha-vidya*. Shakuni knew very well that he did not know it. In spite of knowing this he was invited to come for the game of dice and Shakuni defeated him by cheating. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 4) Even though Pandavas completed their 12 years of *vana-vasa* and one year of *ajyata-vasa*, you did not return their kingdom as per the agreement. **Where was your dharma when they returned desiring their kingdom?** (Shl 5) Following your suggestion Duryodhana had Bhima bitten by poisonous snakes. He fed him poison laced food. **At that time did you not have the sense of dharma and *adharma*?** (Shl 6) You deliberately tried to burn down Partha sleeping in the wax house in Varanavatha. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 7) You made fun of Draupadi who was in the evil grip of Dushasana and was menstruating. Did you not feel at that time that doing so is *adharma*? **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 8) Vulgar Duryodhana and others harassed innocent Draupadi so horribly. At that time, you like someone who has lost his mind, went close to her and looked at her with vile eyes. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 9) 'All Pandavas are finished; they have fallen into permanent *naraka*. They cannot regain their status ever. Therefore select someone else as your husband.' Saying this you went close to Draupadi and were staring at her. Did you not feel it was *adharma* to speak to a *sadhwi* (virtuous woman) like that? **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 10) Greedy for kingdom, you encouraged Shakuni's game of cheating and called back Pandavas who had returned to Indraprastha and caused them grief. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 11) Several *maharathas* (including you) surrounded young Abhimanyu who was fighting alone and killed him. **Where was your dharma at that time?** (Shl 12) **The dharma that you are talking about was not being practiced by you then. Therefore, talking about dharma now only causes your mouth to dry up.** There is no other use. Now you can do many acts of dharma. But today you cannot escape alive from this battlefield. ...

Maharaja! When Vasudeva said all this to Karna, he bowed his head with shame. He did not give any answer. (Karna; Adhyaya 91)

- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 2-10) **When *kama* (desire for worldly things) finds a place in the mind, *krodha* follows immediately.** Once desire enters mind, man starts trying hard to get the objects of desire. This leads to excessive interest (*raga*) in the objects. Then greed & next attachment follow. Once these feelings fill the mind, man does not think of dharma. In case he has to do *dharma karya*, it will be only for show-off & not genuinely. He collects wealth only by such hypocritical approaches. **Since more wealth can be acquired by illegal methods, his mind will always take that route. If friends or well-wishers try to point out the hypocrisy or dangers of the path, they will convince them with very intelligent words & apparently clear logic.** It will be as if they are speaking with full authority of Vedas. But there will be no correlation between their words & actions. Such *adharma* is of three kinds: in mind, in speech & in action. They develop company of such sinners only. Though they may acquire a lot of wealth, eventually they will suffer great grief. They have no place in the higher worlds beyond. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 210)
- **Maharaja** Janaka's wife dissuades him from taking *sanyasa*: (Shl 34) **Understand that wearing a *kaashaaya* dress (brown-red, the colour for *sanyasi*) without being fully rid of the *kashaaya* (*raga* etc impurities in the heart) is merely a show (make-believe).** For such people with shaved heads who go about in the guise of dharma, in my opinion, *sanyasa* is a convenient method for making a living. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 18)
- Yudhishtira responding to Sanjaya: (Shl 9) Dhritarashtra has adopted a path of inequality (partiality for selfish pleasures), but expects others to tread the path of dharma & sacrifice. This is certainly not fair. He should understand that others will behave with him the same way he behaves with them. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 26)

How to correct if already an *adharmi*

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Brihaspati! Now I have heard what will be the state obtained by practicing *adharma*. Next I wish to know what happens if one practices dharma. (Shl 1) How can man obtain *sadgati* in spite of committing sins? By doing which *satkarma* can even the sinner gain *sadgati*?

Brihaspati said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! **Man comes under control of *adharma* by doing sinful deeds. As a consequence his mind also moves in directions opposed to dharma. That is why he goes to *naraka* after death.** (Shl 4) **But one who commits sin due to ignorance and having realised the sins repents for it, then such man having gained control over his mind will not again indulge in sins.** (Shl 5) **As the mind keeps censuring the wicked deeds, his body will be freed of sins.** (Shl 6) **If a sinner confesses his sins before brahmanas who know dharma and repents for the sins he will be liberated from the bad name he acquired due to those sins (Christian confessions are similar!!)** (Shl 7) In the manner in which the sinner confesses his sins and repents, in the same manner he will gain freedom from his sins just as a snake releases its old skin. (Shl 8) **If man develops firm mind in Paramatma and gives variety of *daans* to brahmanas, he will wash all his sins and gain *sadgati*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 112)

Raja-dharma

- **Yudhishtira on *raja-dharma***

Yudhishtira took permission of all elders present and asked, "Grandfather! Those who know dharma say that for kings, dharma is the greatest. But I feel that ***raja-dharma*** is very heavy (responsibility). Preach me such *raja-dharma*. (Shl 2) tell me especially *raja-dharma*, because, for all the living beings on earth *raja-dharma* provides refuge. In *raja-dharma* all three *vargas* (*dharma-artha-kama*) are included. Even all the *moksha-dharma* is included in *raja-dharma*. (Shl 5) Just as reins are needed to control horses, to keep the world in check so that it does not cross the limits of dharma, a restraining type of *raja-dharma* is said to be necessary. If the king gets confused about implementing this *raja-dharma* which has come down to us from past *rajarshis*, the world order will be in chaos. Due to anarchy the world will plunge into grief. (Shl 6) Just as inauspicious darkness is driven out as soon as Sun rises, the *raja-dharma* drives away inauspicious ways of living. (Commentary: *Raja-dharma* encourages people to practice good dharma and helps them attain *punya-lokas* after death also). Therefore first preach *raja-dharma* to me. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 56)

Overwhelming superiority of *raja-dharma*

- Bhishma: (Shl 24) Yudhishtira! *Raja-dharma* depends on physical might. **This *raja-dharma*, served by *kshatriyas* and which protects all *manava-dharmas* is greatest in the world. I have heard *Veda-vakya* which says that *brahmana-vysya-shudra* and other auxiliary dharmas are all protected by *raja-dharma*.** (Shl 25) Just as the footprints of all other animals get merged in the footprint of an elephant, all dharmas and their variations merge in *raja-dharma* or depend on *raja-dharma*. (Shl 26) *Arya-purushas* who know dharma say that taking refuge in all other dharmas are lowly refuges (*alpashraya*) and yield very limited fruits (*apla-phala*). It is the decisive opinion of *arya-purushas* that *kshaatra-dharma* is the refuge of all other dharmas, is very auspicious and none are equal to it. (Shl 27) Yudhishtira! All dharmas have accepted *raja-dharma* as the prominent dharma, because all dharmas are protected/governed by *raja-dharma*. **All types of sacrifices are incorporated in *raja-dharma*. Aryas say that *tyaga-dharma* is the most ancient dharma and greatest of all. (Perhaps the last two shlokas highly emphasise *raja-dharma* to convince Yudhishtira to proceed with his duty as monarch and not again get into doubts).** (Shl 28) If *danda-neeti* is destroyed, all three Vedas will hide in *rasatala*. If Vedas are destroyed, all dharmas in practice in the world will be destroyed. If the ancient *raja-dharma* were to lapse, all *ashrama-dharmas* will be wiped out. (Shl 29) All types of *tyagas* can be found in *raja-dharma*. All types of *deekshas* (initiations, religious observances) are propounded in *raja-dharma*. (Shl 30) **Just as killing of birds and animals by *vyadhas* & others causes sadness to those who practice non-violence, in the same way dharmas without *raja-dharma* lose their protection and cause sadness to followers of dharma. People, worried or afraid that their dharma has no protection, ignore their *swadharma*. Therefore *raja-dharma* is superior to all others.**

(Shl 3) **The *sanatana dharma* of the different *ashramas* has many paths and is invisible.** Scholars determine the form of these dharmas through Vedas and *shastra*. (Shl 4) Some explain the worldly matters (*laukika*) with beautiful *Veda-vakyas*. **Due to this, those who hear mutually opposite interpretations of dharma get confused about the definitive meaning, and are destroyed due to doubt in matters of dharma not clarified by examples.** (Shl 5) That dharma which is clearly visible (*pratyaksha*), brings greater happiness, is prompted by *atma-sakshi*, is not

fraudulent and is beneficial to all *lokas* is established in *kshatra-dharma*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 63)

- Once, many kings sought refuge in *devadeva*, *prabhu* Narayana. Their doubt on whether *danda-neeti* is greater or *karmas* prescribed for *varnashramas* are greater had not been cleared. ...I will now tell you a history full of *dharma* which resulted in deciding the meaning of *tattva*.

A great monarch called Maandhata performed a *yajna* addressed to Mahavishnu. At that time Mahavishnu appeared before him in the guise of Indra. At that time a long discussion took place between Maandhata and Indra regarding Mahavishnu.....Maandhata said: "(Shl 19) Bhagawan!..... About obtaining boons from you, now I wish to give up all desires and desiring only *dharma* want to go to forest as all *satpurushas* do at the end. (Shl 20) Indradeva! I have obtained many *punya-lokas* by virtue of my *kshaatra-dharma*. But I have not learnt to implement/practice the greatest *dharma* (*moksha-dharma*) expounded by *Adideva Mahavishnu*.

Indra said: " (Shl 21) Maandhata! It is not correct to say that those who do not have military might, who are dedicated to *dharma* and who are well established in *Vanaprastha* will neither help others attain *shreshta-gati* (best course for soul) nor will they themselves attain it. But that is not the only approach to attain *shreshta-gati*. ***Kshaatra-dharma* was born first from Adideva Narayana himself. Other dharmas were born later from it as constituent dharmas.** (Note that in the earlier *adhyaya* Bhishma has said that *brahmana varna* was born first and all other *varnas* came from that *varna*!). (Shl 22) ...But the other dharmas will decline over time. The ***kshaatra-dharma* which consists of best traditions is special compared to others. All other dharmas are incorporated in this dharma.** Therefore this *dharma* is said to be the greatest. In the past Bhagawan Vishnu killed all enemies through ***kshaatra-dharma* only and protected all devatas and rishis.** (Shl 24) In case *aprameya bhagawan* had not killed *asuras*, the enemies of *devatas*, through *kshatra-dharma*, there would have been no *brahmanas* by now. The original creator of world *Brahma* also would not exist. *Kshaatra-dharma* also would be non-existent. (Shl 25) ...With the destruction of *brahmanas* the ***chaturvarnas* and *ashrama-dharmas* all would have been destroyed.** (Shl 26) The eternal *sanatana dharmas* have many times been lost due to the troubles created by *asuras* and *rakshasas*. But the *sanatana dharmas* have been resurrected only due to *kshaatra-dharma*. ...(Shl 27) The following are all main dharmas of king's *kshaatra-dharma*: Sacrificing life in war, being kind towards all animals, knowledge of worldly affairs, governance of people, curing the despair of people and curing the grief of grieving people. (Shl 28) Those who have a tendency due to their *kama* & *krodha* to cross the limits (expectations of moral conduct) imposed by society do not indulge in sinful deeds out of fear of the king. Virtuous people who are practitioners of all dharmas, practice *sadachara* & *sad-vyavahara* and preach *dharma* to the world when protected by the king. (Shl 29) **Kings protect the citizens as their own children due to *raja-dharma*. That is why all can live without fear in this world.** (Shl 30) In this manner, *ksaahtra-dharma* is greater than all other *dharma*. It is the birth place for other dharmas. It is an all-round *dharma* which is *sanatana*, *nitya* (continual), indestructible and helps attain *moksha*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 64)

- Mahavishnu in the guise of Indra to Maandhata: (Shl 5, 6) **A king, when he enters the task of governance, should with a special effort completely give up the differentiation between people he likes and dislikes (*priya*, *apriya*). He should treat all with equality.** By duly establishing and practicing the *chatrur-varnas* by adopting several approaches, regulations, valour and by every possible effort, *kshaatra-dharma* is said to be the best and an accomplished *dharma* (*Grihasthashrama* is said to be the best *ashrama-dharma*). Because, the dharmas of all *varnas* and *ashramas* can be protected and followed only with the co-operation of *kshaatra-dharma*. (Shl 7) **Those who are always engaged in accumulating limitless money/wealth leaving aside all *maryada* (set expectations of moral conduct of society and *dharma*) are said to be animal like humans.** But *kshatriya-dharma* along with helping to make money also creates good knowledge of *neeti* among the citizens. That is why *kshatra-dharma* is greater than others.

(Shl 10) If a *brahmana* does *karmas* other than the ones prescribed for him, then he becomes undeserving of the *vrutti* of a *brahmana*, because, ***dharma* grows only by doing the prescribed karmas. The nature of a person reflects his dharma.** If a *brahmana* has *brahmana-dharma* in him, he will shine as a *brahmana*. If he does *karmas* opposite to this, he will have a fall.

(Shl 12) It is *kshatriyas* who have to uplift the *varnashrama-dharma* which is integral in all dharmas. This is the *dharma* of *kshatriyas*. It is because this *raja-dharma* uplifts all other

dharmas, it is superior to others. It is my opinion that *kshatriyas* who have valour as their uniqueness are followers of *veera-dharma*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 65)

- Bhishma explains to Yudhishtira **how the practice of Raja-dharma alone results in obtaining the fruits of all other dharmas.**

What gives fruits of *sanyasashrama* & equivalent *ashramas*

(Shl 5) **There is no need for a king to become a *sanyasi*.** If he becomes free of desires and hatred, treats all with equality and rules with *danda-neeti*, he obtains the same ultimate fruits of *sanyasashrama*. (Shl 13) By caring for all animals, freeing the nation from the troubles of thieves etc, and by performing several types of *yajnas*. (Shl 14) By studying the Vedas everyday, by forgiving, by worshipping the *acharyas* and by serving the teachers (*brahmashrami*). (Shl 16) By fighting in a war with the determination that, 'either I should defend the country or I should give up my life'. (Shl 17) By dealing with all in a straight and honest way. (Shl 31) By honouring deserving *sadu-purushas* by giving them wealth and gifts. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

What gives fruits of *Grihashashrama*

(Shl 6) Such brave *kshatriya* who knows *tattva-jnana*, knows the secret of what to sacrifice, has done *indriya-nigraha*, has kind feelings towards animals & **practices what he says** will obtain the fruits of *grihashashrami*. (Shl 15) Who does *japa* of *ishta-devata mantra* everyday and who always worships *devatas*. (Shl 24) The *kshatriya* who shows great hospitality to and provides protection to *atma-jnani sadhus*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

What gives fruits of *brahmacharyashrama*

(Shl 7) *Kshatriya* who regularly honours the worship-worthy persons by giving them whatever they desire. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

What gives fruits of *Vanaprasthashrama* & *deekshashrama*

(Shl 8) A *kshatriya* who uplifts relatives, brothers & friends who are in difficulty. Who continuously provides hospitable treatment to the great persons and *varnashrama-dharmis*. (Shl 10) Who does everyday the prescribed morning religious karmas, *pitru-yajnas*, *bhoota-yajnas* and *manushya-yajnas* (i.e., *atithi-seva*: hospitality to the guests). (Shl 11) Who suppresses the enemies in order to protect the virtuous. (Shl 18) Who donates very generously to those in *Vanaprastha*, *brahmanas* and to scholars who have studied the three Vedas. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

What gives fruits of all *ashramas* combined

(Shl 19) A *kshatriya* who is kind towards all animals and who generally has tendency towards karmas devoid of cruelty. (Shl 20) Who behaves with extreme kindness towards the young (boys & girls) and the aged. (Shl 28) The king who gives due respect to the position of citizens, their *kula* and their age. (Shl 29) A king who follows *desh-dharma* and *kula-dharma*. (Shl 31) **The following ten are common dharmas for all *varnas* (Manu smriti):** *dhriti*, *kshama*, *dama*, *astheya*, *shouch*, *indriya nigraha*, *dhi*, *vidya*, *satya* and *akrodh*. The person who follows these and is more interested in *kshatriya dharma* becomes worthy of being a king and enjoys fruits of all *ashramas*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

Share of fruits earned by others

(Shl 32) In that king's country where people skilled in dharma practice dharma protected by the king, the king obtains one sixth of the fruits of such dharmas practiced by citizens. (Shl 33) The king who does not protect those who enjoy dharma and are dedicated to dharma, will obtain all the fruits of sins they may be having. (Shl 34) Those who assist the king in protecting dharma will also obtain a share of fruits of dharma done by others. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

Kshatriya in *grihashashrama*

(Shl 21) A *kshatriya* should remain in *grihashashrama* protecting those who are being subjected to violence/oppression (*balatkara*) and those who have sought refuge. (Shl 23) **Whether the queen (main wife), or the youngest wife or brothers or son or grandson—if they commit an offence the king should punish them.** If they are living on the path of dharma they should be favoured. This is the *garhasthya-dharma* that must be followed by a *grihashtha* king. (Shl 25) He should bring home the persons who are in different *ashramas* and satisfy them with good food etc. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 66)

General

(Shl 26) That person who practices the prescribed *varnashrama* and its dharmas will obtain the fruits of all *ashramas*. (Shl 27) **Whatever *varna* or *ashrama* a person belongs to, if his *sadgunas* (virtuous qualities) do not get destroyed for any reason, then he will be considered as being in all *ashrama-dharmas* even if he is in one *ashrama* and will be great among men.** (Shl 36) The human being who considers all as equal to himself, who gives up *danda* and has overcome anger, will be happy here and also hereafter. (Shl 38) When all desires retire from a man, then he will be in *sattva-guna*. He will realise the *Brahma*.

(Shl 37) *Raja-dharma* is like a boat. It is in the ocean of *dharma*. The power that moves it is (the sailor) *sattva-guna*. The rope that binds it is *dharma-shastra*. That boat is pushed by the wind of *tyaga* and quickly crosses this ocean of *samsara*.

(Shl 40) *Yudhishtira*! You should get actively engaged in the protection of *brahmanas* who are dedicated to the study of *Vedas*, are devoted to truth as well as all other citizens. (Shl 41) The king who protects the *rishis* who build *ashramas* in forests and follow *dharma*, will obtain hundred times the fruits obtained by them. *Yudhishtira*! All the fruits that people obtain by being in the respective *ashramas* and being dedicated to their respective dharmas, you can obtain just by governing them with *dharma* (*praja-palana-dharma*). (*Shanti*; *Rajadharmanushasana*; *adhyaya* 66)

Relationships & dharma

Husband-Wife relationship/Marriage related

- *Ashtavakra* said: *Bhadre*! I will not unite with other's wives under any circumstances, because, **those who know *dharma shastra* have condemned adultery.** I swear on truth. I have already decided to marry a *rishi-kumari*. Understand this very well. I do not know about pleasures of the senses. **Don't we want to beget children only for the accomplishment of *dharma & artha*? I will marry only to beget children for *dharma*.** I will attain higher *lokas* only by virtue of such children. There is no doubt in this matter. **You should understand *dharma* and stop this kind of libertine behaviour.** (*Anushasana parva*; *Daandharma*; *adhyaya* 19)
- *Draupadi*: (Shl 68-69) This is the *dharma* practiced forever by *satpurushas*. Husbands, even if weak, should protect their wives; this protects the future generation, which in turn protects one's *atma*. (*Vana*; *Arjunabhigamana*; *adhyaya* 12)
- **Deerghatamas forms a new rule: one woman-one husband for life**
(Shl 35-37) *Deerghatamas* understood the intent of his wife completely. He felt she has no desire to continue as his wife. He decided to eliminate the system whereby wife could live with another while the husband was still alive. He proclaimed a new *dharma*. His *dharmavani* was firm & clear: "I am proclaiming a new rule from today. During the lifetime of a woman she should be attached to only one husband. Even after the death of husband, she should not take other partners in her lifetime. In case a woman, out of sexual desire, gets attracted to (*anuraktha*) another man when the husband is alive or even after his death, she will become a sinner. Even if a woman has plenty of wealth, if she does not have a husband who is responsible for her getting a child who gives eligibility for happiness in both this world & other world, let that wealth be wasted. Let infamy & allegations follow a woman who goes after another man (*para-purusha*)." (*Adi*; *Sambhava*; *adhyaya* 104)
- **Brahmana about his valuable wife**
(Shl 31-33) You are my *saha-dharma-charini* (who walks the path of *dharma* with me); you ignore your own pleasures considering my pleasures as your pleasures. You care for me like my mother. *Devatas* have made you my best friend. You alone will be with me at all times. My parents have accepted you as the rightful partner for my obligations of *grihasthashrama*. Just to save my life, I certainly cannot renounce you who are born in noble lineage, have all the good qualities & have borne a son. (*Adi*; *Bakavadha*; *adhyaya* 157)
- **Wife about her duties towards husband**
(Shl 3-4) *Brahmani* to her husband: **Aren't wife, son & daughter for own benefit? ...I will myself go to him (*Bakasura*). This is also in accordance with *dharma* and is the main duty of women. The greatest duty of wife is to sacrifice for the welfare of husband even if by giving up her life. This is *sanatana dharma*.** For these reasons it is wiser for you to let me go & it is

in accordance with dharma too. Experts in dharma say that it is auspicious for a woman who has children to die before her husband dies. I am ready to sacrifice my daughter, son, relatives and even life for your sake. (Adi; Bakavadha; adhyaya 158)

- **About polygamy & polyandry**

(Shl 27) Drupada: **One man marrying many women is accepted. But one woman marrying many men is something I have neither seen nor heard so far.**

(Shl 7-9) I feel having many husbands is a sin and is against tradition, world and Vedas. I have never heard of a woman having more than one husband. This dharma of multiple husbands has not been followed by any of our ancestors. We, who have the discriminative ability for dharma & *adharma*, should never practice *adharma*. Therefore my mind does not consent to this. I have strong doubt that having multiple husbands is dharma.

Yudhishtira: Even if we examine tradition, practices and customs, there are many examples of multiple husbands in Puranas. Dharmic Jatila of Gautama vamsha had married seven rishis (Saptarshi). Similarly, Varkshi, daughter of Kandu muni had married ten rishi kumaras all having the same name Prachetasa. (Adi; Swayamvara; adhyaya 195)

- **Validity of Sahadharma in marriage**

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather Bhishma! At the time of marriage of women, many things (like *saha ubhau charatam dharma*) are stated about *sahadharma* (common dharma, duty etc). With what objective is this stated? (Shl 2) Is the *saha-dharma* stated by *rishis* in the past about the relationship between man & woman an *arsha dharma* (relating to or belonging to or derived from *rishis*) or *praajapatya dharma* (for purposes of procreation) or *asura dharma* (the word *asura* also means *indriyas*. Does it refer only to the pleasure of *indriyas*)? (Shl 3) I have a serious doubt about this statement on '*sahadharma*'. I feel the word has contrary meaning. That is, where will whatever *sahadharma* is here be after death? (Shl 4) Grandfather! After death human being may get *swarga*. Between husband and wife, one of them will die first. Then how can *sahadharma* be meaningful for the one who survives here. Tell me about this. (Shl 5) **Since human beings consist of different kinds of dharma-phalas, live in different places controlled by variety of karmas and go to swarga or naraka according to their auspicious or inauspicious fruits of karmas, how can sahadharma be managed between a man & a woman?** (Shl 6) **Dharma-sutra-kaars** (makers or authors of dharma-sutras) **have decided that women are not truthful (astayavadi).** **If this opinion were to be accepted, how is sahadharma possible with them?** (Shl 7) Even Vedas have mentioned that women are untruthful. Therefore, the *sahadharma* that is stated at the time of marriage also includes this untruthfulness. But *asatya* (untruth) can never be dharma. **Therefore the term sahadharma in marriage can only be figurative and not factual. Whatever acts husband and wife do together have been called sahadharma only for namesake and there really is no element of dharma in it.** (Shl 8) Though I have been thinking about this matter for long, the issue only becomes more complex and I do not find an answer. Therefore please tell me what the *shrutis* say about this and clear my doubt. (Shl 9) From when did this thing called *sahadharma* come into vogue? How did it become a practice? In what form did it come. Tell me completely about all these.

Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! In this matter an old *itihaas* that happened between Ashtavakra and Goddess of North direction (*Uttara-dik-devata*) is quoted by scholars.

(The illustrative example does not at all appear to address the issue raised by Yudhishtira!! It only talks about unbridled sexuality in women and hence looks quite out of place!!)

(Story not included here)

.... Ashtavakra said: (To the old woman who is actually goddess of Northern direction disguised as very old woman) *Bhadre!* I will not unite with other's wives under any circumstances because those who know dharma *shastra* have blamed adultery. I swear on truth. I have already decided to marry a *rishi-kumari*. Understand this very well. I do not know about pleasures of the senses. Don't we want to beget children only for the accomplishment of *dharma & artha*? I will marry only to beget children for dharma. I will attain higher *lokas* only by virtue of such children. There is no doubt in this matter. You should understand dharma and stop this kind of libertine behaviour. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 19)

- **Traditions and systems of lawful marriage of a girl**

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather Bhishma! Tell me about *kanya-daan* (giving a girl in marriage) which is the basis for all dharmas, people of the family, residences, *devatas*, *pitrus* and guests. (Shl 2) It is my opinion that this dharma of *kanya-daan* is most fit topic to be thought about compared to all other dharmas. To what type of person should the girl be given? Tell me about this.

Bhishma said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! **Satpurushas should thoroughly examine the character & nature, education, family, conduct and the work being done by the prospective groom and if all these qualities are found suitable in him then she should be given to such person.** (Shl 4) It is the dharma of *satpurusha* brahmanas to select a good groom in this manner and give the girl in marriage. This is called '**Braahma-vivaha**'. A worthy groom should be welcomed, daughter should be made to sit with him and he should say '*sahobhau charatam dharmam*' – you both should practice dharma together. Then as per one's capability marriage should be performed. Doing it in this manner is the *sanatan dharma* for brahmanas & *kshatriyas*. (This is called **Praajapatya vivaha**). (Shl 6) **If the girl rejects the boy found by father and desires to marry a boy whom she likes and the boy also likes and wishes to marry her** (that is, mutual acceptance by boy & girl) **then the father should give his daughter to that boy only.** Scholars of Veda call this **Gaandharva vivaha**. (Shl 7) Attracting the parents of the girl with lot of money and without caring for the willingness or otherwise of the girl and thus buying the girl for money is called **Asura vivaha**. (Shl 8) Killing the parents and brothers at home, cutting off their heads, and when all relatives are crying, dragging away the girl who is crying uncontrollably and marrying her is called **Rakshasa vivaha**. (Shl 9) Of these five types, first three (Braahma, Praajapatya & Gaandharva) are approved by dharma. The last two are sinful ways. For no reason should *rakshasa* & *asura vivahas* be performed. (Shl 10) Braahma, Kshaatra & Gaandharva *vivahas* are compatible with dharma. These marriages can be done separately or together. (Braahma can be clubbed with Praajapatya & Gaandharva. Case of Dushyanta & Shakuntala is Gaandharva. There is no mixing there. The marriages of current day are all mostly Gaandharva-Braahma type. Marriages are solemnised only after boy & girl agree. Formal ceremonies are a part of Braahma marriage. Selecting the partner of their choice is Gaandharva. According to commentators, Damayanti's marriage is considered mix of *Braahma-Kshaatra*, Rukmini's *Rakshasa-Gaandharva* and Subhadra's is *Kshaatra-Rakshasa*). (Shl 11) A brahmana can marry a girl from *brahmana*, *kshatriya* or *vysya varna*. A *kshatriya* can do so from *kshatriya* & *vysya varna*. A *vysya* can marry only from *vysya varna*. **If the girl is from another varna, their children will belong to the varna of father.** (Shl 12) Among the girls a brahmana marries, girl of brahmana *varna* must be the eldest. Similarly for *kshatriya*, the *kshatriya* girl should be the eldest. It is the opinion of some *shruti karas* that a *shudra* girl can be married for pleasure/sexual union. Some others say that a *shudra* girl should not be married by other *varnas*. (Manu smriti says that among the four *varnas*, the earlier *varna* man can marry girls from subsequent *varnas*. Order is *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vysya*, *shudra*. In this sense, *vysya* can marry a *shudra* girl). (Shl 13) *Satpurushas* do not approve of a brahmana man begetting children from *shudra* girl. There is a rule that such a man should perform atonements.

