

**Mahabharata Series**

# **About Yajna, Yaga & Homa**

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## PREFACE

I have extracted these contents from my other comprehensive & unique work on Mahabharata called **Mahabharata-Spectroscope**. (See <http://www.ghvisweswara.com/mahabharata-2/mahabharata-spectroscope-a-unique-resource/>). Whereas the material in that was included in the order in which it appears in the original epic, in this compilation I have grouped them by meaningful Topics & Sub-topics thus making it much more useful to the student/scholar of this subject.

This is a brief compilation of the contents appearing in the great epic Mahabharata on the topics of **Yajna, Yaga & Homa**. The compilation is not exhaustive in the sense that every para appearing in the great epic is not included here for the sake of limiting the size of this document. Some of the topics like **japa-yajna** have already been compiled in another document called Japa-Dhayana-Pranayama. But still most of the key or representative passages have been compiled here. The contents are from Mahabharata excluding Bhagavad Gita.

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

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

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# About Yajna, Yaga & Homa in Mahabharata

## Eligibility, Duty, Inclination to perform

### General

- Shakuntala to Dushyanta: (Shl 42) Only one who has wife is eligible to perform *yajna-yagas*. Only those who are with wife are called *Grihastha*. (**Adi; Sambhava; 74**)
- Indra in the guise of a fox to brahmana Kashyapa: (Shl 45) **Those who are born in good *nakshatra*, good day (*thithi*), and good *muhurta* (time) try their best to perform *yajnas*, to give to charity and to beget good children.** (Shl 46) Those who are born in *asuri nakshatra*, blemished *thithi* and inauspicious *muhurta* **do not perform *yajnas***, do not beget children and after death are born as *asuras*. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 180**)
- Bhishma to Yudhishtira: (Shl 22) Many kinds of *shooras* (valiant/brave/champion) have been named. (Shl 23) **Some are *yajna shooras*** (always perform *yajnas*). (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 7**)
- Swayambhu Manu in response to clarifications sought by a group of *rishis*: (Shl 10) Not taking what has not been offered, giving to charity, study of Vedas, being immersed in *tapas*, non-violence, truthfulness, not getting angry, **performing *yajnas***—these are characteristics of dharma. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 36**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 37) By living or keeping continued contact with a fallen person for one year man becomes fallen. **He also becomes immediately fallen by assisting him to perform *yajnas***, by assisting him to study Vedas and by marrying one's children with his children. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 165**)

### Varnas & yajna

- Bhishma: (Shl 51) One who knows different forms of *yajna* and their respective fruits has firm & clear knowledge of *yajnas*. Such brahmana who is a *jnani* and has *shraddha* (faith) has the right to perform *yajnas*. (Shl 52) Whether he is a thief, a sinner, or worst among sinners, if he desires to perform *yajna* he will be said to be *sadhu* or *satpurusha*. Therefore, what to speak of *kshatriya-vysya-shudra* who are forms of brahmana himself? (Shl 53) *Rishis* also praise one who desires to perform *yajnas*. Performing *yajna* is very auspicious. There is no doubt in this matter. It is the decision of *shastras* that people of all *varnas* should regularly be performing *yajnas*. (Shl 54) **There is no karma superior to *yajna* in the three *lokas*. Therefore human being should perform *yajna* without jealousy, with full faith and in accordance with his capability and desire.** (**Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60**)
- Bhishma: (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*. (**Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60**)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! **In the past Prajapati Brahma created only four *varnas* (*brahmana, kshatriya, vysya, shudra* in that order) for purposes of *yajna* and decided their karmas.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 48**)
- Bhishma: (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). (Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60)

- Ashtavakra: (Shl 11) All four *varnas* participate in the conduct of *yajnas*. (Vana; Tirthayatra; 134)
- Parashara to king Janaka: (Shl 10) Parameshwara first created Brahma, worshipped by the whole world. Brahma obtained a son (called *parjanya*) who could bear all the *lokas*. (Shl 11, 12) **Vysyas should worship *parjanya* and should gain prosperity in agriculture and cattle rearing. The king should protect their wealth. Brahmanas who are honest & sincere, not obstinate, not given to anger, who can help perform *havya-kavya* should help spend that wealth for performance of *yajnas* and other acts of benefit to the *loka*. *Shudras* should clean the place of conduct of *yajna* etc. By doing so dharma will not be destroyed.** (Shl 13) If dharma is being practiced without being destroyed, citizens will be happy. If citizens are happy, the *devatas* will also rejoice. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 293)
- Bhishma: 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 *vaedic 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 parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60)
- Sri Krishna to Sanjaya: (Shl 23) The **karmas for brahmanas** are: *Vedadhyayana* (study of Vedas), performing *yajnas*, teaching Vedas, assisting/guiding a *yajamana* to perform the *yajnas*, accepting *daans* approved by *shastras*. (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. He should give *daan* to the deserving. **He should perform *yajnas*.** He 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 26) Respecting the brahmanas & serving them is the main dharma of *shudras*. **He is forbidden to perform *yajnas*.** He must work everyday without any laziness for his own improvement & success. These are the karmas prescribed for *shudras* since ancient times. (Udyoga; Sanjayayana; 29)
- To Bhima: (Shl 36) Serving the *dvijas* is the dharma of *shudras*. For them beggary (mendicancy), **performing *homa* and *vrata* etc are banned.** Living in the house of guru and serving him are the best dharma. (Vana; Tirthayatra; 150)
- Bhishma: (Shl 8) A king should not wilfully bring even a small amount of money from the house of *shudra* for use in *yajna*. **Because, *shudras* do not have even the tiniest eligibility to participate in *yajnas*.** .. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 165)
- Bhishma: (Shl 16) **Those who teach Vedas to *shudras*, those who help them perform *yajnas*, those who have them alone as disciples and those who are disciples of *shudras* are not eligible to be invited in *deva*, *pitru karyas*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 23)
- Bhishma said: In *shastras* dharmas for brahmana etc four *varnas* have been stated decisively. There is no such description of dharmas of *sankara-varnas*. There is no specific number to the mixed castes. *Varna-sankara* continues to grow due to those outcastes who mate with women of other *varnas* without caring for caste, **who are not authorised to perform *yajnas*** and who have been excommunicated by *sadhu* – *satpurushas*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 48)

## Ashramas & yajna

- Nakula to Yudhishtira: (Shl 22) **To a *grihashthrami 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...** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 12)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 6) A *vanaprasthashrami* should be regular in his practices. He should eat food as per the rules. He should eat once in the sixth part of the day. He should be careful. **He should perform *agnihotra*, service of cows, *yajnas* etc.** (Shl 7) He should live by eating rice, wheat, a kind of millet (without himself doing agriculture) and eat food left after serving the family members & servants. **He should perform *pancha-maha-yajnas* and offer *havis* to *devatas*.** (Shl 8, 9) There are four kinds of *vrittis* in this *ashram* also. Some eat whatever they have got that day, wash all vessels & close down. Some collect & store grains enough for one month. Some collect & store grains enough to last for a year. Some do this for twelve years also. **They store that much grains for extending hospitality to guests and *yajna-karmas*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 244)

## Motivations to perform

### Fear of punishment

- Arjuna to Yudhishtira: (Shl 12) Whether a *brahmachari*, *grihashtha*, *vanaprastha* or *sanyasi*, the fear that if they transgress the expectation of their *ashrama* it would result in punishment in this world and other world makes them stick to their *ashrama-dharmas*. (Shl 13) **One who is not afraid of punishment will not perform *yajnas*. If there is no fear of sins, no one would like to donate his money to another. Without fear of sin, no one will even fulfill oath/promise.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 15)
- Bhishma: (Shl 36) **It is *danda* that establishes this world in truth. In *satya*, dharma is well organised. Such dharma is established in *brahmanas*.** (Shl 37, 38, 39) *Brahmanas* study *Vedas* due to the influence of *danda*. From *Veda*, *yajnas* originate. *Yajnas* satisfy *devatas*. Pleased *devatas* pray to *Indra* to care and nourish the people. Satisfied *Indra* graces the mankind with *anna* (food). **The life of all animals is always established in *anna*.** Therefore all are established in *danda*. *Danda* will always be alert for protecting the people. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 121)

### Dharma-Artha

- Vidura spoke first recollecting all *dharma-shaastras*: (Shl 5) Dharmaja! The following are the wealth or assets of *atma*: study of several *shastras*, *tapas*, *tyaga*, *shraddha*, *yajna-karma*, *kshama*, *bhava-shuddhi*, 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.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 167)
- Vidura: (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; 35)
- Bhimasena to Yudhishtira: (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-yaga*, *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.** (Vana; Arjunabhigamana; 33)
- Arjuna: (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) Oh 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. **(Shanti, Rajanushasana; 8)**

- Arjuna to Sri Krishna: Just as Truth is firmly fixed in a *brahmanishta* brahmana, politeness is natural in *satpurushas*, **Lakshmi resides in *yajnas***, victory resides where you, the Narayana, are present. **(Drona; Pratigya; 76)**

### Desires

- Bhima: (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. **(Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 167)**
- Brahma to *munis*: (Shl 9, 10) **All the following are prompted by *rajoguna***: Sorrow, lack of confidence, *vrats* & rules, *kaamya-karmas* (karmas done to pray for obtaining desired things), *ishtapurta karmas* (like constructing wells, lakes etc, planting several trees, constructing temples etc *punya karyas*), *svahakara* (for *devatas*), *namskara* (for guests), *svadhakara* (for *pitrus*), *vashatkara*, **directing performance of *yajnas* as well as doing them**, studying and teaching, giving to charity and receiving, repentance/atonements and auspicious acts. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 37)**
- Hanuman to Bhimasena: 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* & *yagas* took shape in that Yuga. People were performing many *yajnas* and *daans* for fulfilment of their desires**. .. In the third Yuga, Dwapara, half of dharma declined. Greed increased in people. **People started indulging in *yajna*, *yagas* 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. .. 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*. ***Vedadyayana*, *sadachara* and *yajna-yagas* will decay in that Yuga**. **(Vana parva: Tirthayatra; 149)**

### Good children

- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: By performing *tapas*, *brahmacharya*, *satya-nishta* and *kshama*, fathers like to have children who are full of all good qualities (*kalyana-guna-sampanna*). In the same way, mothers, by fasting, *yajnas*, *vratas* and several auspicious deeds, desire to have sons with good qualities (*guna-sheelas*), and bear the pregnancy for 10 months. All parents will have only worries like, 'Will the children be born safely and easily? Will we have children? Will the children after birth live well without various evil planetary influences (*graha-badhe*)? After they grow up will they be full of noble qualities and bring us happiness in this and other worlds?' **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 7)**

### Debts (*rinās*)

- King Pandu to *rishis*: (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-yagas* and *homa-havans***. By doing *adhyayana*, *adhyapana* *rishi-rina* is discharged. By performing *shraaddhas* *pitru-rina* is cleared. *Manava-rina* is discharged by living with kindness towards all beings. **(Adi; Sambhava; 120)**
- Parashara to king Janaka: (Shl 9) Every man is born with debts towards *devatas*, *atithis*, *bhritya* (servants, family members), *pitrus* and one's own debt. By clearing all these debts duly he should become free of this burden. (Shl 10) By study of Vedas & *shastras* the debt of *rishis*, **by performing *yajnas* the debt of *devatas***, by *shraaddhas* & *daan* the debt of *pitrus* and by welcome, hospitality and serving of guests the debt of *atithis* is cleared. (Shl 11) In the same way, **by the study & thinking of Vedas, by eating the remnants of offerings in *yajna* and by self-protection the self-debt is cleared**. By supporting & maintaining those who are one's



responsibility (family members, servants) man is cleared of the *bhritya rina*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 292)

### Atma jnana

- Sanatsujata: (Shl 43) **Veda which was a monolithic entity in the beginning was divided into four parts as it was not possible to understand it.** Paramatma, who has no second (*adwitiya*) is eternal (*Vedaswaroopa*). *Maharaja!* **It is very rare to find someone who has understood the essence of the monolithic Veda which represents the ultimate Truth (*satya-swaroopa*).** (Shl 44) Not understanding the truth of Veda in this form, man considers himself as knowledgeable (by talking of *panchaVeda*, *chaturVeda* etc). ***Daan*, *adhyayana* & *yajna* are done with greed** (with desire for fruits). (Shl 45) The resolve of those who miss the real essence of Truth will be also in accordance with the slippage. From *ajnana* karmas are born. This happens due to not understanding the Truth. (Shl 46) **For some *devata-adhyayanas* become *yajnas*. For some *brahmayajna-japa* etc become *yajnas*. For some others action oriented *Jyotishtoma* etc become *yajnas*. But a *sankalpa siddha* transcends all these resolves** (becomes *nissankalpa*). (Shl 47) **When *atmajnana* is not yet attained, *yajna*, *mouna* etc *deeksha vratas* have to be practiced with dedication.** But Truth or *Parabrahma sakshatkara* alone is the ultimate. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 43)
- Panchashikha to king Janaka: (Shl 18) **In *shastras yajna-karmas* have been prescribed to renounce material wealth, *vratas* for renouncing pleasures of senses, *tapas* for renouncing bodily comforts and practice of yoga to renounce everything. If everything is renounced one can obtain *mukti*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 219)

### Others

- Bhishma: (Shl 118) One who desires prosperity and rise should make a brahmana perform *vastu pooja* and *homa* and live in that house built by an architect (*sthapati*). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 104)
- Mouse to cat: (Shl 154) By giving very generous donations the giver becomes much liked by the taker. By talking very sweetly the speaker becomes dear to the listener. **One who does *homa*, *mantra*, *japa* etc for other's accomplishment becomes loved by the one who achieves success.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 138)
- Vasishta to king Janaka: (Shl 8) *Chetana*, who takes birth in thousands of forms of animals & birds, feels that he is himself that bird or animal. Some times that same *chetana* is born as *devata* and thinks he is just a *devata*. **Because he has this attachment to the respective bodies (*deha-abhimaan*) he experiences the fruits of the karmas done through those bodies.** .. (Shl 29) The *chetana* engages in *swadhakaar*, *vashatkaar*, *swahakaar* & *namskaar*. He performs *yajnas* & helps others perform them. He studies Veda & teaches it also. He gives to charity & accepts charity also. In this way, he engages in many other karmas. (Shl 30) *Chetana* takes birth. He dies. He quarrels. He engages in war. Scholars say that all these transactions of *chetana* due to the contact with *Prakriti* are both auspicious & inauspicious and belong to *karma-marga*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 303)

## Gains of performing

### Punya & purity

- Krishna Dwaipayana to Maitreya: (Shl 12) **Even a small giving to charity can yield huge results if given according to *shastras*.** Without any envy you have given food and water to me when I was hungry and thirsty. (Shl 13) Oh lord! I was very tired due to hunger and thirst. You have made me feel satisfied with food and water. **Just by this you have obtained best of the *lokas* just as one would by performing great *yajnas*.** I am seeing this practically. .. (Shl 21) That a *daani* will obtain progressively greater happiness is known to us practically. **Rich people gather wealth. Then they give to charity and perform *yajnas* and enjoy greater happiness.** .. (Shl 25) Those who are engaged in *yajna*, *daan* and *tapas* are *punya karmis*. .. (Shl 27) You be joyous. Have prosperity. Be happy. Do *daan*. Perform *yajnas*. If you do these, wise men or *tapasvis* will not ignore you (will honour you). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 120)