(Shl 14) A thirty year old man should marry a ten year old *eka-vastra-dharini* girl. (One who does not wear a blouse, meaning, who has not reached puberty). A twenty one year old should marry a seven year old girl. (Shl 15) A girl who does not have father & brother should not be married because she will be bound by *putrika-dharma*. (Not having father & brother means she will be the only daughter. Father may have considered her in the position of her son at the time of his death. In such circumstance the only daughter will have duties of *putrika-dharma*. Therefore she should not be married). (Shl 16) If the parents do not perform the marriage of the girl before her reaching puberty, then she should wait for three years after reaching puberty. If marriage does not happen even then, she should find her partner herself in the fourth year. (Shl 17) By doing this, her sexual relationship with her husband or the children born will not be of inferior order. Instead, if she behaves promiscuously, she will become worthy of blame in the eyes of Prajapati Brahma. (Shl 18) Such a girl should be married who is not *sapinda* with boy's mother and not *sagotra* with boy's father. Manu has stated this dharma. (Mother's sister, mother's brother and brother's daughter are *sapindas*. Smriti has stated that after five generations from mother and seven generations from father, this *dosha* is annulled). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 44)

(Several other types of marriages are described in this section but are not included here)

Relationship with children

- Sri Krishna to Dhritarashtra: Dhritarashtra: (Shl 13) Love for son is very strong. It is that love that made me deviate from dharma. (Stree; Jalapradanika; adhyaya 13)
- Speaking to Karna Sri Krishna said, 'Anyone may be responsible for the birth of *kaaneena* or *sahoda*. But whoever marries such a mother by following formal procedures becomes the father of the *kaaneena* or *sahoda* child as per the *dharma shastras*. You are a *kaaneena*, born to a *kanya* (unmarried woman). That *kanya* married king Pandu formally after your birth. Therefore, as per *dharma shastra* you become Pandu's son. Therefore you will become the king. Come with me. We will coronate you. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 140)

Other relationships

- Ashwatthama: (Shl 21) Dharma *shastra* says that for *acharyas*, after their sons, students are the most loved ones. (Virata; Goharana; adhyaya 50)
- Bhishma: ... (Shl 27) But ungrateful persons are considered worse compared to all the defects I have listed. They do not even hesitate to kill the friend. Completely reject/abandon such wicked persons. **This is the decision of dharma.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 168)
- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: ... (Shl 24) **Ancient *munis* have said that only the person who rescues someone in danger is his *bandhu* (relative). He alone is cordial friend.** This is the dharma practiced by *satpurushas*. (Karna; adhyaya 68)

Truth, Untruth & Dharma

What, Why & When of *satya*

- Bhishma said: ... (Shl 31) *devatas, pitrus and brahmanas* are pleased by truthfulness. Firmness in speaking truth is said to be the greatest dharma. Therefore truth should not be transgressed. (Shl 32) *Munis* are dedicated to truth. Their valour is truth. Their vow is truth. That is why *satya nishta* is the greatest dharma. (Shl 33) Those who are truthful will find happiness in *Swarga*. But *dama* is the root cause for the fruits obtained by truthfulness. I am telling you this with utmost sincerity. (Shl 34) One who controls his mind and is humble/polite will be worshipped in *Swarga*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 74)
- Shakuntala to Dushyanta: (Shl 103) If the fruits of a hundred *ashwamedha* were to be loaded on one side of a balance and dedication to truth on the other side, the side with truth will weigh more. (Shl 104) Study of all the Vedas, bathing in all the sacred waters may or may not equal the dedication to truth. (Shl 105) There is no dharma equal to dedication to truth. Nothing is greater than truth. Similarly, nothing is more sinful than lying. (Shl 106) *Maharaja! Satya* is the *parabrahmavastu*. Dedication to truth is the best *vrata*. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 74)
- Dharma vyadha: Truthfulness the greatest *vrata* (Vowed observance); that which is 'good' (*sarva bhootha hita*) to all the beings is Truth. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 213)
- Dharma vyadha again addressed the brahmana and said the following logical things: (Shl 2) Aged persons have decided that this dharma is founded on Vedas and compliant with Vedas. But this path of dharma is very subtle. It has many branches. It is endless. Firstly there is a directive of Upanishad that human being should be truthful (*satyam vada*). (Shl 3, 4) It may become necessary to lie in times of life threatening situations and in matters of marriage. Lies spoken at such times are as good as truth. Lies under such situations have the same effect as truth. But, if truth is spoken in such situations, and if life is lost or marriage is broken it will have same *dosha* as lies. Therefore by speaking that which causes welfare of all (*sarva-boat-hita*) should be treated as truth. Thus in this manner dharma is very subtle. The adharma of 'speaking lies' can become dharma in times of danger. If truth can cause hurt to beings it becomes adharma. Sometimes so much variation can occur in dharma. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; adhyaya 209)
- Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 2) ***Satya & asatya* – these two have enveloped the whole world and are always present.** Which of these should one who has his mind fixed on dharma practice? (Shl

3) What is 'satya'? What is 'anrita'? What actions are suited for *sanatana dharma*? When should one speak *satya*? When should one speak *asatya*?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 4) Yudhishtira! It is of course good to speak *satya* (truth). There is nothing greater than *satya*. **But finding out what is truth is very difficult.** I will tell you about it. (Shl 5) **Where *anrita* (lies) will do the job of truth, there lies should be told. Where truth will do the job of lies, there truth should not be told.** These two should be used with discrimination. When there is danger to life and if it can be saved by telling a lie, then lies alone should be told. If by telling truth it results in loss of life or honour to someone, then truth should not be told. (Shl 6) Since spoken word is not absolute, a fool who does not know the principle of *satya-anrita* will get stuck in these worldly affairs and become a sinner. **Therefore one who decides *satya-asatya* according to the situation is the one who knows dharma.**

(Shl 8) What a surprise! A foolish *tapasvi* who wanted to be on the path of dharma come what may, told the truth and earned sins (Story in Section Illustrative Stories/Episodes). Similarly, like the owl on the banks of river Ganga which did cruel deed and still earned *punya*. (Story: on the banks of river Ganga a serpent had laid several eggs. The owl ate them up one by one. Thus by destroying the eggs it prevented the snakes from hatching out and troubling the people there. This earned the owl *punya*).

Examples of tricky situations

(Shl 14) Thieves desire to snatch the money of a rich man. But they do not know where the money is kept or the rich man now is. At that time they ask persons close to him. In that situation, not giving them correct information, even if by lying, is considered dharma by scholars. (Shl 15) When the thieves come and demand to know the whereabouts of the rich man, if by not saying anything the thieves can be stalled then silence is better. If you think they will suspect by your not talking and talking appears necessary, in this situation telling lies is better (The person has gone somewhere, he has moved his money to some unknown location etc). Elders have thought about and decided that doing so is the correct approach in such situations. (Shl 17) Even if by swearing falsely, you must try to escape from the thieves. As far as possible you must try that they do not get the money, **because the money given to the thieves troubles the giver himself.** (Shl 18) A person would have taken loan from a rich person. He would have desired to repay it by working for him and he will be doing so. But the greedy loaner unjustly does not accept that the loan is cleared even after he works for several years. At that time the person who has taken loan calls witnesses for a discussion. The witnesses say something and not what they should have said. Then they all become liars. In some situations by not saying what should have been said you acquire *dosh*. (Shl 19) In times of danger to life, marriage and when protecting others money lie can have to be told. There is no *dosh* in telling lies in such situations. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 109)

- **Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna on practical approach to truth and dharma**

(Shl 31) **It is good to speak truth.** There is no dharma better than steadfastness in truth. But, Arjuna! You have to understand this: **It is very difficult to understand the true form of this *satyanisht-dharma* practiced by *satpurushas*. It cannot be understood easily.** Because, (Shl 32) **If at times the generally good results of telling truth are obtained by telling a lie, then at such times one has to lie. And at times if by telling the truth, the generally bad/evil results of telling a lie obtain, then at such times truth should not be told.** (Shl 33) **Lies can be told at the time of marriage (perhaps basis for the Kannada proverb 'tell a thousand lies and perform a marriage'), at the time of sexual union with woman, at the time of danger to life, at the time when all you have is being stolen and for protecting/saving a brahmana.** Sins will not be accrued by lying in these five situations. (Commentary: It does not mean that lies must be used to achieve success in these situations. Lies can be told if needed) (Shl 34-35) It may become unavoidable to utter lies when everything you have is being stolen. (Commentary: A thief may break into house and demand to know where all the valuables are kept. It may be necessary to lie at that time. No fool will try to be truthful at that time) Telling a lie at that time gives the same *phala* as telling the truth (at least some part of the belongings may be saved). If only truth is told at such times, it will result in the same fruits as telling a lie; everything will be lost. But without understanding the real meaning of truth, the immature who merely sticks to the rote that 'only truth must be told' will consider the lie told at the time of snatching of all your possessions as sin. In such situation of potential loss of everything there will be a need not to tell the truth. At such

time one should not tell the truth and suffer bad consequences and claim that steadfastness to truth was practiced. **One should assess the consequence of truth and lies based on the circumstance and then decide.** (Commentary: Truth must be told, one should not lie is the general dharma. One can tell lies in emergency situations, if required. But that should not be made a regular habit. If a lie has to be told the situation should be analysed). One who does such discriminative thinking and then acts will be a *dharmavid*.

(Shl 60) If speaking is inevitable—if it is felt that not talking will lead to suspicion by thieves—then in that situation a lie plays the role of truth. There is no need to think too much about this. Telling a lie is the best option.

(Shl 61) **Scholars opine that one who makes a mental vow to do something and then tries to fulfil it without discriminative thinking will not get the fruits of fulfilling the vow.** (Shl 62) If the words spoken are distanced from truth they will not be treated as 'lies' under following circumstances: At the time of losing life, marriage, when all members of family are likely to be destroyed, during times of humour/jesting and merriment/amusement. One who has understood the principle of dharma will not consider lies at these times as *adharma* or as resulting in accrual of sins. (Shl 63) Even if by making hundred false vows one should escape from the clutches of thieves. At such times telling a lie leads to welfare. Without bothering in the least, in such times of danger, one should insist that he is telling the truth even when it is a lie. (Shl 64) **Even if a hundred false vows have to be made, they should be done to gain the trust of thieves and get freedom from them, but under no circumstance they should be given the money even if one is capable of doing so, because, money given to sinners will hurt the donor and others.**

(Shl 65, 66) Therefore even if a lie is told for the sake of dharma it will not be considered as a lie. (Karna Parva; *Adhyaya* 70)

Story of Kaushika

- Sri Krishna: Arjuna! There was a brahmana called Kaushika. He was a great *tapasvi*. But he had not studied *shastras* much. He was living at a place near at the meeting point of rivers slightly away from the villages. His *vrata* was '*satyam mayaa sadaa vachyam*'—I should always speak the truth. Accordingly he was always speaking truth and became well known as '*satyavaadi*'. One day a few travellers who were being chased by thieves and were afraid of them came running and hid in the forest where Kaushika *muni* lived. The angry thieves chased them there also and started searching them seriously. But they could not find them in spite of their best efforts. Then those thieves went to Kaushika *muni* who was sitting nearby and said, "Bhagawan! Some people came this way. Where did they go from here? We are asking you because of truth. If you know where they went, kindly tell us." Kaushika thus questioned by the thieves answered in accordance with his fame as *satyavaadi*, "Oh *dasyus* (Thief, impious)! They have taken refuge in this forest full of creepers, bushes and trees. They are hiding here." He not only told them the truth, he showed them to the thieves. Then the thieves attacked them, killed them and took away all their possessions. In this circumstance even though Kaushika told the truth it was not considered dharma. It resulted in *adharma*. His words did not become truth, they became evil words. By uttering those evil words which were *adharma*, Kaushika who did not know the subtlety and secret of dharma, fell into difficult *naraka* after his death. (Karna parva; *adhyaya* 69)

About *satya* (Truth) and its forms

Grandfather! Brahmanas, *rishis*, *pitru-devatas*, *devatas* all praise dharma in the form of truthfulness. Therefore I wish to understand the significance of truth (*satya*). Please tell me. (Shl 2) What is the characteristic of *satya*? What is the method to obtain it? What is the benefit of practicing *satya*? How do we gain it? Tell me about all this.

Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) Bharata! Scholars do not approve or praise the mixing up of the four *varnas* (Brahmanas following *kshatriya* dharma etc). But truth without any distortions is established in all *varnas*. There is nothing like different truths for brahmana, *kshatriya* etc. For all the four *varnas* truth is the same. (Shl 4) *Satpurushas* always follow the dharma which has the form of truth (*satya swaroopa*). *Satya* is *sanatana dharma*. You must bow to *satya* because, *satya* is the best refuge of man. (Shl 5) *Satya* alone is dharma, *tapas* and *yoga*. *Satya* is the *sanatana brahma-vastu*. *Satya* is also said to be the best *yajna*. Everything is established in *satya*.

Dharmaja! Now I will tell you sequentially the practices and characteristics of *satya*. Understand how *satya* is obtained. **It is well known in all worlds that *satya* has thirteen forms.**

Forms of *satya*

(Shl 8, 9) *Satya* (truth), *samata* (Equality), *dama* (restraint of senses), not having *matsara* (jealousy), *kshama* (forgiveness), *lajja* (modesty; sense of shame), *titiksha* (endurance), not having *asooya* (envy), *tyaga* (relinquishing), *dhyana* of Paramatma (meditation), *aryatva* (Cultured behaviour), unbroken *dhairya* (courage) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) are the thirteen forms of *satya*.

Satya

(Shl 10) **Being eternal, indestructible and having no distortions** (any kind of change in form) **is the characteristic of *satya*.** *Satya* is obtained by practicing the yoga of doing duties suited for all dharmas.

Samata

Samata is having feeling of equality towards oneself, those liked by oneself, those disliked by oneself and the enemy. The way to achieve *samata* is to give up *iccha* (wishes), hatred, *kama* and anger.

Dama

(Shl 12) Following are the characteristics of *dama*: Not desiring other's property/belongings, profundity, courage, having no fear, giving assurance to all living beings and calming or soothing mental illnesses. This is obtained by *jnana*.

Amatsarya

Amatsarya is the ability to control the mind at the time of giving to charity or performing *dharmakaryas*. **While doing *daan* & *dharma* there should be no feeling of 'I & mine'. These should not be done to compete against someone.** One who always practices truth will have *amatsarya*.

Kshama bhava

(Shl 14) That person who treats equally matters which deserve tolerance and those which irritate, likeable speech as well as unpleasant speech is considered to be a *kshama-sheela*. Truthful person attains this quality quite well.

Lajja or hri

(Shl 15) An intelligent person who does auspicious and beneficial deeds for others efficiently and then does not regret doing it and the quality of his speech and mind remaining calm always is called *lajja* or *hri*. This is obtained by uninterrupted practice of *dharma*.

Titiksha & Anasuya

(Shl 16) Ability to bear or withstand the difficulties that may arise in accomplishing *dharma-artha* is called *titiksha*. This is obtained by *dhairya*. (Not finding fault in others is *anasuya*).

Tyaga & Dhyana

(Shl 17) Giving up interest/attachment/desire for pleasures of the senses is called *tyaga*. This can be achieved only by one who has no *raaga* or *dwesha*. Otherwise it cannot be obtained. (Single minded thinking of Paramatma is *dhyana*).

Aryata

(Shl 18) Wilfully doing good deeds towards living beings without showing himself (or projecting himself) is called *aryata*. This is obtained by one who is without *raga-dwesha*.

Dhriti

(Shl 19) Not having any alteration in the mind when faced with happiness or grief is called *dhriti*. Wise man who desires elevation should always practice *dhriti*. (Shl 20) To attain *dhriti* the person should always be truthful and *kshama-sheela*. A *pandit* who has given up joy, fear and anger attains *dhriti*. (Shl 21) Not committing treachery towards any in speech or mind or actions, and

conferring benefits and charity are *sanatana dharma* of *satpurushas*. (Shl 22) These thirteen are different characteristics of *satya*. These depend on *satya* and strengthen *satya*.

(Shl 23) Yudhishtira! There is no end to the qualities of *satya*. That is why brahmanas along with *devatas* & *pitrus* appreciate *satya*. (Shl 24) **There is no dharma superior to *satya*. There is no sin greater than lying. *Satya* is the foundation of dharma. Therefore never lapse on *satya*.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 162)

Quality of speech

Vidura said: (Shl 12) **Being silent is better than talking irrelevantly. If speaking is necessary, then speak only truth. This is superior to silence. This is the second rule. The speech should be both truthful & likeable. This is the third rule. Such speech should also be based on dharma. This is the fourth rule. All the four rules should be followed.** (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 36)

Shri Krishna's miracle with power of truth

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

Shri Krishna again promised to make the child come alive. He said: (Shl 18) Uttare! I never tell lies. Whatever I say will turn out to be the true. I will make this dead child get back life as all these people are watching. (Shl 19) **Even when playing freely I have not told a lie even for fun. I have never reverted from a war. Due to these two great dharmas practiced by me, may this child be alive.** (Shl 20) **Dharma is very dear to me. Even there, brahmanas are very close to my heart.** Let this child be alive by the power of this truth. (Shl 21) I have never expressed opposition in respect of Partha. Let this child become alive by virtue of that truth. (Shl 22) **Truth & dharma reside in me for ever.** Let this child of Abhimanyu become alive by the power of that *satya* & *dharma*. (Shl 23) If it is true that I have killed Kamsa & Keshi in accordance with *kshatriya dharma* let this child regain life by the power of that truth. (Shl 24) **In case I practice *brahmacharya*,** if *satya* is established in me, if my *aishwarya* is unimpeded let this child regain life by the power of these. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 68)

Swadharma

- Ashwatthama to Arjuna: You who know meaning of dharma! Arjuna! Those who know dharma consider the person who relinquishes his own *dharma* and adopts another dharma as poison. (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 197)
- Dhrishtadyumna to Arjuna (after killing Drona): ... "(Shl 24-26) Brahmanas are expected to practice six karmas: *yajana-yaajana*, *adhyayana-adhyapana*, *daan-pratigraha*. Which of these karmas was Drona practicing regularly? **He had lapsed in all these karmas prescribed for a brahmana. He was not practicing *swadharma*.** He was involved in practicing karmas not expected of him and he was killing thousands of people with his inhuman *divyastras*. **I killed such a Drona who had lapsed in his *swadharma*.** Why do you blame me for this? (Shl 27) Partha! What is wrong in killing Drona by cheating who was *swadharma-bhrashta* and practiced *para-dharma*, who was indulging in *maya-yuddha*, who was impossible to face in war and who called himself a brahmana? ... (Shl 30) It is not correct on your part to call me killer of guru while claiming yourself to be firm in *dharma*. I was born from fire for the express purpose of killing Drona. (Shl 31) Arjuna! **How will you classify as brahmana or *kshatriya* that Drona who was fighting in the battlefield and for whom good and bad deeds were same (*karya*, *akarya*).** (Shl 32) Great among Men! Why should we not kill by whatever method the person who kills even those who have no knowledge of *astras* with *Brahmastra*? (Shl 33) You who know meaning of dharma! Arjuna! **Those who know dharma consider the person who relinquishes his own *dharma* and adopts another dharma as poison.** Knowing this why do you blame me?... (Shl 38) Arjuna! **They say that it is *adharma* not to kill enemies in war. A *kshatriya* should either kill the enemy in war or be killed by them.** This is the prime dharma of *kshatriyas*. (Drona; Narayanastra-moksha; adhyaya 197)

Varnashrama dharmas

- **Bhishma explains the *varnashrama dharma* (Dharmas of the four *varnas*) to Yudhishtira.**

Yudhishtira again bowed to Bhishma and asked him thus: “(Shl 2) Grandfather! Which *dharma*s are satisfactory to all *varnas*? What are the *dharma*s to be followed by each *varna* separately? Which are the four *ashrama-dharma*s in *chaturvarnas*? Which *dharma* is considered as *raja-dharma* by scholars? (Shl 3) By what methods or by whom does the country progress? By what methods or by whom does the king develop/grow? By whom or by what do the citizens and servants prosper? (Shl 4) What kind of persons in following roles should be rejected by the king: Treasurer, commander, official in-charge of fort, associates, ministers, *ritwijas*, *purohita*s and *acharya*s? (Shl 5) Grandfather! In times of danger or crisis, whom should the king trust? From whom should he protect himself strongly?”

Common dharmas for all varnas

Bhishma replied: “(Shl 7) **The following nine are common dharmas to be followed/practiced by all four varnas:** No anger, always speaking truth, enjoying earned wealth by sharing, having forgiveness, begetting children from *dharma-patni*, being pure/clean both internally and externally (*antaranga & bahiranga*), not committing treachery towards any, living with honesty and simplicity, and caring (supporting & nourishing) for the members of one's family. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)

Dharmas for brahmanas

- (Shl 9) Knowledgeable persons say that the best *sanatana dharma* for brahmanas is *dama* or *indriya-nigraha*. Secondly, a brahmana should always be engaged in the study of Vedas and *shastras*. By just studying these he would have accomplished all his stipulated karmas. (Shl 10, 11) In case wealth takes refuge in a brahmana who is engaged in *swadhyaya-abhyasa*, is *jitendriya*, is calm, is content with the *jnana* and *vijnana* he possesses, does not do anything against the *varnashrama dharma*, then he should get married and beget virtuous children. He should give to charity and perform *yajnas*. He should himself also enjoy, as well as share the wealth that has come his way with relatives and friends. This is the duty of brahmana. (Shl 12) **Whether he does any other karmas or not, a brahmana is fulfilled by study of Vedas and shastras.** Because a brahmana has friendship towards all, he is also called '*maitra*'. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)
- Pitrudevatas advice to Parashurama: This business of war is meant for *kshatriyas*. *Swaadhyaya*, *vedadhyayana*, *vratanushtana* are the dharmas of brahmana. These are his great assets. We had told this same thing to you earlier also. Taking up a weapon is a fierce act. It is totally banned for a brahmana. You have done an act which is not considered worthy of a brahmana. (Udyoga; Ambopakhyana; adhyaya 185)

Dharmas of a kshatriya

- (Shl 14) *Kshatriya* should give charity to the deserving (*satpatra*). But he should not ask others for anything (should not take *daan*). He should perform *yaagas*. But should not conduct (guide in the procedures and conduct of *yaagas* which brahmanas do) *yaagas* for others. He should study Vedas and *shastras*. But should not teach them to others. Should govern the people. Should always be engaged in destroying thieves, robbers etc who trouble the citizens. Should display valour when fighting enemies in the battlefield. (Shl 16) Scholars who know *puratana-dharma* do not appreciate a *kshatriya* who goes to the battlefield and returns defeated and unhurt. (Shl 17) Scholars say that fighting is the main path for a *kshatriya*. There is no duty better than destroying thieves, robbers and other trouble makers. Doing *dhyana*, *adhyayana* and *yajna* brings success to a *kshatriya*. **But since fighting with enemies and dasyus is the main dharma of a king, a king who wishes to stick to the path of dharma should always be ready & willing for war.** (Shl 19) A king should ensure that all citizens follow their respective *varnashrama-dharma* and through them should execute all deeds according to dharma in the interest of peace. (Shl 20) **Whether he does any other karma or not, a king is fulfilled by governing the people with dharma. Governing the people is the most important and greatest dharma for a king.** Since the king is powerful as related to Indra, he is also called *Aindra*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)
- Draupadi to Keechaka: (Shl 42) By protecting the wife, one's children are protected. By protecting the children, you protect yourself. Because a husband enters wife's womb and comes out again as son, wife is called '*jaaya*'. In the same way wife should also protect the husband. If she does not do so, how can children worthy of husband be born? Similarly, **for kshatriyas the only**

important dharma is to destroy the *adharmic*. Nothing is more important than this dharma for *kshatriyas*. (Virata; Keechakavadha; adhyaya 21)

- Bhishma: (Shl 2) Yudhishtira! **It is the opinion of some that truth is the basis of *kshatra-dharma*. Some say it is based on logic (*yukti-vada*). Some others say it is based on *sadachara* (virtuous practices). Some others say that by taking appropriate action based on time & place using the four techniques of *sama-dana* etc dharma is established.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 100)
- Karna to Shalya: (Shl 43) We have heard that lying dead in the battlefield honoured by *satpurushas*, is the most important dharma for a *kshatriya*. (Karna; adhyaya 40)
- Yudhishtira to Duryodhana: (Shl 56) Even if we were to consider that you have the authority for donating this earth, I do not wish to rule over the earth that you give in donation. (Shl 57) Oh King! I will not accept the land that you will give in donation as it would be against dharma. **No where does a *dharma-vakya* exist that a *kshatriya* can accept *daan*....** (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 31)
- (Shl 17) Sri Krishna to Balarama: Brother! **I believe that for a *kshatriya* fulfilling his oath is very important dharma.** As you know, Bhima had in the past made a vow in the full assembly that he would break Duryodhana's thigh with mace. As a complement to that, Maitreya *maharshi* had also cursed Duryodhana that 'Bhima will break your thigh with his mace'. For these reasons I do not see any *dosha* in Bhima breaking his thigh. So do not get angry in this matter. (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 60)
- Duryodhana to Kripa: (Shl 31) In this world happiness and comforts are not permanent. This being so how can kingdom and success (gained by valour) be permanent? The important duty in this world is to gain fame. For a *kshatriya* this can only come through war and by nothing else. (Shl 32) **For a *kshatriya* death at home is the worst. Not just this; a *kshatriya* dying at home lying on the bed is major *adharm*.** .. (Shl 35) I have already attained the same *punya-lokas* which are attained by relinquishing variety of pleasures and *tapas* by way of this *dharma-yuddha*. (Shalya Parva; adhyaya 5)
- **Bhishma: on *kshatriya* dharma & killing in war**
Bhishma addressing Sri Krishna but to reassure Yudhishtira: "(Shl 14) There is no *dosh* in killing *kshatriyas* in a war. Just as *daan*, *adhyayana* and *tapas* are the *dharma-karyas* of brahmanas, killing enemies with weapons is the dharma of *kshatriyas*. (Shl 15) It is nothing but dharma for one who kills *pitrus*, grandfathers, brothers, gurus, relatives and others who had taken to path of *adharm*. (Shl 16) Keshava! That *kshatriya* knows dharma who kills the sinners who have crossed the boundaries of dharma due to greed, even if they are gurus (Commentary: A *kshatriya* who knows dharma should kill them). (Shl 17) That *kshatriya* knows dharma who kills in a war those who out of greed ignore *sanatana* dharma which is like a bridge. (Shl 19) A *kshatra-bandhu* (a warrior) should always fight with one who invites to a war. **For a *kshatriya* war is supportive of dharma. It is like a bridge to *swarga* and brings fame in the world.** Manu himself has said so." (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 55)

Sanatana dharma to be followed by *vysya*

- (Shl 22) The following are the karmas of *vysya*: *daan*, *adhyayana*, performing *yajnas* and **earning money in clean ways**. He should always be active & perseverant and should care for all the animals with love and alertness just as a father would take care of his children. If he does anything other than cattle rearing it will be *vikarma* (unlawful occupation). (Shl 23) *Vysya* obtains great happiness by cattle rearing. Prajapati created cattle and handed the responsibility of their care to *vysya*. (Shl 24) Prajapati has handed over the responsibility for caring and *nourishing* of people to *kshatriya* and brahmana. Next I will tell you about his occupations and how he should earn his living. (Shl 25) If a *vysya* has obtained six cows from the king or citizens, he can utilise the milk of one cow for his personal use. If he is rearing a hundred cows, he can utilise one cow and one ox for his personal use. Or out of the total value obtained by the milk, butter, ghee etc of these 100 cows, he can utilise one seventh for his personal use. He can also keep for his living one seventh of sale proceeds of horns of dead cattle, and one sixteenth of the sale proceeds of their hooves. (Shl 26) **From all kinds of food-grains he grows, he can keep one sixteenth for personal use. This is like his annual salary. But he should never think of not caring for the**

cattle. (Shl 27) As long as he wishes to care for the cattle, he should not sub-delegate their protection and care to others for any reason. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)

Dharma to be followed by shudras

- (Shl 28) **Prajapati Brahma created shudra in the form of servant to brahmana, kshatriya and vysya.** Therefore for a shudra serving the other three varnas is the karma assigned by shastras. (Shl 29) Shudra attains great happiness by serving the three varnas. Therefore he should serve the three varnas sequentially. (Shl 30) **A shudra should not ever accumulate money. Because, if he accumulates money he will indulge in sinful deeds. He may bring persons greater than him under his control by virtue of money-power.** (Shl 31) **Or a shudra who is a dharmatma can accumulate money with the permission of the king and perform dharmic acts as he wishes.** I will tell you about his occupation and livelihood. (Shl 32) All the three varnas should necessarily take care of his bharana-poshana (support and nourishment). Because, he deserves it. To a shudra who serves, **used** umbrella, head gear, beds, foot-wear and fan should be given. (Shl 33) The other three varnas should give him unusable (old, torn etc) clothes. Because, all such items are the wealth of shudra according to dharma. (Shl 34) People who know dharma have said that if a shudra comes to a person with the intention of serving him, that person must make arrangements for his living. (Shl 35, 36) **In case the master does not have children, the serving shudra should perform his pinda-pradana** (rites upon death). If the master is old or weak, the shudra should take care of his bharana-poshana. When the master is in some danger, the servant should never desert him. In case the master loses all his money and becomes penniless, even then the shudra should not desert him and out of the money left after caring for his family, he should care for the master (**Where does he get this money from?**). **A shudra has no money of his own. He can only get money from his master. Meaning, the rights to the money with the shudra rest with the master.** (Shl 37) The yajnas prescribed for the three varnas should be done by shudra also. But in the yajna done by shudra there will be no swahakara, vashatkara and vaidic mantras. (Shl 38) Hence a shudra should perform yajna without himself undertaking a vrata. The dakshina of such paka-yajna is called poorna-patra-mayi. (Shl 39) We have heard that a shudra named Pajavana performed a yajna by the method of Aidragna-yajna without using swahakara and vashatkara and gave away one lakh poorna-patras as dakshina upon completing the yajna. (Shl 40) **Because a shudra is always dedicated to serving the other three varnas the yajnas they perform belongs to the shudra also. There is no need for him to separately perform yajnas.** He will also obtain fruits of yajna even though he himself does not perform, by virtue of his dedicated service to them. Before all yajnas, the shraddha-yajna is prescribed. (Faith in what you do). **Shraddha is greater devata than all others. It is shraddha which brings sacredness to the performers of yajna.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)

Role of brahmanas w r t other three varnas

- (Shl 41) Brahmanas with a balanced mind, with mutual co-operation of others, worship the Paramatma by way of several satra-yagas with several kinds of desires. (Shl 42) **The process of creation in other varnas has happened only through brahmanas. Other three varnas have been created by brahmanas only.** (Therefore shudras also have right to perform yajnas. This is why all four varnas perform yajnas in order to fulfil their desires). (Shl 43) What the brahmanas, who are devatas of the devatas also, say in respect of dharma-karma by virtue of their understanding of Vedas and shastras is for the benefit of all varnas. Therefore the other three varnas should perform yajnas as prescribed/recommended by brahmanas and not as per their will or wish. (Shl 44) **Brahmana who has completely studied rig-yajur-sama Vedas will be worthy of worship by all just like devatas. Brahmana who has not studied these will be considered an upadrava** (mischief-maker, trouble maker, misfortune) **for Prajapati.** All varnas perform yajna with willingness and faith. (Shl 45) Therefore it is never that either devatas or other people do not desire such yajna done with faith. **Hence all varnas have the right to perform yajnas with full faith.** (Shl 46) Brahmana is an extraordinary devata for other varnas by virtue of his karmas. Therefore, it is never so that brahmanas, who are friendly towards all, do not perform yajnas for the benefit of all varnas....Brahmana has been created to perform yajna for the benefit of other varnas. (Shl 47) **Brahma has created other three varnas only through the brahmana. Therefore the other varnas are equivalent to brahmana varna. The other varnas also have earnestness and simplicity and are 'brother varnas' of the brahmana varna. Kshatra-vysya-shudra are variations born of brahma-varna. Just as rig-yajur-sama born of 'a'kara are not**

different from it, in the same way other *varnas* born from brahmana *varna* are not different from it..... (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 60)

Varna dharma under extraordinary circumstances

Can brahmanas live by vysya-dharma and if yes, how?

Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 1) Grandfather! Earlier you had said that brahmanas can live by *raja-dharma* (*kshatriya-dharma*) in emergencies (*aapat-kaal*). Can they live by *vysya-dharma* under extraordinary situations? Or should they not?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 2) *Maharaja!* **If brahmana cannot make a living by practicing his profession, he can live by practicing *kshatriya-dharma* under emergency situations. If due to circumstances he cannot do this also, he can make a living by *vysya-dharma* by doing agriculture, cattle rearing and trade.**

Dharmaja asked: (Shl 3) When practicing *vysya-dharma*, which items should he not sell so that he will not fall from *swarga*?

(Shl 4, 5) Yudhishtira! A brahmana should not sell the following under any circumstances: wine, salt, prepared (pre-processed) liquids, sesame, horse, sheep, goat, cow, bull etc animals, honey, meat and prepared (cooked) rice. If he sells these he will fall into *naraka*. (Shl 6) Goat represents *agni*; ram represents *varuna*; horse represents Sun; earth represents *virat*; cow represents *yajna* and *soma*. Therefore a brahmana should never sell these. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 78)

Four stage ashrama dharma

Characteristics of the four stage ashrama dharma

- Bhishma: I will tell you the names and dharmas of the four stage *ashramas*.

(Shl 2) *Brahmacharya*, the great *Garhasthya*, *Vanaprastha* and *Bhaikshya-charya* (*Sanyasa*) are the four *ashramas*. **The fourth viz *Sanyasa* should be taken up only by brahmanas.**

(Shl 3, 4) After the *chooda-karma* (the rite of tonsure), a brahmana should become *upanita* (initiation) in the eighth year and thus obtaining *dvijatwa* should study Vedas, complete *vrata-samavartana*, get married, regularly perform *oupasana-agnihotra-vaishvedeva*, beget good children, **get fulfilled in *grihasthashrama***, and then being a *jitendriya*, having *jata*, being dedicated to the realisation of *atma* enter *Vanaprastha* (living in forest) along with his wife or alone. (Shl 5, 6) Such a person in *Vanaprastha* should study the *aranyaka-shaastra* (*atma-vidya*) and practice *Vanaprastha-dharma*. Being *urdhwa-retaska* (*brahmacharya-vrata* or super sublimation of the sexual instinct), he can change to *sanyasahrama* and by doing *atma-sandhana* will attain the eternal *brahma-bhava*. These are the characteristics of *munis*. They would have gone through all these karmas in that order. A scholarly brahmana should also do all these karmas. This is his duty.

(Shl 7) **If a *brahmana-vatu*** (The *Brahmachari* or religious student, after his investiture with the sacred thread) **who is strictly/rigorously practicing *brahmacharya-vrata* desires *moksha*, it is auspicious to grant him rights to perform karmas related to *Sanyasa* directly** (*Sanyasa-deeksha*).

(Shl 8) One who wishes to be a *muni* or *sanyasi* should first gain victory over external and internal *indriyas*. He should not have anything called desire. There should be no *mutts* (A building inhabited by ascetics of the same order) or *kutiras* (cottage, hut). He should always be travelling. He should stay at a place soon after Sunset. He should consume whatever food he gets due to God's grace and be content with it. (Shl 9) **A *sanyasi* should be without desires. He should look upon all with *sama-bhava* (equality). He should be away from all kinds of *bhogas*** (enjoyments) (should not desire them in the mind also). *Ashrama* with such dharmas is called '*Kshemashrama*'. A brahmana who is in such *ashrama* will attain oneness with *Brahma*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 61)

- **Bhrigu said: The following are prescribed for all *ashramas*:** not causing pain to living beings, speaking truth and not getting angry. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 191)

Dharma for brahmacharis

- (Shl 18) Yudhishtira! A *brahmachari* who is smeared with dust and mire should be thinking about *Vedamantras* by being alone. He Should recite Gayathri *mantra* sitting alone. He Should do all his

chores himself. Should have only one *acharya* and be always dedicated to his service (like a *shudra*, in a sense). (Shl 19) He should always keep his *indriyas* and mind under control. He Should be dedicated to *vrata*. Sometimes should be *deeksha-baddha*. Should always be studying Vedas and live in the house of the guru. (Shl 20) He should be constantly engaged in the service of guru. He should prostrate to the guru. He should not give up the *shat-karmas* of *yajana-yaajana*, *adhyayana-adhyapana*, *daan-pratigraha*, but should not always be engaged in them only. They should be done without affecting the serving of the guru (For example *yaajana*, *pratigraha* should be done as per order of guru for the sake of his service and not for oneself). **Guru-shushrusa is the main duty.** (Shl 21) Child! Yudhishtira! A brahmachari should not attempt *nigraha* (control/suppress) or *anugraha* (grace, conferring benefits) of others. He should not have company of those who hate. These are stated *ashrama-dharmas* for Brahmacharis. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 61)

- Bhrgu said: Bharadwaja! Brahma has in the past organised four kinds of *ashramas* for protecting dharma in the interest of welfare of the world.

Among them the first is *brahmacharya* in which one has to live with the guru and practice its norms. He should have inner and external purity. He should have undergone *samskaras* like *jatakarma* etc. He should practice *vratas* & *niyamas*. He should have his mind under control. He should do *suryopasana* by way of *sandhya-vandana*. He should do *upasana* of *agni*. He should keep sleep & laziness at a distance. Should do *guru-vandana* everyday and should purify his mind by the study of Vedas and *shastras*. He should strictly follow *brahmacharya-vrata*. All the food collected by begging should be surrendered to the guru. He should surrender himself completely to the guru. If guru indicates or signals or explicitly orders to do some work it should simply be done. He should never go against the orders of the guru. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 191)

- Brahma said: (Shl 1, 2) *Maharshis!* A *brahmachari* should practice his karmas as described earlier. He should study to the best of his abilities, should be engaged in *swadharma*, should have all *indriyas* under control, should be contemplative, should be interested only in causing happiness & to do that which is liked by the guru, should be devoted to *satya* & *dharma* and be clean & pure. (Shl 3) He should have his meals after obtaining guru's permission. When eating he should not blame the food. He should think of *bhikshanna* (food obtained by begging) as *havis* and eat it. Should be in the right place. Should sit in correct posture. Should have correct practices. (Shl 4) Should be clean and should perform *agnikarya* in the morning and evening with concentration. Should always hold a staff of either *bilva* or *palasha* tree. (Shl 5) A *brahmachari* should wear only clothes made of silk or cotton or deerskin. He can also wear clothes which are completely saffron in colour. (Shl 6) He should tie a *mekhala* (girdle) made of *munji* grass. He should have *jata* (twisted hair). Should bathe everyday. Should wear the sacred thread all the time. Should be engaged in the study of Vedas, should have no desires of any kind and should practice *vrats* as prescribed. (Shl 7) A *brahmachari* who has faith, always follows regulations and offers *tarpana* to *devatas* with clean water will be praised by all. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 46)

Grihastha dharma (Householder's dharma)

- (Shl 10) **Listen to Grihastha-dharma.** After becoming *upanita* he should study all Vedas. After completing this he should pay *guru-dakshina*, obtain guru's permission, complete karmas prescribed in the Vedas and get married. Should beget good children in his *dharma-patni* and enjoy pleasures and comforts of *Grihasthashrama*. In this manner with single minded dedication, he should practice **this extremely difficult Grihasthashrama** consisting of dharmas befitting *munis*. (Shl 11) He should love and find contentment in his wife only. He should mate with his wife only during fertile periods. He should perform all *nitya-naimittika* karmas as prescribed in the *shastras*. He should never become a cheat or a rogue. He should eat limited quantities of food. He should be devoted to worship of *devatas*. He should remember/be grateful to those who have caused benefits to him. He should be truthful. He should be soft-natured. He should be kind and forgiving. (Shl 12) He should have the *indriyas* under control. He should be obedient to gurus, the aged and *shastras*. Should not miss out on offering *havya-kavya* to *devatas* and *pitrus* at right times. He should always donate food to brahmanas (*anna-daan*). He should be free of jealousy and hatred. Should support and nourish persons of all other *ashramas*. He should be devoted to

performing *yajna-yaagas* regularly. Yudhishtira! In this matter many *maharshis* quote Narayana Gita. Listen to it. (Shl 14) 'A Grihastha should be truthful; simple; should treat the guests well; should be devoted to practice of dharma; should earn money and wealth in the path of dharma; should be attached to his wife; in this manner he should enjoy happiness in the world. It is my opinion that such a Grihastha will enjoy happiness in *para-loka* also.' (Shl 15) Great *Rishis* say that supporting and caring for wife and children and bearing (studying) Vedas are the main duties of a person in *Grihasthashrama*. (Shl 16) In this manner a brahmana who is devoted to performing *yajnas*, practices *Grihastha-dharma* properly and earns money in clean ways will obtain good fruits in *swarga-loka* also. (Shl 17) When such a *grihastha* dies, all his desires will be fulfilled infinitely. He will enjoy un-decaying pleasures in *swarga*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 61)

- **Power of *atithi satkara* (hospitality to guests)**

Bhishma said: ..King Sudarshana married king Oghavanta's daughter Oghavati. Sudarshana lived in Kurukshetra practicing *Grihastha dharma*... He made a vow that he would remain a *grihastha* and still conquer death. He told his wife Oghavati: (Shl 43) Dear! **You should never do any thing unfavourable to a guest. You should provide whatever makes the guest contented as a part of hospitality. If by chance you have to submit yourself also to the guest, you should do it and show our hospitality. There is no need for you to think even under such circumstance.** (Shl 44) Oh beautiful! This *vrata* that I should always be doing *atithi satkar* has taken firm roots in my heart. **There is no dharma higher than this for *grihasthas*.** (Anushasana; Daandharma; adhyaya 2)

- Bhrgu said: Bharadwaja! Brahma has in the past organised four kinds of *ashramas* for protecting dharma in the interest of welfare of the world.

Grihasthashrama is said to be the second *ashrama*. Its best practices are as follows: This *ashrama* has been prescribed for those *brahmacharis* who after having completed their learning/education, after becoming *snatakas* (after performing the ceremonial functions required on his finishing his studentship as a brahmachari under a religious teacher, returns home and begins the second period of his life as a *grihastha*) and getting married formally, wish to obtain the fruits of dharma by practicing the dharms prescribed in Vedas. In this *ashrama* you obtain *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*. Therefore in order to accomplish all three *purusharthas* he should collect wealth/money by unquestionable means. He can earn by the special eligibility he gets by having studied Vedas. He can earn by the ways recommended by brahmarshis in *dharma-shaastras*. He can earn by collecting gems, diamonds, special medicines and gold available in mountains. Using money earned by way of *yajna*, *shraaddha* etc karmas, practice of *vratas*, study of Vedas, god's grace etc also he can practice the *garhasthya-dharma*. It is said that *grihasthashrama* is the foundation for all other *ashramas*. (Shl 10) **The *brahmacharis* who live in *gurukula*, the *vanaprasthas* who practice strict *vrata* & *niyamas*, the *sanyasis* who have given up everything and travel around—all these find alms, food & *daana* only in the house of a *grihastha*. Therefore this ashrama is a shelter for all others.**

For those in *vanaprastha* collecting/accumulating money is forbidden. These great men wish only for pure and healthy food. They will be dedicated to *swadhyaya*. They will be travelling all over the world for pilgrimages and to see the places. If they come to the house of a *grihastha* they should be immediately welcomed. They should be bowed to. No fault should be found in them. They should be spoken to sweetly. They should be given comfortable seats & comfortable beds. They should be served good meals. This is a main duty of the *grihastha* towards such great people. There is a popular saying: (Shl 12) That guest who returns disappointed from the house of a *grihastha* will transfer all his sins to him and pick up all the *punyas* of the *grihastha*. By performing *yajnas* while in *grihasthashrama*, *devatas* will be pleased; by *shraaddha-tarpanas* *pitrus* will be pleased; by the study of Vedas & *shastras*, *rishis* will be pleased; by begetting children Prajapati will be pleased.

(Shl 14) A *grihastha* should speak to all affectionately. He should only speak sweet words. Should not create pain to others; this is highly objectionable. (Shl 15) Disdain towards others, arrogance and feigning are objectionable.

In *grihasthashrama*, garlands of flowers, variety of jewellery, dance & music, sights & sounds that please the eye and ears are all available (A *grihastha* can enjoy all these). He also gets a variety of tasty & healthy food and drinks. He can roam around in gardens and enjoy himself. He can also

enjoy sexual pleasures with his wife. (Shl 17) **That grihasta who enjoys all three purusharthas regularly can enjoy all happiness and pleasures in this world and finally also attain sadgati.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 191)

- **Yudhishtira: Duties of a grihasta towards others**

(Shl 56) What a guest needs are: happy outlook of the host, good mind & words. A grihasta should get up, welcome & receive the guest happily, offer him a seat, and treat him well & justly. This is *sanatana dharma*.

(Shl 62-63) The *annadaan* (giving good food as donation) to a stranger who has come tired to the house brings great *punya*. In this way, out of the money earned & saved, nourishing *yatis* & *brahmacharis*, extending hospitality to guests is, according to *pandithas*, considered a great dharma for a Grihasta. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)

- **Value of grihasta dharma; true yogi**

Nakula praises grihasta-dharma strongly and advises Yudhishtira against taking *sanyasa* and going to forest. He also defines who a true *tyagi* is.

(Extracts)

(Shl 4) **Pitrus, who provide food even to the atheists (through rains etc) keep doing their karmas as prescribed for them. ..(Shl 8) 'Tyagi' does not mean one who has given up all relationships/attachments or one who has given up all karmas. One who uses all the wealth he has earned by sticking to dharma for performing yajnas, and one who has his mind under control is 'tyagi'.** (Shl 9) One who rejects all the pleasures of *grihasthashrama* and has dedication to *vanaprastha* and *sanyasashrama* is called a '**tamasa-tyagi**'. (Shl 10) One who has no abode to live, who cannot prepare his food, roams randomly, lives under the tree, is always absorbed in yoga, is silent, has relinquished all relationships and attachments and all karmas is called a '**bhikshuka**'. (Shl 11) **A brahmana who has rejected anger and joy, and particularly, finding fault in others, studies Vedas & performs prescribed karmas of Vedas is called a 'tyagi'.**

(Shl 12) *Maharaja!* Once, scholars weighed the specialities of these four *ashramas*. On one side of the scale they placed the specialities of *grihasthashrama* and on the other specialities of *brahmacharya*, *vanaprastha* and *sanyasa*. (Shl 13) **In this manner when they were weighed in the scale of discrimination (viveka) it was proved that grihasthashrama is superior to all others.** The reason for this is simple: Through *grihasthashrama* all desires can be enjoyed; after death great *lokas* can also be obtained. Therefore this *ashrama* is followed by *rishis* also and by those who understand the world. (Shl 14) **One who stays in grihasthashrama, and believing it a better approach to perform the karmas prescribed in Vedas does them without desire for fruits is really a 'tyagi'.** (Shl 15) If a person who is living in forest, by some turn of circumstances gets attracted to the pleasures of the senses, Yama will immediately tie his neck with his rope of death. (Commentary: If one is in *sanyasashrama* without having reached the maturity of mind and gets attracted to sensual pleasures, he will have a great fall).

(Shl 16) **Any karma done with a sense of huge ego will not yield fruits. If any karma is done without attachment to self (I and mine) and with sense of 'sacrifice' (tyaga-buddhi), then it yields great fruits.** (Shl 17) The following bring benefits (*hita*) to *rishis*: *shama, dama, dhairya, satya, shoucha, saralata, yajna, dhriti and dharma*.

(Shl 18) Since activities related to worship of *pitrus*, *devatas* and *atithis* are combined in *grihasthashrama*, it has received much praise. **It is in this ashrama that dharma-arth-kama all three can be realised.** (Shl 19) **At the same time, for a person in this ashrama who performs karmas prescribed in Vedas but without desire for fruits (without phalapeksha) adhyatmic rise is not denied** (possibility of *moksha* also exists). ..(Shl 22) To one in *grihasthashrama* *yajna-karma* is a compulsory act just like a natural bondage. For this reason, this *ashrama* is difficult to manage and difficult to obtain.....(Shl 27) I have not seen anyone who has responsibility of a family giving up all relations and contacts. But you can give up everything you have through *yajnas* like *Ashwamedha*, *Rajasuya* or *Sarvamedha* etc.....

(Shl 35) **Only by rejecting ahankara and mamakara which always attach a person's mind internally and externally, can one become a 'tyagi'.** Instead of this, by merely relinquishing

home and going away, one does not become a *tyagi*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 12)

Vanaprastha

- Brahma said: (Shl 8) Similarly, the kind of *vanaprasthi* described next who has good qualities and is *jitendriya* will gain superior *lokas*. He will attain the highest state and will not be reborn. (Shl 9) A *vanaprasthi* who is cultured with all *sanskaras*, is steadfast in practicing *brahmacharya* should give up attachment to this world and should go away from inhabited places and live in a forest. (Shl 10) A *vanaprasthi* should wear deerskin or rough clothes. He should take bath in the morning and evening. Should always reside in forest. Should not again enter the town/village for living. (Shl 11) Even when living in forest he should give refuge to guests. They should be treated suitably in a timely manner. He should live by eating fruits, roots, leaves and cooked *shyamaka* (Indian barnyard millet). (Shl 12) He should consume only such things as blowing wind or flowing water which are available in a forest. Without any lethargy he should eat only the kind of food that is available in the forest as dictated by his *vrata*. (Shl 13) He should show hospitality to the guest who comes to his *ashram* with fruits, roots and other foods. Without least lethargy he should offer a part of whatever is available for his eating to the guests. (Shl 14) Everyday after offering the food to *devatas* and then to guests, he should eat silently. **He should not compete with any one.** Should eat small quantity of food. Should seek refuge only in *devatas*. (Shl 15) Should control *indriyas* and be friendly with all. Should be forgiving. Should have beard, moustache and long hairs. Should perform *agnihotra* at the stipulated times. Should always be engaged in *swadhyaya*. Should be devoted to *satya* & *dharma*. (Shl 16) a *vanaprasthi* who is pure/clean, is skilled in deeds of dharma, who is living in forest and focussed on Paramatma and is a *jitendriya* will conquer *Swarga*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 46)

- **Vanaprastha dharma – its practice and greatness**

Uma (consort of Maheshwara) said: (Shl 1-3) Oh worship worthy Shankara! I wish to know the holy procedures of *Vanaprasthis* who live on the beautiful banks of rivers, near mountain streams, bowers in the vicinity of rivers, in mountain regions, in forests and in sacred places having plenty of fruits & roots.

Maheshwara said (**selected shlokas**): (Shl 8) They should practice yoga and obtain mastery in *asanas*. Should conquer *kama* & *krodh*. They should live in forests where only the valorous can live and should meditate sitting in *Virasana*. (Shl 9) Should be engaged in accomplishment of yoga with total concentration. Great *vanaprasthis* should in summer season sit in the middle of *panchagnis* (five fires) and perform *tapas*. He should be busy in practicing *Manduka yoga* (well known in *Hatha yoga*) as described in *shastras*. (Shl 10) Should sit in *virasana* everyday. Should sleep on the floor. During winters he should be in water. When rain is pouring he should be in the open. In scorching summer he should set up fire on four sides around him and sit in *virasana*. *Vanaprasthashramis* with an orientation to dharma should do these *vrats*. (Shl 13) *Vanaprasthas* who live everyday in forest, who move around only in forest, who live their lives till death in forest should take shelter in forest just as disciples would take refuge with a guru. (Shl 16) They will stay away from mating with wife. They will be free of all kinds of contacts. Being free from all kinds of sins they live in and travel around the forest. (Shl 18) These people who depend on truth & dharma, and are *siddhas* will attain *Brahma loka* and the permanent *Soma loka*.

Uma said: (Shl 20) *Sarva-bhuteshwara*! Tell me the dharma of *munis*. (Shl 21) What is the dharma specified for those who have great accomplishments in *siddhi* and *vada* (speaking about, arguments) and roam around freely and for those *vanaprasthis* who live with their wives?

Maheshwara said: (Shl 22) *Devi*! All *vanaprastha-ashramis* will be engaged in *tapas*. Some among them travel around freely. They do not live with wives. Some live with their wives. Those who are free and move about shave their head and wear saffron (ascetic) clothes. They do not live at any one place all the time. But those with their wives live in *ashrams* in the night. (Shl 23) Bathing thrice daily, performing *agnihotra* everyday, achieving *samadhi* state in meditation, acting only in virtuous ways and doing the karmas prescribed in *shastras* are the duties of both types of *munis*. (Shl 24) Whatever dharmas I have described to you about *vanaprasthis* apply to *munis* also. If they practice it they will get full fruits of their *tapas*.

(Shl 25, 26) Such *dharmatma grihasthas* who follow the **dampatya dharma** (matrimonial dharma) and live with wife, practice the karmas prescribed in Vedas while being *jitendriyas* and mate with wife only during the periods of fertility, will get the same fruits as practicing *rishi dharma*. *Grihasthas* with an eye on dharma should not indulge in any other desires and enjoyments. (Shl 27) One who is free of the blemish of violence and gives assurance to all beings becomes a *punyatma*. (Shl 28) One who is kind towards all beings, behaves with honesty with all and looks upon all as himself will become a *punyatma*. (Shl 29) **Being an expert in all four Vedas and behaving with arjava** (honesty, no crookedness) **with all, both these yield the same fruits. Or honesty may be even higher than expertise in four Vedas.** (Shl 30) **Arjava is said to be dharma. Crookedness is adharma.** The person who lives with honesty is a *punyatma*. (Shl 31) A person with simplicity/honesty obtains nearness to *devatas*. Therefore one who wishes to be *punyatma* should have honest dealings with all. (Shl 32) One who is forgiving, a *jitendriya*, who has conquered anger, who is committed to dharma, who is nonviolent and always engaged in dharma will be a *punyatma*. (Shl 33) That *jnani* who is without lethargy, is *dharmatma* and who walks the path of virtuousness to the best of his abilities will attain *Brahma-bhava*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 142)

Suitability of the ashramas & karmas

- Bhishma said: (Shl 2) **All four ashramas are suited for a brahmana. The other three varnas are not practicing all these ashrama dharmas.** (Shl 3) *Shaastras* have prescribed several karmas for *kshatriyas* which are suited for them and will take them to *swarga*. But wars etc which are primarily violence oriented are not suited to brahmanas. Meaning these karmas are not aligned with the karmas for brahmanas. (Shl 4) Even though a brahmana, if that dull-headed person does karmas fit for *kshatriyas*, *vysyas* or *shudras*, he will be blamed in this world and will also go to *naraka* later. (Shl 5) The derogatory words applicable to slave, dog, wolf or animal will also apply to the brahmana who is *karma-bhrashta*. (Shl 7) That brahmana who is engaged in performing the *shat-karmas*, adopts the four *ashramas* sequentially at the right stages of life, and follows their applicable dharmas, who is protected by the shield of dharma, who has won over his mind, is of purified self, is always engaged in *tapas*, who has no desires and who is generous, will attain un-decaying *punya-lokas*. (Shl 9) **Just as agriculture, trade and earning money by interest are main dharmas of vysya, governing people so that they live happily is the main dharma of kshatriyas, in the same way for a brahmana the karma of studying Veda is the main dharma.**

(Shl 10) **Prompted/goaded by kaal and influenced by vasanas of past births, they perform uttama, madhyama and adhama karmas, though their karmas are clearly defined.** (Commentary: Bhishma is answering the possible question why people of different *varnas* do not do their prescribed karmas. Whatever *varna* a person may be born in, his karmas are influenced by his past *vasanas*. It will be in accordance with the times in which he is living. Moreover man does not enjoy total freedom to act. He is controlled by *kaal*. Therefore according to *kaal* and *desh*, he does his *karmas* which are *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama*). (Shl 11) The factors which were responsible for obtaining this body end with the body. Therefore one who is dedicated to *swakarma* becomes eternal and all pervasive. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 62)

- Vyasa said: (Shl 1) Yudhishtira! Agree to whatever Dhritarashtra says without a second thought. This king has become old. Moreover he has lost all his sons. It is my opinion that he cannot withstand this difficulty for too long. Highly fortunate Gandhari is very wise. She knows the secret of destruction of loved things and obtaining of disliked things. Therefore she can withstand the grief of death of sons with more courage. I am also telling you the same thing. Listen to me. Agree for the king to go to forest. Let him not die here unnecessarily. Let him follow the path of past *rajarshis*. Forest is the place to reside for all *rajarshis* in the end.

Vaishampayana said: Upon Vyasa saying so, Dharmaraja said to him: (Shl 7) Worship worthy! You are most honourable to us; you are our guru; you are the refuge to this family and this kingdom. (Shl 8) As you know king Dhritarashtra is both our father and mother; he is also our guru. **According to dharma son is under the control of father** (So how can I direct him on anything).

Vyasa replied: Oh mighty one! Whatever you said is correct. But the king is now old. He is in his last stages. Let him have my and your permission and do what he wants to do. Do not obstruct him. **This is the highest dharma for rajarshis.** (Shl 12) **A kshatriya should either die in war**

by a weapon or in forest by proper karmas. ... Now it is the right time for him to go to *tapas*. Therefore permit him to go. He does not have even an iota of anger about you.

Yudhishtira then agreed. (Ashramavasika parva; Ashramavasa; adhyaya 4)

Conditions for Vanaprasthashrama

(Shl 11) Yudhishtira! If the king wants that in his kingdom the people of four *varnas* should live according to their *varnashrama-dharma*, listen to the dharmas stated for the four *varnas*.

(Shl 12, 13) *Maharaja!* That **shudra** who has done the service of all three *varnas* and has become fulfilled, has got good children, who has only slight difference in *sadachara* and *sadvyavahara* in comparison to other *varnas*, who is practicing the ten dharmas, such a *dharmatma shudra with the permission of the king* can take any *ashrama* other than *sanyasashrama*. (Commentary: Since he is not formally initiated he cannot be a brahmachari, since he should have got children he would have been a Grihastha and hence only *Vanaprastha* is left).

(Shl 14) Just as *Vanaprastha* has been allowed for a *shudra* who has met the above stated conditions, **vysyas** and **kshatriyas** have also been allowed to take *Vanaprastha* in some circumstances. (Shl 15) A **vysya** who has been properly following the dharma prescribed for his *ashrama* and is hence fulfilled, after reaching old age can accept *Vanaprastha with the permission of the king*.

(Shl 16-21) For a **king** to take up *Vanaprastha* he must complete all activities prescribed for him in his *varnashrama*. Should study Vedas. Should study *raja-shaastras* (*neeti-shaastra*, archery etc). Should get married and beget good children. Should drink *somarasa* in *yajna*. Should govern the people with dharma. *Mahayajnas* like *Rajasuya*, *Ashwamedha* etc should be performed. Should earn and accumulate money and other wealth as prescribed in *shaastras* and should donate them to brahmanas during *yajnas*. Should gain huge victories in wars. Should install his son on the throne to govern the people. In case he does not have a son, he can select a suitable person of another *gothra* or an excellent *kshatriya* youth and enthrone him. Should spare no effort in pleasing *pitrus* (by *pitru yajna* including *shraadh*, *tarpana* etc), *devatas* (by *yajnas*) and *rishis* (by *Vedadhyayana*). When his end nears, if the king desires change of *ashrama*, he can take up *Vanaprastha* and find *siddhi*. (Shl 22) Even though a king gives up *grihasthashrama* as stated above, he should have the attitude of a *rajarshi* and adopt begging (*bhiksha*) for his survival. He should not live by serving others.