- Bhishma: (Shl 30) Some say that performing *yajna* etc *karmas* as prescribed in *shastras* along with *mantras* etc for keeping the mind under control is defective. But **performing these karmas with desireless attitude leads to *vairagya***. In the same way, *yajna karmas* accompanied by *mantras* etc help in steady practice of *shama*, *dama* etc *shuddha dharmas*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 212)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 27) The various terms like *tapas*, *karma*, ***yajna*** etc stated in Vedas **are means to *loka-siddhi*** and the ten *kramas* result in *atma-siddhi* (Means to *loka-siddhi*: three types of *tapas* viz *shaarira*, *vachaka* & *maanasa*. Two types of *karmas* viz *ishta* & *poorta*. Four types of *yajnas* which are mentioned later. Total nine. The tenth is the means for *atma-siddhi* viz *yama-niyama*. Vedas present the means of *karya-siddhi* in these ten *kramas* or methods). (Shl 28) The most inexplicable *Brahma-vastu* which has been stated by scholars through *veda-vakya* and has been clearly described in Upanishats is seen or perceived through the *krama-yoga* (*Swadhyaya*, *garhasthya*, *sandhya-vandana* etc *nitya-karmas*. *Krichra*, *Chaandrayana* etc *tapas*, *yajna*, *poorta-karmas* (*ishta-poortas* are digging wells, lakes etc), *yoga*, *daana*, *guru-shushrushe* and *Samadhi* -- these ten are considered *krama-yoga* by classical commentators). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 13) For *santosha* (delight, contentedness) you should depend on *sattwa-guna*. ***Sattwa-guna* is the characteristic of highest peace**. This *guna* douses thirst and grief due to *sankalpa-vikalpa* (resolves, irresolution/option), worries & unhappiness. (Shl 14) The person with following six characteristics will attain completeness and will attain *moksha*: not having grief, not having feeling of mine, calmness, clearness of mind and not having envy. (Shl 15) **That wise man rich in *sattwa-guna* who has the above said six characteristics and either by *yajna*, *daan* & *tapas* or by *shravana* (hearing), *manana* (reflection, thinking), *nididhyasana* (profound & repeated meditation) realises the *atma* that is within the body, will retain the *atma-bhava* even after death.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 251)
- Kapila to Syumarashmi: (Shl 4) Vedas have not stated the fruits obtained by those who perform *yajnas* without any desires considering it a duty. It is not stated in *itihisas* too. **Those who perform *yajnas* without any associated desires will get the direct fruit called *chitta-shuddi* (purity of mind) which makes all the *loka* appear as a witness.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 270)
- Bhishma: (Shl 6) Yudhishtira! In *devata karyas* like *yajna* etc the *siddhi* is not under the control of brahmana. **Such acts will find accomplishment only if there is god's grace**. The *yajamana* performs the *yaga* only due to the grace of *devatas*. There is no doubt in this matter. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 22)
- Serpent said: (Shl 48) Oh hunter! In *yajnas ritwijas* perform *homa* with *havis*. But the fruits of such *homa* do not accrue to them. It goes to the *yajamana*. (Anushasana; Daandharma; 1)

#### Eligibility to be invited to *shraaddhas*

- Bhishma: (Shl 30) Even if a brahmana does not practice *vrats*, is a gambler, a thief or in the business of selling & buying animals, if he performs *somayaga* and drinks *somarasa* he becomes eligible to be invited for *shraaddha*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 23)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 30, 31) Such brahmanas who have made an effort to take bath in sacred *tirthas*, **who have participated in *yajnas* by reciting *mantras* and have had their *avabhrta snan***, who are without anger, who have no unsteadiness or fickleness, who are forgiving, are *jitendriyas*, and are engaged in the welfare of all beings should be invited for *shraaddhas*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 90)

#### Gaining other *lokas*

- Duryodhana to Kripa: (Shl 36) For all those who have very good *achara-vyavahara* (practices and behaviour), who do not turn their backs on the battlefield, the brave who are steadfast on the path of truth, **who perform *yajna-yagas***, who have been bathed with the sharp edge of a weapon, living in *swarga* is assured. (Shalya Parva; 5)

- Sanatsujata: (Shl 9) By *jnana* he unites with Paramatma. Without *jnana* he will perform *yajnas* etc with a desire for pleasures, will enjoy their fruits in other *lokas* and return to this normal world. **(Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 43)**
- Vaishampayana to Janamejaya: (Shl 11) Oh king! If it pleases you I want to tell you these words which are in your interest. **You might have heard of *devayana marga* when starting a *yajna*.** That path is best suited for you. (Shl 12) From the time you start the practice/performance of *yajna* to please the *devatas*, they become your well wisher friends. Since they are capable of causing the *jeevas* to get other *lokas*, they grace those *jeevas* who are liked by them and ensure that the *jeevas* obtain the desired *lokas*. (Shl 13, 14) Therefore, *jeeva* who is permanent, gains the capability to go to other *lokas* by worshipping *devatas* through *yajnas*. Those who do not perform *yajnas* do not get other worlds (higher worlds). **(Ashramavasika parva; Putradarshana; 34)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 18) A teacher obtains inexhaustible fruits due to his teaching with great efforts. **One who performs *homa* in *agni* as per prescribed procedures will be worshipped in Brahma loka also. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 74)**
- (Then Bhishma quotes a conversation that occurred between Indra in disguise of king Dhritarashtra (not of Kaurava-Pandava story) and a *tapasvi* Brahmana called Gautama. Indra forcibly snatches a grown elephant which Gautama would have adopted as a baby elephant and had brought up with lot of love and affection).

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

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

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

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

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

Dhritarashtra: (Shl 41) ***Prajapatya lokas*** are meant for those who have been **crowned as *chakravartis* after performing *Rajasuya yaga***, are *dharmatmas*, are protectors of citizens and whose entire body has been washed in the *avabhrita* of *Ashwamedha yaga*. But Dhritarashtra will not go there. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 102)**

- Bhishma said: (Shl 2) Dharmaja! The specific dharma for each *ashrama* has been prescribed. Those dharmas also obtain *Swarga* as well as great *satya-phalas (moksha-dayaka)*. **The actions done under dharma which has many doors like *yajna*, *tapas*, *daan* etc will not be wasted.** (Shl 3) Whoever has clarity in whatever matter considers that subject as the greatest. They do not honour other dharmas. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 352)**

### As a strategy against enemy

- Kanika to Dhritarashtra: (Shl 19) For the destruction of the enemy many times different make-believes may have to be adopted. **With proper assessment of time *agnihotra*, *yaga-yajna* should be performed.** Saffron robes indicating renunciation should also be worn. Hair may have to be tied up in a *jata* & deerskin may have to be worn. All this should be done appropriately. These will gain confidence of people. While doing so, watch for the right opportunity, attack the

enemy & destroy him just as a wolf would wait & pounce on sheep. .. Spies should be present in places where *yajna*-yagas are held, in well-river-mountain-forests and all places where people congregate. **(Adi; Sambhava Parva; 140)**

- Kalakavrikshiya to Kshemadarshi: (Shl 17) You should suggest to him to develop several large gardens fit for a king to enjoy. Suggest to him to decorate the palace with several expensive luxury beds, gem studded thrones etc. **Overall your strategy should be to empty his coffers on these expensive luxury items.** (Shl 18) **Profusely praise the brahmanas of the kingdom and through them make the king to perform several major *yajnas*.** In the pretext of *yajna* and *daan* the brahmanas will gobble up his wealth like wolves. The brahmanas will be grateful to you for having created such opportunity for them and will help you when needed. (Shl 19) A person who earns lot of *punya* will certainly attain *sadgati*. He will also get a special place in *swarga*. (Shl 20) **Whether the king indulges in acts of *dharma* or *adharma*, the end result is that his treasury will get emptied.** Once this happens, he can be controlled by the enemies. (Shl 21) You should see that the treasury is emptied for *swarga* etc fruits or for gains like victory. The enemies of the enemy will rejoice at this. **You should suggest to him to perform only *yajnas* etc for gaining victory** (*daiva* related acts) and not that he should increase strength of his army (and not man related acts). (Shl 23, 24) **Your desire will be fulfilled with these tricks. Once the enemy loses all his wealth through major *yajnas* like *Vishvajid-yaga*,** you should continue to act like a friend and narrate to him the story of a *mahatma* who is in trouble. Along with this, in passing, you should mention that there is a *yogi* who knows *yoga-dharma* and is spiritual thinker. In that state of mind, with the preaching of the *yogi*, the enemy king may even relinquish the kingdom. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 105)**
- Dhritarashtra: Even though Pandavas & Kauravas are same in the eyes of Bhishma, Drona & Kripa, **because they have lived in our refuge & have performed *yajna-yagas*, given charities** etc. they will fight on our side feeling obligated to us. **(Udyoga; Yanasandhi; 51)**

#### Not an ultimate/everlasting gain

- Bali to Indra: (Shl 56, 57) Shakra! Do not think that, 'I alone have done 100 Ashwamedha *yagas*.' All the people I have mentioned (**there is a list of 41 names**) had performed 100 *yajnas* each. All were practicing dharma diligently. **All had the ability to travel in the sky.** All faced the enemies and fought. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 227)**

## What annuls gains

### Ego/Arrogance

- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 26) "I have given so much to charity in this way"; "I have done so many *yajna-yagas*"; "I have studied so much"; "I have done so many *vratas* & *upavasas*"; thinking & feeling like this with ego causes fear or is dangerous (danger of losing all the fruits gained). This attitude should be totally given up. **(Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 90)**
- Kaam (Kaam Gita) (God of desire): (Shl 14) I take birth even in one who tries to kill me by performing variety of *yajnas*, just as *dharmatma* is born in *jangama yoni* (I take birth as pride/ego in him). **(Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 13)**
- Yayati: (Shl 6) **Man should perform best of the *yajnas* with his immense wealth but without desire. There should be no ego that I have done *yajnas*.** Even if he be a great scholar in many subjects he should be polite. There should be no ego of *vidya*. Vedas should be studied. *Tapas* should be performed. Only such a person can overcome all illusions & go to *swarga*. .. (Shl 24) Four karmas always give what is desired by the doer. They are always protecting him and blessing him. But these four should be practiced without any ego. If done with ego (*ahambhava*) the same karmas will become fearsome. **These four great karmas are—*agnihotra*, *mouna* (silence, quiet: this is not merely for speech but more importantly also for the mind), *adhyayana*, *yajna*.** ... (Shl 26) "I have given so much to charity in this way"; "I have done so many *yajna-yagas*"; "I have studied so much"; "I have done so many *vratas* & *upavasas*"; thinking & feeling like this with ego causes fear or is dangerous (danger of losing all the fruits gained). This attitude should be totally given up. **(Adi; Sambhava; 90)**



- Yayati to Brahma: (Shl 12, 13) The fruits (*phala*) I earned by governing the kingdom for thousands of years with dedication to dharma; **the *phala* of having performed several *yagas***; the *phala* of giving plentiful donations to brahmanas—how did all this decline in a short time? For what reason did all the *phala* I had accumulated vanish?

Brahma to Yayati: (Shl 15) **All this *phalas* you had earned were destroyed by one fault/defect of ego.** It is because of ego that you were rejected by those in *swarga* and you fell from it. (Shl 16) Permanent *punya lokas* cannot be gained by arrogance; cannot be gained by might or cruelty or obstinacy. They cannot be attained by *mayavidya* or by cheating. (Shl 17) *Maharaja!* You should never humiliate the *adhama* (lowly) or *madhyama* (middle level) or the *uttama* (the noble). For one burning in the flames of ego there is no way of dousing it. **(Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 126)**

### Sins

- Brahma to Vasishta: (Shl 32) Even though Saudasa, the king of Kosala had performed many *yajnas* and was well honoured, he became a cannibal *rakshasa* due to the curse of *maharshi* Vasishta... (Shl 34) Even though Uparichara vasu had worshipped *devatas* by performing hundred *yajnas* and had become as powerful as Indra, because of one lie he told he had to go to the bottom of *rasatala* (lower worlds). **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 6)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 63) Those who destroy water spots created for animals, ***yajna-shaalas***, assembly halls or bridges and houses will go to *naraka* in miserable state. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 23)**

### Others

- Bhishma: Once *devatas* prayed to Brahma and said: .. **If the owner of the land does not give permission, then the *yajna* performed in that place will not yield desired fruits.** You are the lord of everything moving and not moving in this world. Therefore permit us to perform the *yajna* on earth. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 66)**
- Vidura: Kashyapa's clarifications to Prahlada: (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 *yagas* are destroyed. **(Sabha; Dyuta; 68)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 12) One who praises in the presence of the person and abuses when he is not there is like a dog in this world. He will neither get this *loka* nor *para-loka* (Commentary: has neither *jnana* nor *dharma*). (Shl 13) Even if such a person gives to charity to a hundred persons or performs variety of *homa-havan*, the fruits of all that will be destroyed soon. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 114)**
- Bhishma said: (Shl 3) Dharmaja! All the desires/hopes of whoever makes a promise (to a brahmana) to donate – small or big — and then does not do so will be wasted like the desire of an impotent for a son. (Shl 4, 5) All the *punya phalas* from the time of birth to the time of death, all the *phalas* of *homas* done in *agni*, all the fruits of good deeds done will be lost to the person who does not honour his promise. **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 9)**
- Vidura: (Shl 40) An object which drowns in the sea is lost. Words spoken to someone who is not listening with attention are lost. Knowledge of *shastras* is lost to one who is not a *jitendriya*. **A *homa* conducted in ash instead of in fire is wasted.** **(Udyoga; Prajaagara; 39)**
- Indra to Mandhata: (Shl 28) The *daan*, *homa* etc done by the man who humiliates the king, who is like a guru to the whole world, will not be fruitful. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 65)**
- Hamsa bird to Saadhyas: (Shl 27) Yamaraja snatches away the *yajna*, *daan*, *tapas* & *homa* of a wrathful man. **Therefore all efforts of a person inclined to wrath are wasted.** **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 299)**

## Right ways to perform

### Using honest money

- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 3) The secret nature of ***grihashthashrama*** is as follows: ***yajna-yagas should be performed only from money earned in dharmic ways.*** You must do *daan*. You must treat the guests well with food. You should not use things that are not given voluntarily by others (*adatta*). These are the rules for *grihashthas*. (**Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 91**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 21, 22) *Satpurushas* do not appreciate such *yajnas*, for performing which, the king orders those interested in collecting money to collect it from all over the kingdom by force, and his officers do so by threatening the citizens. (Shl 23) **Capable persons should perform *yajnas* according to their financial strengths and with money accumulated without troubling others. *Yajna* should never be performed using money extracted by force from others.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 61**)
- Nakula to Yudhishtira: (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 in dharmic ways for performing *yajnas*,** and one who has his mind under control is '*tyagi*'. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 12**)