(Shl 23) **Surviving by bhiksha-vritti is not compulsory for the kshatriya-vysya-shudra. It is optional for all the four varnas** (and for those in *Vanaprastha*). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 62)

Sanyasashrama

- Bhrgu: Bharadwaja! Now I will tell you about the practices of *sanyasis*. Those who have taken to *sanyasashrama* give up all things at home like *agni-hotra*, money, wife etc, give up all enjoyments & luxuries, break all bondages of affection and go away from home. **They treat a lump of mud, stone and gold in the same way with no differentiation. They will be disinterested in dharma, artha & kama.** They treat equally an enemy, friend or neutral. They will not commit any treachery towards *sthavara*, *jarayuja*, *andaja*, *swedaja* & *udbhijja* borns by way of speech or in mind or in actions. **They do not live in ashramas or mutts.** They will always be travelling. During nights they will stay in caves in mountains or river banks or under the trees or in temples or in cities. **They do not stay for more than five nights in cities and one night in villages.** They go and stand before houses of such *brahmanas*, *kshatriyas* & *vysyas* who do not do karmas against their *varna-dharmas* and who follow pure dharma for their own sustenance. **They will be content by eating whatever collects in their bhiksha-patra (begging vessel) without their asking.** They would have completely given up *kama*, *krodh*, *lobh*, *moha*, *kripanata*, *dambha*, *ninda*, *abhimana* and *himsa*. The following *shlokas* are well known in this matter: (Shl 4) That *muni* who travels around reassuring everyone/making others feel no fear (*abhaya-pradana*), will not have fear from any living being....Just as *agni* calms down completely when the firewood is consumed, in the same way **the chitta when all the samsara-vritti has died down will rest in its original place viz Brahma-vastu.**

That person who makes his mind devoid of all resolves, who follows/practices the rules of *mokshashrama* according to the *shaastras*, will attain the ultimate peaceful and *jyotirmay*

brahmaloka, just like *agni* in the absence of any fuel. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 192)

- (Shl 17) **Whether a *brahmachari*, *grihastha* or *vanaprastha*, if he desires *moksha* he should take to the superior *sanyasa*.** (Shl 18) He should offer assurance (*abhaya*) to all living beings and should practice *sanyas dharma* by giving up all karmas. He should wish happiness for all living beings. He should withhold all *indriyas* and practice *muni vritti*. (Shl 19) **He should neither beg nor desire and should feel content with whatever food becomes available by God's will. A *sanyasi* who knows *moksha dharma* should, after completing the rituals in the morning, decide to go for begging to the house of a *grihastha* after the smoke in his house has stopped coming** (after all cooking is completed), **after everyone in that house have eaten and the vessels have been washed.** (Shl 20) He should not feel joyous if he gets alms. Nor should he feel sad if he does not get any food. He should beg and obtain only that much food which is needed to remain alive. (Shl 21) He should beg only for surviving. Should go for begging only up to appropriate time. Should be focussed. Should not use the alms obtained by other *sanyasis*. **He should have *jugupsa* (aversion/disgust/dislike) in respect of food that is served by inviting him to homes. A *sanyasi* should have *jugupsa* towards honour, pride etc.** (Shl 22) He should not eat following kinds of food: too hard, too sour, too astringent, too spicy and too sweet. He should eat only to manage to live. His purpose in eating should only be to stay alive (*prana-dharana*). (Shl 24) **A *sanyasi* who knows *moksha dharma* should live on alms obtained such that it does not trouble other beings.** When begging for food he should not desire any food other than the food that can be obtained by begging. (Shl 25, 26) **A *sanyasi* should not practice his dharma for showing off to others.** He should be without *rajoguna* and live in lonely places. For staying at night he should choose an empty house, forest, under a tree, bank of a river or cave in a mountain. In summer season he should not stay for more than one night in one village/town. **Only in rainy season he can stay at one place.** (Shl 27) **A *sanyasi* should keep travelling till Sunset. He should walk very slowly like a worm and travel the world. While doing so he should carefully examine the ground below and walk such that insects are not troubled/hurt by his walking. When walking through inhabited towns/villages he should not collect money or other things. He should not live anywhere with an interest in that place. He should not develop attachment to any place.** (Shl 28) A *sanyasi* should always perform his karmas with properly cleaned/filtered water. He should take bath and perform other religious rituals with water drawn from a well or brought from a river. (Shl 30) **He should be constantly engaged in the following eight *vrats*: *ahimsa*, *brahmacharya*, *satya*, *arjava*, *akrodha*, *anasuya*, *dama* and *apaishuna*.** He should be *niyatendriya* (have restrained *indriyas*). (Shl 31) All his dealings should be without sins, cheating and crookedness. He should only accept that food which becomes available unasked. He should not desire it. (Shl 32) He should eat only as much as is needed to survive. Even in that he should eat only what has come in the path of dharma. **He should not eat indiscriminately driven by desires.** (Shl 33) A *sanyasi* should not accept anything other than/more food than is needed to survive and clothes needed to cover the body. He should not accumulate/collect more food than just needed. (Shl 34) A wise *sanyasi* should not beg for others sake. He should not accept anything from others. **Nor should he distribute/share what he has out of kindness to others.** (Shl 35) **He should not take other's possession. Should not accept things which come unasked. After enjoying a good thing he should not again desire to have it.** (Shl 36) An active *sanyasi* may make use of the following if they do not belong to anyone else: mud, water, cooked rice, leaves, flower and fruits. (Shl 37) A *sanyasi* should not make a living by sculpting. He should not desire gold. He should not have enmity with anyone. **He should not be preacher to anyone.** He should not accumulate anything and he should not 'beautify' himself. (Shl 38) He should eat food that is prepared with faith and is sacred.

He should ignore good and bad omens. He should have nectar like sweet dealings/behaviour with all. But he should not have love or interest in any. He should not get to know anyone too much (lest it may result in attachment). (Shl 39) A *sanyasi* should neither himself do nor cause others to do acts of violence, *kamya-karmas* (acts done with a desire for something), or *loka-sangraha-karmas* (propitiation or conciliation of men, welfare of the world). (Shl 40) He should give up attachment to all things, should be content with small things and travel everywhere. He should have a feeling of equality towards all moving & non-moving beings. (Shl 41) He should not cause anxiety/agitation to any living being. He should not himself also have these feelings at any time. He should be worthy of trust by all. Such a person is said to be

greatest among all and one who knows *moksha dharma*. (Shl 42) **A *sanyasi* should not think what will happen in future. Nor should he worry about the past. He should also ignore whatever is happening in the present. He should always be concentrated in Parabrahma and await *atma-skashatkara*.** (Shl 43) He should not censure/blame anyone with his eyes, speech or mind. He should not do any bad deeds directly or indirectly. (Shl 44) Just as a tortoise pulls in all its limbs into its shell, a *sanyasi* who knows all *tattvas* should withdraw his *indriyas*, should be free of desires and weaken *indriyas*, *manas* and *buddhi*. (Shl 45) **He should be free of dualities, should not bow to anyone, should give up *agnihotra* etc. He should be without *ahankara* & *mamakara*. He should not think/worry about his own welfare. He should restrain his mind (*nirdvandvo nirnamaskaro nihsvahakara eva cha, nirmamo nirahankaro niyogakshema atmavan*).** (Shl 46) There is no doubt that a *sanyasi* who is without desires, without *gunas*, is calm, is disinterested, has no abode, is devoted to *atma* and knows *atma-tattva* will be liberated from the bondage of *samsara*.

(Shl 47, 48, 49) That person who can see in the cavity of his heart the *atma* which resides in all living beings and which has no arms, legs, back, head or stomach, which is free of *guna* & *karmas*, is without a second, who is pure, who is steady, who cannot be known by attributes of *gandha*, *rasa*, *roopa*, *sparsha* & *shabda*, who is worth knowing, who is detached, who is without bones & flesh, who is without worries, is indestructible, is divine and is unmoving will have no death. (Shl 50, 51) ***Buddhi*, *indriyas* or *devatas* cannot go to the Paramatma who resides in the heart. *Vedas*, *yajnas*, *lokas*, *tapas* or *vrats* cannot go there. Only those who know *atma* (*jnanavatam*) can enter there. Because, *atma* is without any external signs.** Therefore only those who know *atma-dharma* which has no external signs go towards the *atma-tattva*. (Shl 52) **Scholars who have taken refuge in the most secret dharma of *Brahma tattva* should remain incognito and carry on their *sadhana*. Even if not a fool/idiot, they should behave so. But while behaving so they should not censure/blame dharma.** (Shl 53) **When they live so, other people in the society may treat them with disrespect. Even then they should remain calm and do the *sadhana*. But they should not censure the dharma of *satpurushas*. A person who is accomplished in such behaviour is said to be a great *muni*.** (Shl 54, 55) That person who thinks deeply about *indriyas*, objects of *indriyas*, five *maha-bhutas*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahankar*, *avyakta prakriti* and *Purusha* and understands their *tattvas* properly will be liberated from all bondages and will attain *moksha*. (Shl 56, 57) That person who knows *brahma tattva*, sits in seclusion at the time of death and meditates upon the Paramatma in the heart will, like *vayu in akash*, be freed of all kinds of attachments, will become free of *pancha koshas* and without any anxiety will attain Paramatma. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 46)

Victory/War & Dharma

Dharma is the cause of victory

- Vyasa *maharshi* to Dhritarashtra: *Maharaja!* What is happening now is the work of *daiva*. No one is capable of regulating or stopping it. **Victory will be to that side which has *dharma*.** Therefore do not grieve. (Bhishma; Jambookhandavinirmana; adhyaya 2)
- Vyasa *Maharshi* to Yudhishtira: (Shl 66) Pandava! Kindness, generosity, forgiveness and truthfulness—always serve these with love. Where there is dedication to dharma, victory shall also be there.” (Drona; Ghatotkachavadha; adhyaya 183)
- Karna complemented Sri Krishna & said: Even though you know everything or though you have already decided things should happen ‘this way only’ why are you causing illusions in my mind? Why are you confusing me? The destruction of the whole earth has become imminent. Duryodhana, Dushasana, Shakuni & I are just pretexts for this. A horrible war between Kauravas & Pandavas is inevitable. There is absolutely no doubt that a war will occur. This will not be an ordinary war. It will be a horrible war. ...Duryodhana, of late, is hating brahmanas. He also hates *gurujanas*. Not just this, he even hates servants who are attached to him & are very faithful to him. This also is an omen for defeat.
...I have understood this clearly. ‘*yatho dharmahsthathe jayah*’—Victory is where dharma is. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 143)

- **Pandava’s strength is dharma**

Dhritarashtra is disturbed and puzzled by the victory gained by Pandavas at this stage. He asks Sanjaya: Warriors on Pandava's side fight great warriors like Bhishma on our side who are experts in *astras* & *shastras*. If not god's grace, what else can this be? How did *mahatma* Pandavas become invincible? Who gave them the boon of immortality? Or have they acquired some other *jnana* to remain immortals in war?

Sanjaya: *Maharaja!* Listen carefully. ..As far as I know, their immortality is not because of some secret *mantra* or *maya*. Moreover during the war Pandavas do not create any fearsome or terrifying sights to scare your children or the warriors. They fight according to the rules of war. But there is no doubt that they are very capable and powerful in fighting. ***Maharaja! Kunthi's children follow dharma strictly in all their works including their day to day living. Their goal is to attain eternal fame only by adhering to the path of dharma. They never retract from war. Therefore they are adorned with victory. Don't you know yatho dharmah tatho jayah?***

Maharaja! Pandavas are immortals because they are strict followers of dharma. They are also victorious. Victory will never forsake them. It is not that you do not know about your children. They are all wicked minded. They are always indulging in sinful deeds. They speak harshly. They are interested only in heinous acts. It is for this reason that they will be destroyed in the war.

Bhishma to Duryodhana: Duryodhana! To tell in one phrase, **He is everything...Where there is Krishna there exists dharma and where there is dharma there will be victory (*yathah krishnastatho dharmo, yatho dharmastatho jayah*)**. (Bhishma; Bhishma vadha; adhyaya 65)

- Bhishma: (Shl 40) Brave warriors! Understand that victory is the foundation of dharma and all pleasures. That debility/depression which causes weakening of mind for the enemy will cause great happiness to the brave. The cowards are afraid of death. The valorous invite it bravely. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 100)
- 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; adhyaya 95)
- Bhishma to Duryodhana: (Shl 20-22) **Arjuna will never do merciless acts. His mind will not consider sinful deeds even in worst danger. Even if there is a possibility of his conquering & taking control of all three lokas, he will not give up dharma.** In comparison to dharma, even the *trilokas* are of no value to him. It is for this reason that we are all alive today. If his only intention was to kill us and regain his kingdom, he could have easily done it today when we were all unconscious. **Because he is totally dedicated to dharma, he made us only unconscious and has let us live.** (Virata; Goharana; adhyaya 66)
- Bhishma to Karna: (Shl 34) Fight without ego but by relying on your might & valour. There is nothing more auspicious than *dharmayuddha* for a *kshatriya*. (Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; adhyaya 122)
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya with a heavy heart: "Sanjaya! You are saying that there was a terrible war with Abhimanyu alone on one side and several *maharathas* on the other side. But you are saying that at every instance the victory was Abhimanyu's. This kind of valour is unbelievable and perplexing. **But one thing is true. For those to whom dharma is the constant refuge, such achievements are not a wonder.**" (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; adhyaya 46)

- Yudhishtira to Duryodhana:(Shl 24) It is not *sanatana dharma* to not fight and run away without firmly facing the enemy. Only the lowly (mean) follow such despicable ways. Moreover this approach does not fetch you *swarga* also... (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 31)
- Bhishma: (Shl 13) In a war, I have so far never seen or heard any one side saying with certainty that they shall win. When a war begins, one side has to win & the other will be defeated. No war ends without a decision of victory & defeat. Therefore we have to either win or be defeated. There is no doubt about this. **At this juncture either we have to do what is right for war or what is right by dharma. We have to decide one or the other immediately.** (Virata; Goharana; adhyaya 52)

Apparent adharma is dharma

- Krishna to Arjuna urging him to kill Karna: “Hey Pandava! Are you careless? (Shl 71) **Even if enemy is extremely weak, scholars do not delay destroying them. This being so, what is there to say about a powerful enemy? When a powerful enemy is in serious trouble for whatever reason, a pandita kills him and attains dharma and success.** (Karna; adhyaya 90)
- Sri Krishna said, “(Shl 3) Arjuna! Both have had the same kind of training. Bhimasena is the mightier one. Duryodhana is better in terms of practice and effort. (Shl 4) **If Bhima keeps fighting following principles of dharma, he certainly cannot defeat Duryodhana. Only if he deviates from the path of dharma and violates yuddha-dharma he can kill Duryodhana.** There are precedents of killing enemies in war by unjust means. **He quotes a few precedents.** (Commentary: In a way they do not appear to be cases of ‘cheating’). **Therefore in this gada-yuddha also let Bhima adopt valour with maya** (trick/deceit). (Shl 7) At the time of the *dyuta* (game of gambling) Bhima has made a vow that he will kill Duryodhana by breaking his thighs. (Shl 8) Therefore let Bhima fulfil that oath. **Let him kill that deceitful Duryodhana with deceit itself.** (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 58)
- **Bhima exhorts Yudhishtira to rule the kingdom**
Bhima ridicules him for talking about *sanyasa* and advises Yudhishtira to follow his *swadharma* and rule the kingdom. (Extracts)
(Shl 1) *Maharaja!* Your intelligence has become just like that of a *shrotriya* who has merely practiced reciting Vedas and has not understood the meaning. Just as a *shrotriya*’s intelligence does not grasp the meaning of Vedas, in the same way your intelligence also cannot understand the essence of *tattva*. (Shl 2) By blaming *raja-dharma* and by deciding to live a life of laziness what fruits have you gained by killing all sons of Dhritarashtra? ...If we had known earlier itself that you had such thinking we would not have taken up our weapons at all; nor would we have killed anyone. We would also have somehow continued to exist by begging till this body dies. ...Scholars say that all this is for the enjoyment of the mighty. All moving and unmoving things belong to the mighty to be governed. (Shl 7) **Scholars who know kshatra-dharma say that if anyone opposes when taking over a kingdom, they should be killed...** Thus after having killed all enemies by the path of dharma we have obtained the kingdom and you should enjoy it along with us.... (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 10)

Yuddha dharma

- Bhishma: (Shl 23, 24) Dying while lying in the bed is *adharma* for a *kshatriya*. That *kshatriya* who dies spitting phlegm frequently, discharging everything on the bed, whimpering with misery on the bed and with a body which has no injuries of war is not appreciated by those who know the dharma of a *kshatriya*. Such death does not befit a *kshatriya*...(Shl 28) Dying while surrounded by cousins and relatives after killing several enemy warriors and being wounded by many weapons is highly praised death for a *kshatriya*. (Shl 31) A valorous *kshatriya* will fight without caring for his life. He will not show his back to the enemy under any circumstances. Such a fighter will attain *indra-loka* after death. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 97)
- Bhishma to his army commanders: (Shl 11, 12) It is considered an *adharma* for a *kshatriya* to sit at home and die of a disease. Dying in a war by a metallic weapon is dharma. This is the *sanatana dharma* for a *kshatriya*. (Bhishma; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 17)

- (Shl 42) Duryodhana said, “Everyone has to fight in obedience to the order by the king. **Particularly a brahmana who is earning his livelihood as per *kshatra-dharma* also has to do so according to those who know dharma.**” (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 65)
- Kripa to Ashwatthama: (Shl 11-12) From the point of view of dharma killing those who are sleeping, who have put down their weapons, who have unhitched the horses from their chariots, who have surrendered saying ‘I am yours’, who have untied their hairs and who have lost their vehicles is not appreciated. (Souptika parva; adhyaya 5)
- Ashwatthama to Duryodhana: (Shl 5, 6) *Maharaja!* When you participate in war either victory or defeat is certain. But the killing in a war has greater significance. No one feels sad if a warrior is killed in a just manner. *Dvijas* have understood this *dharma-rahasya*. (Drona; Narayanastramoksha; adhyaya 195)
- Kripacharya to Duryodhana: (Shl 8) There is no better way for a *kshatriya* than the *yuddha-dharma* they follow for their propitiousness. (Shl 9) For one who lives by *kshatriya dharma*, it becomes unavoidable to fight with sons, brothers, father, nephew, uncle, relatives etc. (Shl 10) It is considered a great dharma to either kill or be killed in a war. Running away is *adharma*. Those who wish to live according to *kshatriya dharma* adopt this cruel way of livelihood. (Shalya Parva; adhyaya 4)
- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: (Shl 101, 102) “Whether very elderly or aged or of highest virtues, if he comes to kill you armed with weapons, he should be killed. Dhananjaya! This is the eternal & invariant dharma for *Kshatriyas*. He should fight the enemies but without malice. He should protect the virtuous and perform *yajnas*. All these are important *dharma*s of *Kshatriyas*.” (Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; adhyaya 107)
- Arjuna who was always reminding himself of *yuddha-dharma* never hurt a second time those who were falling from the chariots, who had fallen on the ground & were struggling/in agony and those who had turned away from war. (Drona; Samshaptakavadha; adhyaya 32)
- Bhishma to Karna: (Shl 34) Fight without ego but by relying on your might & valour. There is nothing more auspicious than *dharma-yuddha* for a *kshatriya*. (Bhishma; Bhishmavadha; adhyaya 122)
- Gandhari: **But Bhima behaved against dharma in the presence of Vasudeva.** ...He hit Duryodhana below the navel against the rules of war. This act of Bhima increased my anger. (Shl 21) **How can a warrior, even to save his life, break the rules of war made by *dharmatmas* and *mahatmas*?** (Stree; Jalapradanika; adhyaya 14)
- Duryodhana: (Shl 13) Indra promised not to commit breach of trust but cut off the head of Namuchi. He thought that it was the best opportunity to kill Namuchi. This approach to eliminate enemy has been in practice for generations and it has been accepted as *dharma*. (Sabha; Dyuta; adhyaya 55)

Right ways to fight a war

- Yudhishtira questioned Bhishma: (Shl 6) If a *kshatriya* king has to fight another *kshatriya* king how should he fight the war?
(Extracts)
Bhishma said: (Shl 9) **If the opponent starts a war with cheating or fraud, you should also fight with the same methods.** If the opponent is fighting a war according to dharma, you should also do the same. (Shl 11) Poisoned arrows and arrow called *karni* should not be used in war. **You should not get angry with the enemy warrior who wants to kill you.** You should fight him back or revenge him according to *yuddha-dharma*. (Shl 12) **When two warriors are fighting, if one gets into serious trouble, the other should not kill him. You should never kill an opponent warrior who is weak and who has no children.** (Shl 13) You should not use weapons on the following: one whose weapon like sword etc is broken, who is in trouble, whose bow-string is cut and whose vehicles (elephant, horse etc) have been killed. **He should be given medical treatment in your country itself or he should be sent to his home.** (Shl 14) **Once his**

wounds heal, he should be allowed to go. This is according to *sanatana-dharma*. Therefore, Swayambhu Manu has said that war should be fought following only dharma.

(Shl 16) Starting a *dharma-yuddha* and then gaining victory by *adharma* is the approach of sinners. Great & noble persons wish to defeat the wicked by adhering to path of dharma. It is better to die in a *dharma-yuddha* than gain victory in *adharma-yuddha*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 95)

- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 4) One should not again fight with a king who gets defeated along with his *chaturanga-bala*. The defeated king should be kept in captivity for one year but should be treated very well. This will be like rebirth for him. He becomes like a son to the victorious king. He can be released after one year. (Shl 8) If a brahmana intervenes between two sides that are ready to start a war with the intention of brokering a compromise, then the war should be stopped. It should not be continued.
(Shl 10, 11) A king who desires victory should not emulate a king who gains victory by transgressing the rules of dharma of war. There is no greater gain than victory by the path of dharma. (Shl 12) The victorious king should speak sweetly and distribute enjoyable goods and should please the enemy side by comforting them. This is the best *neeti* for a victorious king. (Shl 13) If they do not thus please the *anaryas* and treat them inappropriately and try to destroy them and drive them out of the country, later they will become enemies and will await their time. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 96)
- (Shl 11) All *kshatriyas* desire to attain *swarga-loka* through *dharma-yuddha*. That is why even angry ordinary soldiers create a chaos in the enemy lines. **(Motivation)** (Shl 12) A king should govern with dharma the country he wins. **Soldiers who are running away should not be chased too far.** (Shl 13) **If such chased soldiers get frustrated with saving their life and turn back to fight, they will hit back very hard.**
(Shl 17) Just as a son depends on father, the whole world depends on the might of a valorous person.
That is why in all conditions a valorous man will be respected. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 99)

Virtuous character & Dharma

Importance of *sheela*

(*Sheela*: good character, moral conduct, morality, integrity)

- Bhishma: Indra in the guise of a brahmana goes to king Prahlada on the advice of Shukracharya. He serves him with great dedication and pleases him immensely. Highly pleased, Prahlada insists that he ask for a boon. Indra asks him, "(Shl 42) *Maharaja!* If you are pleased with my serving you and if you wish to do me good, **I desire the *sheela* in you.** This is the boon I want."

Upon hearing this, Prahlada was happy and also concerned. He started thinking. He concluded that anyone asking for such an extraordinary boon may not be an ordinary person. He was also quite surprised by the kind of boon asked. **Still he said, 'Evamastu', Let it happen so** and granted the boon. But Prahlada felt very sad for having given the boon. He was quite worried. As he was thinking about this, from his body a brilliant *tejas* emerged and left him. Prahlada asked it, 'Who are you?' It said, 'I am *sheela*. You have forsaken me. Therefore I am going away. I am going to that *shishya* of yours.' Thus saying he vanished and entered Indra. Then another similar power came out. Upon asking it said, '**I am dharma. I will go to wherever *sheela-purusha* resides.**' This was followed similarly by *satya*, *sadachara*, *bala* and *shreedevi* (fortune).

Upon being questioned, *shreedevi* (goddess of fortune) told him, "(Shl 61) **You had gained victory over all three *lokas* only because of *sheela*.** Indra understood this and snatched it from you. (Shl 62) Oh the great wise man! ***Dharma, satya, sadachara, bala* and me, we all depend on *sheela*. We reside where *sheela* resides. There is no doubt about this.**" (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 124)

- Dhritarashtra to Duryodhana: (Shl 66) Not committing treachery towards anyone whether in mind or by speech or action; Being kind towards all; giving to charity to the best of one's ability—these are called *sheela*. All praise such nature. (Shl 67) Any task or action or valour does not cause benefit to another or any act for which you have to feel ashamed, should never be done. (Shl 68)

That work which will be praised by *satpurushas* in major or important assemblies is *sheela*. You should do only such acts. (Shl 69) Sometimes even those with bad *sheela* (*dusheela*) may gain *rajya-lakshmi*. But they will not enjoy it for long. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 124)

- Dhritarashtra to Duryodhana: Child! If you wish to gain as much wealth as Yudhishtira or even more first you have to become *sheelavan* (endowed with *sheela*). (Shl 15) It is possible to gain victory over the three *lokas* by *sheela* alone. There is nothing that is impossible for those who have *sheela*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 124)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 16) Man should always behave with a view towards worldly affairs and virtuous conduct. He should find methods of dharma and welfare of self. If he deals in this manner he will prosper for a long time. (Anushasana; Daandharma; adhyaya 37)

Valuing Sheela

Bhishma: .. (Shl 48) Even if a person is of higher *varna* but is devoid of character, he should not be respected and worshipped. **Even if a person is a *shudra* but is knowledgeable about dharma and has virtuous practices, he should be respected and treated cordially.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 48)

Caution about certain virtues

About Krupa (Pity)

Bhishma: (Shl 20) If you continuously see people suffering major difficulties this defect of *krupa* is born. **When it is understood that this is the decision of dharma, then it is doused.** (Commentary: The difficulties or agonies being experienced by some people are unavoidable. If you feel pity towards them and help, it may not get solved; sometimes it may even increase. At such times if it is realised that their suffering is the decision of dharma and that god's will cannot be altered, then the feeling of undue pity will subside. When you see someone is suffering due to the punishment given as a consequence of offences he committed there may arise a sense of pity. But it should be understood that it is the rule of dharma). (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 163)

Women & Dharma

Danger to dharma by women of unrestrained morals

(This *adhyaya* has a long story extending over two more *adhyayas* on how a *rishi's* disciple guarded his guru's wife from Indra by entering her body through *yogabala*. The long story has been skipped here)

Bhishma said: Oh king! Whatever you said about women is correct. In this matter I will tell you the ancient story of how Vipula protected his guru's wife. I will also tell you how and with what purpose Brahma created women. (Shl 4) **There are none more sinful than women of unrestrained morals.** A woman intoxicated with youth is equal to fiercely burning fire. She is indeed the *maya* created by *rakshasa* Maya. (Shl 5) As you said she is equal in weight (value) to blade of a sword, poison, serpent and fire. Both are same in their destructive power. **We have heard that in the beginning all humans were dedicated to dharma. They were able to attain *devatva* by virtue of their dharma. This caused great fear in *devatas*. Then all *devatas* went to *Pitamaha*. They told him about their concern. *Pitamaha* understood their fear and to confuse/delude men (to divert them from practice of dharma) he created *krityas* (goddesses of spell/charm) in the form of women.** Women who practiced fidelity in the past creations were born as women now. Brahma granted them sexuality and desires as they wanted it. Young women who are lustful will always be bothering men. **Brahma then created *krodh* (anger) to support and assist *kama*. Men & women under the control of *kama* & *krodh* started developing interest in each other.**

(Shl 12) There are no *vaidik-karmas* to be done by women. Dharma *shastra* itself has arranged matters like this. Women have no *indriyas*. Meaning, they are not capable of keeping their *indriyas* under control. They lack knowledge of *shastras*. Shruti itself says that they are embodiment of lies. Brahma granted to women beds, comfortable seats, decorations, food & drinks, *anaryatva* (not honourable character), liking for bad speech and *rati* (enjoying and giving pleasures, amorous pleasures). (Shl 13) It is not possible for a man to guard or protect women. When Brahma himself cannot do it, how can it be done by ordinary humans? (Shl 14) **It is not possible to protect lustful**

women from falling from dharma by using good words or punishment or imprisonment or by giving variety of troubles and difficulties, because, women do not have control/restraint on *indriyas* and are of unsteady mind.

.... (Shl 20) If women are *sadhvis* (virtuous, chaste) and *pativratas* (fidelity & devotion towards husband) they will be highly fortunate everywhere. They will be respected in the world. They will be mothers for the whole world. They bear this earth with its forests due to the power of their *paativratya*. (Shl 21) Those who are not *sadhvis* will develop evil behaviour. Due to that they can destroy the whole family. They always decide to indulge in sinful deeds. Such women should be identified by the inauspicious physical signs they are born with. **Only mahatmas can save them from evil practices. There is no other method by which they can be prevented from taking the wrong path.** (Shl 23) Women who are not *sadhvis* are of sharp/aggressive nature. They have aggressive valour. There is no one who can be considered 'dear' to them. Whoever they mate with will be their 'dear' till that act lasts. (Shl 24) It is they who are the forms of *kritya* (doll of evil spirit), forms of sorcery or spell related acts and forms of fruits of such acts. They never stop with enjoying any one man. Just as *kritya devata* goes about taking one after another man as sacrifice, these women also go in search of different men only to destroy them. (Shl 25) (In case one such woman becomes wife) Men should never have friendly attitude with such women. At the same time they should not display intolerance towards them. Taking refuge in 'sweat-dharma' (*sveda-dharma*) they should be mated with only during fertile periods. (Sweat-dharma: We cannot push away sweat even though it smells. It is generated in our body all the time. Even though we do not want it we cannot keep it away. In the same way, for the fault of having married such woman somehow life has to be carried on. But you should remain unattached and behave according to dharma). (Shl 26) Man who acts differently than this will be destroyed. Therefore, under such circumstances disinterest in praised everywhere. (Anushasana; Daandharma; adhyaya 40)

Women are mainstay of dharma

- Bhishma: ... (Shl 8, 9, 10) Monarch Manu desired to go to *swarga* and **handing over women to men** said: Oh Men! Women are weak. They do not commit many sins. They are content with small amounts of clothes and jewellery. They have a good mind. They win truth (are truthful). They are jealous. They expect honour & respect. They have a very angry temperament. Some times they are also very uncordial. They are not very knowledgeable. Still these women deserve to be respected. Oh men! Indulge and respect women. **It is the woman who is the mainstay of dharma.** Sexual pleasures, service and *namaskaaras* (adoration, offering of respect) are under the control of women. Therefore you should be soft hearted and gentle towards them. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 46)
- Maharshi Narada describing Sri Rama's kingdom to king Srinjaya: "(Shl 56) In his rule no one would fight with another. **When there was no fight/dispute among women, what to speak of men?** All were dedicated to dharma." (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 29)

Characteristics of dharma - patni

- Shakuntala to Dushyanta: **I am your dharma patni, bharya. Have you understood the significance of bharya? If you had, you would not have humiliated me in this packed assembly.**

Bharya has to be efficient; should have a son; should consider husband as her life; should be cooperative/favourable to the deeds done by husband. These are important characteristics of *bharya*.

She is the *ardhangji* (half) of man. She is the best friend. She alone helps in achieving dharma-*artha-kama*. Those who wish to cross the ocean of *samsara* have to take the help of *bharya*.

.. Wife plays the role of father, mother, friend and servant. In private, she tells those words which are in the best interest of husband like a good friend. She, just as a father advises his son, advises in *dharma karyas*.

...Passion, love and dharma are all dependent on wife. Woman is responsible for the birth of world. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 74)

- Savitri to Yamadharma: (Shl 21) Wherever my husband is dragged to or wherever he goes on his own will, I also should go there. It is *sanatana dharma* that wife should follow her husband all the time. (Vana; Pativrata-mahatmya; adhyaya 297)

Parvati describes *stri-dharma*

.... Having thus been praised by Gangadevi, Umadevi started to tell about *stri-dharma* (Dharma of women) comprehensively:

(I have omitted points that are repeated within and across verses)

(Shl 33) Gangadevi! I will tell about this as it shines upon/manifests in my mind. May it become famous in the world as I present it!

(Shl 34) **The close relatives of the bride will preach *stri-dharma* to her at the time of marriage. The girl becomes her husband's *saha-dharma-charini* (who practices dharma with him) with *agni* as witness.** (Shl 35, 36) That girl whose nature is very good (*su-swabhava*), who speaks good words (*su-vachana*), who has good character (*su-vrta*), who is such that merely looking at her makes the husband happy (*sukha-darshana*), whose mind never wanders towards other men (*ananya-chitta*) and has a beautiful face (*sumukha*), will live according to *stri-dharma*. That faithful wife who at all times considers her husband as god himself is the woman who practices *pati-dharma* with devotion. She alone will get *punyas*. (Shl 37, 38) That *sadhvi* (chaste, virtuous, faithful woman) who considering her husband as god obeys & serves him, does not lose concentration even once (in serving her husband), follows good rules, who looks at her husband's face repeatedly just as looking at son's face and who eats limited food is the one who practices *stri-dharma*. (Shl 39) **The wife who is devoted to dharma in accordance with the saying that 'husband and wife should live in the same place and perform dharma *karyas* with a single mind' is a *pativrata stri*.** (Shl 41, 42) One who has submitted herself to the husband with love, has very good mind, has virtuous character, dresses up so as to make the husband happy and who is always smiling in the presence of husband is the one who practices *stri-dharma*. The wife who maintains a pleasant face even if the husband speaks harshly to her or looks at her as if she is blemished is a *pativrata*. (Shl 43, 44) The woman who does not look upon anyone other than husband as a man whether it is Sun or Moon or a tree is devoted to *stri-dharma*. The wife who cares for her husband like caring for her son even if he is poor or sick or exhausted after travelling will earn *punya*. (Shl 45, 46) That woman who has pure heart, is skilled in caring for her husband, has son, is loved by her husband and who thinks of her husband as her life earns *punya*. That woman who is engaged in caring and nursing her husband with a happy mind, who has unshakeable trust in her husband and is humble/polite is associated with dharma. (Shl 47) That woman who does not have as much desire/longing for sexual pleasures or enjoyments or wealth or happiness as she has for her husband is associated with dharma. (Shl 48-50) The woman who is keen on getting up early in the morning, starts her household duties soon after getting up, cleans the house thoroughly, performs *agnihotra* with her husband, offers flowers to *devatas*, worships *devatas* along with her husband and eats her food only after serving guests & servants and makes sure that the members of the family are happy and well nourished is united with dharma. (Shl 51, 52) That woman who has virtuous qualities and is interested in serving the in-laws, **is also devoted to her parents** is surely a *tapodhana* (rich in austerities). That woman who takes care of brahmanas, the weak, orphans, poor, blind and indigent by giving them food becomes eligible to get the fruits of *pativrata dharma*. (Shl 53) One who everyday practices very difficult *vrata* which a weak woman cannot and is always interested in the welfare of her husband will get the fruits of *pativrata dharma*. (Shl 55) Husband is the god for a woman; he is the relative; he is the ultimate refuge. There is no refuge that can match husband. Even god cannot be a match to him.

Parvati turned to Ishwara and said: (Shl 56) *Devadeva!* To a *sadhvi*, the grace of husband and *Swarga* may be equal or may not be. But I would not want even *Swarga* if you my beloved husband is not happy. (Shl 57, 58) Even if the husband is very poor or suffering from sickness or be in danger or in the midst of enemies or agonised by curse of a brahmana, wife should obey him. **At that time even if what he says in *adharma* or wrong deed or even risk to life she must consider it as *aapadharma* (dharma in times of distress) and do the task without any doubts.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 146)

Female liberty in ancient dharma

Pandu to Kunthi: "Practices from the past are not blind followings. They were ways of living indicated by *rishis* who knew the nuances of dharma. This is also known as *shishtachara*. **In the olden times women had more freedom. Family was not considered bondage and women did not have to**

obey the orders of husband. They had the freedom to go wherever they wanted and live as they wished. In spite of living so, they were considered as *pativratas*. Their manner of living was not considered sinful. That was the regulation of dharma in those days. **Even now aren't all animals other than humans following the same rule?** Have they developed any jealousy because of such living? *Maharshis* knowledgeable about dharma had approved such behaviour & living. Among Uttarakurus this tradition is followed even now. Giving freedom to women is considered *sanatana dharma*. **The requirement (*shishtachara*) that a woman should have attachment only to her husband is more recent.** (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 122)

Yugas & Dharma

Hanuman's description of the characteristics of the four yugas

Hanuman to Bhimasena:

Krita Yuga

(Shl 11) Child! 'Krita' is the name of first Yuga. **In that Yuga there will be no work or dharma other than *adhyatama-chintana*.** Because there will be no other duty it is named 'Krita'. **All will be engaged in *adjhyatma-chintana* and attain *brahma-sakshatkara* there will be no work to be done.** Dharma would have completely evolved in that Yuga. **There will be no defects in the bodies of people.** Though the status will be like this at the beginning of Krita, as time progresses and the next Yuga approaches, dharma will reduce.

In the first leg of Krita there will be no *deva-danava*, *yaksha-rakshasa-kinnara-kimpurusha*. There will be no *Veda-varnas*. **There will be no need to buy or sell.** There will be no need for man to work and earn for his livelihood. **Any item desired will become available merely by wishing for it.** The main dharma of that Yuga will be *Sanyasa*.

People of that Yuga will not have any mundane problems. They will not have mental and physical diseases. There will be no jealousy. No one will cry for anything. **People of that Yuga do not know ego and pride. They do not know fraud or deceit. There will be no enmity or hatred. No one will be lazy.** All will be forgiving (**Where is the need to forgive?!**). No one will have any kind of fear. No one will worry on any account.

All people will be *brahma-jnanis* and will always be in a state of *brahmananda*. In that Yuga Shriman-Narayana, the *atma* of all living beings, will shine with white colour.

In Krita Yuga the qualities and actions (*guna-kriya*) of the four *varnas* will be natural. **Everyone will automatically be engaged in acts of their *varna*. But the resolve, actions and practices will all culminate in *brahma-jnana* only.** They act only to attain *brahma-sakshatkara*. They will not have any other resolves or desires. For all four *varnas* meditation (*dhyana*) was the main *karma*. Paramatma who shines like a lamp in all hearts will be the *adhishatna-murty* for all *varnas*.

'OMkara' alone was their main *mantra*. All four classes were dedicated to *brahma*. Though there were four natural *varnas* called *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vysya* and *shudra*, they all followed only *Upanishad-dharma*. **They all worshipped only the *jyoti-swarupa* Paramatma who resides in all hearts.** In this way people of Krita Yuga always attained *jeevan-mukti*.

(Shl 22) Dharma founded on *atma-yoga* is the main characteristic of Krita Yuga. The dharma of all four *varnas* was complete with all four legs. *Pravritti*, *prakasha*, *moha* or ***rajas-tamas-sattva gunas* did not exist in that Yuga.** Bhimasena! That greatest Yuga was full of only *brahma-nishta* people. (Vana parva, Tirthayatra upa-parva; Adhyaya 149)

Treta Yuga

Next I will tell you the characteristics of Treta Yuga, listen, child! In that Yuga dharma had declined by one-fourth. *Sarvantaryami* Vishnu shone with red colour. **People were truthful. They performed the daily religious rituals (*nitya-naimittika-karma*) without fail.** Many *yajna* & *yaagas* took shape in that Yuga. People were performing many *yajnas* and *daans* for fulfilment of their desires. (Commentary: In Krita they were getting desired items just by wishing. But they did not have any intense desire other than *brahma-sakshatkara*. In Treta the *brahma-nishta* declined. **Several desires germinated. To fulfil those desires they started performing *yajna*, *yaaga* and *daan*.** People in Treta never lapsed from their respective *dharma*s. People of that Yuga had *sattva-guna* as the dominant quality. (Vana parva, Tirthayatra upa-parva; Adhyaya 149)

Dwapara Yuga

In the third Yuga, Dwapara, half of dharma declined. *Sarvantaryami Narayana* shone with golden hue. In Krita and Treta Veda were in a single form (monolithic). **As soon as Dwapara started, they were divided into four parts called Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana.**

The reason was that in this Dwapara Yuga people did not have the ability to study the Vedas in full. In this Yuga also some studied all four Vedas, some three, some only two and some only one. There were many who did not know *rik* at all. **As Vedas were divided, the *karmas* were also divided.** People with dominant *rajo-guna* (desire-motivated) would engage themselves in *tapas* and *daan*. The number of *brahma-nishta* people fell. Due to this the *jnana* in people declined. This in turn resulted in decline in *satya-nishta*. **One people lapsed from the path of *satya*, mental and physical diseases started (See <http://www.nextavenue.org/article/2012-08/truth-lying-makes-you-sick>) and dangers started attacking.** Greed increased in people. People started indulging in *yajna*, *yaagas* and *daans* to overcome diseases and to fulfil desires. Some performed *yajnas* for fulfilment of material pleasures and some to attain *swarga*. In this way **people of Dwapara are becoming dominant in *rajo-guna* and are indulging in *adharma*** and hence being destroyed. (Vana parva, Tirthayatra upa-parva; Adhyaya 149)

Kali Yuga

Bhimasena! In Kali Yuga only one-fourth dharma will survive. In that Yuga Shriman Narayana will shine with black colour. **That Yuga will be dominated by *tamo-guna*.** *Vedadhyayana*, *sadachara* and *yajna-yaagas* will decay in that Yuga. People will be troubled by excessive rains-drought, famines, rats, cheaters, birds which eat food (grains?) and by enemies. Several kinds of diseases will trouble people. People will tend to be lazy. They will tend to get angry very soon. There will be fear of hunger. **As Yugas pass, dharma also will decline. As dharma declines the moral and ethical standards will fall. As this happens, the nature and qualities of people will change.** For this reason the *karmas* that they perform will yield opposite results. Such a Kali Yuga is about to start soon.

The *chiranjeevis* like me who continue to live from Yuga to Yuga adjust ourselves according to the changes of the Yuga. (This statement is interesting. Could it be a lesson to some of our die-hard traditionalists?!)

Bhishma's summary of yugas & dharmas

Bhishma: (Shl 23) **In Krita yuga *satya* & *dharma* will be complete with all four legs. Since there will be no *adharma* then, there will be no *aagamas* (*shastras* which define dharma).** (Shl 24, 25) **In Treta, Dwapara & Kali yugas dharma has to be learnt from *shastras*. In each these yugas one fourth of dharma will gradually decline (Remaining dharma will be three parts in Treta, two parts in Dwapara & one part in Kali).** *Adharma* will increase by way of thieving, untruth and cheating. In *Satya yuga* people will be without diseases and strong. All their desires will be fulfilled without efforts. Their longevity is 400 years. In Treta the longevity will reduce by one part that is it will become 300 years. Similarly in Dwapara it will become 200 & in Kali 100 years. (Shl 26) **We have heard that the number of people who study Vedas will also decline from *yuga* to *yuga*.** The longevity also reduces from *yuga* to *yuga*. Desires will not be fulfilled easily. There will also be a reduction in the fruits of *vedadhyayana*. (Shl 27) **As the duration of each *yuga* reduces the dharma of people will also change and be different.** (Shl 28) **In Krita yuga *tapas* will be the greatest dharma. In Treta it will be *jnana*. In Dwapara it will be *yajna* and in Kali it will be *daana*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 231)

Miscellaneous

Death is certain dharma

Sanjaya to Dhritarashtra: *Maharaja!* Hearing the words of a very sad Ashwatthama, your son wiping his copious tears repeatedly with his hands, addressed all three and said, "(Shl 23) Brave warriors! **The dharma of *martya-loka* (the world of death) is like this only. They say this rule is made by Brahma himself. Therefore eventually all animals in this world will be destroyed.** The destruction which is assured for all animals one day has come to me also." (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 65)

Rules for bartering

Bhishma: (Shl 7) *Satpurushas* do not approve bartering uncooked (unripe) items with cooked (ripe) items. But unripe item can be bartered with ripe items. (Commentary: You can give raw rice and get cooked rice). (Shl 8) "We eat cooked rice. Please take this raw material and prepare it for our eating"; so saying, and after verifying that the food has indeed been prepared with items given by him, brahmana can eat it. Yudhishtira! I will tell you what the *sanatana dharma* of people knowledgeable in transactions was. (Shl 10) **By saying, "I will give this to you. You give me that" and thus bartering by mutual consent and happiness is dharma. Taking away by force without mutual consent or happiness is *adharma*.**

In the past all transactions between *rishis* and others were happening in this manner. There is no doubt that transacting like this is right (or acceptable). (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 78)

Artha

- Dhritarashtra: (Shl 36) Wealth is disastrous (*Artha can become anartha*) particularly if it is earned in illegal ways. Still why do we indulge in earning wealth without thinking about the right & wrong ways? Moreover man does not even desire to donate the earned wealth. All this appears to be the nature of man. If the wealth gained is not distributed properly, it will rot & get wasted like stagnant water. (Vana; Ghoshayatra; adhyaya 236)
- Yudhishtira to Sri Krishna: (Shl 19) ***Saddharma* will not remain with one who has no shame in committing sins. Once dharma is destroyed, as it goes out, it takes his wealth too.** Destruction of wealth destroys the person. Not having wealth becomes equivalent to death. **A man without wealth is as good as dead.** ... (Shl 23) All *dharma-karyas* (like *yajna*, *yaaga*, *daan* etc) can only be done if there is money. Therefore accumulating wealth is a great dharma. **Everything is rooted in money. Only the rich are leading proper, happy life in this world. The poor are as good as dead even if alive.** ... (Shl 27) **Destruction of wealth is a great danger to man. It is greater than death. This is so because *Artha* is the foundation for dharma & *Kama*.** (Udyoga; Bhagavadhyana; Adhyaya: 72)

Dharma-Artha

Artha should be based on dharma

- Bhishma to Parashurama: ... (Shl 54) When the question of accumulating *dharma-artha* comes up, then an able & knowledgeable person should act after deciding if *artha* is founded on *dharma*. If there is a doubt whether *artha* is founded on *dharma* then *artha* should be rejected & *dharma* about which there is no doubt should be stuck to. In case the *dharma* itself is suspect that also should be rejected. **There should be no doubt in *dharma* or *artha*.** There should not be a doubt whether gaining that *artha* is right; or whether following that *dharma* is right. In such situations it is better to reject both *dharma* & *artha*. (Udyoga; Ambopakhya; adhyaya 178)

(Commentators elucidation: Ambe is like *artha*. But there is a doubt about her because she is interested in another man. Therefore she is not fit to be accepted. Obeying the orders of a guru is *dharma*. But one should analyse what is the nature of his order. If you obey the guru, suspect *artha* will have to be accepted. Therefore, in the present situation, there is a doubt whether guru's order is in accordance with dharma. Though it is true that one has to obey the guru, it cannot be assumed that everything guru says is in accordance with dharma. In such circumstances discriminative thinking is called for. After analysing, if dharma is in doubt the order should be rejected. One should follow one's purified conscience).

- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: That person, who rejects *dharma* and is only dedicated to serving *artha*, will fall in a downward path in this world also. (Drona; Samshaptakavadha; adhyaya 24)
- Drona's message to Ashwatthama through Duryodhana: (Shl 36-38) Obey your father's words. Let your mind be firm in *daya*, *jitendriyatva*, *satya-nishta* and *rijutva*. You are skilled in the practice of *dharma-artha-kama*. Never agonise *dharma-artha*. Do *dharma*-centric deeds again and again. Please brahmanas with a humble attitude and faith in your heart. Care for them to the best of your abilities. For no reason should you do acts unpleasant to them because, brahmanas are *tejaswis* as the flames of fire. (Drona; Jayadrathavadha; adhyaya 151)

- **Qualities needed to comprehend dharma-artha**

Kripacharya to Ashwatthama: (Shl 1) I believe that those who are not *jitendriyas* and who do not have *medha-shakti* (intellectual brilliance/sharpness) cannot fully comprehend *dharma-artha* even though they have a desire to know about them. (Shl 2) Similarly even if one has the intellectual brilliance to understand everything, if he has not learnt humility, he will not be able to take decisions in the least on matters of *dharma-artha*. (Shl 3) One whose intelligence is frigid, even if he is brave, even if has served the scholars all his life, he cannot take decisions on *dharma-artha*, just as a ladle dipped in soup for any length of time cannot realise its taste. (Shl 4) One who is intelligent, even if he serves the scholars for a short while, will grasp the decisions on *dharma-artha* quickly, just as the tongue can discern the taste of soup very quickly. (Shl 5) One who is intellectually sharp, who is *jitendriya*, who has interest in serving scholars and listening to their preaching, will learn all *shastraas* and will not oppose those which are worth grasping/absorbing. (Souptika parva; adhyaya 5)

- Tapasvini Shandili to Garuda: *Sadachara* gives the fruit called dharma. It also gives wealth. One who follows *sadachara* gets both *dharma* & *artha*. *Sadachara* also clears up *avalakshanas* (bad characteristics?) in a person. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 113)
- Vidura: (Shl 38) A fool is one who without knowing own abilities, desires to acquire an impossible object which is against both *dharma* & *artha* and without working for it. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 33)
- Vidura: (Shl 67) One who understands by discriminative intelligence what is *dharma* and which *artha* is rooted in dharma and accordingly accumulates possessions is known as 'completely-possessing'. He will always be happy. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 34)
- Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: That person, who rejects *dharma* and is only dedicated to serving *artha*, will fall in a downward path in this world also. (Drona; Samshaptakavadha; adhyaya 24)
- Bhima: (Shl 28, 29) Just as fire is the integral property of *arani*, for fulfilment of desires (*kama*) *dharma* & *artha* are both main components...just as clouds & sea are interdependent, so are *dharma* & *artha*. (Vana; Arjunabhimana; adhyaya 33)
- Sri Krishna to Duryodhana: (Shl 10-18) In this world, the actions of *satpurushas* integrate *dharma-artha* in them. The actions of *asatpurushas* are the opposite. Such topsy-turvy thinking of *asatpurushas* is seen in you also. It can be seen in you repeatedly. We are seeing in you an opinion which is against *dharma-artha*. It is so horrible that it can even result in loss of lives...**If we analyse whether there could be a prominent reason for such opinions to be formed in you, we can't see any. This wrong & wicked opinion has formed in you without any reasons.** I will tell you what will be the consequence of this opinion you have formed. It will surely not be possible to achieve your aims going by your opinions. Push away such destructive opinions. It will only result in your own good... (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; Adhyaya 124)
- Parashara to King Janaka: (Shl 4) It is the decision of *jnanis* that money earned and grown in just ways should be protected with an effort for the purpose of doing *dharma-karyas*. (Shl 5) One who wishes dharma should not earn money by cruel methods. He should do all actions according to his capability. **He should not always be thinking about increasing his money.**

(Shl 19) **Whatever wealth you obtain by following the path of dharma is the true wealth. My condemnation to wealth gained by path of *adharma*. Only dharma is eternal in this *loka* (not money). Therefore with the desire to accumulate money, dharma should not be given up.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; adhyaya 292)

- **Conditions to be satisfied for marriage**

Brahmana to Kunthi: (Shl 12) Before settling at a place look for a good, capable, worthy king & take refuge there. Only then one should marry. **After marriage, money should be earned in ways complying with *dharma*.** That person who has a king who protects/cares for his citizens, obedient wife and wealth becomes capable of helping his relatives & children to tide over all difficulties. (Adi; Bakavadha; adhyaya 160)

Artha more important than dharma

Arjuna: (Shl 6) That person whose all means of betterment are lost, who is utterly poor, who has become a non-entity in this world, who has no wife or children or cattle, who due to his inability cannot earn/accumulate kingdom, wealth etc, he should resort to living by begging. (Shl 7) *Maharaja!* Have you at least thought what people will think of you if you relinquish all this kingdom and wealth and go about with a begging bowl and leading such despicable life? ... (Shl 11) When Nahusha *chakravarti* was penniless, he did very cruel karmas and said these sad words, 'Condemnation to utter poverty! **Giving up everything and suffering poverty is the dharma of *munis*. It is not the dharma of king**'. (Shl 12) You are aware that not accumulating for tomorrow but living from day to day by begging is the dharma of *rishis*. Similarly, whatever has been prescribed as *kshatriya* dharma is fulfilled only through money. (Commentary: If the respective dharmas are not followed it is a loss to the nation and, the one who follows the dharma not suited or ordained for him will also be destroyed). (Shl 13) **Dhana and dharma** (money and dharma) **are complementary to each other. When you snatch someone's money, you snatch away his dharma also**. When money and along with it dharma is snatched away how can we be forgiving? That is why we have regained our kingdom from the enemies in a way befitting *kshatriyas*. It is deserving of us to do so.

(Shl 14) In this world if a poor person is standing next to you, people think he is born cursed. In this world poverty has been considered a *pataka*. Therefore never praise it.... (Shl 16) Just as many rivers take birth in mountains and flow out, the collection of taxes and gifts from several places results in increase of wealth and promote the conduct of all auspicious deeds. As money fills up in the treasury, one feels like doing many good deeds and *yajnas*. **Therefore money is the foundation for all kinds of good deeds**. (Shl 17) Of king! What more to say! **Practice of dharma is possible only through money**. Only if money is there one can enjoy all material pleasures. With money you can perform *yajnas* and attain *swarga* also. Even living in this world is not possible without money. (Shl 18) Just as small rivulets dry up in summer, all the works of a foolish and moneyless person vaporise. (Shl 19) (Shl 19) Friends seek the rich. Relatives also seek the rich. Only the one with money will be considered a 'man' (*Purusha*). One who has money is the *pandita*. (People do not oppose the person with money. Whatever he says is accepted as sacrosanct). (Shl 20) **Even if a *daridra* (pauper) desires money he cannot accumulate enormous money. On the other hand, the money with the rich keeps growing. His wealth accumulates from several sources**. Just as tamed elephants help bring the elephants from the forest and tame them, the wealth of the rich keeps helping them to attract wealth outside. (Shl 21) As I said earlier, practice of dharma is possible only with money. With money, you can satisfy the desires. You can even attain *swarga* by performing *yaagas* if you have money. **Joy is where the money is; even the anger of the rich is fruitful**. Only money makes education possible; If you have money you can suppress enemies. All these are possible only with money.

(Shl 22) With money the fame and status of the *kula* increases. Dharma also increases. A pauper knows no happiness in this world, and because he cannot practice deeds prescribed by dharma, he has no happiness in *para-loka* also. (Shl 23) **One without money cannot implement *dharma-karyas* as prescribed by *shastras*. Just as water oozes out/flows from mountain, dharma also flows out from money**. (This is the irony even today. Even remedial measures to overcome poverty or its consequences are so expensive!!). (Shl 24) A man cannot be said to be weak just because his body is thin. One does not have money or has very little, is in reality weak. One who does not have cattle wealth is weak. One who does not have servants is weak. One whom guests do not visit is weak.....

(Shl 29, 30) *Devatas* have themselves devised systems for and implemented whatever I have said about money. This is also the eternal canon of Vedas. It is only with money that brahmanas teach Vedas and conduct the *yajnas*. Similarly, kings defeat enemies and take control of their treasury. This is the best approach for a king. **One king can accumulate money only by hurting another. So far I have not seen with any king money accumulated without hurting another king**. (Shl 31) Brother! In the same way kings win the earth. Just as children say that father's property is their own, kings after winning a kingdom from another, say it is their own. (Shl 32) Many *rajarshis* of the past also ruled kingdoms in the same way and have gone to *swarga* by their good deeds. The dharma of those *rajarshis* has been praised. **Just as water from the full ocean spreads everywhere through clouds, from the filled treasuries of the king wealth spreads to all parts in various forms**. (Commentary: Wealth is not accumulated purely for selfish purposes. Kings spend it for the prosperity of the kingdom). ... (Shanti, Rajanushasana; *Adhyaya* 8)

Philosophic outlook on *artha*

- Yudhishtira asked Bhishma: (Shl 1) Grandfather! Even if the king is *dharmic* and making efforts, *artha* is not obtained. At that time even his ministers will trouble him. When a king desiring happiness is thus deprived of treasury and *danda* what should he do?

Bhishma replies by narrating a conversation that took place in the past between Kshemadarshi and Kalakavrikshiya.

Kshemadarshi asked Kalakavrikshiya: (Shl 4) Great brahmana! I have heard that man is eligible for *artha*. But even after desiring it repeatedly, if he cannot obtain *artha* or *rajya* (kingdom) what should persons like me do? (Shl 5) Tell me if there is any way other than hurting oneself, being miserable, being under others mercy or indulging in mean affairs to earn kingdom and *artha*. (Shl 7) **Only when man develops disinterest (*vairagya*) in *kama* & *bhoga* (material enjoyments) and becomes ascetic like, then he will give up both love and grief and gains the wealth of *jnana* and attains happiness.** (Shl 8) **I feel pity on those who believe that happiness is dependent only on wealth.** I also had a lot of wealth. But just like wealth in the dream it all vanished. (Shl 9) **Those who give up great wealth with them certainly do an impossible task.** Now no money is left with me. **But the attachment to money has not gone. I am unable to give up even the money I do not have!** (Shl 10) Brahmana! Now I am deprived of kingdom and wealth. I have become miserable and distressed. I am in a pitiable state. **If there is a happiness which is different from the one that comes from money, please preach that to me.**

Kalakavrikshiya replied: (Shl 12) Prince! You are a knowledgeable person. **Therefore you should have beforehand decided in your mind that whatever is 'I & mine' is temporal.** (Shl 13) **Whatever you think 'exists', understand that it 'does not'.** The wise who understand this will not grieve when in any kind of difficulty or danger. (Shl 14) **What existed before is not there now. Whatever manifests in future also will not exist later. If you realise this well you will be freed of all *adharma*s.** (Shl 15) Whatever existed among kings in the past and whatever was passed on from one to another, none of those objects exist now. Those kings are also not there now. If you think like this, why would you worry about what is not there today? (Shl 16) **Kingdom that was there earlier will not be there now. It goes to someone who did not have.** Whatever you possessed can be lost. What you do not have can come to you. **But grief does not have the ability to get you lost kingdom.** Therefore you should never grieve for not having the kingdom. (Shl 17) King! Where is your father now? Where is your grandfather? Now you are not seeing them. They are also not seeing you. Isn't it?

(Shl 18) **This body is transient. You have been seeing this and you have understood this.** Therefore why do you cry for it? Analyse this matter well with your intelligence. **Someday in future, you will also not be there.** (Shl 19) Oh king! Me, you, your friends, enemies, none of us will be here. All will be destroyed. Not just we, whatever we are seeing will also not survive. (Shl 20) Whoever are now 20 or 30 years old will all die before they are a 100. (Shl 21) Human being, who is in such a situation, even if endowed with huge wealth, should realise that 'this huge wealth is not mine' and work towards *atma-kalyana*. (Shl 22) We should consider whatever things that will become available to us in future as 'not mine'. Whatever was with us and lost that also should be considered as 'not mine'. **One who thinks that 'destiny is most powerful' is indeed a scholar. It is said that that is the state of *satpurushas*.** (Shl 23, 24) Those who are not rich also live; they also rule. Of them some are equal to you in valour and intelligence. But none of them grieve like you. Therefore you should also not grieve. Are you not equal or greater to them in intelligence and valour?

(Shl 25) Great brahmana! That whole kingdom had come to me without any effort. **I think that the most powerful *kaal* (time) snatched everything from me.** (Shl 26) *Tapodhana*! Just as a powerful flood takes away things, I have lost this kingdom in the flood of time. I am grieving now as a consequence of that. I am surviving on whatever I can find at that time.

(Shl 27) Kosala prince! **After understanding the truth (*tattva*) as it is, man should not grieve for what was lost in the past or what will happen in future.** Therefore you also should not grieve like this about all the *arthas*. (Shl 28) An intelligent man desires what he can obtain. He does not desire what is beyond his reach. In the same way you should also enjoy what has become available and not worry about the un-obtained. (Shl 29) Just as you were content in the

past with whatever you had, are you content even now with whatever you have? I hope you are not grieving for the loss of kingdom since you are a man of pure character. (Shl 30) **The unwise man who thinks he is unfortunate when he loses his wealth always keeps blaming fate. But if he gets wealth, he does not consider it as god given. He thinks it is due to his own efforts.** (Shl 31) **He looks at wealthy people and considers them as undeserving of the wealth. This grief born out of jealousy always follows him.** (Shl 32) **Many people who consider themselves as *veera-purusha* (brave or eminent) will be full of jealousy and ego.** Kosalehsvara! I hope you are not like them! (Shl 33) **Even when you do not have wealth, be tolerant towards wealth of others.** Do not be envious of it. **Clever persons enjoy others wealth all the time. Those who hate people out of jealousy will lose their wealth even if they have it.** (Shl 34) Those brave souls who know *yoga-dharma* voluntarily give up enormous wealth, children and grand-children they already have (They consider it as not theirs). (Shl 35) **Wealth is built by continuous efforts but still it is transient.** Understanding this, many consider wealth as very difficult to hold and give it up (they do not attempt to build wealth). (Shl 36) You are very wise. **You know that happiness and comforts are controlled by *daiva*.** You know that wealth is temporal. **Still you do desire what are not worth desiring.** You are even worrying yourself into a miserable state for the sake of troublesome kingdom which is controlled by someone else. (Shl 37) Try to grasp this advice and think about them. Give up desire for material enjoyments. **What you see as *artha* is in reality *anartha*** because all material enjoyments are indeed forms of *anartha*. (Shl 38) **Some lose their wealth to earn *artha*. They are constantly hastening with the feeling that wealth alone will bring eternal happiness.** (Shl 39) One who is enjoying wealth thinks that there is no other means to happiness. But all his constant efforts at gaining money are brought to nought by *daiva*. (Shl 40) If all that wealth built with great effort is lost someday, that broken man loses attachment to money (*virakti*).