### With a sense of duty

- Shaunaka's reply to Yudhishtira: (Shl 74) **Vedas ordain karmas. But they also say repeatedly that it should be done without desire for fruits of karmas.** All karmas should be done purely as offering to *deva* and not with ego/attachment to self. (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; 2**)
- Yudhishtira: (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. (**Vana; Arjunabhimana; 31**)
- Yudhishtira to Draupadi: *Yajnaseni*! **I do not do my karmas with an eye on the fruits of those karmas.** I donate thinking it is my duty. **I perform *yajnas* as my duty.** Whatever karmas are prescribed for one in *grihashthashrama* 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. (**Vana; Arjunabhimana; 31**)
- Birds to Jajali: (Shl 7) The *yajna* performed by those who are full of faith, who treat gains & losses equally, who are *jitendriyas*, pure in mind and **perform *yaga* as a duty,** will never be wasted or be a vain attempt. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 264**)
- Yudhishtira to Draupadi: (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 41, 42) Krishne! Do not blame/abuse Paramapurusha who is the witness to all beings, is in everyone and is lord of all. **Learn how to attain him by *daan-tapas-yajna*.** Surrender to him. **Never disrespect Paramapurusha due to whose grace only mortals can become immortals.** (**Vana; Arjunabhimana; 31**)

### Without desires

- Kapila to Syumarashmi: (Shl 15) **In the past many brahmanas used to perform *yajnas* without any desires.** They were aged in *veda-vidya* (ripe in their knowledge). They had inner and outer purity. They were possessed of virtuous practices/conduct and fame. (Shl 16) **Those scholars who were free of the bondage of desires worshipped *devatas* daily through *yajnas*.** The *yajnas* they did, the study of Vedas and other day to day acts were all in accordance with the

*shastras*. (Shl 17) To those karma-yogis who had no *kaam* or *krodh* and followed virtuous practices and did virtuous deeds that cannot be practiced by others, even *shastras* flashed in their intellect according to times. They had truthful resolves over time. (Shl 18, 19) **All the acts of these karma-yogis**, who were praised by all for their karmas done adhering to their *swadharma*, who were pure by nature, had simplicity, were dedicated to peace, were generous and were capable of virtuous practices impossible for other to follow **were yielding unending fruits** (undecaying *moksha*). We used to hear this at all times. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 270)

### Importance of faith

- Birds to Jajali: (Shl 10, 11) *Devatas* took the following decision in respect of materials of *yajna*. **They treated equally the material of one who is clean & yet has no faith and the unclean material of a faithful. In the same way, they treated equally the *anna* (cooked rice used in *yajnas*) of a miserly brahmana learned in *shastras* and that of a generous person who lives on money earned by interest.** (Shl 12-14) **But Brahma did not agree with this opinion of *devatas*.** Therefore he told them: *Devatas*! The equality you have assigned is not correct. The unclean *anna* given by one who is generous but with faith is more sacred. If a generous person gives clean materials but without faith it is not sacred and such a donation becomes destructive. **The *anna* of a miserly *shrotriya* should not be consumed. The *anna* given by generous *vardhushi* (one who lives by interest earned) can be accepted. Anyone who has no faith is not eligible to offer *havis* to *devatas*. Those who know dharma say that *anna* offered by a person without faith should not be consumed.** (Shl 15) **Lack of faith causes serious sins. Faith clears sins.** Just as a snake sheds its skin, the faithful gets rid of his sins. (Shl 16) **Giving up *kaam* & *krodh* in addition to having faith is the best sacred deed.** There is nothing more sacred than this. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 264)

### Yajna for greed Vs Atma-yajna

- Dharmaja! Jajali said: Oh Merchant! You (Tuladhara) who hold a balance have started a dharma which obstructs the doors of *swarga* and ways of livelihood. It is from agriculture that food is produced. You also live by that food only. Men live by cattle, plants & herbs. ***Yajnas* are born depending on food (*anna*).** If agriculture etc are given up because it will cause agony to oxen etc the life on earth will come to a stand-still. This *loka* will not survive. Moreover you are talking atheism.

### Improper forms of performing *yajnas*

Tuladhara said: Oh Jajali brahmana! I will tell you about life without violence. Surely I am not an atheist. I never blame *yajnas*. **But finding those who know the correct form of *yajna* is not at all easy.** (Shl 5) I salute to the method prescribed for *yajna* to be done by brahmanas. **I also salute to the venerable brahmanas who have clearly understood the *brahmana-yajna*. But now brahmanas have given up their *yajnas* and are engaged in *yajnas* meant for *kshatriyas*.** (Shl 6) **Atheists, greedy and desirous of accumulating money, are publicising false *yajnas* (*mithya-yajna*) without knowing the truth of sayings in Vedas.** (Shl 7) Jajali! In *shrutis* & *smritis* it has been stated that, 'This much fees (*dakshina*) must be paid in this *yajna*; that much must be paid; only by paying that much, *yajna* will get completed. **The fruits of the *yajna* will not materialise if *dakshina* is not paid or less amount is paid. Opposite results will happen.** If in spite of being able to afford the said amount of *dakshina*, it is not paid the performer of *yajna* will be considered a thief. He will accrue the sin of thieving'. (Shl 8) *Devatas* feel happy & contented by *homa-dravyas* (materials needed to conduct *yajna*) collected through auspicious deeds. ***Shastras* have also specified that it is possible to do worship with just *namaskaar* (prostrations), *havis* (clarified butter), *adhyayana-adhyapana* (study & teaching of Vedas) and cooked rice.** (In spite of this, people opt for *ishta-poortas*—*yajnas* & other charitable activities-- which involve spending lot of money. The reason for this is their desires). (Shl 9) **Children who are obsessed with desires are born to those non-virtuous people who driven by desires perform *ishta-poortas* with impure money earned illegally.** (Shl 10) **Greedy beget greedy children. To persons who treat all equally (*sama-darshi*) children who are similar in attitude are born. Whatever kind of desires are in the minds of the *yajamana* (the master performing the *yajna*) & *ritwija* (the priest who helps perform the *yajnas*), their children will also have similar tendencies & desires.** (Shl 11) **Just as clean rains pour from the sky, from *yajnas* performed with clean or pure feelings, pure children are born.** Great Brahmana! The materials of *homa* that are offered in *agni* with *mantras* reach Aditya. Aditya causes rains. From this food is produced. From food people are born and carry on their livelihood.



(Shl 12) People in the past (ancestors) had good dedication to dharma and would engage in *yajna* with faith. All their desires were being fulfilled. Earth was yielding crops without agriculture. Creepers which yield flowers & fruits were growing by mere auspicious resolve. (Shl 13, 14, 15) **They were not expecting any fruits for themselves in performing *yajnas*.** Those who perform *yajnas* doubting whether the resolved fruits will become available or not, will be born as *asatpurushas* (unwise, not virtuous), *dhoortas* (cunning, fraudulent) and as greedy persons for whom the only useful things are money & wealth. (Shl 15) Great brahmana! The *buddhi* of the person who decides with his sophistry that Vedas which are a standard are inauspicious is not pure. His mind will always be immersed in sinful deeds. He will go to inferior *lokas* like *naraka* with his sinful deeds.

### Proper *yajna*, *atma-yajna*

(Shl 16) He alone is true brahmana who thinks the karmas prescribed in Vedas are his duty and feels that not doing so is cause for fear, in whose view *ritwik*, *havis*, *mantra* & *agni* are *brahma-maya* (full of brahma) and **who even though doing his karmas as duties has given up the pride of a 'doer'**. (Shl 17) We have heard that if there are blemishes/defects in karmas they will not yield fruits, will lose their quality and will become dangerous to all beings. **But if the same karma is performed with no desires (*nishkaam-karma*) it becomes great karma.** Therefore a person engaging in karmas should always be restrained in respect of fruits. (Shl 18) **In the ancient past brahmanas performed *yajnas* which were dedicated to truth and restraint on *indriyas*. They were greedy of *Parama-purushartha* or *moksha* (complete liberation). They were content with whatever worldly money they got. They were not storing anything for tomorrow and were giving away whatever they received. They were free of jealousy & hatred.** (Shl 19) They knew the *tattva* of the body & *atma*. **They were dedicated to *atma-yajna*.** They were always engaged in the study of Upanishads and were happy and made others happy too. (Shl 20) All *devatas* and all Vedas find shelter in the *brahma-vid* (one who has realised Brahma). Therefore if a *brahma-vid* feels satisfied, so will *devatas*. (Shl 21) One who has gained contentment with all *rasas* will not praise any one *rasa*. **Similarly, one who has found contentment in *jnana* will not desire contentment in anything else. *Jnana-trupti* (contentment with *jnana*) is a permanent satisfaction that generates happiness.** (Shl 22) Many among us do karmas with dharma as the basis. There are many who believe that the happiest way is to stick to the path of dharma. They decide properly about what duty is & what is not and engage in action. **But wise persons say that there is a *Paramatma-tattva*, something bigger and more pervasive than what we know as the true form of dharma.**

(Shl 23) Some holy persons who desire to cross the ocean of *samsara* and are enriched with *jnana* & *vijnana* attain *Brahma-loka* which is very holy, has many holy people & is sacred. Once they go there they have no grief. They do not fall from there and will not be subject to any worries. (Shl 25, 26) Such *sattwik* people attain *brahma-pada*. **They do not even desire *swarga*. They do not perform *yajnas* for the sake of money or fame.** They follow the path of *satpurushas* and perform *yajnas* without any violence. **They consider *vanaspatis* (plants, small cut branches of Indian fig tree), *oshadhis* (cooked rice or herbs) and roots & fruits as *havis* for *yajna*. Greedy *ritwijas* who desire only money do not engage in assisting such *sattwik* persons in performing *yajnas*.** (Shl 27) *Jnani* brahmanas who perform karmas with decisive *jnana* consider themselves to be the implements of performing *yajnas* and do *manasic-yajna* (mental *yajna*) for the welfare of people of the world. (Shl 28, 29) Jajali! Greedy *ritwijas* cause men to perform inauspicious *yajnas* (having no intention for liberation). **Virtuous persons (*sadhus*) can arrange *swarga* to others by their practice of *swadharma* alone (their own *varnashrama-dharma*).** Thinking of this my mind retains feeling of equality towards all (*sarvatra-samabhava*). (Shl 30) *Mahamuni*! **Those wise & learned brahmanas who in *yajnas* worship *devatas* who guide towards non-repeating cycles of birth & death, will, with the grace of those *devatas*, travel to higher *lokas*.**

(Shl 31) Jajali! **There will be birth & death for those who have desires. There is no such repetition for the *jnani*.** Even though both may travel to higher *lokas* through *devayana* (way leading to gods) due to difference in resolves one gets repetition & other ends repetition. (Shl 33) ***Sankalpa-siddhas* (accomplished by mental resolve or will, one who has gained supernatural powers through strength of will) set up the *yupa* (sacrificial post) in their mind and perform *yaga* with plentiful *dakshina*.** Such persons with *chitta-shuddi* (purity of mind) can do *gavaalambhana* (killing a young bull in sacrifice) through mind itself. (Shl 34) Great brahmana! Therefore great persons who have achieved *yoga-siddhi* can perform *yajna* with *anna* (cooked

rice) etc. But greedy *ritwijs* cannot do such mental *yajna*. The greatness of those who can give up the fruits of karma is so amazing. **Therefore I am telling you these things with *tyaga-dharma* as the main consideration.** (Shl 35) **Such a person is called a brahmana by *devatas* who has no desires in the mind, who does not initiate action with eye on the fruits, who stays away from salutations & praises, whose *atma-dharma* never wanes and in whom actions that result in bondage have waned.** (Shl 36) Jajali! How can someone who does no *adhyayana* or *adhyapana*, no *yajnas*, gives no charity to brahmanas, does none of the karmas prescribed for his *varna* but is only engaged in activities full of desires attain *sadgati* (good state)? But one who does all karmas with an attitude of *nishkaam* (no desires) and as an offering to please Paramatma will obtain the true fruits of *yajna* (*moksha*).

Jajali said: (Shl 37) Great merchant! I am not asking about the principles of mental *yajnas* of *munis* who are *atma-vid* (realised *atma*). Moreover those *tattvas* are quite difficult to grasp too. *Rishis* of the past have not done much discussion in this matter. Even if they had and obtained accomplishments they have not established this *Para-tattva* in the world. For this reason I am asking you about this. (Shl 38) As you said, men who are ignorant and are like cattle cannot perform this *atma-yajna* in this holy field called body. By which other karmas can such people attain *moksha*? Oh the highly learned one! Merchant! Tell me this matter. I have developed great faith in you.

Tuladhara said: (Shl 39) Since **the *yajna* done by hypocritical persons has many blemishes like lack of faith etc it is not considered a *yajna* at all.** Such persons are not even fit or eligible to do mental *yajna*, or even action based *yajna*. A person with deep faith will complete the *yajna* with clarified butter, milk, curds and particularly *poornahuti* (offering made with a full ladle). One who is incapable of doing even this much completes the *yajna* by making offerings to *pitrus* with the tail of a cow, worshipping *devatas* with the horns of a cow (pouring milk etc as a part of worship: *abhisheka*) and by smearing the dust from cow's feet on his head. (Shl 40) For performing *yajna* without violence, just as *yajna* is done with clarified butter etc., a wife who embodies faith should also be created mentally. Considering the *yaga* as the *devatas*, worship of the *devatas* should be done with faith and attain Paramatma who is a form of *yajna*. (Shl 41) All rivers are forms of river Saraswati. All mountains are holy lands. Similarly it has been said that for all *yajnas* *purodasha* (*rotis* made of rice flour) has been said to be the best *havis* compared to scarificng cattle.