(Shl 41) Only a few of noble birth desire *amushmika-sukha* (pleasures of the other world) and make dharma their refuge. They get detached from all worldly affairs. (Shl 42) **Some greedy people even sacrifice their lives just for money. In their opinion there is nothing other than money which is of use.** (Shl 43) Kosalehsvara! Look at the miserliness of such people. Look at their foolishness. **When life itself is not eternal, they are focussed entirely on money.** (Shl 44) All accumulation ends in destruction. Life ends in death. Coming together (of people or things) ends in separation. When this nature is well established why merge the mind with these? (Shl 45) Man will leave all the money accumulated when he goes (dies). Money will also necessarily leave him. Therefore which scholar will worry when money is destroyed? (Shl 46) Oh king! Not just your money, other's money will also be lost. Friends will also be destroyed. Therefore apply your mind and think. You have also got problems just like other humans. (Shl 47) Keep your *indriyas* under control. Bring your mind under control. Reduce speech and become silent. Who other than you can stop the weak, disadvantage oriented speech, mind and *indriyas* from going in search of pleasures? (Shl 48) **All objects become visible when they are close. As they recede they become invisible. They cannot also be seen after they are destroyed. You were seeing *artha* when it was with you. You are unable to see it as it has left you. A highly knowledgeable person like you does not grieve for the invisible *artha*.** (Shl 49) You are content with fewer things (*alpa-trupta*). You do not have fickleness desiring everything. You are of a soft nature. A *jitendriya*, firm minded & enriched with *brahmacharya-vrata*. Therefore persons like you just do not grieve. (Shl 53) **Sometimes a highly stirred up lake becomes clear by itself. Similarly, a mind that is disturbed becomes calm.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 104)

- Shaunaka's upadesha to Yudhishtira based on Janaka maharaja's sayings: (Shl 47, 48) The wise scholar understands that youth, physical beauty (looks), life, collection of precious stones, company of loved ones are all impermanent and hence do not long for it. Therefore an intelligent person should understand these and not go after money. No wealthy person is free from grief. **Therefore *mahatmas* praise wealth earned by methods of dharma and not by chasing it.** (Shl 49-52) Some say that money should be accumulated only for performing acts of dharma. It is my opinion that instead of struggling physically & mentally to accumulate it, it is better not to desire it. Isn't it better not to touch mire rather than touching and washing hands later? *Maharaja!* Therefore do not desire anything. If you wish to be a *dharmisht* give up desire for worldly things. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 2)

In Governance & for Kings

- Vidura's sayings: (4920, Shl 11) A king who knows the forts & geography of his kingdom, money in the treasury, boundaries of the kingdom, and system of punishment and has good knowledge of *dharma* & *artha*, will be capable of regaining the kingdom even if lost. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; adhyaya 34)
- Vidura: (Shl 11) That king who knows the forts & geography of his kingdom, money in the treasury, boundaries of the kingdom, system of punishment and **has good knowledge of dharma & artha**, will be capable of regaining the kingdom, even if lost. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 34)
- (Shl 47) A greedy person has to be won over only by giving to him every day. He will have no satisfaction irrespective of the amount of wealth he gets. All are of course greedy to obtain the happiness that comes from virtuous deeds. **One who has no money will give up both dharma and kama.** (Shl 48) A greedy person wishes to obtain other's money, luxury items (objects of pleasure), women & children etc. There is nothing that a greedy person does not want. There will be every kind of blemish in him. **Therefore a king should never appoint a greedy person for any job.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 120)
- **Bhishma's advice on how to govern well**
Yudhishtira questions Bhishma: By governing people in what ways will the king not have to worry and will not be an offender of dharma?

Bhishma replied: (Extracts)

(Shl 7) The king who attempts to accumulate *artha* by respecting/practicing *kama* & *krodha*, such a foolish king will accumulate neither *dharma* nor *artha*. (Shl 8) Do not appoint either misers or fools for accomplishing goals of *kama* & *artha*. (Shl 9) If you appoint a person who is unskilled (not smart), slave of *kama* & *krodha*, and a fool as the officer for the task of collecting *artha*, he will resort to crooked/contemptible ways and agonise the citizens. ... (Shl 13) Yudhishtira! **Do not resort to accumulating wealth out of greed by following adharmamargas. Because dharma & artha will be fleeting with the one who does not follow neeti-shaastras.** (Shl 14) A king who acts against the *shaastras* will not get *artha* rooted in dharma. The wealth he accumulates by *adharma* paths will be wrongly spent and lost.

(Shl 16) A man who desires milk should only take as much as the cow gives and be content. He should not try to cut off the udders. By doing so, he will not get even a drop of milk. **Similarly a king should collect taxes & levies from citizens such they are not hurt in the least. A kingdom which burdens the citizens with a variety of vile taxes will not prosper.** (Shl 19) Just as a mother who has had adequate nutritious food feeds enough milk to the baby, just as a well-cared for cow will nourish its calf and give milk to others, land well cared for and protected by the king will yield plentiful grains and gold to the king and others. (Shl 20) **Become like the garland seller who makes garlands and sells them. Do not be like the coal seller.** The garland seller will first plant the flower plants, water them etc and then will pluck the flowers carefully, prepare a garland, sell them and make a living. Just like him, you should first govern the people well and then collect taxes from them so that it does not hurt or harm them and thus be happy. You should not be like the coal seller. He will burn trees and plants filled with flowers and fruits and make coal. Finally he may not find trees to burn and his life may be destroyed. A king should not become like him.

(Shl 21) In case you lose wealth due to attack of enemies, then it is desirable to collect money from rich *kshatriya-vysya-shudras* by soft and friendly methods (*samopaya*). (Shl 22) However bad state you may be in, even if in your last stages, even if in stage you will lose your life due to lack of funds, let your mind not desire to collect money from rich brahmana. This being so, what to speak of collecting money from brahmanas when you are rich? (Shl 26) **The best dharma for a king is the statement that, 'The king is governing the people with dharma'.** Protecting all and being kind towards all are the dharmas of a king. (Shl 28) If the king does not protect his citizens for just one day, he will spend a thousand years in hell to clear that sin. Just as protecting people brings a lot of *punya* not protecting earns lot of *papa*. It is wrong to believe that by not protecting people nothing will happen to me as I am happily sitting in the palace. (Shl 29) Conversely, a king

who earns *punya* by governing well and protecting people for a single day will enjoy it for ten thousand years in *swarga-loka*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 71)

- **How to fill the treasury**

Bhishma quotes from *gitas* of Brahma: ... (Shl 4,5, 6) Man separates the grains from other parts of crops and eats them. It is said that money with someone who does not satisfy *devatas* & *pitrus* with *havis* and guests with food and drink is a waste. A *dharmic* king should collect from the greedy the money that would get wasted and use it for creating facilities to the citizens and please them. But he should not fill the treasury with such money. (Shl 7) **That king who forms a bridge between the wicked and virtuous in terms of taking the money from the former and reaching it to the latter knows dharma completely.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 136)

- Dhritarashtra: You must appoint as ministers those who are highly learned, humble, of good family, experts in *dharma* & *artha* and honest brahmanas. You should be having regular consultations with them. (Ashramavasika parva; *Ashramavasa*; adhyaya 5)
- Gandhari to Duryodhana: (Shl 40) Waging a war is not an auspicious/beneficial thing to do. When it does not result in achieving *dharma* & *artha*, how can it result in happiness? Whether you win or lose a war, there is no happiness. There is not even a guarantee that victory is assured. Victory is uncertain & impermanent. As there are so many defects in a war do not think of it. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 129)

Atonement for artha earned by adharma

Bhishma: *Acharyas* have suggested following measures to wash the sins of accumulating money by the path of *adharma*: (Shl 13, 14, 15) He should study the three Vedas. He should serve the brahmanas. He should please the brahmanas with sweet words and good deeds. He should be generous. He should marry a girl from a high & noble family. When serving the brahmanas he should introduce himself. He should praise the good qualities in others. After bath, everyday he should chant *maha-mantras*. Should be soft natured. He should not talk much. Even though people will call him as sinner, he should not mind it. After doing many difficult to accomplish *punya-karmas* he should enter the society of brahmanas and *kshatriyas* (**Reformist punishment**). (Shl 17) One who does atonement in this manner will clear his burden of sins and become respectable to many. Then he will enjoy many kinds of pleasures. He will also protect himself by virtue of the good deeds he has done. He will obtain great fruits in this *loka* and *paraloka*. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 134)

Example of Kayavya

There was a very virtuous hunter called *Kyavya* (his life style and values are described). Once several robbers (*dasyus*) came to him and requested him to become their leader. *Kayavya* said to them (laid down following conditions):

(Shl 13) Dear friends! **You should never kill women, the scared, children or *tapasvis*. You should not kill those who are not fighting with you. You should not forcibly carry away women.** (Shl 14) None of you should kill female of any animal. You should always work for the welfare of brahmanas. If needed, you should even fight for a brahmana. (Shl 15) You should not loot the crops in agricultural fields. You should not cause obstructions to marriage etc auspicious functions. You should not attack where *devatas*, *pitrus* and guests are being worshipped. (Shl 16) Among all, brahmana is especially exempted from robbers. Robbers should always him go. Not just this; even if a robber has to give his everything, he should try for the upliftment of brahmanas. (Shl 18) One who abuses brahmanas and desires their destruction will himself be destroyed just as sun rise destroys darkness. (Shl 19) You should always stay here and expect the fruits. You should attack only those merchants who do not give money voluntarily. (Shl 20) **Danda has been prescribed only for punishing the wicked. It is not meant for increasing one's own wealth.** It is said that death penalty is the right punishment for those who harass the virtuous. (Shl 21) **Those who try for self-aggrandisement at the cost of nation will be destroyed just like worms.** (Shl 22) Those, who even though are robbers, have practices according to *dharma-shastra* will attain accomplishments quickly. They all agreed to his terms and lived accordingly. They were freed of their sins. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 135)

Dharma-artha-kama

Importance of these three

Yudhishtira to Sri Krishna: (Shl 13) I have no interest in living without Krishna-Arjuna-Bhima just as a person loses interest in life if he has no success in dharma-*artha-kama*, is chronically sick or subject to grief. (Sabha; Jarasandha; adhyaya 20)

Inter-dependence of the three

- Vidura to Dhritarashtra: *Artha*, *Kama* & Moksha are rooted in Dharma; so should the kingdom be. (Vana; Aranya; adhyaya 4)
- Bhishma to Satyawati: (Shl 20-21) Oh mother! An intelligent & wise man has to implement *dharma-artha-kama* with great discrimination. Practice of dharma today should pave the way for *dharma* attitude in future also. *Artha* & *kama* should be supported & backed by dharma. They also should lead to future gain of *artha-kama*. This is the duty of an intelligent person. Therefore, you have my total support for your suggestion which is as per accepted tenets of dharma. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 105)
- **Ekachakrapura's brahmana's opinion on dharma, artha, kama, moksha**
(Shl 21) Holding on to life is very difficult. It is full of variety of sicknesses & fears. As long as there is life, incidents causing grief keep coming one after another. This is certain. (Shl 22) *Atma* alone serves *dharma-artha-kama*. When trying to get these three, even if there is slight imbalance, the whole life becomes distressed. (Shl 23) Some say that attaining *moksha* is the ultimate achievement. But it is my conviction that by following *dharma-artha-kama*, *moksha* cannot be attained. Man can be *dharma*. But when it comes to gaining *artha* man suffers like in hell. (Shl 24) First of all when you try to accumulate *artha*, several hurdles will soon appear. Gaining of *artha* will happen only with much stress. Once *artha* is gained, to protect it, even more troubles will be experienced. Not only physical stress, constant mental worries will start. If the *artha* is lost, it leads to even more grief. (Adi; Bakavadha; adhyaya 157)
- After hearing Vasudeva, Balarama a *dharma*vid said, "(Shl 21-22) Krishna! **The dharma which has been practiced well and properly by satpurushas keeps shrinking due to artha & kama.** (Commentary: *Artha* & *kama* distort dharma in various ways). **The artha of a highly greedy and kama of a highly lustful person damages dharma** (Dharma's role becomes insignificant in achieving *artha* & *kama*). **One who does not damage dharma & artha for the sake of kama, dharma & kama for the sake of artha, and kama and artha for the sake of dharma and one who practices dharma, artha & kama appropriately will enjoy ultimate happiness.** (Shl 23) **In this instance since Bhima has damaged dharma for the greed of artha, all the decisions made in respect of yudhha-dharma in the past are now distorted.** Still you are saying that it is in accordance with dharma as it occurs to you." (Shalya; Gada; adhyaya 60)
- (Shl 5) The citizens after seeing the *sadachara*, *sadguna* of King Shanthanu and its influence/power **came to the conclusion that dharma is greater than artha & kama.** (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 100)
- Yudhishtira to Sanjaya: (Shl 4, 5) **We desire happiness rooted in dharma. Those who desire pleasures of indriyas only, will try hard to avoid or remove all obstacles in its path.** Their efforts will all finally end in grief. Desire for *indriya sukh* (pleasure of senses) leads to suffering & pain to the body. One who desires satisfaction of *indriyas* can never be happy. One who does not desire will have no grief. If firewood is fed to the fire, it will burn tenfold more intensely. Similarly man is never content with gains of *kama* & *artha*. Dhritarashtra himself is an example for this. Compare the things of pleasure we have. He has a pile of all of them. Still he has no contentment. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; adhyaya 26)

Strategy for managing/accomplishing the three

- **Sri Krishna's advice to Duryodhana**
(Shl 34) All the actions initiated by wise & intelligent persons will be towards the path to achieving the triple *siddhi* of dharma-*artha-kama*. If all three cannot be succeeded in, they achieve success with dharma & *artha*. They keep following dharma & *artha* (even if desired results --*kama*-- are not

achieved they do not give up dharma & *artha*). (Shl 35) **Dharma, *Artha*, *kama*—these can be separated and each can be pursued individually. Of this following the first viz dharma is quite hard. Therefore only *dheeras* follow dharma. The *madhyama* (middle level) person follows *artha* which is the main cause of quarrels. The *adhama* (of low level), the fool and the immature follow only *kama*.**

(Shl 36) The person who becomes a slave to the *indriyas* and is driven by greed dispenses with the most important part viz dharma, and wishes to gain *kama* & *artha* by mean acts will certainly be destroyed. (Shl 37) **It is not that *kama* & *artha* are not required by man. One who desires to succeed with *artha* & *kama* should stick to dharma from the beginning.** By practicing dharma *artha* will not be lost. *Kama* will also not be lost. Along with dharma, *kama* & *artha* will also be achieved. ***Kama* & *artha* not within the framework of dharma will lead him to disaster.** (Shl 38) **For the success of dharma-*artha* & *kama*, dharma is the basis according to the scholars.** Therefore one who desires *artha* & *kama* founded on dharma will prosper very quickly just as a spark in a mound of dry grass increases rapidly. (Udyoga; Bhagavadgita; adhyaya 124)

- Kanika's preaching to king Shatrunjaya: (Shl 57) There are three types of agonies viz foolishness, greed and weakness in the practice of dharma, *artha* and *kama* (**respectively**). There are also three auspicious fruits for these: *chitta-shuddhi* for dharma, *yajna* etc *karmas* for *artha*, and enjoyment for *kama*. These are known as *anubandha* (appendix). These *anubandhas* should be accomplished through dharma, *artha* and *kama*. The agonies should be rejected. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 140)
- Kanika to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 69-70) *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* are accompanied with three good as well as bad results. Enjoy the good ones & leave aside the bad. Practicing one and omitting the other two brings pain. By practicing only dharma, there will be suffering due to absence of *artha* & *kama*. One who always desires *artha* will suffer due to lack of support from *dharma* & *kama*. Attachment only to *kama* results in suffering due to absence of *dharma* & *artha*. Therefore intelligent person should practice all three equally so that there is no suffering. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 140)
- Kanika: (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 *neetishastra*. One should try for *dharma-artha-kama* as dictated by time & place. (Adi; Sambhava; adhyaya 140)
- Bhima: (Shl 22-53) (**His opinion on *dharma*, *artha* & *kama* & their mutual relationship. Several interesting points**): If you are always sitting & chanting '*dharma*, *dharma*', then sometimes that dharma will itself make you weak & powerless. Just as happiness & unhappiness leave the dead person, *dharma* & *artha* will both relinquish such a weak person. One who follows dharma just for dharma's sake (ignoring *artha* & *kama*) will suffer in many ways & will not understand the benefits of dharma also... etc. Vidura to Dhritarashtra: *Artha*, *Kama* & Moksha are rooted in Dharma; so should the kingdom be. (Vana; Arjunabhishek; adhyaya 33)
- Bhishma: Dharmaja! Giving up meat & liquor is greater than *brahmacharya*. Living within the boundaries set by Vedas is best dharma. Restraint of mind and *indriyas* is the best purity.

Yudhishtira: (Shl 26) Grandfather! At what times should human being practice dharma? At what times should he gather money? And at what times should he be interested in enjoying pleasures?

- Bhishma: (Shl 27) Yudhishtira! Money should be gathered in the forenoon. Then dharma should be practiced. Then one should enjoy; but should not become addicted to desires of senses (*kama*). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 22)
- **Kamandakopakhyaana: About dharma-artha-kama**
Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! I wish to know your clear opinion on dharma-*artha-kama*. By holding onto what can we complete our journey in this world? (Shl 2) What is the root of dharma-*artha-kama*? Who is responsible for their birth? Some times they are together and sometimes separate. Why?

Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) *Maharaja!* When people are pure hearted, wish to accomplish *artha* only through dharma, at that time by virtue of appropriate *kaal*, *karan* and *karmanushtan* (time, reason and execution of needed action) *dharma-artha-kama* will be together. (Through dharma, gain *artha*. This brings these two together. Then enjoy *kama* only by *artha* thus earned. Hence all three come together. To actually achieve it, clearly, choice of time and nature of actions done at all three stages have to be based on dharma). (Shl 4) **Dharma at all times is the reason for gaining *artha*. *Kama* is the fruit of *artha*. But resolve (*sankalp*) is the root cause for all three. This resolve is formed by objects of sense (*vishaya roopa*).** (Shl 5) **All *vishayas* are fully for enjoyments of the senses. These are the roots of *dharma-artha-kama*. Withdrawing from these is called *moksha*.** (Shl 6) Dharma protects the body. It is said that need of *artha* is only for acquiring dharma. *Kama* gives sexual pleasure (*ratiphala*) (to be generalised as enjoyment through the senses). All these are based on *rajo-guna*. (Shl 7) ***Dharma-artha-kama* that comes your way should be enjoyed such that it is beneficial/agreeable. *Dharma-artha-kama* need not be driven away from the mind.** By *tapas* and introspection, one should free himself from these. That is, these three should be enjoyed without *asakti* (attachment) and by relinquishing the fruits. (Shl 8) If the keen and faithful interest in *dharma-artha-kama* can be diverted to *moksha*, then man will attain *moksha* itself. Acts done wilfully (Commentary: with the resolve that I am taking these actions to obtain these fruits) may or may not yield desired fruits.

(Shl 9) Some people express the opinion that 'It is not necessary to practice dharma for the sake of *artha*. Money can be earned by agriculture & service also'. 'Money is sometimes gained by effort, sometimes by god's grace. Here there is no need to earn money by dharma. In the same way there is no rule that one who has *artha* is a *dharmatma*. Rich people also commit sins. Therefore *artha* does not lead to dharma. There is also no rule that dharma cannot be practiced without *artha*. Dharma can grow even by fasting etc *vratas* which do not require *artha*'. Fools with no clear knowledge and with poor intelligence propose these and such other arguments and do not gain the fruits of dharma & *artha*. (Mutual dependence of *dharma* & *artha* is questioned or disbelieved).

(Shl 10) **Doing acts of dharma and expecting fruits is called *dharma mala* (Impurity of dharma). Hoarding money without giving to charity or enjoying is called *artha mala* (impurity of *artha*). Having too much attachment to pleasures of the senses is called *kama mala* (impurity of *kama*). Expecting fruits for acts of *dharma*, hoarding money, having too much attachment are natural qualities of *dharma-artha-kama*. If these qualities are given up and these are done without desire for fruits, they become auspicious.**

Yudhishtira! In this matter people quote the ancient conversation between Kamandaka and king Angarishta. Once in the past, king Angarishta, finding appropriate time, questioned Kamandaka. (Shl 13) Respected *Maharshi!* A king commits sins due to *kama-moha*. But he repents for the mistake done. At that time what atonements should he do to clear his sins? (Shl 14) How should a king make a well known person, who is practicing *adharma* as dharma due to ignorance, revert from his path?

Kamandaka replied: (Shl 15) *Maharaja!* One who rejects *dharma-artha* and only enjoys *kama*, will become a fool by relinquishing dharma and *artha*. (Shl 16) **Loss of *buddhi* (right thinking) is *moha* (perplexity, delusion). That *moha* destroys both *dharma* & *artha*. This results in atheism. He also becomes a person of wicked practices.** (Shl 17) When the king does not control the wicked and the bad elements by awarding suitable punishments, then people of the country become very anxious and concerned, just as people in a house into which a serpent has entered. (Shl 18) People will not obey a king who does not punish the wicked. Brahmanas and other *satpurushas* will not obey or follow him. Then the king will face many troubles. **In the end the citizens themselves will kill such a king.** (Shl 19) Even if the people do not kill him, removed from his position and humiliated, that king will lead a life full of grief. If he continues to live after being dethroned, such a life will practically be like death for him.

(Shl 20) The duties in such circumstances have been laid down by *acharyas*. The king should blame his sins. That is, should repent for his sins. Should study the Vedas; should honour the brahmanas. (Shl 21) Should fix his mind especially in practice of dharma; should marry a girl from a noble family; **should serve brahmanas who are thoughtful, wise and forgiving.** (Shl 22) He

should chant Gayathri *mantra* standing in water; should be clean; Should always be joyous; should develop company of *dharmatmas*; should banish sinners from the kingdom. (Shl 23) **Should please everyone with sweet words and good deeds; should praise good qualities in others and should tell others that, 'I am yours. Treat me as your own'.**

(Shl 24) **That king who practices these will soon be freed of his sins and will be honoured by all.** There is no doubt in this. (Shl 25) Follow/practice the dharma your *gurus* teach you exactly. You will achieve success and fame by the grace of gurus. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 123)

- **Pravrtti Dharma**

Maheshwara to Umadevi: (Shl 76) *Pravritti dharma* has been especially specified for *grihastha*. I will explain this dharma which is in the interest of and brings good to all living beings. (Shl 77) A person who desires welfare of the self should always give to charity to the best of his abilities. He should perform *yajnas*. He should be engaged in religious karmas which result in prosperity. (Shl 78) **Man should earn money by adhering to dharma. Money so earned should be divided into three parts. Man should, with a conscious effort, do only karmas which are predominantly dharma oriented.** (Shl 79) One who wishes his own welfare should use one third of money earned justly for accomplishment of dharma & *artha*. Another third should be used for enjoyments and fulfilling desires. The remaining third should again be invested in acts that are predominantly dharma based and grow it. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 141)

- Bhishma said: .. (Shl 4) Scholars say that by constructing a lake in a village all three *purusharthas* of dharma, *artha* & *kama* will be accomplished. A place having a lake will be a great place of refuge for all animals. (Shl 7) It should be realised that reservoirs are great refuge for all four kinds of living beings such as *jarayuja* etc. All lakes yield good wealth. (Shl 8) *Deva*, *manushya*, *Gandharva*, *pitrus*, *uraga* & *rakshasas*, as well as non-moving things like trees find refuge in lakes. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; adhyaya 58)
- Vidura: (Shl 109-110) **That person will be praised by all who does not begin work related to dharma, artha & kama in haste**, answers factually when asked about something, does not like to argue with friends, does not get angry when not honoured by others; such a person is said to have complete sense of discrimination. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 33)
- Yudhishtira: He was caring for the three *purusharthas* of *dharma*, *artha* & *kama* as if they were his relatives and without any unequal treatment. (Adi; Khandavadaha; adhyaya 222)
- Gandhari to Duryodhana: (Shl 24) *Kama* & *krodha* are two powerful enemies of man. They make the man devoid of the four *purusharthas*. The king who wins these two enemies becomes capable of winning the world. (Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; adhyaya 128)
- **Arjuna on the importance & power of danda**
Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 2) Brother! **It is danda** (Literal meaning: a strong, thick, long stick; figurative: Punishment) **that rules all people. It is danda that protects people. When all are sleeping danda will be awake. That is why scholars say that danda is dharma.** (Shl 3) *Danda* protects dharma. It also protects *artha*. Therefore it is said to be of three forms viz dharma-*artha*-*kama*. (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; adhyaya 15)

Relative prominence of the three

Discussion on dharma-artha-kama among the Pandava brothers

After Bhishma rested, Yudhishtira went back to palace and questioned his four brothers and Vidura: (Shl 2) Tendency of people is generally to engage in *dharma*, *artha* or *kama*. Among these three, which is highest, which is second and which is lowest? (Shl 3) **On which one should the person who wishes to gain victory over kama & krodh focus?** In which should his mind engage for accomplishment? Tell me your final opinion in this matter.

Vidura's view: Dharma is highest

Vidura, recollecting all *dharma-shaastras*, spoke first: (Shl 5) Dharmaja! The following are the wealth or assets of *atma*: study of several *shastras*, *tapas*, *tyaga*, *shraddha*, *yajna-karma*, *kshama*, *bhavashuddhi*, kindness, *satya* and *samyama*. (Shl 6) Yudhishtira! You should focus on these. Let not your mind deviate from these. These are the foundations for dharma & *artha*. In my opinion this path alone is the best. (Shl 7) *Rishis* have crossed the ocean of *samsara* only by depending on dharma. **All worlds are established in dharma.** *Devatas* have also attained their heights by dharma. **Artha is embedded in dharma.** (Shl 8) Scholars say that dharma is the best, *artha* is the middle and *kama* is lower than dharma & *artha*. (Shl 9) Therefore a king with control on his mind should all his dealings with dharma as the main theme. He should have as much interest in welfare of all others as he has about himself.

Arjuna's view (Prominence of artha)

(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 without the support of artha, dharma & kama cannot be accomplished.** (Shl 13) Only a rich man can practice the best dharma through the means of money. Even those desires which cannot be fulfilled by those who are not *jitendriyas* can be fulfilled by the rich person using his money. (Shl 14) **Shruti says that dharma & kama are the two limbs of artha. It is only by accomplishment of artha that dharma & kama can be accomplished.** (Shl 16) Those who have grown long matted hairs and wear deer skin, who have control on their external *indriyas*, who have smeared their body with mud, *sanyasis* are all interested in money and hence create different *ashramas* for themselves. (Shl 17, 18) Even those who are free from wanting to accept any thing from others, who are shy, calm, wear saffron robes, have grown moustache & beards are all interested in earning money. **Some others are interested in attaining swarga (An abode of pleasures!)** They will be following the traditions of their past generations and their own *varnadharmas*. All these are primarily interested in money. (Shl 19) There are many atheists. Many believers. Many who have self-control and are steadfast in following rules. All these are desirous of money. **In my opinion: Not realising the prominence of artha is ignorance and darkness. Realising the prominence of artha is bright & good jnana.** (Shl 20) One who takes care of his servants by providing them comforts and enjoyments and who brings the enemies under control by using *danda*, is really the rich person. This is my actual opinion.

Views of Nakula, Sahadeva (Equal importance of dharma & artha)

(Shl 22) Eldest brother! Man should at all times, whether he is sitting, sleeping, walking or standing, be accumulating money in various ways. (Shl 23) **Money is highly loved by people. But it is not easy to obtain. If such money is obtained or it favours him, he obtains all desires. This is the practical experience of all. There is no doubt about this.** (Shl 24) Whether money is (earned) with dharma or dharma is (done) with money, both are like *amrita*. **Therefore we believe both dharma and artha are important.** (Shl 25) A pauper cannot fulfil any desires. Similarly how can one without dharma gain (lasting) *artha*? The whole world will be afraid of those who are deprived of money with dharma. (Shl 26) Therefore man should have his mind under control. **He should give importance to dharma and should accumulate money by practicing dharma.** All beings trust the person who follows dharma. Once a person gains the trust of all, he can fulfil any desires. (Shl 27) Before everything else, man should practice dharma with faith. Then he should earn *artha* following the path of dharma. Then he should fulfil his desires. By practicing all three, he will feel accomplished.

Bhima's view (kama is the foundation)

(Shl 29) One who has no *kama* in his mind will want neither *artha* nor dharma. In fact he will not have any kind of desires. **Kama is the root cause for dharma, artha and kama.** To perform a *dharmakarya* first that desire must arise in the mind. Even to earn *artha* its desire should take birth in the mind. If there is nothing called 'desire', no action will be done. **Therefore kama or desire is higher than dharma & artha. Moreover, kama is the birth place of dharma & artha.** (Shl 30) **Rishis perform tapas only to fulfil some desire.** They perform very rigorous and tough *tapas* eating only fruits, roots, dry leaves and just breathing air. (Shl 31) Many study Vedas and *upa-vedas* and also become experts in it only due to some desire. It is only with some desire that people perform *shraaddha-karma*, *yajna-karma*, *daan* etc. These are all *dharma-karyas* but in the background there is some desire. (Shl 32) Traders, agriculturists, cow-herds, labourers, architects, those who do tasks related to *devatas*, all these are driven to these jobs only by a 'desire' to earn money. **If there were**

no such desire, they would not have done any such work. (Shl 33) Driven by desire some people even plunge into the seas. There are many forms of *kama*. But all works in the world are driven only by *kama*. (Shl 34) There neither is nor was nor be a living being without desires in this world. Therefore among the three, *kama* is the essential quality. **Dharma & artha are embedded in kama.** (Shl 35) Just as butter is the essence of curds, *kama* is the essence of dharma & *artha*. Just as oil is more precious than the extracted seeds, ghee is greater than butter-milk, fruits & flowers are greater than the wood, *kama* is greater than dharma & *artha*. (Shl 36) Just as the nectar in the flower is greater than the flower, *kama* is greater than dharma & *artha*. *Kama* is the root cause for the other two. Therefore *kama* is a form of dharma & *artha*. (Shl 37) But for *kama* brahmanas would not eat delicious/sumptuous food. Without desire no one would donate money etc to brahmanas. But for it, none of the transactions in this world would occur. For all these reasons a higher position has been assigned to *kama*. (Shl 38) Dharmaja! Therefore it is because of *kama* that you are wearing attractive dresses. Enjoy your life with beautiful, well decked up and intoxicating young women. **Let kama be the main purushartha guiding us.** (Shl 39) Dharmarandana! I have come to this decision after much thinking. There is no need for you to think any more in this matter. These words of mine are the best; pleasing; great; full of essence; without any harshness. Even great people can accept this. (Shl 40) **In my opinion all three purusharthas viz dharma, artha & kama should be practiced equally. One who is stuck to only one of these is of the worst kind.** In dharma & *artha*, efficiency/capability is the basis for *artha* and hence it is of middle order. It is clear that *kama* is greater than *artha*. **One who is interested in two purusharthas is middling. One who has equal interest in all three is the superior person.**

Yudhishtira's view (Fate and prominence of moksha dharma)

Having listened to his brothers and Vidura, Yudhishtira thought for a while, analysed their statements and said with a smile: (Shl 44) That person will be free of all blemishes who is not engaged in *paap-karya* or *punya-karyas*, and who is not immersed in dharma or *artha* or *kama*. **One who considers a lump of mud and stone and lump of gold all equally will be freed of the artha-siddhi which is accompanied by happiness and grief.** (Shl 45) One who is able to recollect past births, is being agonised by the problems of old age and worldly affairs and has been awakened due to these will appreciate only *moksha*. **But we do not know what that moksha is.** (Shl 46) Bhagawan Swayambhu himself has said that one who has '*sneha*' (attachment) in his mind cannot have *mukti* (salvation). **Those jnanis without attachment attain moksha.** You should not treat anyone as loved one or otherwise. (Shl 47) Thinking in this way is the main method to attain *moksha*. **A living being cannot live exactly as it wishes. I will do with faith whatever work Brahma has assigned me to. Fate has assigned each living being in different works. Therefore all of you should understand that fate (Brahma) is very strong.** (Shl 48) Whatever a human being does, he cannot obtain what he is not destined to obtain. All of you have to understand that whatever the fate has decided for you only will happen. It is not necessary to depend on dharma, *artha*, *kama* to achieve things that benefit. Even one who does not practice these can obtain *artha* if he has the blessings/grace of fate. Therefore one should take to the path of *moksha* for the welfare of the world. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 167)

• Who is a pandita?

Vidura to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 20) One whose intelligence by virtue of critical analysis of all aspects takes the path of dharma & *artha* only, and who for the same reason pushes aside *kama* and practices the other three *purusharthas* (dharma, *artha*, *moksha*) is called a *pandita*. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; Adhyaya 33)

Ashrama dharma & trivarga

Value of grihastha dharma

(Shl 18) Since activities related to worship of *pitrus*, *devatas* and *atithis* are combined in *grihasthashrama*, it has received much praise. **It is in this ashrama that dharma-artha-kama all three can be realised.** (Shl 19) **At the same time, for a person in this ashrama who performs karmas prescribed in Vedas but without desire for fruits (without phalapeksha) adhyatmic rise is not denied** (possibility of *moksha* also exists). (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; adhyaya 12)

Daiva (Fate), Human initiative and trivarga

- Yudhishtira: (Shl 47) A living being cannot live exactly as it wishes. I will do with faith whatever work Brahma has assigned me to. **Fate has assigned each living being in different works.**

Therefore all of you should understand that fate (Brahma) is very strong. (Shl 48) Whatever a human being does, he cannot obtain what he is not destined to obtain. All of you have to understand that whatever the fate has decided for you only will happen. **It is not necessary to depend on dharma, artha, kama to achieve things that benefit. Even one who does not practice these can obtain artha if he has the blessings/grace of fate.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 167)

- **Self-effort most important**

Bhishma's discourse to Yudhishtira: (Shl 14) Child! Yudhishtira! One should always engage in efforts towards achieving *purusharthas*. If there is no *Purusha-prayatna* (self-efforts, initiative) *daiva* by itself will not provide results. **Only after doing our efforts fully, one should pray for grace of God; one who simply believes that all achievements will happen merely by daiva-bala will not accomplish anything.** Therefore, for a king, efforts are the main dharma. (Shl 15) For success of a work, luck (fate, unseen) and *Purusha-prayatna* are the two general prerequisites. **But it is my opinion that of the two, Purusha-prayatna is more important because luck factor is pre-decided.** (Shl 16) If a work that has been started once does not succeed fully, or remains incomplete, one should not grieve about it. Efforts should be made once again to accomplish that task. This is a very important policy and *neeti* for kings. (Shanti Parva, Rajanushasana upa-parva; Adhyaya 56)

- **Sri Krishna preaches/clarifies to Bhima on daiva**

Sri Krishna to Bhima: I would like to tell something. **When analysing very complex or delicate matter of dharma, people do not take into account alternatives/possibilities for gods & humans.** (They do not consider what could be '*daiva sankalpa*'). **Daivabala plays a more prominent role in the achievement of artha by humans. An effort without daivabala is also responsible for destruction. It is doubtful if ends can be achieved by mere human efforts.** Many times decisions of good & bad reached after careful thinking of pros & cons even by scholars change just as a storm may change its directions. Therefore, Bhima, mere human resolve and mere effort become useless.

(Shl 8) **Man discusses with experts; uses his intelligence & discriminative thinking to do the task; the job done will also be just. But for such a well thought out work also obstructions are posed by daiva.** (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. (Shl 11) Therefore humans should consciously come to the conclusion that there is no alternative to human effort for leading our lives and engage in the work needed. But it should be understood that the results are a combination of human efforts & *daiva-anugraha* (God's grace).

(Shl 12) One who decides that 'doing the needed effort is my duty, result is determined by Gods' will not grieve if the result is not as expected. He does not exult also if the results turn out to be as expected. I would like to iterate the same in the matter of war also. (Shl 13) There is no reason to believe that victory is certain when fighting an enemy. This does not mean that obstacles posed by Gods cannot be overcome. It is possible to overcome them by self-efforts. (Shl 15) **When luck changes sides you should not get depressed. You should not weaken in the mind.** (Udyoga; Yanasandhi; adhyaya 77)

- **Draupadi to Yudhishtira about Dharma & Vidhi**

(Shl 1) My prostrations to Parameshwara who has caused the delusion to your intelligence and *vidhi* (fate) which has caused us this sorry state! Though your thinking should have taken the path of our forefathers, it has taken a different path. (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 enjoying/suffering the karmas). Some are deluded by greed and desire to be freed of grief without doing any *karmas*. (Shl 3) **In this world man cannot gain wealth by practicing dharma or by being generous or by forgiveness or by being polite/humble or by being kind. If it were not so, you should not have been in this serious difficulty.** Even your great brothers need not have suffered. *Maharaja!* **Have you ever thought that there is something superior to dharma? When you were a chakravarti also you did not do anything opposed to dharma.**

Today even though in deep trouble, nothing which is against dharma enters your mind. You consider dharma more important than your life itself.

(Shl 6, 7) **Everyone knows that for you 'kingdom is for dharma alone', 'your life is for dharma alone'. Maharaja! You can even give up your brothers; even me; but I feel you cannot relinquish dharma.** (Shl 8) I have also heard the following being said by elders: "Dharma protects the king who protects dharma." But today I have to consider even this statement of elders as being false, **because, no dharma is saving you though you protected it with more affection than your life.** (Shl 9) Just as shadow follows an animal, your mind always follows dharma. Just as shadow & animal cannot be separated, dharma and you cannot be separated. Your body, mind & wealth (*tanu, mana, dhana*) are all dedicated for dharma. You have never rejected your equals or your elders or youngsters. Even though you were the monarch of the whole world, *ahankara* (ego, arrogance) could not find any place in you. You are always satisfying/pleasing *devatas* with *swahakara*, *pitrus* with *swadhakara* and *brahmanas* with *dakshina*.

Seeing the grief and sorry state you are facing in spite of your dedication to dharma, my heart is agonised. Due to this reason, my mind is confused about dharma & adharma. There are many examples in the history to show that man is subject to the control of *Ishwara* and is incapable of doing anything independently. (Shl 22) **Just as Paramatma has incorporated the tree & fruit in the seed, happiness & grief, likeable and unpleasant acts are all prepared before the man is born.** (Shl 23) **Just as a puppeteer moves the limbs of a puppet with his skill, Paramatma moves the lives of all as per his wishes.** (Shl 24) Just as sky is all pervasive, Paramatma is also all-pervasive and directs the lives of *jeevas*. (Shl 25) Just as a bird tied to a string, all *jeevas* are controlled by *Ishwara* (*Jeeva* is neither lord of itself or others). Just as a bead strung in thread, like an ox tied with ropes through its nose and a fallen tree caught in a flood, every *jeeva* is subject to the wishes of Paramatma. **Man being under the control of Paramatma cannot do anything independently.** (Shl 28) Man is ignorant. He knows nothing. He is not responsible for his happiness & grief. He does his works as prompted by *daiva* and then goes to *swarga* or *naraka*. (Shl 29) **Just like a blade of grass caught in a storm, this human being is prompted by this powerful daiva and does good & bad deeds.**

(Shl 30) Yudhishtira! One peculiar thing about this is: It is certain that *daiva* is all-pervasive. It is also certain that good & bad deeds are done by his prompting. But no one considers (accepts) that good or bad deeds are prompted by *daiva*. (Shl 31) This body called *kshetra* is only a pretext (*nimitta*) for Brahma. The *vidhatha* performs auspicious & inauspicious deeds through the agency of this body. (Shl 32) Yudhishtira! See the power of Paramatma's *maya*. He makes the man believe that this body, which is merely a pretext, to be 'I & mine' and causes it to kill another *kshetra* (body). (Shl 33, 34) **Matters understood by tattvadarshi maharshis at one time change at another time like the speed of wind. Man understands one thing; daiva does another thing. Jnanis have decided that this whole creation is a massive illusion. Daiva creates all this. Daiva again is responsible for the laya (dissolution, extinction) of all this.** On one side it creates large numbers of life and on the other side also creates innumerable lives which will kill lives. Moreover, it creates discord/hatred within the same group/specie and becomes responsible for destruction of that specie. We can see this peculiarity in both *sthavara* & *jangama* (Literally fixed & moving or animate & inanimate).

(Shl 35) Yudhishtira! To cut an inanimate tree, an axe made by using a part of a tree is used! A stone is used to break a stone. Iron can be cut by an iron weapon/tool only. Inanimate, by itself, does no action. *Daiva* does everything. (Shl 36) Yudhishtira! In this way, *prapitamaha* (great grandfather), *swayambhu*, *devadeva* Paramatma using his *maya* causes animals to kill animals. (Shl 37) Just as children play with dolls, Bhagawan for his pleasure (*leelarth*) creates lives and destroys the lives thus created. (Shl 38) This *Paradaiva* does not like parents show affection towards all. It sometimes appears that it treats humans as not belonging to it and behaves with rage as if revenging an enemy. (Shl 39) Because, **due to the mischief or vagaries of this daiva we see satpurushas, satyanishtas and dharma-sampannas live in difficulty and the evil live in great luxury. This caused me much sadness/agitation,** Dharmaja.

(Shl 40) **Seeing the difficulties you are suffering today and the comforts & luxuries that Duryodhana is enjoying, I certainly do not accept the Paramatma who has caused all this**

as being the greatest. I blame him. He is partial. (Shl 41) What great *phalas* will *daiva* enjoy which has given Duryodhana who is cruel, *adharmi*, trespasses all *shastras*, is arrogant, is greedy and wicked all the wealth & luxury? What benefit does *daiva* gain from this? (Shl 42) **If it is true that 'karmas done follow the doer and has no connection with others', then this Sarveshwara who has prompted all these sinful deeds should also become a sufferer of these paap-karmas.** On the other hand if it is that the good & bad deeds of humans do not attach to the all-pervasive and prompter Paramatma, then I will have to conclude that happiness & grief only depend on might and I feel sorry for the weak. (Vana; Arjunabhimana; Adhyaya 30)

- **Yudhishtira's reply to Draupadi about her views on Dharma & Vidhi**

(Shl 1) Draupadi! Your words certainly make one feel happy. They are full of illustrations. I have completely thought about all that you have said. **Though what you have said appears very logical they resemble the arguments of atheists.**

Yajnaseni! **I do not do my karmas with an eye on the fruits of those karmas.** I don't think it is my duty. I perform *yajnas* as my duty. Whatever karmas are prescribed for one in *grihasthashrama* by *smritis* I do as many of them as I can do 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 *dharma-phalas*. (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. (Shl 8) One who has doubt about dharma will have lowly births such as birds & animals. Higher *lokas* and path of *moksha* will be hard to attain for one who has weak conviction about the sayings of *rishis*. You might have heard that there is a lot of difference between Vedas & *dasyus* (*impious, barbarian, enemy of gods*). Same wide gap exists between an *adharmi* & *moksha*. (Shl 9) A boy who is of noble birth and studies Vedas and practices karmas ordained in Vedas, will be respected by *dharmatmas* as a *rajarshi* without bothering about his age. (Shl 10) One who rejects the path of dharma, who has doubts about karmas and does sinful deeds only for money, even if aged will be considered inferior to *dasyus* and *shudras*. Draupadi! A few days back did you not have *darshan* of Markandeya *rishi*? He attained *chiranjeevitva* (immortality) only by practicing dharma. Vyasa, Vasishta, Maitrya, Narada, Lomasha, Shuka etc have become holy souls (*pootatma*) only by practice of dharma. Have you not met all of them? They are capable of both curse & boon (*shapa-anugraha*); are great *tapasvis*. *Devatas* also worship them. They all propound *Veda-marga*. Therefore I do not find it right to blame *daiva* or doubting dharma.

(Shl 16) **A mean person thinks of himself as all-knowing (*sarvajna*) and presents an atheist's logic rejecting dharma & daiva. But he pays no attention to the sayings of maharshis who know about past, present & future. He calls them 'insane'.** For him the objects of pleasure of the senses are most important. That fool thinks that pleasure of the senses is the highest happiness. He has no thought of *paraloka-paradaiva*. (Shl 18) **There is no remedial measure or repentance for the offences committed by one who has doubts about dharma.** That sinner who always thinks of *artha* & *kama* only cannot attain *paraloka*. (Shl 19) The person who rejects the authority of Vedas, interprets Vedas absurdly/wrongly, is only interested in *kama-artha* will suffer in *naraka* in due course of time. (Shl 20) *Kalyani*! **But one who practices dharma as a duty without any doubts about Veda & dharma will certainly attain superior lokas.**

(Shl 21) The foolish person who rejects/deplores the ancient authorities and does not practice dharma will not enjoy happiness in several births also. (Shl 24) Just as boat is the equipment to cross a sea for a trader/merchant, to those who wish to attain *Swarga*, dharma acts like that ship. There is no other option. (Shl 25) **If the dharma practiced by dharmatmas were to be useless, by now the world would have been in total darkness.** None would have tried for *moksha*. No one would want even *artha* and *vidya*. Human beings would have lived like animals. **If tapas,**

brahmacharya, yajna, adhyayana, daan, arjava etc. were all useless, these satpurushas would not be practicing it uninterrupted for ages. If these karmas were to be useless, even engaging in them (*pravritti*) will have to be treated as cheating. If as you say, all these karmas were to be without any *phalas*, why would proponents of dharma like *rishis, devatas, Gandharvas, suras, rakshasas* etc take so much interest in it? (Shl 30) **They were practicing this ancient dharma with the firm belief that it will bring about auspicious results.** Draupadi! **When the fruits of vidya and tapas are there for us to see, can we not say that fruits of dharma & adharmas are also established?** *Adharma* results in bad results and dharma in good results. You are yourself a proof that there is result for *tapas*. Recollect how you were born Panchali! How did great Dhrishtadyumna take birth? Were you not both born as a result of practicing dharma? Do you need greater evidence than this? Those who practice karma while being *jitendriyas* and without desiring much will surely get the fruits of *karmas*. (Shl 34) The foolish are never content irrespective of what they get and do not enjoy here also. Not having practiced dharma, they will not enjoy the fruits of dharma in the other world also.

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 unable to achieve *shreyas* 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) Krishna! 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; Arjunabhisamana; *Adhyaya* 31)

(In essence Yudhishtira is saying that while atheists can come up with logical arguments & objections, the practice of dharma and acceptance of Paramatma requires faith strengthened by the long centuries of history of yogis and *maharshis* and our own practical experiences)

- **Bhimasena's discourse to Yudhishtira on dharma-artha-kama and Purusha-prayatna**
Bhima, who became angrier after listening to what Yajnaseni said, came near Yudhishtira and said: *Maharaja!* Follow the *rajadharma* practiced by *satpurushas*. What will we achieve by living in the forest like *rishis* devoid of *dharma, artha or kama*? **Duryodhana did not win our kingdom by dharma or without crookedness or by valour. He has snatched our kingdom and wealth by cheating in the game of dice.**

(Shl 4-6) Just as weak fox snatches the food from lion by cheating, weak Duryodhana has snatched wealth from us, who are mighty, by cheating. **Haven't you, under the delusion, that keeping up the promise is the prime duty given up artha meaning this kingdom which is the basis for dharma & kama and undergoing all this suffering? Our kingdom which was protected by Arjuna and could not have been snatched by even Indra was snatched from us from under our noses by these wicked people only because of your carelessness.** (Shl 7) Brother! Kauravas snatched our kingdom due to your weakness even as we are alive and right in our presence just as snatching *bilva* fruits from those who have no arms and cows from those who have no legs. Yudhishtira! You are only desirous of dharma (*dharma-kama*). We are also suffering this grievous difficulty because we do not wish to hurt you. We are causing happiness to our enemies and grief to our friends only because we are under your control.....**You make meaningless promises and call it 'dharma, dharma'.**

Only the weak lose hopes, not being capable of retrieving lost wealth. **Losing hope is self-destructive and of no use.** Yudhishtira! You are farsighted. You are strong and know that we all have valour. In spite of this you are too calm. You are not realising that our difficulties today are

destructive. Your quality of forgiving is the reason for this. But Dhritarashtra's sons do not think so. **They think that by virtue of being forgiving we are weak and that we have no valour to regain the kingdom. This agonises me intensely.** I feel it is best for us to start a *dharma-yuddha*, fight till the end, be killed and attain *veera-swarga*. In case we win the war, this kingdom will be ours. With this also we can gain auspicious results. War is the right approach to us, who desire fame, who wish to gain fame & success by following *swadharma*. You may be worried that this will make us blameworthy in the eyes of the world. But the whole world knows that we were cheated. Therefore if we fight a war for regaining our kingdom, no one will blame us. **You may say that even if others do not blame, it is *adharma* to go against vow or promises. I believe that this dharma that you depend on is *kudharma* (bad dharma).** Because (Shl 21) **Will that dharma which puts you and your friends in deep misery be called as dharma? It is surely not dharma. It is a bad addiction; it is *kudharma*.**

(Shl 22) Brother! **Sometimes dharma itself makes the person weak who does nothing and always chants 'dharma, dharma'. Just as happiness and grief abandon the dead, *dharma* & *artha* abandon the weak.** (Shl 23) One who follows dharma purely for the sake of dharma will suffer many difficulties. He will not understand the benefit of dharma. He is like the blind that cannot see the brightness of the Sun. (Shl 24) Similarly, **one who earns wealth purely for the sake of it will not know the usefulness of money.** Just like the cow-herd who protects the cows in the forest for earning his labour, he will be engaged only in the protection of money. (Shl 25) One who does not spend the money earned for dharma and *kama* is an inferior person. He deserves to be killed. Just as one who commits *brahma-hatya* is deplored by all, a greedy person is also deplored by all. (Shl 26) **In the same way, one who lives only for *kama* and has rejected *dharma* and *artha* will be abandoned by friends & relatives and will be a pauper bereft of *dharma-artha*.** (Shl 27) One who makes enjoying the pleasures of *kama* as the main goal and does not accumulate any *dharma-artha*, will after some time be destroyed just as fish die when the lake they live in dries up. (Shl 28) Therefore *vidwans* will be very careful in the matters of dharma & *artha*. Just as *arani* is essential for *agni*, *dharma* & *artha* are essential for *kama*. (Shl 29) ***Artha* should always be rooted in *dharma*. In the same way, *dharma* should be of use in *artha*.** Just as clouds & ocean are mutually dependent, dharma & *artha* are mutually dependent/supportive. (Shl 30) ***Kama* is the happiness/glee felt (in the mind) by way of pleasures of senses and the comforts of money, gold, objects, vehicles etc. *Kama* lives only in the mind and has no body.** It is body-less. No one can see it. (Shl 31) One who desires *artha* earns it with dharma as the basis. One who desires *kama* needs money. Meaning, ***artha* comes from (following) dharma and *kama* from (having) *artha*.** But nothing (no object/nothing tangible) is obtained by *kama*. (Shl 32) **It is not possible to get (satisfy) one desire from another desire;** because *kama* has the form of fruit (/result). **Only enjoyment (or experience) is the use of *kama*.** Burning firewood results in ash. **But nothing can again be produced from ash.** Similarly, dharma & *artha* prepare the ground or make *kama* possible; *kama* ends in its experience.

(Shl 33) The effect of *adharma* pains all the animals in the world just as the bird-hunter in this forest causes agony to the birds. Violence is the form of *adharma*. (Shl 34) **One who does not understand the true nature of dharma and is a slave of *kama* and greed becomes eligible to be killed.** He will be considered evil or wicked both 'here' (*iha*) and 'there' (*para*). (Shl 35) *Maharaja!* *Artha* means accepting money. You know this already. You also know the true forms of money. (It can have many forms like cash, gold, land, cattle, elephant, horses, soldiers, servants etc.) You also know all that can be achieved with *artha*. You also know the right use of objects. (Shl 36) If wealth is destroyed or lost—due to old age or death—it is called *anartha*. Today such an *anartha* has happened to us. (Shl 38) When our sense organs like eye or ear engage themselves in an object, mind resolves to grasp (take possession) of that object; the heart decides. **I call *kama* as the pleasure/happiness we get by experiencing the objects of pleasure. For the work we do, the best result is satisfaction of the desire.** (Shl 39) **That is why *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* have been stated by elders in that order/sequence.** From *dharma* we obtain *artha* and from *artha* we obtain *kama*. **No one should reject *artha* & *kama* and practice only *dharma*. One should not give up *dharma* & *kama* focussing only in *artha*. Or *dharma* & *artha* should not be neglected in pursuit of only *kama*.**

Shaastras say the following in respect of practicing *dharma-artha-kama*. (Shl 40) In the pre-noon period dharma related deeds should be performed. In noon time, money should be earned. In the

evening, one should satisfy his desires. This is the rule of *shaastras*. (Shl 41, 42) **In the early stages of life, desires should be fulfilled. In the middle stage money should be earned. In old age, dharma should be earned. Even when doing this following the inter-dependence of *dharma-artha-kama* is important.** *Shaastras* thus direct us in respect of the focus areas in stages of life. It does not imply that the early years should be dedicated to pursuit of *kama* to the exclusion of *dharma-artha*. **From *dharma* should come *artha*, and from *artha* should come *kama*—this is valid for all times.** Yudhishtira! Wise people practice *dharma-artha-kama* as I have stated just now. Brother! Is separating *dharma-artha-kama* and following *dharma* for its own sake, or being absorbed only in *artha* or being only absorbed only in *kama* the way to attain happiness? Or is it better to achieve one with the help/power of the other? You have to think thoroughly in this matter. You can take a decision and either you can reject inter-related *dharma-artha-kama* and choose only *moksha*. Or by following the *shaastras* you can try to regain the kingdom. But one who cannot make up his mind clearly between these two options will only have grief. His state will be like that of a sick person. Brother! Everyone knows that you are always a follower of dharma. Knowing this many well wishers encourage you to perform *yaaga-yajnas*.

(Shl 46) The following have been said to be great dharmas: *yajna*, *daan*, honouring *satpurushas*, *Vedadhyayana* and no deceit. These are capable of giving fruits both in this world and the other. Don't you agree with these? (Shl 47) But these great dharmas cannot be practiced without *artha*. Even if many other facilities are available, without money *yajna-yaaga*, *daan*, honouring *satpurushas* cannot be done. (Shl 48) **It is certain that this whole creation is dependent on dharma. There is nothing greater than dharma. But the practice of this dharma is possible only by one who has money.** (Shl 49) One with mere *dharma-buddhi* cannot earn money by begging or weakness. (Shl 50) A brahmana can earn money by begging/seeking. But that is forbidden for you. We can gain *artha* only by valour. Therefore, we should adopt our *swadharma* of valour and earn the money needed for *dharma-karya*. (Shl 51) The begging that brahmanas can choose or the agriculture or trading of *vysya* or the service of *shudra* is not suited for us *kshatriyas*. *Kshatra-dharma* is working by using might & valour. (Shl 52) Therefore you should follow the practice of dharma suited to *kshatriyas*. Destroying the enemy by any method is the main dharma of *kshatriya*. Accordingly you should get ready to conquer the enemy as per *swadharma*. With my help & Arjuna's help destroy the sons of Dhritarashtra who are like a forest.

(Shl 53) *Vidwans* say that *daansheelata* (quality of giving to charity/donating) is a great dharma. Therefore become *daan-sheelata*. It is surely not appropriate for you to live in miserable state. (Shl 54) Rajendra, wake up! You know all the *sanatana* dharmas. You are born in the *vamsha* of *Kshatriyas* who perform cruel deeds. For this reason people are afraid of *kshatriya*. (Shl 55) Destroy the enemies and care for citizens as your children. Enjoy its fruits. It is certainly not to be blamed. This is the *rajadharma* designed by *daiva*. It is also your *swadharma*. This is what is called *sanatana dharma*. (Shl 56) If you were to slip from this *swadharma*, the world will make fun of you. **Whatever good qualities may seem to be present in other dharmas, it is not beneficial to give up *swadharma*. It is not appreciable also.** (Shl 57) Kurunandana! Convert your heart to a *kshatriya*-heart and drive out this weakness of your mind. Take refuge in valour and take over the responsibility of kingdom. (Shl 58) No one king has won the kingdom or monarchy by being merely *dharmic*.

(Shl 59) Just as a hunter spreads food and catches the animals when they come to eat it or just as a fisherman ties a worm to the thread and by dangling it in water catches fish, a king defeats the enemy kings by meeting the officials of the enemy king in secret, offering/promising them plentiful wealth in various forms and dividing them from their king and finding out his secrets. (Shl 60) **Did it not happen the same way between *devas* & *asuras*. *Asuras* were born first; had a lot of wealth; were very valorous. Later *devatas* destroyed them by clever planning. Does anyone blame the *devatas*?** (Shl 61) *Maharaja*! **Therefore all deeds are dependent on valour. All is gained by the mighty.** Right now you conquer the enemy by *sama-daan-bheda-danda* and *koota-neetis*. There is no archer who can equal Arjuna and no *gadadhari* who can equal me. (Shl 64) Valour is the reason for earning wealth. For a *kshatriya* there is no alternative to *swadharma* of valour for gaining wealth. For a *Kshatriya*, quality other than valour is a waste. A weak *kshatriya* is as useful to the world as a tree in winter (*himantha ritu*). (Shl 65) **Sometimes a small wealth has to be spent to gain enormous wealth just as a few seeds are sown to reap abundant crops.** Do not have any doubt in the matters I have told you so far. (Shl 66) But where you know that equivalent or higher wealth will not be gained, *artha* should not be spent/invested.

Spending in this way will be like *khara-kandura nyaya* (By scratching the neck of a donkey nothing is gained. The donkey does not become happy but you will have to take bath. On the other hand scratching the neck of a cow will give you punya & also help in milking). (Shl 67) Just as by spending small wealth intelligently enormous wealth can be gained, by sacrificing a small amount of dharma a lot of *dharma-karyas* can be done. One who does this is a *jnani*.

(Shl 68) Intelligent persons will find out who are friends among the enemy, will make a deal with them, will divide them and by making them to support our side, will weaken the enemy. Then they will await the right time and capture the enemy or the kingdom. (Shl 69) **Mighty do not go to war solely depending on military strength. They should also have *atma-shakti* (inner power).** Only those with confidence & firmness of mind can fight. It is not possible to rule people by any other kind of effort or by praising others. (Shl 70) **Many times even the weak can join together and defeat the enemy just as several small bees join together and chase away the man who comes to steal their honey.** (Shl 71) Like this you also have to defeat the enemy by some approach. Just as the Sun both agonises and protects people with his rays, you have to punish the wicked and care for the virtuous.

(Shl 72) We have the oft said *purana-vakya* that *kshatriya's tapas* is 'protecting the country from enemies and caring for the people (good governance).' Our forefathers followed this only. (Shl 73) Instead of this if *kshatriya* starts dedicating himself to *yajna-tapas*, the duties of brahmana, he cannot attain success. He certainly cannot attain the *punya-lokas* that can be gained by victory or death in *dharma-yuddha* by indulging in *yajna-tapas*.

Seeing your miserable state today, people may believe that *tejas* from Sun and light from Moon can be separated someday (If Dharmaraja can suffer such fate, what about others?). When *satpurushas* meet and when relatives & friends get together they discuss you and praise you and condemn Duryodhana. Above all this, Kauravas and brahmanas praise you. They say that, 'Yudhishtira is *satya-priya*, *satya-nishta*, never lies due to greed or miserliness or due to wealth.' (Shl 78) **Even if you commit a few sins to get back the kingdom, later you can perform many *yajnas* & *yaagas* and by giving huge donations you can clear them.** (Shl 79) By donating thousands of villages and cows to thousands of brahmanas, a king can clear his sins and shine like the Moon which has come out of clouds.