(Shl 43) Jajali! **This body is itself a holy place** (pilgrim centre). **You don't have to travel all over the country as a guest to undertake pilgrimage.** Those who practice the dharma without violence that I have described can practice dharma with simple materials & implements and attain auspicious *lokas*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 263)**

## Others

- 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 *kaama* (**respectively**). There are also three auspicious fruits for these: *chitta-shuddhi* for dharma, ***yajna* etc karmas for *artha***, and enjoyment for *kaama*. These are known as *anubandha* (appendix). These *anubandhas* should be accomplished through dharma, *artha* and *kaama*. The agonies should be rejected. **(Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 140)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 20) I will tell what will be the 'tools' of *yajna* for people with divine qualities (*daivi-sampat*). *Chitti* (*buddhi*) is the *sruk*, *chitta* (*manas*) is *aajya*, and superior *jnana* is the *pavitra* worn in hand during *yajna*. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 79)**
- Manu to Brihaspati: (Shl 18) Pronouncing/reciting the *veda-mantra* according to rules; performing *yajnas* according to the formal instructions in Vedas; giving *dakshinas* to the best of abilities; doing *anna-daan*; being focussed while doing all the karmas—these five are *angas* (limbs) of karma. Scholars say that this *panchatmak-kriya* (five fold work) itself is the fruit of karmas. **If *yajnas* are performed with these five components full benefits of the *yajna* are obtained.** **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 201)**
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 12) A *grihasta* should everyday eat left over (after serving the guests) and ***yajna-shesha*** (after performing *yajna*) food. Thus he should be a *vighasashi* & *amritashi*. (Shl 13) The *grihasta* who eats his food after all members in his house under his care

have eaten their meal is called a **vighasashi**. The food that is left after all members of the family have eaten is called *vighasa*. **Yajna-sesha is called amrita. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 243)**

- Narada to Galava: (Shl 40) Those who eat the remains of food offered in *yajna* (*yajna-shesha*) consume it as *prasada* (residuum of offering as grace of god) and not as pleasurable things to the taste buds. But those who consume food as objects of pleasure for senses will be subjected to karmas. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 287)**
- Sanatkumara to Vritrasura: (Shl 9) All living beings dissolve in Mahavishnu. They again originate from him. **It is not possible to attain him by knowledge of shastras or tapas or yajna-karmas. He can be attained only by restraint of indriyas.** (Shl 10) One who stabilises the mind through internal & external auspicious karmas and using *buddhi* purifies the inside and outside of the body, will attain endless *moksha* in *paraloka*. (Shl 11, 12) **Just as a goldsmith purifies silver by putting it in fire several times, jeeva gets the mind purified over several janmas (births). But if jeeva makes a great effort, then in one birth it can become purified through yajna & shama, dama etc karmas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 280)**
- Narada to Yudhishtira: (Shl 41-42) Is a *purohit* who is well versed in *shruti & smriti* and is not of a crooked mind advising you on which *shantihoma* (*hutam cha hoshyamanam cha*) should be performed when? **(Sabha; Lokapalasabhakhyana; 5)**

## Animal sacrifice and Non-violence in Yajna

### Involving/for sacrifice

- ..In that *yajna* (Ashwamedha performed by Yudhishtira), 300 animals (meant for sacrificing) had been tied to the *yupas*. Among them the Ashwamedha horse was the prominent animal. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 88)**
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 11, 12) **Even yajna-agni expects meat. In yajna, brahmanas offer animal meat.** Those animals made holy by *mantras* will also attain *swarga*. **(Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 208)**
- Indra to Marutta: (Shl 30) Marutta! For *havis* let a *lohit* species deer representing *agni* be sacrificed. For *havis* to Vishvedevatas let a deer of many forms be sacrificed. Let the brahmanas here sacrifice a blue coloured bull with fluctuating/quivering genital organ (*chalacchishnam*) as per my directions. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 10)**
- **Conversation about yajna & sacrifice of animals**

Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! Which dharma will without using violence fetch the six qualities that a king should have and which also leads to *bhoga* (enjoyment of pleasures) & *moksha* (liberation)? (Shl 2) Grandfather! Which is greater of the two *garhasthya-dharma & yoga-dharma*, though there is not much difference between the two?

Bhishma said: (Shl 3) Yudhishtira! **Both these dharmas make one highly fortunate.** Both are very difficult to practice. But to those who practice it with dedication they bring great results. Both have been practiced by *satpurushas*. Kuntiputra! **Now I will propound the authenticity of both.** It will leave you with no doubts about dharma & *artha*. Listen to me with attention. In this matter scholars quote a conversation between Kapila *muni* and a cow. I will tell you the same, listen.

We have heard that in the ancient past, **Nahusha prepared to sacrifice a cow** to please Twashtu *devata* when he came to him as a guest. Nahusha had thought the directives of Veda to be ancient, permanent and eternal but had not understood their goal which is also *artha*. At that time Kapila who was full of *sattwa-guna*, was dedicated to controlling *indriyas*, ate limited food and was generous, saw the *dhenu* (cow). Kapila who had intelligence that was very good, fearless, firm, truthful, full of good intentions and enthusiastic addressed the Vedapurusha once with a long pronunciation of the word 'VEDA' (People are indulging in such wrong practices in your name!). At that time a *rishi* by name Syumarashmi entered the body of the cow which had been tied up for the sacrifice and said to Kapila: Oh Kapila! If you have doubt about the authenticity of Vedas, on what basis will you prove the other *dharma-shastras*? (Shl 10) Brave

*tapasvis* who consider *shruti* & *vijnana* as their eyes consider Veda as the exhalation like speech of Paramatma who is full of undecaying knowledge. (Shl 11) Which statements are contrary statements in Veda which has been generated by the exhalation of Parameshwara, who is without longings, has no anguish and is without desires?

Kapila said: (Shl 12) I do not criticise Vedas. I never make statements which oppose Vedas. I have heard that the benefit or end result of the karmas prescribed for the different *ashramas* are all same. (Shl 13) A *sanyasi* who has given up attachments to everything (*sarva-sanga-parityagi*) will certainly attain the *parama-pada*. One in *Vanaprastha* will also go there. *Grihastha* & *Brahmachari* will also go there. (Shl 14) All the four *ashramas* are permanent four paths called *devayaan* to gaining *parama-pada*. The greater or lesser quality of these and their strengths & weaknesses have been stated making the fruits of the *ashrama* as the basis. (Classical commentators have interpreted *devayaan* as *atma-sakshat-kartru*, those which lead to realisation of *atma*. By these *ashrams* *atma* can be realised. For *sanyasi* direct *moksha*, for the other *ashrams* *moksha* after attaining higher *lokas*). (Shl 15) It is the opinion of Vedic systems that *yajna-karyas* should be started after understanding the fruits of karmas. Finally, *shruthi* which is based on *siddhantas* (doctrines, principles) says that 'karmas should not be started at all'. (Shl 16) If animal sacrifice is not done in *yajnas* there will be no *dosh* (blemish). If sacrifice is done, it causes great blemish. In such situation it is difficult to assess the strength & weakness of *shastras*. (Shl 17) *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is the greatest dharma. If you know of any clear statements of *shruti* which establish that there is a dharma higher than that, tell me. Those statements need not be rejected as being incompatible with *shastras*.

Syumarashmi said: *Shruthi* says repeatedly that, 'one who wishes to go to *swarga* should perform *Ashwamedha yaga*'. Therefore man first resolves in his mind the fruits he wants and then starts the *yajna* (The intention is to go to *swarga* and not to hurt the animal and eat its meat). (Shl 19) *Shruti* says that sheep, horse, goat, cow, birds, plants available in villages and forests are food for the *prana*. (Shl 20) It also says that in the same way *anna* (food) is thing to be consumed in the morning and evening by *prana* and animals & grains are part of *yajna*. (Shl 21) Prajapati created all these components of *yajna* along with *yajna*. Again Prajapati himself performed *yajna* for the *devatas* with these items of *yajna*. (Shl 22) In the two groups of seven animals belonging to town & forest, each is greater than the other. The animals that are purified by *mantras* in *yajna* and scarified are designated as '*uttama*' (Cow, sheep, man, horse, goat, mule & donkey are the seven *gramya-pashus*. Lions, tigers, wild boar, wild buffalo, elephants, bears and apes are the seven forest animals). (Shl 23) People of previous generation and even more ancients also considered these two groups of seven animals as components of a *yajna*. Therefore which scholar would not have done *yajna* at least once in his life-time according to his abilities? (Shl 24) **Animals, human beings, plants and trees—all desire *swarga*. *Swarga* cannot be obtained without *yajna*. Therefore it is imperative for all those who desire *swarga* to perform *yajnas*. Since *yajna* takes animals also to *swarga* there is no question of violence here.** (Shl 25) *Oshadhis* (certain grains & plants), animals, trees, creepers, clarified butter, milk, curd, other *havis*, earth, directions, faith and *kaal* (time) — all these twelve are components of a *yajna*. (Shl 26) *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* & *Yajamana* — adding these four the components of *yajna* become sixteen in number. *Garhapatyagni* is the seventeenth. (Shl 27, 28) The above seventeen items are components of *yajna*. *Shruthi* proclaims that *yajna* is the main cause for the expansion of the world. *Goyajna* is performed with items like clarified butter, milk, curd, cowdung, broken milk, skin, hairs from the tail, horns and hoof. Therefore all the items which have been prescribed must be collected individually. (Shl 29) A *yajna* is managed with *ritwijs* & *dakshina*. The *yajamana* collects all these and performs the *yajna*. (Shl 30) ***Shruthi* proclaims that everything in the world is created only for *yajna*.** Depending on this statement our ancestors were always engaged in performing *yajnas*. (Shl 31) **One who performs the *yajna* with the feeling that it is his duty and without desiring any fruits for that act will not be causing violence to the animals. He will not commit treachery against anyone and will not start any karma with *ahankar* (ego).** (Shl 32) These items of *yajna* which have been stated as pre-requisites in *yajna-shastra* are duly used in the *yajna* as prescribed, and *yajna* & *yajnanga* (parts or components of *yajna*) bear each other with mutual dependence. (Shl 33) I have studied thoroughly the *dharma-shastra* proclaimed by *rishis*. All Vedas are propounded in these *dharma-shastras*. Since *brahmana-vakyas* (statements) which encourage karma have been found in ancient *dharma-shastras*, scholars treat them also as authoritative works. (Shl 34) *Yajna* has appeared from the *Brahmana* part of Vedas. This has been offered to the *brahmana* only. **All world follows *yajna*.**



Similarly the *yajna* also follows the world. *Jagat & yajna* are both dependent on each other. (Shl 35) OM is the root of Veda. That *yajna* in which *namah*, *swaha*, *swadha*, *vashat* are used to the best of ability will be a *yajna* done properly. (Shl 36) To one who does *yajna* in this manner, there will be no fear from anyone in all three *lokas*. Vedas themselves have proclaimed so. *Siddhas* & great *rishis* also say the same. (Shl 37) That person who has in him *sthobhas* (chanted interjections in *saama*) like '*haaayi*', '*haaavu*' etc related to proper intonation of *rigveda*, *yajurveda* & *samaveda* is real brahmana. (Shl 38) Great brahmana! You have yourself understood the fruits obtainable by *agnyadhana* & *somayaga* and many other great *yajnas*. (Shl 39) Great brahmana! Therefore every brahmana must perform *yajnas* without thinking much about it and he should help others perform them. One who desires to attain *swarga* and does the *yajna* following the laid down procedures will get great *swarga* as the fruit after his death. There is no doubt about this. (Shl 40) It is sure that those who do not perform *yajna* will not get happiness either in this world or the other world. One who has properly understood the matters stated in Veda will be an authority both for *pravritti-marga* & *nivritti-marga*. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharmā; 268**)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 24) Yudhishtira! It is not right for you to not accept my words of *neeti*. Because, you have been created by Brahma to perform cruel deeds. You have not noticed this. .. (Shl 26) Brahma created goat, horse and *kshatriya* with the same intention. It is due to these three that life for all beings on this earth constantly progresses. **Goats are for *yajna***, and horses and *kshatriyas* are created for war. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 142**)

### Against violence/sacrifice

- Yayati to Ashtaka: (Shl 5) Yagas & *yajnas* are performed with desire for various worldly gains and out of jealousy for others. **The animal sacrifices done in such desire-driven *yajnas* involving cruelty to others are considered cruel & lacking in mercy.** This cannot be accepted as truth oriented and earnest path. Those who indulge in such wrong acts for the sake of worldly gains are considered as having destructive mind. Wealth earned by such persons who are not *jitendriyas* is tainted with sin. Therefore the path of *jnanis* or yogis is simple, straight, without blemish and takes one to the state of *samadhi*. Therefore such a path is best. (**Adi-Parva: Sambhava Parva; 92**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 43) **That lowly fool who under the pretext of *yajna* – *yaga* & such *vaidic karmas* kills animals will go to *Naraka* after his death.** .. (Shl 49) **We have heard that in previous *kalpa* people were using animals made of de-husked rice and flour in *yajna*. *Yaajakas* who desired to gain *punya lokas* used to perform *yajnas* with animals made of flour.** (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115**)
- Brahmama narrating a story: A *yati* (sage, ascetic) saw a sacrificial goat being sprinkled with water and condemning it said, 'This is violence. Hence it should not be done'. To that the *adhvaryu* (priest who does the sacrifice/*yajna*) said that by doing so the goat will not be destroyed and (Shl 8) that if the statements in Vedas were true, this animal will only have prosperity (*shreyasa yokshyate janturyadi shrutiriyam tatha*). (Shl 9) The physical parts of this animal will merge into earth. Its water content will merge into water. (Shl 10) Its eyes will merge in Sun, ears in directions and *pranas* in *akash*. Because I am doing things as in *shastras* I will not get any blemish.

*Yati* said: (Shl 11) Oh *adhvaryu*! If you see that by losing its life the goat will find prosperity then this *yajna* will actually be for the sake of the goat! What is the use to you of such *yajna*? (Shl 12) If you act in accordance with *agama* you will also have to follow the *mantra* which says, 'Oh animal! Let your father, mother, brothers, friends and associates consent to this act'. According to this *shruti* you have to take this goat which is particularly dependent on others to all these relatives and take their consent for its sacrifice. If you merely pronounce the *mantras* but do not take consent in practice, the blemish of causing violence to animal will surely adhere to you. (Shl 13) First you have to meet the relatives of the animal. Then you should find out if they will consent to its killing. Only if they consent can you sacrifice it in the *yajna*. (Shl 14) Moreover by reciting a *mantra* you have already merged all its *indriyas* in their place of origin. If Vedas are the proof then, in my opinion, now only the inactive body of the goat is remaining. (Shl 15) Due to the application of *mantra*, this goat which has a body which is bereft of *chetas* (consciousness) is equal to a piece of wood. To one who wishes to perform *yajna* to atone for violence, it is as if wood itself has taken on the significance of animal. (Therefore when *yajna* can happen with wood itself, why cause violence to an animal?). (Shl 16) **It is the preaching of all elderly & knowledgeable that *ahimsa dharma* (dharma of non-violence) is greater than all other**

**dharma. We believe that that act which is without violence alone is worth doing.** (Shl 17) If there is anything more that I have to say it is just this: I have to make everyone take a vow that, 'I will practice the dharma of non-violence'. If not, people like you will perpetuate these violent wicked deeds. (Shl 18) We always love not causing violence to any living being. Let us practically accomplish this. Let us not engage in worshipping the indirect/unseen (like *Swarga*). (In trying to worship for it let us not cause violence to animals here).

*Adhvaryu* said: (Shl 19, 20) *Yatishwara*! You enjoy the *gandha* in *bhumi*. You enjoy *rasa* which has water. You see form which is an attribute of *tejas*. You experience touch which is a quality of *vayu*. You hear sound which is born in *akash*. You churn the *buddhi* with *manas*. But you consider all these *bhutas* as having life. (If you extract their qualities from these *bhutas* will it not cause violence to them?). (Shl 21) You have withdrawn from taking life of other living beings. But you are engaged in extracting their qualities from the beings. **It is my opinion that no act can be done without violence. This being so, how do you think that you will practice non-violence?**

*Yati* said: (Shl 22) **Atma has two states called *kshara* & *akshara*.** That state which is not destructed at anytime and for all the time, such indestructible form is *akshara*. That which is changing is called *kshara*. (Shl 23, 24) If *prana*, *tongue*, *manas* & *sattva* combine with *rajas* it becomes *swabhava* (*kshara*). To one who is free of such feelings, who is free of dualities, has no desires, treats all beings equally, is without attachment (*nirmamasya*), is *jitendriya* and liberated from all sides there will be no fear at all.

*Adhvaryu* said: (Shl 25, 26) Oh *yati* who is great among the intelligent! After hearing your opinion the following is occurring to my mind: Surely one should have company of *satpurushas*. Oh worship worthy! Having obtained *jnana* from your wisdom I say this: I who am doing *vrata* as stated in Veda *mantras* will not have committed any offence.

Brahmana said: In this way, brahmanas say that *moksha* is very subtle. *Sadhaks* practice *moksha-dharma* as preached by *tattva-darshis*. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 28)**

- 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 vidhidrishta 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 (*adhramic* 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 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. .... (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 91)

- Bhishma: (Shl 39) Cows do a great benefit to the world by their milk, curds, clarified butter, cow-dung, hide, bones, horns and tail. (Shl 40, 41) Cows are always working for the benefit of the world. Cold or heat or rain does not trouble them. They do not have any kind of grief. That is why they go to the *Brahmaloka* along with brahmanas. (Shl 42, 43) This is the reason that scholars equate cow with brahmana. **In the yajna performed by Ranti deva cows were taken as yajna pashu** (sacrificial animal). **The water that flowed out from their bodies when they were being washed formed the river Charmanvati. Later they freed them from the state of sacrificial animals and retained them for giving as daan as part of the yajna.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 66)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 11) There cannot be a worse and cruel person than one who wishes to grow his flesh by eating meat of others. (Shl 12) **There is nothing dearer than life to any living being. Therefore, just as man expects others to be kind towards him, he should also be kind towards others.** (Shl 13) Great *dosha* is acquired by eating meat. Because, it is generated from semen. There is no doubt about this. Therefore one gets *punya* by not eating meat. (Shl 14) Man is not subjected to blemish by eating meat which has been sanctified by procedures stated in Vedas. **There is a statement of Shruti that animals have been created for yajna only.** (Shl 15) Eating meat other than by methods prescribed in Vedas but purely for the sake of it and as and when desired has been said to be *rakshasa vidhi*. I will tell you what regulations have been stated for *kshatriyas* for eating meat. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 116)
- Bhishma said: (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; 116)
- Son to his father: (Shl 30) **Both immortality and death are established in our body itself. Man embraces death due to moha. By satya he attains immortality.** (Shl 31) Therefore, I at least will stay away from cruelty and violence, will always practice *satya*, will abandon *kaam* & *krodh*, will look upon happiness and grief with equanimity, will wish auspiciousness/welfare of all and free myself from death just as *devatas*. (Shl 32) **I will be dedicated to the yajna of peace, will be jitendriya, will be absorbed in brahma-yajna and live in muni-vritti. I will perform vak-yajna in the form of japa & swadhyaya, mano-yajna in the form of dhyana and karma-yajna in the form of agni-hotra and care of guru etc.** (Shl 33) **How can a scholar like me worship devatas through cruel ways like pashu-yajna? A wise man does not do tamasa-yajnas through the bodies of pishchas** (a class of demons) which yield impermanent results. (*Pishacha* keeps giving up its physical body by way of suicide by poison, fire etc due to its *vasanas* of past births. I will not destroy my body by doing *tamasa-yajnas*. I will not destroy the bodies of animals also. I do not see any difference between my body and that of animals). (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 175)
- Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! Scholars quote an old *gita* of king Vichakhnu in the matter of kindness towards animals. I will repeat the same to you. Once, king Vichakhnu saw several cows wailing upon seeing a young bull whose neck had been cut off at the time of *gavaalambhana* during a *yajna*. He created a statement of good will towards all cattle by saying, '*swasti gobhyostu lokeshu*' and explained its creation thus:



(Shl 4) **Only such persons support violence (*himsa*) who have strayed from the restrictions of dharma, are fools, atheists, have doubt about the existence of *atma* and are infamous.** Dharmatma Manu has propounded only non-violence in all karmas. **Men engage in sacrificing animals during *yajna* only to satisfy their desires.** (Shl 6) Therefore a scholar should decide dharma with reference to Vedas. **It is the opinion of scholars that for all animals non-violence is the best of all dharmas.** (Shl 7) Harsh *vrats* should be practiced while fasting. **The karmas for fulfilling desires (*kaamya-karmas*) stated in Vedas should be given up.** *Sakaam* karmas should be treated as *anaachara* karmas (forbidden). They should not be indulged in. Only the mean perform karmas desiring fruits. (Shl 8) The argument that, 'no man cuts trees unnecessarily; they are cut only to make the pillars needed for *yajna* (*yupa-sthambha*); no one eats meat unnecessarily. Only the meat of the animal sacrificed in *yajna* is consumed as *prasad* of gods' also does not look reasonable because no one appreciates this dharma of violence. (Shl 9) **Liquor, fish, honey, meat, wine and rice with sesame seeds have been included as materials of *yajna* by the crooked. In Vedas there are no methods of use mentioned for these.** (Shl 10) **These crooked people have added these out of arrogance, delusion and greed only to satisfy their desire of the tongue.** (Shl 11) In all *yajnas* brahmanas worship Shri Mahavishnu as the supreme God. Method of worshipping him with flowers and *paayasa* (sweet porridge prepared from milk & rice) has been stated in *shastras*. (Shl 12) Whatever trees have been specified in Vedas in connection with *yajnas* have to be used. Whatever kind of *havis* is prepared by a *sattwik* person with pure practices & thoughts and made sacred by simple means becomes eligible to be offered to *devatas*. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 265)**

- Yudhishtira questioned: (Shl 1) Grandfather! There are many types of *yajnas* in the world. But there is a single common objective of all (love of god). But among these *yajnas* or *tapas* which of them are performed only for the sake of dharma and not for gaining *swarga* or wealth? And what is the method of performing them?

(This *adhyaya* is said to be known as *yajna-ninda-adhyaya*. Basically it establishes the superiority of non-violence over violence even in *yajna* (avoiding sacrifice of animals). The last *shloka* alone is translated here)

I am telling you the truth about which dharma is dedicated to truth. Non-violence is the dharma of *satya-vadis*. All dharmas are established in non-violence. Violence is *adharma* and brings disadvantage or harm. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 272)**

### Others

- Then Shriman Narayan while remaining invisible said to *devatas*: (Shl 82) **Now a great time called *Krita yuga* is in progress. In this *yuga* animals cannot be sacrificed in *yajnas*.** It cannot go against this (Nothing in this *yuga* can go against non-violence). (Shl 83) In this *Yuga* there will be complete dharma with all four quarters. After this is over, Treta Yuga will come. In that Yuga, *trayi dharma* will exist (dharma will be of three quarters). (Shl 84) In that *Yuga* animals made sacred by *mantras* & water will be sacrificed and one quarter of dharma will be lost. (Shl 85) After Treta, Dwapara will come. That *Yuga* will have mix of dharma & *adharma*. In that *Yuga* two quarters of dharma will be lost. (Shl 86) **After Dwapara is completed, Kali Yuga will start in Pushya nakshatra. In that *Yuga* only one quarter of dharma will survive.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharmas; 340)

## Brahmanas & *yajnas*

- Bhishma: (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 also *devatas* of the *devatas*, 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* (mischievous-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 parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60)

- Bhṛigu said: (Shl 2, 3) Bharadwaja! Only that person who has had the *jatakarma* etc *samskaras*, who is clean (internal & external purity), who has studied/studies Vedas well, who performs the *shatkarmas* (six karmas--there are two groups of these: (i) *adhyayana-adhyapana*, *yajana-yajana*, *daana-pratigraha*; (ii) *sandhyavandana*, *snana*, *japa*, *homa*, *devata-puja* and *atithisatkara-vaishvedeva*), is engaged in *shoucha*, *sadachara*, who consumes only *yajna-shesha*, who is loved by the guru, is dedicated to practicing *vratas* and who is *satya-nisht* is called **brahmana**. (Shl 4) Only that person is a brahmana who has the good qualities of: *satya*, *daana*, *adroha*, *kaarunya*, *lajja*, *daya* and *tapas*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 189)
- Brahma to *maharshis*: (Shl 38) The reason for getting *brahmanatva* (birth as Brahmana) are said to be twofold. It is the conclusion of wise old scholars that *tapas* and practice of auspicious deeds (*punya karmas*) result in *brahmanatva*. (Shl 39) There are many kinds of karmas. Among these, worship, meditation and performing *homa* in *yajnas* are the main karmas. It is the decree of old wise people that to one who is born in family of brahmanas studying Vedas (*adhyayana*) is auspicious karma. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 42)
- Karna to Duryodhana about **Brahmanas**: They are fit to sit in gardens, assemblies, beautiful buildings and narrate entertaining and peculiar/strange stories; in preparing the various vessels & items required for *yajna* & arranging them neatly in right places & purifying such places; finding faults in others, reading other's minds, deciding the nature & character of others, inspecting elephants, horses & chariots, treating/curing donkeys, camels & goats, building cattle wealth, in the design of main entrances & highways (architecture), finding defects in food & drinks. They are unfit to fight or lead a war. (Virata; Goharana; 47)
- Shalya to Duryodhana: (Shl 46) Among these four, *kshatriyas* are protectors. It is prescribed that they collect taxes etc and give to charities. **Brahmanas have been created to assist/direct performing of *yajnas***, teaching *adhyayana*, taking purified forms of *daan*, and for gracing the world. (Karna; 32)
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 8) These are activities which bring *siddhi* to brahmanas: *Tapas*, *yajna*, *vidya*, *bhaikshya* (begging), *indriyas-nigraha*, *dhyana*, *ekantha*, *santosha*, *shaastra-jnana*. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 23)
- Maheshwara to Umadevi: (Shl 66) That person is a brahmana who has studied all three Vedas, who does not make a living by teaching Vedas, who is always engaged in the three karmas of *yajna*, *daan* & *dharma*, has given up *kaam*, *krodh* & *lobh* and is friendly towards all beings. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 141)
- Ashwatthama to Karna: (Shl 5) A brahmana learns Vedas & become eligible to perform & help/guide perform (officiate in) the *yajnas*. *Kshatriya* learns archery and devotes to protecting & caring of citizens and becomes eligible to perform *yajnas* but not to help/guide perform it. (Virata; Goharana; 50)
- Bhishma: (Shl 22) If a brahmana has more money and grains than needed for running the family for three years, he should perform *yajna* with the excess money. He should not accumulate money unnecessarily. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 47)

- Bhishma: (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. (Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60)
- Bhishma: (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. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 130)
- Father said to his son: (Shl 6) Child! A brahmana should become an *upanita* and while practicing *brahmacharya-vrata* should study Vedas. Then he should adopt *grihastashrama* and beget children for the *sadgati* of *pitrus*. **Then he should set up *tretagnis* and perform *yajnas*.** Then he should adopt *vanaprashthashrama* and desire to become a *muni*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 175)
- Indra in the guise of a fox came to brahmana Kashyapa, who had decided to end his life: (Shl 42) Best of brahmanas! If you were to listen to me, if you have faith in my words, you will gain the main fruits stated in Vedas for dharma. (Shl 43) Study Vedas while remaining alert. **Perform *agnihotras*.** Be truthful. Control your *indriyas*. Give to charity to the best of your abilities. **But do not compete with any one.** (Shl 44) **Do brahmanas like you who have studied well and are engaged in performing and helping perform *yajnas* grieve?** Why would they think of the inauspicious act of suicide? **They desire to do *punya-karyas* like *yajna* etc and enjoy great happiness.** (Shl 45) **Those who are born in good *nakshatra*, good day (*thithi*), and good *muhurta* (time) try their best to perform *yajnas*, to give to charity and to beget good children.** (Shl 46) **Those who are born in *asuri nakshatra*, blemished *thithi* and inauspicious *muhurta* do not perform *yajnas*, do not beget children and after death are born as *asuras*.** .. (Shl 51) If I were to be born a human being in the future, I will live with contentment. I will be careful. **I will be dedicated to *yajna*, *daana*, *tapas* etc. I will know that which should be known (*brahma-vastu*). I will give up things that deserve to be given up.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 180)
- **Division into *varnas***  
Bhrigu said: (Shl 10) Bharadwaja! **In the past there was no difference in *varna*. Because Brahma created it, the whole creation was only Brahma (*sarvam brahmanam-idam jagat*) (or *brahmanas*).** Later according to their *karmas* this division happened. (Shl 11) Those brahmanas who gave up the *dharma*s prescribed for them, got interested only in pleasures of the senses, developed fiery nature, were given to anger and were interested only in adventurous acts became *kshatriyas*. Their colour became red. (It is interesting to note that in astrology such nature is signified by Mars which is a red planet). (Shl 12) Those brahmanas who did not perform their prescribed *karmas* and started to live by rearing cattle and agriculture became *vysyas*. Their colour became yellow. (Shl 13) Those brahmanas who lapsed from doing *shoucha* & *sadachara* and indulged in telling lies, were overtaken by greed and did many despicable acts to live became *shudras*. (Shl 14) **Having been separated from brahmanas due to these *karmas* brahmanas changed into these *varnas*. But for all of them practice of *dharma* and performing *yajnas* were not banned.** (Shl 15) In this manner all those who were originally brahmanas were divided into *varnas* according to their *karmas*. Brahma revealed *Vedavani* to all of them in the beginning. But those who were covered in ignorance due to greed became ineligible for studying Vedas. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 188)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 2) For a brahmana child all *karmas* starting from *jaata-karma* to *samavartana* (return home of a brahmana student) should be performed by *acharyas* who are scholars in Vedas. (Shl 3) After *upanayana* (thread ceremony) the brahmana boy should be dedicated to the service of guru and study all the Vedas. Then he should pay the *dakshina* (fees) to the guru and thus having freed himself of the debt of guru, **learn the methods of *yajna*** and obtain the *samavartana samskara*. (Shl 4) He should take permission of the *acharya* and **adopt any one of the four *ashramas* viz *brahmacharya*, *grihastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sanyasa*.** Then he

should practice the rules and disciplines of that *ashrama* throughout his life. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 234)

- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 7) *Grihasta* is freed of his debt to the *pitrus* by begetting children, debt of *rishis* by study of Vedas and debt of *devatas* by performing *yajnas*. (Shl 8) He (brahmana) should live in that place on earth which is sacred and *punya-tama* (holy). By living there he should put in efforts to become an ideal person in matters of greatest fame. (Shl 9, 10) **He should become an ideal person (role model) either by performing great *tapas* or in scholarly achievements or in performance of *yajnas* or in giving to charity plentifully. The fame of a brahmana increases by these four methods.** As long as his fame is praised in this world he will live in *lokas* of holy persons and will enjoy great divine happiness. (Shl 11) A brahmana should be engaged in following six karmas: Studying & teaching, **performing *yajnas* himself and making others perform it**, giving to charity and accepting charity. But he should never accept inappropriate charity nor give it. (Shl 12) **If he gets plenty of money given by the *yajamana* (one who performs the *yajna*) when he helps others perform the *yajna*, or when he teaches or when he marries & is given by the parents of the girl (like dowry), he should give it to charity or perform *yagas*. He should never enjoy such money all by himself.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 234)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 4) **Brahmana should desire a profession such that it does not cause difficulty to anyone and does not form an obstacle to anyone's life.** He should be a cultured gentleman, efficient in learning *shastras* and should acquire *tattva-jnana* while serving *satpurushas*. (Shl 5) He should always be engaged only in karmas prescribed for his *varnashrama* and should be dedicated to truth. A *grihasta* brahmana should be engaged only in the six karmas stated earlier. (Shl 6) **He should worship Paramatma with faith and by the five fold method of *brahma-yajna* (reciting Vedas), *deva-yajna* (performing *homas*), *pitru-yajna* (offering *tarpan*), *bhuta-yajna* (offering *vaishvedeva bali*) and *manushya-yajna* (*atithi-satkar*).** He should be courageous. He should be careful and alert in doing only the right duties and giving up wrong karmas (*akarma*). Should control his external *indriyas* and be an *atmavan* (control mind). Should know dharma. (Shl 7) A brahmana who is free of delight, arrogance and anger will not be destroyed for any reason. **Brahmana increases his *tejas* by *daan*, study of Vedas, *yajna*, *tapas*, modesty, simplicity and control on *indriyas*.** With these he also destroys his sins. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 235)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 23) **One born in a noble birth should view *adhyapana* (teaching Vedas), *yaajana* (helping others perform *yajnas*) and *pratigraha* (accepting/receiving charity/donations) with suspicion** (Should not get engaged in these without careful thought). But he should without fail do *adhyayana* (study of Vedas), *yajana* (performing *yajnas* himself) and *daan* (giving to charity). Somehow he should keep making efforts towards *atmoddhara* through knowledge & wisdom. **He must cross the *kaal-nada* or *samsara*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 235)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 2, 3) **Scholars have described four kinds of livelihood for a *grihasta* brahmana.** Storing granary full of grains (*kusoola-dhanya*) is the first. Storing a large jar or pitcher full of grains (*Kumbha-dhanya*) is the second. Storing just enough grains for that day (*ashvasthana*) is the third. Living by *kapota-vritti* is the fourth (picking up grains in fields as a dove does). Among these four the latter ones are greater than the former ones from the viewpoint of dharma. (Shl 4) **Brahmana with *kusoola-dhanya-vritti* will be engaged in *shatkarmas* like *yajana-yaajana* etc. The second type will be engaged only in *yajana*, *adhyayan* & *daan*. The third type will be engaged in *yajana* & *adhyayan*. The fourth type will be engaged only in *brahma-yajna*.** (Shl 5) Many good *vratas* have been described in *shastras* for a *grihasta*. **A *grihasta* should never cook food just for himself.** He should not kill animals except on the occasion of *yajnas*. (Shl 6) In a *yajna*, whether an animal or other things, they achieve *sanskar* only by *yajus*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 243)
- Vidura: (Shl 84-85) **All the citizens in the world can be categorized into six classes. These six live in six unique ways.** There are no people of the seventh category & there is no type of life which is seventh. (i) There are many who are arrogant (or drunk with some power) or careless. There are thieves who survive because of these people. If there are no careless people there will be no thieves. If there are no sick people, there would be no doctors. (ii) Those desiring sexual



pleasures survive due to corresponding others. (iii) **Purohita survive depending on the Yajamana who conducts yagas.** (iv) Kings survive on fight between other kings. (v) King survives depending on quarreling citizens. (vi) *Panditas* depend on fools for their livelihood. (Udyoga; Prajaagara; 33)

- Brahma to maharshis: (Shl 22) A Brahmana should have following six activities: **yajana—yaajana, adhyayana – adhyapana and daan – pratigraha.** (Shl 23) **Understand that of these, help perform the yajnas (yaajana -- to be the priest for yajnas), teaching scriptures, and accepting daan are the means of making a living for a brahmana.** (Shl 24) The remaining three are for increasing dharma component. (Shl 25, 26) **Brahmanas who know dharma should not be careless in karmas of adhyayana, daan and yajna.** If a *grihastha* who is *jitendriya*, is friendly towards all, is forgiving, looks upon all beings with equality, is contemplative, practices *vrats* severely, follows these to the best of his abilities he will conquer *Swarga loka*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 45)

## Kings/Kshatriyas & Yajna

- Shamika to his son Shringi: (Shl 29) The king establishes dharma. By following the path of dharma, we gain *swargaloka*. *Yajnas & yagas* 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 *shrotriya*s. (Adi; Astika; 41)
- 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; 8)
- Suhotra had obtained his kingdom by the path of dharma. He was governing his kingdom as per the advice of *ritwijas*, *brahmanas* and *purohita*s. 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; 56)
- *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; 21)
- Bhishma quotes from *gita*s of Brahma: (Shl 2) **King should not snatch money of those who perform yajnas.** Similarly he should not take away properties or assets reserved for god-worship related works. He can take away the wealth of robbers and those who do not practice their *varnashrama-dharma*. (Shl 3) All people belong to *kshatriyas*. All royal pleasures also belong to *kshatriyas*. All the money in the world belongs to *kshatriyas*. It is not anyone else's. **But only that money which is his own should be used to strengthen the army or for performing yajnas.** .. (Shl 9, 10) Just as *udbhijas* (plants, creepers etc) grow according to their abilities, a king who knows dharma should expand his kingdom according to his capability. **Just as many insects/worms are born in this world for no purpose, people who oppose yajna are also born similarly.** Therefore the king should have same attitude and behaviour towards such people as normal people have towards fly, mosquito, eggs or ants. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 136)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 24) When all citizens join together to shower the king, who is dedicated to the welfare of people, with money and gold and thus all kinds of wealth is accumulated with him, **then he should worship gods by way of yajnas. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 61)**
- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: (Shl 102) 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; 107)**
- Then Bhishma consented to Yudhishtira returning to town along with his ministers & others. He said with a sweet voice to Yudhishtira: (Shl 9, 10) Rajendra! Now you should enter the town. Let the anxiety in your mind be cleared. Like king Yayati, you with faith & control on *indriyas*, **worship devatas by performing variety of yajnas with plentiful food and dakshina.** (Shl 11) Partha! Be always engaged in *kshatriya dharma* and please *devatas* & *pitrus*. You will gain prosperity by doing so. Let your worries go away. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 166)**
- Then Yudhishtira went to Vasudeva and said to him: ... We are now enjoying everything only by your grace. It is you who have won this earth with your valour & intelligence. You are my *parama guru*. Therefore you please be the *dikshita* for this *yaga*. If this *yaga* is performed with you as the master (*yaajamanya*) we will become sinless. (Shl 22) **You are yourself the form of yajna. You are everything. You alone are dharma; you are Prajapati. You are the refuge for all living beings. This is my clear opinion.** Therefore it is fair that you perform this *yajna*.

Shri Krishna said: Oh mighty! It is befitting you to say these things. (Shl 23) **It is my opinion that you are the refuge for all living beings.** (Shl 24) **Among all the warriors of Kuru only you are adorned with dharma. We are all your followers.** Yudhishtira! **You are not only our king, you are also our guru.** (Shl 25) You please perform the *yajna* with my permission. It is you who should perform this *yajna*. **Appoint me in whatever task you wish me to do.** I make a promise to you that I will discharge whatever tasks you assign to me. If you do the *yajna*, it is as of Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula & Sahadeva also have done it. They will also get the fruits of this *yajna*. Therefore start the *yajna* immediately. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 71)**

- Rishi Devasthana advises Yudhishtira: (Shl 10) Brahma created money only for *yajna*. Brahma has created *Purusha* with the intention of *yajna* and for protecting money. **Therefore all monies should be spent on yajnas. Once yajnas are performed, the performer gets all the desired fruits as a result of the yajnas.** Therefore a king should dedicate all his wealth to *yajnas*. (He gives examples of past eminent personalities who gave everything to *yajnas*: Indra, Mahadeva, Maruttha and Harishchandra). **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 20)**
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 10, 11, 12) The *punya-karmas* for kings are: **performing yajnas; vidyabhyasa** (studies); attack on enemies; not being content with any amount of wealth; punishing the wicked; being aggressive; governing the people; understanding the meaning of all Vedas completely; performing *tapas*; having *sadachara* (virtuous conduct); building huge wealth; and giving donations to the deserving. Kings who do these *karmas* will attain best results both in this world and in the other world. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 23)**
- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 32) **Kshatriya's life itself is comparable to yajna.** The war you fight in the battlefield is *yaga-deeksha*. Ruling the kingdom properly by using *danda-neeti* is *yoga-sadhana*. The *daan-dakshina* you give in *yagas* is giving up of wealth (*vittha-tyaga*). **Therefore the following three karmas should be considered as sacred for a kshatriya:** Fighting wars to win over enemies; using *danda-neeti* with discrimination to punish the guilty and protect the good; **performing several yagas and giving generous daan-dakshina.** **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25)**
- 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*. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 75)**

- Ashwatthama to Karna: (Shl 5) A brahmana learns Vedas & become eligible to perform & help/guide perform (officiate in) the *yajnas*. **Kshatriya learns archery and devotes to protecting & caring of citizens and becomes eligible to perform yajnas but not to help/guide perform it. (Virata; Goharana; 50)**
- Bhishma: (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 *yagas*. But should not conduct (guide in the procedures and conduct of *yagas* which brahmanas do) *yagas* for others. **(Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 60)**
- Bhishma: (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. **(Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 60)**
- Bhishma: (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-shaashtra*, 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 *shraadhya*, *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*. **(Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 63)**
- Bhishma: Following get the fruits of *Vanaprasthashrama* & *deekshashrama* (to a *kshatriya*): (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 parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 66)**

### Gains of performing

- Maharshi Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 33) A king who overcomes *ahankara-mamakara*, governs the kingdom using his intelligence and wise *neetis* (*suneeti*), **performs yajnas** and with the intent of protecting dharma travels to all countries will enjoy bliss in *Devaloka* after death. (Shl 34) A king who defeats the enemies, governs the country with dharma, **drinks somarasa of yajnas**, begets children and brings them up, uses *danda-neeti* with discrimination, protects and nourishes his citizens and finally dies in a war **will enjoy in devaloka. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 25)**
- Bhishma replied: (Shl 3) Dharmaja! By doing the following the **kings wash away their doshas and become pure:** by suppressing the sinners, by encouraging *satpurushas* respectfully, **by performing yajnas** and by giving to charity. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 97)**
- Indrota muni to Janamejaya: (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). **(Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 152)**



## Different ashramas & yajnas

### Grihasthashrama

- Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 55) First one should faithfully practice *brahmacharya-vrata* and learn Vedas-*shastras* from the guru, and then take up *grihasthashrama*. In this *ashrama* to clear the debts of *pitru-deva-manushya*, **he should beget a son and perform yajnas**. He should not have envy towards any. (Shl 56) First he should start with *brahmacharya-vrata* and then enter *grihasthashrama* to get a children; he should keep his *indriyas* pure, should give up grief, untruth, *ahankar-mamakar*, **should perform yajnas** and should worship *swarga*, this world and Paramatma. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28)
- Maheshwara to Umadevi: (Shl 71-73) A *grihastha* should purify his self by doing **pancha-maha-yajnas**. He should be truthful. Should not have a blemished view. Should be a *daani*. Should show hospitality to brahmanas. Should keep the house spick & span. Should not have arrogance. Should always be honest. Should speak in a friendly manner with others. Should be engaged in the service of guests and visitors. **Should eat only food that is offerings of yajna** or after all others in the house have eaten. Should show hospitable treatment according to *shastras*. **Such a person is a dharmic**. (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. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 141)

### Sanyasashrama

- Entering *sanyasashrama*

Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 22, 23) The *vanaprasthashrami* who has grown old & hence weak, who has been afflicted with variety of diseases should leave this *ashrama* and enter *Sanyasashrama* when the fourth part (after 75 years) of his longevity begins. **When taking up the Sanyasa-deeksha** (initiation) **he should perform a yajna which can be completed in just one day and then donate everything he has as dakshina**. (Shl 24, 25) Then he should perform *atma-yaga*. **Should be rejoicing in the supreme spirit. He should 'play' with the atma**. In everyway he should find shelter only in *atma*. He should transfer all *agnis* into *atma*. He should give up all kinds of acceptance/receiving. **He should perform such brahma-yajnas & ishtis which can be completed quickly. He should give up karma-yajnas performed by yajniks and dedicate to atma-yajna**. (Shl 26) **The form of atma-yajna is as follows:** He should transfer the three *agnis* as per procedures to the *atma*, and until death should keep performing *yajna* with faith according to the procedure of *pranagni-hotra*. Should eat cooked rice five or six times while reciting *mantras* like '*praanaya swaha*' etc. After this he should eat the remaining part of food without criticising, irrespective of whether it is tasty or not. (Shl 27) The *muni* in *Vanaprastha* should have hairs, nails and hairy tail removed, should be purified by *deeksha* procedures and enter into the holy *Sanyasa*. (Shl 28) The brahmana who gives sense of security to all beings, gives up his house etc & becomes a *sanyasi* and goes away, will go to *tejo-maya-lokas* after death. Finally he will attain *moksha*. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 244)

### For rishis

- (Shl 108) The main aim of all **rishi dharma** is to become *jitendriya* and obtain *atma jnana*. *Kaam* & *krodh* have to be completely conquered. This is my opinion. (Shl 109) Performing *agnihotra*, being engaged only in *dharma karyas*, **performing Soma yaga, 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 vritti* (gleaning or gathering of grains for food). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 141)

## Giving daan/dakshina

- Yudhishtira to Sri Krishna: Krishna! By your grace this whole *Bharathakhanda* is under my control. I have been able to gain this much wealth only by your grace. Madhava! **With your permission, I intend to donate all this huge wealth to the great brahmanas and to spend it on yajna & yagas**. (Sabha; Rajasuya; 33)

- Narada to Srinjaya: For the Ashwamedha yaga performed by Pourava raja ... The brahmanas who had done study of Vedas would get food, clothes, house, comfortable & beautiful beds etc as charity. ... Pourava Raja would give huge *dakshinas* in each *yajna*. He was donating to the deserving 10,000 elephants secreting musth, golden chariots, horses decorated with precious jewellery, one million *kanyas* (virgins) seated on elephants and chariots; he would also donate houses, agricultural lands, 100 cows etc. along with the virgins. He was donating 10 million big sized cows. The cows would also be accompanied with calves. He would donate bronze vessels to collect the milk from cows. He used to donate servants—both male & female -- in large numbers, mules, camels, goats & sheep etc. (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 57**)
- Yudhishtira asked: (Shl 1, 2) **Between *yajna* & *daan* which will give greater benefits after death?** The fruits of which of the two have been said to be greater? 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*.** (Shl 12) Yudhishtira! You, who have plenty of wealth, should donate cows, oxen, food, umbrellas, footwear and clothes to brahmanas. (Shl 13) You should give as *daan* clarified butter, cooked rice (or grains), chariots along with horses, houses, beds etc to those brahmanas who help you perform the *yajnas*. These items can be given by the king quite easily. The fruits of these deeds will increase your prosperity. (Shl 14) Find out secretly where brahmanas who are blemish-less are living in difficulty and either openly or secretly provide them with ways of living and support them. (Shl 15) **Providing jobs for brahmanas is more auspicious to kings than performing *Rajasuya* or *Ashwamedha yagas*.** By doing this you will be freed of all sins. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 61**)

- **Yudhishtira seeks a clarification by stating that there is no money at this stage in the treasury and he cannot even bring it by way of taxes & gifts as the whole country has been destroyed due to this war.**

He said: 'It is a well thought out and accepted procedure to give away the earth in *Ashawamedha yaga*. Doing anything else will be against the procedures laid down. I do not wish to give any *dakshina* other than earth itself. So please advice me on what I should do'.