People are saying that Duryodhana having the kingdom is like having milk in a bag made of dog-skin, like Vedas with a low caste person, like truthful words in a thief and like valour in a woman. *Ajatashatru!* Today you are facing this miserable situation. Because you have lost the kingdom we are also subjected to many difficulties. Therefore, you should immediately mount a chariot equipped with all the weapons, get blessings from brahmanas and go to Hastinapura. Proceed on victory march with your brothers and attack Hastinapura....Yudhishtira! Have no doubt about our victory. (Vana; Arjunabhisamana; Adhyaya 33)

Governance/Kings & Purusharthas

- Devarshi Narada's Questions Yudhishtira on Governance: (Shl 17) **Are you serving the three *purusharthas* viz dharma, *artha* & *kama* without any anxieties?** Are your resources adequate for sustaining & nurturing your kingdom? Is your mind always interested in dharma? Are you enjoying pleasures in an appropriate manner? I hope you have no confusions or grief in respect of dharma-*artha-kama*? (Shl 18-20) Are you following a policy, just as your forefathers were doing, consisting of dharma-*artha-kama* but which is not silly in respect of brahmana-vysya-*shudra varnas*? **Mean/inferior persons do not follow the path of dharma due to greed.** Those who have renounced become paupers due to greed (strong adherence) of dharma. Those interested in *kama* neglect dharma-*artha*. You being the lord of the kingdom, I hope, are not mean due to greed for wealth, renounce due to greed of dharma and causing danger to dharma-*artha* due to attachment to *kama*. **Dharma-*artha-kama* should be practiced appropriately. Limit should not be exceeded in any of these.** There should be discrimination as to what should be done when. Those in the know of time & dharma say the following: dharma should be practiced/attended to (*dharma sadhane*) in the morning, *artha* in the afternoon, *kama* in the night. Thus a king should behave such that there is no conflict between the three. Are you following such principles? (Sabha; Lokapalasabha; Adhyaya 5)

- Devarshi Narada's Questions Yudhishtira on Governance: (Shl 86) Are you sleeping in the second & third *yaamas* of the night and by waking up in the fourth *yaama* thinking about dharma-*artha*? (*Yaama: one eighth of a day; period of three hours*). (Shl 98) Are you with conscious effort practicing *karma-marga* as propounded by Vedas with faith in the practice of dharma which is rooted in Vedas and was being followed by your forefathers? (Sabha; Lokapalasabhakhyana; Adhyaya 5)
- Bhishma replied: (Shl 8) Yudhishtira! I will tell you all details. **That in which all things in this world are resting on or depending on is called 'danda'.** (Shl 9) **Another name of dharma is *vyavahara*** (this word can mean many things: Action, practice, conduct, behaviour, commerce, adherence to law). For the dharma not to be affected in any way to one who lives carefully, *danda* is necessary. **Therefore this *danda* is *vyavaharatva*** (quality of *vyavahara* or essence of *vyavahara*) **of *vyavahara*.** (Shl 10) Even Manu has, in the past, stated this clearly: 'The actions and practices of that king who treats those whom he likes and does not like equally, uses *danda-neeti* without any biases and protects his citizens very well are the best dharma....What I have stated is the statement of Brahma. Because this defines '*vyavahara*', that dharma has also been called by the name '*vyavahara*'. (Shl 14) If the king applies *danda-neeti* properly all three *vargas* viz *dharma-artha-kama* can be accomplished. Therefore *danda* is a great *devata*. It makes itself seen with the power of *agni*...(Shl 17, 18) ***Danda* takes the physical shape of every weapon and moves about in the world.** (Shl 19) **It goes about piercing, cutting asunder, agonising, splitting, banging, killing, running behind offenders.**

(Shl 36) **It is *danda* that establishes this world in truth. In *satya*, dharma is well organised. Such dharma is established in brahmanas.** ... (Shl 49) The dharma that Brahma has preached for protecting the world and to establish *swadharma* is nothing but *danda-neeti*. For kings, no dharma is more worship worthy than *danda-neeti*. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; Adhyaya 121)

Illustrative stories/Episodes

Beautiful story of hunter and dove: About protecting one who approaches for it

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! Tell me what dharma will be obtained by one who protects those who seek protection (*sharanagati*).

Bhishma replied: There is great dharma in doing it. We have heard a story that a dove offered great hospitality to an enemy which sought its protection and even offered its own flesh for its eating.

Yudhishtira wanted to know this story. Bhishma narrated it. This story was told in the past by Bhagawan Parashurama to king Muchukunda.

In a huge and dense forest there was a fierce and scary looking hunter. Because he was so cruel even his relatives had abandoned him. (Shl 13) Scholars should reject sinners and keep them far away. **How can someone who deceives himself do acts of benefit to others?** (Shl 14) **Men who are cruel, wicked and interested only in killing others, cause fear in everyone just as serpents do.** He used to go with his net everyday, catch hundreds of birds and sell them. He never realised that his actions were *adharma*...Once when he was roaming around in the forest, suddenly a huge downpour of rain came. All places were filled with water and he did not go where to go or where he was going. But at that time he saw a pigeon lying on the ground. Even though he was himself all wet and shivering with cold, he picked up that shivering bird and put in his cage. **Even though he was himself in grief, he caused sadness to others also**.....Then he saw a massive tree under which he could take refuge. **That tree was like a *sadhu* created by Brahma only for causing benefits to others.** After a short while the wind and rain stopped. Realising that it was night and that his house was far away from there, he decided to spend the night under that tree. He bowed before the tree with folded palms and said, (Shl 32) "I seek refuge with all the gods in this tree." Then he slept there.

Adhyaya 144

A dove in praise of its wife, a *pativrata stree* (loyal wife)

On a branch of that same tree a pigeon lived with its family. Its feathers were peculiar and multi-coloured. Its wife dove which had gone out in the morning to bring food had not yet returned. The male pigeon started worrying seriously. 'There was a huge storm and rain today. My wife has not yet

returned. What could be the reason for her not returning? Is my wife indeed safe in this bad weather and this huge forest? Without her this house feels empty.'

(Shl 5) Even if a *grihasta*'s house is filled with children, grandchildren, daughters-in-law and others, if wife is not there it is as good as an empty house. (Shl 6) **In reality no one calls the structure 'home'. It is the wife who is called 'home' (*griha*)**. Scholars opine that a house without the wife is equal to a forest. (*na 'griham' griham ityahur grihini grihamuchyate, griham tu grihini-hinam aranya-sadrisham matam: the bold part is a famous quote in India*). If my wife who has red eyes, spotted body and sweet voice does not return today, what is the use of my living? (Shl 8) What is the use of my continuing to live if my beloved wife who would not eat if I have not eaten, would not bathe if I have not bathed, would not sit if I am not sitting and would not sleep until I had slept does not return today? (Shl 9) My beloved would feel happy when I was happy. If I was sad so was she. She would have a dull face if I had gone out. If I were to get angry she would say loving words. If such a beloved wife does not return there will be no meaning to my life. (Shl 10) She was a great *pativrata*. She was always dedicated to the welfare of and doing likeable things to the husband. **One who has such a wife in this world is indeed a fortunate man**. (Shl 11) She who was dedicated to serving the husband will know that I will be tired and hungry. Even so why has she not returned? She is deep love with me. She has a firm mind. That illustrious wife of mine was so friendly. She was my ultimate devotee. (Shl 12) If such a beloved wife is under a tree that part of the tree will itself be considered a home. Without wife, even if it is a big mansion, it is surely a forest. (Shl 13) **Wife assists the man in accomplishing all three *purusharthas* viz *dharma-artha-kama***. Even when travelling in other countries she will discharge the role of a trusted friend. (Shl 14) **It has been said that wife is the greatest asset of a man**. Whoever is helpless in this journey of life, his helper is his beloved wife. (Shl 15) There is no medicine like wife for a husband suffering from sicknesses, struggling for a long time and who is feeling pitiable. (Shl 16) **There is no relative equal to the wife. No one offers protection as wife**. There is none who supports and co-operates with the husband in practice of *dharma-karyas* (*nasti bharya-samo bandhu, nasti bharyaa sama gatih, nasti bharya samo loke sahayo dharma-sangrahe*). (Shl 17) **It is better for one who does not have a wife who speaks lovingly to go to forest. Because, a house without such wife is any way like a forest**.

Adhyaya 145

Wife pigeon requests husband to show hospitality to the hunter

Hearing the wailing and words of love of her husband the wife pigeon which was in the cage of the hunter thought to itself: (Shl 2) Wow! Surely I am very fortunate. Whether I have such good qualities in me or not my husband is praising me. (Shl 3) **A wife with whom the husband is dissatisfied should not be considered a woman at all**. If husband is happy about woman, all *devatas* will be satisfied about her. (Shl 4) One who has married with *agni* as witness is her husband. He is her greatest god. If such a husband is dissatisfied with his wife, she will be burnt like a creeper filled with flowers is burnt by forest fire. So thinking, she spoke addressing her husband:

(Shl 6) My dear! I will tell you something auspicious. After hearing me do as I say. At this time you should become the protector in a special way to one who is seeking protection. (Shl 7) This hunter is suffering from cold and hunger and is sleeping under the tree. Show suitable hospitality to him. (Shl 8) **Those who kill brahmana, who kill the cow and who kill someone who has sought refuge all acquire equal sins**. All three types of killers acquire same kind of sins. (Shl 9) According our birth we follow *kapoti-vritti* (**This has a beautiful double meaning here: *kapoti-vritti* means living like pigeons; that is picking up and eating grains that have fallen in agricultural farms and storing only some small quantities. Men who live by this policy are said to practice *kapoti-vritti***). It is befitting for someone who is *jitendrya* like you to constantly practice this way of life. (Shl 10) **I have heard that the *grihasta* who practices his prescribed dharma to the best of his abilities will attain eternal *punya-lokas***. (Shl 12) **You already have children; moreover you have sons to continue your lineage. Therefore now you can completely give up love for your body, accept accomplishment of dharma as the main goal and serve this hunter so that he feels satisfied**. (Shl 13) Do not grieve for me (that I am captured). You can marry another to continue your journey of life (*sharira yatra krityartham*).

Having said this, the female pigeon was looking continuously at its husband with its head lifted up.

Adhyaya 146

Pigeon sacrifices itself to quell hunter's hunger

Yudhishtira! The husband pigeon was very happy to hear the words of its wife which were full of dharma and logic. It showed hospitality to the hunter voluntarily and gladly. It said to the hunter: (Shl 3) Oh hunter! I welcome you. Tell me what you want me to do. There is no reason for you to grieve here. **Think that you are in your own home.** (Shl 4) What shall I do for you? Tell me quickly what you desire. **I am saying these words with love because you have come to our house desiring protection.** (Shl 5) **Even if the person who is seeking protection is the enemy, it is the duty of a grihastha to show him full hospitality. A tree does not withdraw its shade to even the one who has come to cut it. It offers shade to help overcome the tiredness of the woodcutter and helps him to cut with greater energy. This tree is our role model in offering hospitality.** (Shl 6) One should offer hospitality wilfully to one who has come seeking protection. This is particularly true for the *grihastha* who does *panch-yajna*. (Shl 8) Hunter! Therefore trust me completely and tell me what is it that you want? I will fulfil all your desires. Tell me your desire without any hesitation.

Dharmaja! Hearing the *kapota* the hunter said: I am really agonised by this cold (chill weather). Do something to overcome the cold. Yudhishtira! Soon as the hunter said this, the *kapota* gathered all the dry leaves around, flew as fast as it could to the ironsmith and brought fire and lighted the leaves. As the leaves started burning, it said to the hunter: Hunter! Now without any fear or worries you can heat your body and overcome the chill. The hunter was very happy at that time. Then the wide-eyed hunter said, 'Kapota! Hunger is bothering me too much. Therefore I will accept whatever food you can provide me now.' The Kapota replied: (Shl 16) Hunter! I do not have enough food to quell your hunger. **We the forest dwellers eat whatever we collect that day and live our lives. Just as munis who live in forest, we do not stock food items.**

Having said this, the pigeon sat with a dull face because it could not fulfil the desire of the guest. It thought what it could do to quell his hunger. In a few moments an idea occurred to it. Immediately it said to the hunter to wait for a while and that it would solve his problem. Then it gathered some more leaves and lighted it to burn brightly. Then it said: (Shl 21) Hunter! **I have heard from rishis, devatas, pitrus and mahatmas that there is great dharma in satisfying the needs of a guest.** (Shl 22) **I am clear that a guest should be satisfied by whatever method.** I am saying this truly. Accept me.

Saying this, the pigeon smilingly went around the fire three times and fell into it. The hunter seeing it was moved and thought, 'What a heinous deed I have done!' (Shl 25) I being so cruel, who have been blamed for my cruel acts, will acquire serious and severe sins. There is no doubt in this. **Seeing the sacrifice of the pigeon and recollecting all his cruel deeds and blaming himself the hunter cried bitterly.**

Adhyaya 147

Hunter develops disinterest (*vairagya*)

Seeing the sacrifice of the pigeon the hunter said to himself: (Shl 2) What have I done being a fool and a cruel person? I who am living only by wicked deeds am acquiring sins everyday. Blaming himself repeatedly he said: (Shl 3, 4) I am evil minded. I am not worthy of being trusted by any one. I have always lived by deceiving others. I am only interested in capturing birds and have given up all auspicious deeds. This pigeon which had the qualities of a *mahatma* has sacrificed its body to offer me food. Undoubtedly, this great sacrifice of the pigeon is a condemnation of me, a cruel person. (Shl 5) I who am a sinner will now give up my wife and children and above all my life itself. **This mahatma pigeon has shown the greatest dharma to me by its practice of it.** (Shl 6) Just as the heat of Sun dries up lake with less water in *grishma-ritu*, in the same way I will punish my body by giving up all kinds of comforts and pleasures. (Shl 7) I will tolerate hunger, thirst and hot sun and starve my body. I will undertake varieties of fast etc and perform *punya-karyas* which helps me attain *para-loka*. (Shl 8) This indeed is a wonder! **The pigeon by sacrificing itself has shown me how to treat the guests.** Having received the preaching from it, I will also practice dharma. **Dharma is the greatest refuge. I am also desirous of practicing the same kind of dharma I have seen in this pigeon.**

Yudhishtira! Having decided thus, he undertook harsh *vratas* and went away to practice the path of dharma rigorously. Before leaving he freed the pigeon in the cage, threw away the stick, net etc he had with him.

Adhyaya 148

Female pigeon's self-immolation; attains swarga with husband

Yudhishtira! The female pigeon was crying uncontrollably. It said: *Prana-kanta!* I do not remember having done anything that displeased you. (Shl 2) All women feel very sad when husband dies. Irrespective of the number of children they have, the grief of widowhood is unbearable to them. A woman who has lost her husband and leads a *tapasvini* like life becomes a lamentable person even for the relatives. (Shl 3,4,5) *Patideva!* **You were pampering me with your sweet, friendly and delightful words. You treated me with great respect and also regarded me well.** I used to enjoy with you in the caves of mountains, on river-sides and on top of beautiful trees. Even in the skies we were flying together happily. Dearest! I just do not have the pleasures I used to have with you in the past. (Shl 6) **Father, brother or son give only limited happiness to a woman. Only the husband gives her unlimited happiness.** Which woman will not worship a husband who makes possible such unlimited happiness? (Shl 7) **There is none like husband for the protection of a woman. There is no happiness greater than the company of the husband. Even if money, jewellery and everything is sacrificed, it is husband who will be the refuge for a woman.** (Shl 8) *Parna-natha!* There is no point in living without you. Which *pativrata* woman will be interested in living after losing her husband?

With great grief burning in her heart, she also entered the flame and gave up her life. She saw her husband all decked up and in the company of several *vimanas* and upon his beckoning entered his *vimana* and went to *swarga* along with him.

Adhyaya 149

Hunter also attains swarga

The hunter who was on his *maha-prasthan*a (keeping on walking further without food and water) saw the pigeon couple going to *swarga* in *vimanas*. He also decided to attain *swarga*. He developed total disinterest in all karmas, lived only on air, gave up *ahamkara* & *mamakaka* (I & mine) and finally was caught in a huge forest fire, was burned but attained *swarga*. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; adhyaya 143-149)

Story of mongoose

Janamejaya asked: (Shl 1) During the *yajna* performed by my grandfather Yudhishtira did any amazing event occur? If any such thing happened please tell me about it.

..Vaishampayana said: At that time a mongoose called Neelaksha came there. Its one side was golden. It thundered as soon as it came. It said: (Shl 7) Oh kings! The *daans* (charity) you have given in this *yajna* does not equal the *daan* of one small measure of flour (about 1000 grams) given by a brahmana who lived in Kurukshetra by *unccha vrtti* (picking up grains fallen on the ground from the field and surviving on it). All the brahmanas gathered there questioned the competence of mongoose to make such statement and justified themselves saying everything had been done without defects. They said: (Shl 12) We have properly felicitated all those who deserved it as specified in *shastras*. *Agni* has been contented with offering made with *mantras*. Whatever had to be donated has been given without any envy. (Shl 13, 14) Brahmanas are very satisfied with many kinds of *daans*. The *kshatriyas* are satisfied by the battles done according to dharma before the *yajna*. The forefathers are satisfied with the *shraadh*as done. *Vysyas* are satisfied with the care. Women are satisfied with fulfilling of their desires (*kamaistushtha varastriyah*). *Shudras* are satisfied with the kind treatment given to them. By getting items that were left after giving *daans* all other castes have been satisfied. (Shl 15) Cousins & relatives are happy with the virtuous behaviour of our king. *Devatas* are pleased with the *havis*. Those who came seeking refuge are happy with the protection given.

When everyone is feeling quite contented with this *yajna*, what defect have you found to condemn this *yajna*? You appear to be wise. ..So you must answer our question.

The mongoose narrated the event which resulted in one side of its body becoming golden.

In Kurukshetra there was a Brahmana who lived by *unccha vrtti* (surviving by picking up grains fallen on ground in fields after the harvesting is done). He was always engaged in *tapas* and lived along with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. He had virtuous practices & thoughts, followed dharma and was *jitendriya*. That brahmana was eating once every sixth meal (once in three days at the rate of two meals a day) along with his family members. Even if no meal became available on that day, another cycle of three days starts. Once a grave drought occurred. At that time he did not even have stored grains. Therefore that brahmana was in extreme trouble. Though the sixth meal cycle would come, they did not have any meal. On a *Jyeshtha Shukla paksha* day they all again set out to collect grains. But they could not find anything. Again when the sixth meal time came, they could all jointly gather

about one measure (about 750 to 1000 grams) of grains. They converted it into flour. After their bath and daily worship, they shared it equally among themselves. Just when they were to eat it, a Brahmana came as guest. They were all very happy to see a guest coming at the lunch time and invited him into their hut and extended all the courtesies. After seating him, the brahmana offered him one ball of flour of his share to him. The guest ate it happily. But he did not appear satisfied with it (looked still hungry). The brahmana started to worry about how to satisfy his hunger.

At that time his wife told him: Oh *patideva*! Give him my share of flour. He may feel contented after eating this and then he can continue on his journey. But the brahmana who knew his wife was struggling with hunger did not like to take it from her. He told her: (Shl 45) It is not right for you to say that I should give your share of flour when it is the duty of husband to protect wife, We see this even in the animal & bird world. Therefore it is my bounden duty. (Shl 46) **That husband who is cared and nourished by the kindness/mercy of wife will fall from fame. He will not even get good lokas.** (Shl 47) Works related to *dharma-karyas*, serving, care, protecting family lineage are all under control of woman. The dharma of *pitrus* and self is also dependent on wife. (Shl 48) That person who does not consider it his duty to protect his wife or is incapable of protecting her will get great infamy. He will fall into *Naraka* after death.

The wife replied: Do not be displeased. Are not *dharma* & *artha* equal to both of us? Therefore accept this one fourth share of the flour. Give it to the guest who is not satisfied. (Shl 51) Lineage grows only when the *rajas* of mother and semen of father unite. **Husband is the greatest devata to a woman.** It is only by the happiness of husband that woman gets both sexual happiness and the fruit of children. (Shl 52) You who are protecting and caring me have the name *pati*. Since you 'bear' me you are also *bhartru*. By giving me a son you are also *varada*. (*palanaddhi patistvam me bhartasi bharanaccha me, putra-pradanat-varadas-tasmat saktanprayaccha me*). Therefore give this flour to the guest. (Shl 53) You have also become emaciated due to old age. You are exhausted due to hunger. You are very weak. This being so what is special about me?

When she said this, the Brahmana took that flour and said to the guest: Please accept this again for your meals. The guest accepted and ate it. But he was not contented. Again the brahmana became worried. Seeing this, the son said: (Shl 56) Father! Give my share of the flour to the guest. I believe this is virtuous deed. Therefore I am offering my share. (Shl 57) I should always care for you with an effort. It is expectation of virtuous people that an aged father should be cared for. (Shl 59) You will be able to do *tapas* only by remaining alive. For those who have a body the ultimate dharma is to remain alive. Therefore take my share and give it to the guest.

The father said: (Shl 60) Child! Even if you become a thousand years old you will still be my child. Man feels fulfilled only after begetting a son. (Shl 61) Child! I know that young men have much hunger. I, an old man, can withstand hunger. Therefore you eat the flour of your share and become strong. (Shl 62) Son! Because I am quite old and emaciated, hunger does not bother me much. Moreover I have spent a lot of time in *tapas*. Therefore I have no fear of death.

The son said: (Shl 63) Father! I am your son. A person is called *putra* only because he protects *purusha* (father) (*pumsah tranat putra iti smrtah*). They also say that son is father's *atma*. Therefore it is right to protect your life through the son.

Father said: (Shl 64) Child! You are equal to me in appearance, character and restraint on *indriyas*. I have many times tested you to check if you have these qualities. Therefore as desired by you I will take the flour ball with you. The father took his share of flour balls and offered it to the guest. After eating it also the guest was not contented. The brahmana felt ashamed because of this.

As said earlier, that brahmana had a very virtuous daughter-in-law. To make her father-in-law happy she offered her share of the flour balls and said to him: (Shl 68) I get children from your son. You are highly worthy of worship for me. Therefore please take my share and offer to the guest. (Shl 69) Undecaying *lokas* are ready for me because of your grace. Such *lokas* are obtained through sons. One does not have to grieve after going to these holy *lokas*. (Shl 70) Just as *dharma*, *artha* & *kama* are means to *Swarga* and the three *agnis* are the means to *Swarga* through *yajnas*, in the same way son, grandson and great grandson are responsible for obtaining *Swarga*. (Shl 71) We have heard that son frees the father from debt of *pitrus*. Man truly goes to superior *lokas* through sons & grandsons and enjoys much happiness there.

Father-in-law said: (Shl 72) Oh one who has very good practices and behaviour! Your body has withered due to the attack of wind and sun. Seeing you who have lost lustre, have become thin and are in grief due to hunger how can I take these flour balls from you? It is not right of you to say to

take these which you have got after many days. (Shl 74) You have also been practicing the *vrat* of eating on the sixth cycle and are practicing purity, virtuous conduct and *tapas* like us. You are living this life with great difficulty. This being so, how can I take away from you the flour that has become available to you after a long time? (Shl 75) First of all you are still young. Secondly you are agonised by hunger. Thirdly you have become quite weak by observing fast. You are also dear to us due to the serving & caring you do. Therefore it is my duty to protect you in every possible way.

Daughter-in-law said: (Shl 76) You are guru of my guru (husband). You are *devata* to my husband. Therefore please take these to give to the guest. (Shl 77) My body, life and dharma are all dedicated to serving the guru (you). I will obtain the *lokas* I desire with your grace. (Shl 78) It is quite right for you to accept this flour either by thinking, 'I should take care of her well' or 'she has firm devotion towards me' or 'she is mine; what she is saying is worth considering'.

Father-in-law said: (Shl 79, 80) Daughter! You are very virtuous because you are ready to give away the flour which can save your life in order to save dharma. ..Therefore you should not be denied the opportunity of hospitality to the guest. Considering you as one among the virtuous I will accept these flour balls for the guest.

Mongoose said: Great brahmanas! Thus the Brahmana took the flour balls from her and offered it to the guest. After eating it the great guest brahmana was satisfied. **In fact Dharma himself had come to test that brahmana in the guise of a brahmana. Dharma said to him:** (Shl 83) Great *dvija*! The *daan* you have given out of what you had earned in just ways is pure. You have given this *daan* beyond your capability. I am highly pleased with this. Even *devatas* in *Swarga* will proclaim this *daan* of yours as highly significant. See there! Divine flowers are being showered from the sky. *Devarshis*, *devatas*, *Gandharvas*, *deva-shreshtas*, *deva-dootas* are all amazed by this *daan* of yours and are praising you. Brahmarshis in *Brahma loka* are waiting to meet you. Therefore you can go to *Swarga* right now. You have also uplifted your *pitrus* by this deed. (Shl 92) **Hunger destroys wisdom (*prajna*). It drives away *dharma-buddhi*. Due to destruction of *jnana* man becomes confused. One who conquers hunger which is responsible for all these dangers will surely gain *Swarga*.** (Shl 93) One who likes to give to charity will not suffer loss of dharma. You did not care for the hunger and thirst of even your wife and son considering dharma as most superior. (Shl 94) **It is a subtle truth that first man should learn just & legal ways of earning. The second is to determine with discrimination the deserving and then give *daan*. Giving *daan* at the right time is even more important. Giving *daan* with faith is even more important than that. The door to *Swarga* is very subtle/minute. Those who are under *moha* cannot see it.** (Shl 95) **The seed of *lobha* (greed) is the bolt (which locks) to the door of *Swarga*. It is protected by *raga* (longing, passion). It is very difficult to enter in it. Those who have given up anger, who are *jitendriyas*, are dedicated to *tapas*, and who give *daan* to the best of their abilities can give up *lobha* & *raga* and see *Swarga*.** (Shl 96) If a person has a thousand things to donate and donates even hundred of them with faith, he will get the fruits of donating thousand things. If a person has a hundred things to donate and donates even ten of them with faith, he will get the fruits of donating hundred things. **If someone who is not capable of giving to charity anything gives even water to a thirsty person to the best of his abilities he will get the same fruits as the person who donated hundred or ten things.** (Shl 97) Great *vipra*! King Rantideva did not have anything. At that time he gave water with a pure heart to a thirsty person and therefore obtained *Swarga*. (Shl 98) **Dharma does not get pleased by the *daan* given from unjust earnings however big the *daan* may be. Dharma is pleased by that *daan* which is given out of just earnings and is made sacred by faith even if *daan* is quite small in size.** (Shl 101) ***Daans* given with much fanfare alone are not holy. *Daans* given by *satpurushas* according to their abilities but with just earnings is in fact very holy. The *punya* (virtue) obtained by giving such *daan* is not obtained even by performing variety of *yajnas*.** (Shl 102) **By getting angry man loses the fruits of giving *daan*. If he is greedy he cannot go to *Swarga*. Only those who live their lives in just manner and who have understood the real significance of *daan* by *tapas* can get *Swarga*.** (Shl 103, 104) The great fruits you have gained today cannot be equalled by the fruits gained by performing several *Rajasuya yajnas* or *Ashwamedha yajnas*. By donating one measure of flour you have obtained the undecaying *Brahma loka* itself..... After this all the four went to *Swarga* in a *Vimana*.

After they had all left, I (mongoose) came out of my hole. Due to my having smelt that flour, having become wet in the water that was there and due to walking on the divine flowers there and due to contact with the grains of flour that he had given to Dharma my head became golden. Half of my body became golden. You are all seeing it quite clearly. With a desire to make my other half also golden I go to all places where *yajnas* are performed. I came here for the same reason, but my body did not

become golden. That is why I said that this *yajna* does not match that *daan* of brahmana who practiced *unccha vritti*.

Vaishampayana concluded by saying: ...**Thousands of *rishis* have gone to *swarga* by the power of their *tapas* without necessarily performing *yajnas*.** (Shl 120) **Not committing treachery towards any living being, being content always, good character, honesty, practice of *tapas*, *jitendriyatva*, dedication to truth, giving to charity with faith things earned justly (legally) to deserving persons – all these yield same fruits as performing *yajnas*.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; adhyaya 90)

Story of Balaaka

Sri Krishna: Arjuna! There was a *vyadha* (hunter) called Balaaka. He used to kill animals only to support his family and not with the intent of eating them. He had aged parents and many relatives who lived with him. He was caring and supporting all of them. He was committed to *swadharma*, was truthful and had no jealousy. One day when he went as usual to hunt animals he did not find any. When he was roaming about looking for an animal, he saw carnivorous animal drinking water and which was blind, would find its food only by power of smell. He had not seen such an animal till then. Next moment he killed that animal. As soon as he killed it, flowers rained on him from the skies. A beautiful *vimana* with singing and dancing *apsaras* appeared to take him to *swarga*.

Arjuna! That animal had done *tapas* and had obtained a boon that it can destroy all animals on earth. Brahma had made that animal blind. In this way Balaaka, who killed the animal which had decided to kill all animals, went to *swarga*. (Commentary: This is an answer to the question 'Is it dharma to kill animals, even if they are cruel ones?' The general dharma is not to kill animals. But it does not mean that no animal should at all be killed at any time. It sometimes becomes necessary to kill animals which are indulging in violence (*himsa*). By killing that animal which was like the god of death for all animals, *vyadha* attained *swarga*. Even though he killed a wicked animal he accrued *punya*. Not only he did not accumulate sins by killing an animal, but contrary to common notion he even gained *punya* and went to *swarga*. This is what Sri Krishna refers to as *dharmah sudurvidah*, dharma is very difficult to understand) (Karna; Adhyaya 69)

Story of Kaushika

Arjuna! There was a brahmana called Kaushika. He was a great *tapasvi*. But he had not studied *shastras* much. He was living at a place near at the meeting point of rivers slightly away from the villages. His *vrata* was '*satyam mayaa sadaa vachyam*'—I should always speak the truth. Accordingly he was always speaking truth and became well known as '*satyavaadi*'. One day a few travellers who were being chased by thieves and were afraid of them came running and hid in the forest where Kaushika *muni* lived. The angry thieves chased them there also and started searching them seriously. But they could not find them in spite of their best efforts. Then those thieves went to Kaushika *muni* who was sitting nearby and said, "Bhagawan! Some people came this way. Where did they go from here? We are asking you because of truth. If you know where they went, kindly tell us." Kaushika thus questioned by the thieves answered in accordance with his fame as *satyavaadi*, "Oh *dasyus* (Thief, impious)! They have taken refuge in this forest full of creepers, bushes and trees. They are hiding here." He not only told them the truth, he showed them to the thieves. Then the thieves attacked them, killed them and took away all their possessions. In this circumstance even though Kaushika told the truth it was not considered dharma. It resulted in *adharma*. His words did not become truth, they became evil words. By uttering those evil words which were *adharma*, Kaushika who did not know the subtlety and secret of dharma, fell into difficult *naraka* after his death. (Karna; Adhyaya 69)

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