Vyasa thought for a while and then said: Yudhishtira! You need not worry about the treasury (money). It is true that now it is empty. But it will soon be filled. **In the *yajna* performed by *mahatma* Marutta in the past he gave so much *dakshina* that unable to carry it with them the brahmanas deposited it in a place in Himalayas.** You can go and bring it. That will be adequate for you to perform the *yajna*. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 3**)

- Bhishma: (Shl 24) Whatever *punya-karyas* one does, it should be done with faith and with *jitendriyatva*. If adequate *dakshina* cannot be given, then no *yajnas* should be performed. (**Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 165**)

- **Yudhishtira gives huge *dakshinas* to brahmanas & gifts to others**

..Then Yudhishtira gave away one thousand crores (One crore = 10 million) gold coins to brahmanas and donated the entire earth to Vyasa. Vyasa after receiving it said: (Shl 9) Oh great among kings! I am giving back to you this earth which was anyway yours. Give me the value of this earth. After all, brahmanas are only desirous of money (not kingdom) (*Brahmana hi dhanarthinah*). Yudhishtira replied: Great among brahmanas! **There is an accepted rule that in Ashwamedha *yajna* the earth itself should be donated as *dakshina*.** This earth was won by Arjuna. I am donating the same to *ritvijs*. Having donated this, now I will go to forest. You can divide this earth among yourselves. **As per the procedures of *chatur-hotr yajna* (four hotr viz: *adhvaryu, udgatr, hotr and brahma*) you can divide it in four parts and share it. I do not wish to take the property of brahmanas. This is also the firm opinion of my brothers. Other Pandavas including Draupadi echoed the same and said, 'It is correct this way only. It is all our opinion also'.** Everyone was thrilled by this response and praised the attitude of Pandavas immensely. Krishna Dwaipayana said: (Shl 17) Yudhishtira! You have donated this earth to me. I am again handing it over to you. In exchange for it you please give gold to the brahmanas. Let the earth be under your control.

Then Vasudeva told Yudhishtira: (Shl 18) It is better to do as suggested by Worshipworthy Vyasa.

A pleased Yudhishtira gave away three times *dakshina* running into several crores. *Maharshi* Krishna Dwaipayana accepted that huge pile of gold and gave it away to *ritvijas*. They divided it into four parts and shared it among themselves. Then they further shared their part with brahmanas. They shared all items including the various vessels of gold. Then other people like *kshatriyas, vasyas, shudras* and *mlecchas* who had come there also donated money according to their capabilities. Highly pleased brahmanas went back to their houses.

***Maharshi* Vyasa gave away his share to Kunthi happily. She happily accepted it and used it for many works of public good. ... (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 89)**

- ***Dakshina* in *yajnas* is must, but can be affordable**

Yudhishtira raises some questions on *ritvijas* and *yajnas*. (Extracts)

Yudhishtira: (Shl 7) Grandfather! **In the matter of *dakshina* (donation to the officiating priest & others) in performing a *yajna*, Vedas say '*idam deyam, idam deyam*'. 'This should be given, this should be given'. This list keeps growing and does not stop. (Shl 8) This statement is not stated in view of emergencies (*aapatkaal*). It is an order in Veda. There is no room for discussing whether someone has the ability to give huge *dakshina*. Therefore I feel this *Veda-vachana* which is in the form of an order is very harsh. (Shl 9) At another place, *Shruti* also says that person with faith should perform *yaga*. If a poor person starts performing a *yajna* according to this order and if he cannot give huge *dakshina* the *yaga* will be wasted. At such times what will 'faith' do?**

(People in India face this problem even today and priests get labled as being 'exploitative'!!)

Bhishma: (Shl 10) Yudhishtira! No one gains importance by blaming Vedas or by being haughty/arrogant or by cheating. Therefore let your attitude never become so. (Shl 11) ***Dakshina* is an integral part of *yajna*, expands the Vedas and remedies the defects that may happen in its performance. *Yajnas* without *dakshina* do not elevate the *yajamana*. (Shl 12) You said that poor may have intense faith but may not have resources for huge *dakshina*. **Where the ability to give *dakshina* is not same (between the rich and the poor), *poorna-paatra dakshina* (256 fists full grains) is equivalent to the stated *dakshina*. Where there is provision for the rich to give *dakshina* in the form of gold, there is also provision for the poor to give *poorna-paatra-dakshina*. Therefore all three *varnas* can perform *yajnas* according to prescribed procedures. (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 79)****

### **Kanya daan**

- Performing a *yajna* related to *devatas* and at the end of the *yajna* giving the girl in *daan* to the *ritvija* is called *daiva vivaha*. (**Adi; Sambhava; 72**) Giving the bride as gift to someone who assisted in the conduct of *yajna-yagas* is called *daiva vivaha*. (**Adi; Sambhava; 102**)

## Daan of land

- Yudhishtira to Bhishma: (Shl 1) Tell me the best methods of *daan* once again. Tell me particularly about *bhudaan* (donating land). (Shl 2) Only a *kshatriya* can donate land to a brahmana who performs or helps perform *yajnas*. Brahmana can formally accept such *daan* given by a *kshatriya*. None others can give *bhudaan*. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 69**)

## Go (cow, cattle) daan

- Bhishma said: (Shl 15) *Godaan* should just not be done to a man with wicked practices, a sinner, someone greedy, a liar and **one who does not perform deva yajna & shraadha karmas**. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 69**)
- Yama to Naachiketa: (Shl 31) That brahmana who has studied Vedas, is a good *tapasvi* and **is engaged in performing yajnas is most worthy for receiving godaan**. Firstly, cows released from captivity and secondly cows which have come from a very poor person's house for being cared well are considered especially suitable for donating. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 71**)
- Yama to Naachiketa: (Shl 35, 36) Go (Cow) should be donated to a brahmana who is very forgiving, is capable of protecting and nourishing them, is grateful and has no job. He is considered a worthy receiver. It can be donated to those who are aged, who have to eat prescribed dietary food due to sickness, who are scared because of famine and **who intend to perform a great yajna**. Go can be donated at that appropriate time for use in farming, **for performing homa of agnihotra**, when children are born, when a disciple comes asking for it to pay *guru dakshina* and when a boy needs cow's milk for meeting his nutrition requirements (at such times one need not consider sacred time, place or formal procedures). (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 71**)

## As a remedial measure

### Successful as remedy

- Vyasa continued and said: (Shl 1) Yudhishtira! It is my opinion that your mental disposition is not alright. **No man does anything by himself**. (Shl 2) **Prompted by fate** (Ishwara) **man does both good and bad deeds**. Where is the reason to grieve when this massive killing has happened due to the prompting of Ishwara? (Shl 3) In spite of this, if you still consider yourself as sinner and responsible for these sins, I will tell you how you can wash them off. Listen. (Shl 4) **A sinner can always cross the heap of sins by way of yajnas, tapas & daan.....**

Bharata! Therefore you also should perform Rajasuya, Ashwamedha and Naramedha (**human sacrifice!!?**) *yagas*. Just as Dasharatha's son Shrirama performed Ashwamedha with plenty of *dakshina & anna*, you can also perform it. Just as your ancestor, Dushyanta's son Bharata *chakravarti* performed Ashwamedha you can also perform it. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 3**)

- Vyasa to Yudhishtira: (Shl 37) Dharmaja! By birth you are virtuous. You did not have any desire to go to war. You had to face the war inevitably due to the attitude of the enemies. You have completed this war even though you were quite unwilling. Even after the end of war instead of rejoicing you are grieving intensely. Therefore do not grieve for having been the 'pretext' for total destruction. **For this Ashwamedha mahayajna has been stated as the atonement. Perform that yajna. You will be cleared of all sins.** (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 33**)
- Pandavas returned from Himalayas with enormous wealth. Shri Krishna and all others received them before they entered the city and all became very happy. After a few days *maharshi* Vyasa came to Hastinapura. Yudhishtira sought his permission to perform **Ashwamedha yaga**. Vyasa consented. He said (Shl 16) **This yaga will destroy all sins. It makes you holy**. By pleasing the *devatas* through this *yaga* you will become free of sins. There is no doubt about this.....(**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 71**)



- Bhishma: Prithvi's opinion in this matter is: (Shl 11) Just as a lump of mud dropped into the sea will dissolve easily and be destroyed, all kinds of wicked deeds will drown and get destroyed by **giving daan to a person who is engaged** in teaching Vedas, **performing yajnas** and in receiving (*pratigraha*). (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 22**)

### **Fails as a remedy**

- Yudhishtira to Arjuna: (Shl 40) **Shruti states that for a man who indulges in *parigraha*** (acceptance, acquisition) and ***sangraha*** (accumulation) (meaning one who is not a *tyagi*), **practice of dharma (*atma-darshana*) will not be possible**. Moreover, it is my personal experience also. (Shl 41) By desiring kingdom and wealth, I have accumulated a heap of sins. This has become the cause for several birth & death cycles. **Veda itself states that *parigraha*** (taking, acquisition) **results in sin. Performance of *yajnas, daan, japa* etc does not remedy its sins completely**. It is not possible to do repentance matching the *parigraha*. Therefore the heap of sin grows and becomes the cause for birth and death cycles. Once in that cycle, you cannot get *moksha*. That is why it is better not to indulge in *parigraha*. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 7**)
- Ashma to king Janaka: (Shl 44) The whole world is sunk in this large ocean of 'time' which has two crocodiles viz old age and death. But no one understands this. (Shl 45, 46) We have seen that many doctors who have studied *ayurveda* and their family members have been afflicted by many diseases. They keep drinking a variety of medicines. But just as the sea does not cross its shores, they are unable to overcome death. (Shl 48) Even those who are engaged in *tapas*, those who have studied *vedas-shaastras*, who are great donors and **who perform many *yajnas***, like the doctors, **cannot avoid old age and death**. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)
- Asma to king Janaka: (Shl 35) Medicines, *mantras*, ***japa-homa*** etc cannot protect the person who is in the grip of old age or death. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 28**)

## **Infrastructure, Activities, Facilities, Hospitality**

- **Building guest houses**  
Yudhishtira's *Rajasuya yaga* preparations: Several *pandits* came to Indraprastha accepting Yudhishtira's invitation. As per his orders, several architects/sculptors built suitable/appropriate residences for all the guests. (**Sabha; Rajasuya; 33**)
- **Draupadi, a great host**  
Duryodhana narrating to Dhritarashtra the things he saw during Yudhishtira's *Rajasuya yaga*: Yaajnaseni (Draupadi) would not eat for a very long time, and would personally enquire whether the deaf, lame, dumb, midgets etc had finished their meal. She would eat her meals only after confirming that there was no one who had not eaten. (**Sabha; Dyuta; 52**)
- Narada to Srinjaya: For the *Ashwamedha yaga* performed by Pourava raja, innumerable scholars in *shiksha-shaastra*, *akshara-shaastra* (*lipi-shaastra*?) and in the procedures of conducting *yajnas* used to come. The brahmanas who had done study of Vedas would get food, clothes, house, comfortable & beautiful beds etc as charity. The scholars were made happy by the team of hard working servants, players, actors-dancers, *swarna-choods* etc. (**Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 57**)
- 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 *shaastras*. *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 *shraadhas* done. *Vysyas* are satisfied with the care. Women are satisfied with fulfilling of their desires (*kaamaistushta 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. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 90**)

## Different Yajnas mentioned/described

- Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! There is a story of king Bhangaaswana & Indra in this matter. I will tell you the same. In the past there was a king called Bhangaaswana who was very *dharmik*. **Since he did not have any children, he performed a *yajna* called *Agnishtuta*** which had no place for Indra and was hated by him. That *yajna* has been prescribed for men for atonement and to get sons. Coming to know of this, Indra started looking for defects in the king so that he could revenge him. But was unable to find any. The king, however, got one hundred sons. (**Anushasana; Daandharma;12**)
- Trita who had fallen into a well and cheated out of *soma-rasa* decided to and **performed an entire *yajna* in the well itself all by himself**. He did this by creating all the needed materials and the persons (roles) in his mind. His *tapas-shakti* was so powerful, he succeeded and all the *devatas* led by Briahspati appeared before him and granted the desired boons. (**Shalya; Gada; 36**)
- Rishi Devasthana advises Yudhishtira: Therefore you must do all duties of *grihasthashrama* now. Yudhishtira! Therefore, perform ***mahayajnas*** with huge *dakshinas*. **Those who do *swadhyaya-yajna*** (study, learning, teaching of Vedas) **are *rishis***. ***Sanyasis* are immersed in *jnana-yajna***. A *kshatriya* who is a *grihsatha* has to perform ***Ashwamedha*** etc ***yagas***. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 20**)
- Brahma to *maharshis*: (Shl 19) **According to the differences in *gunas***, three types of *daan* are given. **There are also three types of *yajnas***. There are three types of *lokas*. There are three types of *devatas*, three types of *vidyas* and three types of paths. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 39**)
- Samshaptakas take their oath after performing ***ranayajna*** (*rana*=battle; war): If we return without killing Dhananjaya or if we run away from war scared by his assault, may we get the *naraka* that is meant for those who..... (**Drona; Dronabhisheka; 17**)
- Bhishma said: Yudhishtira! Listen attentively to the ***shraaddha karma vidhi*** which is called ***pitru yajna*** which is the cause of gaining money, fame and children. *Pitru devatas* (ancestors who are like gods) are worship worthy for *devas*, *asuras*, *manushyas*, *gandharvas*, *uragas*, *rakshasas*, *pishachas* and *kinnaras*. First the *pitru devatas* are worshipped and then *devatas* are worshipped. **Therefore man should always worship *pitru devatas* through all *yajnas***. *Pitrus* will feel contented even if worshipped on all days. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 87**)
- Marutta who was *dharmatma* got several gold vessels made for the *yajna*. To perform the *yajna* he went to Meru Mountain situated on the northern part of Himalaya. Near this there is a golden mountain too. He established his *yajna-shala* there and started the *yajna-karmas*. As ordered by Marutta, several goldsmiths prepared golden vessels of various shapes as well as seats. There was no possibility of counting the number of things he got made in gold. There were innumerable such vessels and other items made of gold for the *yajna*. Then he performed the *yajna* there along with his subordinate kings. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Ashwamedha; 8**)
- Yudhishtira wanted to perform ***Rajasuya yaga***...He called a meeting of ministers & his citizens to know their opinion. He greeted those who came, was honoured by them and after they were all

seated quietly, he told them about his intent. After extensive discussions with all of them, and with their full support he decided to conduct the Rajasuya yaga. (**Sabha; Sabhakriya; 13**)

- Duryodhana successfully performs **Vaishnava mahayaga** which compares with *Rajasuya yaga*. This was primarily based on the great victory of Karna who conquered most of the kings across the country. (**Vana; Ghoshayatra; 256**)
- Vaishampayana to Janamejaya: **Maharaja! Generally after completion of the great *Rajasuya-yaga* without any obstacles, a horrible war occurs among *kshatriyas*. (Shalya; Gada; 49) (Even the Mahabharata war occurred with *Rajasuya-yaga* performed by Pandavas forming the seed of the war)**
- Bhagiratha to Brahma: ..I performed **sarvamedha yaga** (all sacrifice) eight times. Seven times I performed **naramedha yaga** (human sacrifice).... (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 103**)
- Devarshi Narada's questions to Yudhishtira: (Shl 100) Are you trying your best to conduct **Vajapeya-Pundarika etc yagas** without any defects? (**Sabha; Lokapalasabhakhyana; 5**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 10) Panchashikha was the first disciple of Asuri *muni*. He was also considered *chiranjeevi* (immortal). He had done **manasik-yajna** for 1000 years. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 218**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 13) Asuri muni had divine vision by virtue of his *tapas*. He knew the difference between *kshetra* & *kshetrajna* due to his *siddhi* by performing **jnana-yajna**. (Shl 14) He propounded to the *rishis* who had come to him the *ekakshara-roopa* (OM) & *avinashi* Brahma who appears in several forms. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 218**)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (Shl 31) The important *yajna* for *kshatriyas* is **yuddha-yajna**. For *vysyas* it is **havir-yajna**. For *shudras* it is **seva-yajna**. For brahmanas it is **tapo-yajna**. (Shl 32) This method of *yajnas* existed only in *Treta-yuga*. Not in *Krita-yuga*. It will steadily decline in *Dwapara-yuga* and will lapse in *Kali Yuga*. (Shl 33) People who followed nothing other than *jnana-dharma* in *Krita-yuga* considered *Rik, Sama & Yajus* and *sakameshtis* (*yajnas* for satisfying/fulfilling ones desires) **as different from *tapas* and rejecting all of them were dedicated to *tapas*, the form of *jnana***. (Shl 34) In *Treta-yuga* very mighty kings were born. They became the governors for all the moving and immobile animals. (Shl 35) **In *Treta-yuga* Vedas, *yajna* and *varnashrama-dharmas* were followed systematically**. But in *Dwapara* since the longevity reduced people started to lapse in practicing these. (Shl 36) In *Kali Yuga* Vedas will decline and only some parts will be visible. **Agonised by sheer *adharma* they will also disappear along with *yajnas***. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 232**)
- Sulabha to king Janaka: (Shl 162) The king of that kingdom in which great dharma is considered sacred and that king who considers the entire earth as *dakshina* (who is ready to give away the entire earth as *dakshina*), becomes eligible for the fruits of **ashwamedha yajna**. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 320**)

### **Ashwamedha yajna**

#### **Ashwamedha performed by Yudhishtira**

- Yudhishtira arranged everything as suggested by Vyasa. He called aside Arjuna and said to him: Arjuna! Come here. You should protect this *yajna* horse. You are capable of doing this. No one else is capable of doing this. **When this horse goes around on this earth, many kings may come to oppose you. At that time you should behave with them skilfully so that a war does not happen. You should inform all kings about this *Ashwamedha yaga* I am performing and invite them to come for this *yajna***. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 72**)
- Then a pleased Arjuna invites all of them to come to Hastinapura for the *Ashwamedha yajna*. **Babhruvahana requests that he be given the task of serving food to brahmanas in the *yajna***. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 81**)
- **Ashwamedha begins** (Extracts)



Maharshi Vyasa said to Yudhishtira: ...Because gold is used in plenty in this *yajna*, this *yajna* is well known as *bahu-suvarnaka-yajna* (lot of gold *yajna*). Brahmanas are the main cause for *yajnas*. Therefore give them three times more *dakshina*. By doing so, you will get the benefit of three *yajnas* even if you perform only one. Then you will be free of sins of killing cousins & relatives. ...

Scholars who were best in preparing *somas* and who practiced *shastras* properly, extracted juice from *soma-lata* (Soma creeper) and prepared three *savanas*.

..In Yudhishtira's *yajna* there were members who had not studied Vedas with all its six components, who did not practice *vrats*, who was not skilled in teaching Vedas and who were not skilled in arguments & counter-arguments in discussing *shastras*. Then as soon as it was time for installing the *yupas*, the *yajakas* installed a total of 21 *yupas* consisting of six *yupas* of *bilva* tree, six of *khadira*, six of *palasha*, two of *devadaru*, one of *shleshmataka*. As ordered by Dharmaraja, Bhimasena had also got made other *yupas* of gold...

..In that *yajna*, 300 animals (meant for sacrificing) had been tied to the *yupas*. Among them the Ashwamedha horse was the prominent animal. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 88)

- **Assignment of responsibilities for the yaga**

Yudhishtira called Vyasa and said to him: (Shl 2) Worshipworthy! Give me *deeksha* whenever you consider it the right time to start the *Ashwamedha yaga*. Because this *yajna* that I am about to perform depends on you... Vyasa said: **On Shuddha Poornima of next Chaitra your deeksha ceremony will be conducted.** By then you should arrange all the needed things.....

Yudhishtira said to Vyasa: This is the horse which has been brought after careful examination by *soothas* & *brahmanas*. Now this will roam around the world as it pleases. At this time you have to give us a suitable suggestion. Please tell us who should protect this horse. Vyasa said: (Shl 15) Yudhishtira! **Arjuna**, the brother of Bhima, greatest among archers, great person, enthusiastic about victory, patient and courageous will protect the horse. He who is the destroyer of *Nivata kavachas* is capable of conquering the whole world single-handedly. .. (Shl 17) Arjuna is skilled in dharma & *artha*. He is an expert in all *vidyas*. He will let this horse go around in accordance with *shastras*. .. (Shl 19) The highly valorous **Bhima** the son of Kunthi is capable of protecting/guarding the kingdom. So is **Nakula**. (Let these two take care of protecting the kingdom). (Shl 20) Intelligent & famous **Sahadeva** will manage all matters relating to protection and care of family.

Yudhishtira arranged everything as suggested by Vyasa. He called aside Arjuna and said to him: Arjuna! Come here. You should protect this *yajna* horse. You are capable of doing this. No one else is capable of doing this. When this horse goes around on this earth, many kings may come to oppose you. At that time you should behave with them skilfully so that a war does not happen. **You should inform all kings about this Ashwamedha yaga I am performing and invite them to come for this yajna.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 72)

- **Yudhishtira gives huge dakshinas to brahmanas & gifts to others**

..Then Yudhishtira gave away one thousand crores (One crore = 10 million) gold coins to brahmanas and donated the entire earth to Vyasa. Vyasa after receiving it said: (Shl 9) Oh great among kings! I am giving back to you this earth which was anyway yours. Give me the value of this earth. After all, brahmanas are only desirous of money (not kingdom) (*Brahmana hi dhanarthinah*). Yudhishtira replied: Great among brahmanas! **There is an accepted rule that in Ashwamedha yajna the earth itself should be donated as dakshina.** This earth was won by Arjuna. I am donating the same to *ritvijs*. Having donated this, now I will go to forest. You can divide this earth among yourselves. **As per the procedures of chatur-hotra yajna** (four hotra viz: *adhvaryu*, *udgatr*, *hotra* and *brahma*) **you can divide it in four parts and share it. I do not wish to take the property of brahmanas. This is also the firm opinion of my brothers. Other Pandavas including Draupadi echoed the same and said, 'It is correct this way only. It is all our opinion also'.** Everyone was thrilled by this response and praised the attitude of Pandavas immensely. Krishna Dwaipayana said: (Shl 17) Yudhishtira! You have donated this earth to me. I am again handing it over to you. In exchange for it you please give gold to the brahmanas. Let the earth be under your control.

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***Maharshi Vyasa gave away his share to Kunthi happily. She happily accepted it and used it for many works of public good. ... (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 89)***

- The invited kings who came to Hastinapura came with variety of precious stones, women, horses and weapons to please Yudhishtira. .. The kings who had come to see the Ashwamedha *yaga* saw that all kinds of animals that live on land or water had been brought there. Kings who had come for the *yajna* saw there cows, buffaloes, aged women, water animals, carnivorous animals, birds, *jarayuja*, *svedaja*, *andaja* & *udbhija* animals, animals which live on mountains, animals that live on shores of seas etc. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 85)**

### **Ashwamedha yaga of king Pourava**

- Narada to Srinjaya: For the Ashwamedha *yaga* performed by Pourava raja, innumerable scholars in *shiksha-shaastra*, *akshara-shaastra* (*lipi-shaastra*?) and in the procedures of conducting *yajnas* used to come. The brahmanas who had done study of Vedas would get food, clothes, house, comfortable & beautiful beds etc as charity. The scholars were made happy by the team of hard working servants, players, actors-dancers, *swarna-choods* etc. Pourava Raja would give huge *dakshinas* in each *yajna*. He was donating to the deserving 10,000 elephants secreting musth, golden chariots, horses decorated with precious jewellery, one million *kanyas* (virgins) seated on elephants and chariots; he would also donate houses, agricultural lands, 100 cows etc. along with the virgins. He was donating 10 million big sized cows. The cows would also be accompanied with calves. He would donate bronze vessels to collect the milk from cows. He used to donate servants—both male & female -- in large numbers, mules, camels, goats & sheep etc. **(Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 57)**

### **Maharshi Agasthya's yajna**

Janamejaya said: (Shl 1) If one can get *swarga* by earning money by practice of dharma and then giving it up, tell me about it in greater detail. You are very skilled in discourses. You have told me about the brahmana who lived by *unccha vritti*. Whatever you said is true. There is no doubt about it. But can this be treated as best decision in respect of all *yajna*? Kindly tell me comprehensively about this.

Vaishampayana said: Janamejaya! In this matter scholars cite a *mahayaga* conducted by Agasthya in the past. Agasthya who was interested in the welfare of all living beings undertook a *yajna* which would get completed in twelve years. .... *Maharshi* Agasthya had prepared pure cooked rice to the best of his capabilities to serve to several *tapasvis* who had congregated for the *yajna*. There was no item that was unfit to be used in that *yajna*. ..When this *yaga* was taking place Indra stopped rains in that region. When there was a break in the proceedings of *yajna*, all the *munis* assembled and were discussing this matter. Agasthya as the master of the *yajna* is feeding all of us without any envy. But there are no rains. How will the grains needed in future grow? It appears as if Indra will not let rains pour for twelve years. Therefore it is important that all discuss this matter and grace Agasthya *maharshi* so that the *yajna* can get completed successfully.

Upon hearing this Agasthya bowed to them and said: (Shl 17) **In case Indra does not give rains for the twelve years, I will perform *chinta yajna* (mind *yajna*).** This procedure has been followed for quite some time. (Shl 18) **In case Indra does not give rains for the twelve years, I will perform *sparsha yajna* (touch *yajna*).** This procedure also has been followed for quite some time. (Shl 19) **In case Indra does not give rains for the twelve years, I will perform these *yajnas* which are in the form of *dhyeya* through *dhyana*.** (Shl 20) **I have collected seeds for many years to perform *beeja yajna*. I will perform *yajna* with these seeds itself.** There will be no hurdles in doing this. (Shl 21) Let Indra bring rains here or not. He will not be able to waste this *yajna* I have started for any reason. (Shl 22) **If Indra rejects on his own accord my prayers to pour rains here, I will myself become Indra. I will save the lives of people.** (Shl 23) **One has to depend on that food from which he is born.** I will again and again organise for the required food. (Shl 24) Let all the gold in the three *lokas* come here by itself. (Shl 25) Let *apsaras*,

important Gandharvas, *kinnaras* etc come here and worship this *yajna*. (Shl 26, 27) Let all the wealth of Uttara Kurus come here by itself. Let *Swarga*, *devatas* who live in *Swarga* and dharma – all of these come here by themselves. As soon as Agasthya said this, it all happened. All the *rishis* present there were joyous upon seeing this. They said to him: ..... We are very happy with your attitude of non-violence. **You always propagate/promote non-violence in *yajnas*.** ... Seeing the power of Agasthya and other *rishis* Purandara poured rains there for the twelve years.

In Agasthya's *yajna* there were some who ate only roots and fruits. There were *ashmakuttas* who pounded there grains with stones and ate it. **There were *marichapas* who lived only by drinking Sun rays.** There were *pariprishtikas* who ate only after someone asked them if they wanted food and whatever was given to them. **There were *vyghasirikas* who ate only food left over after offering in *yajna*.** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 92)

### Vaishnav yaga

- Shaunaka questioned: (Shl 1) Respected Sauti! It is said that Shriman Narayana, the lord, the *veda-vedya* receives the first part of offering in *yajnas*. It is also said that this Shriman Narayana himself is eternal *yajnadhari* (performer of *yajna*) (How can the same *bhagawan* be both *yajna-kartru* & *yajna-bhoktru*) (Shl 2) Bhagawan Shriman Narayana, the lord of all, who is forgiving, practices *nivritti marga* (the path of abstaining, returning). But that same almighty *bhagawan* has also ordained *pravritti marga* (engage in worldly affairs). How is this? (Shl 3) **Why did the *bhagwan* who himself practices *nivritti* authorise *devatas* to receive part of offering in *yajnas* which are actually driven by *pravritti*? Why did he make *rishis* & *munis* who have withdrawn from objects of senses practice *nivritti marga*?** (Shl 4) Venerable Sauti! Please clear this long standing doubt of ours. You are capable of doing so.

Sauti said: Great among *munis* Shaunaka! I will tell you the same question that king Janamejaya had asked Vaishampayana, the great & wise disciple of Vyasa. The wise Janamejaya asked Vaishampayana thus: (Shl 7) **We see everywhere that all *lokas* upto *Brahma-loka*, and *devas*, *asuras* & *manavas* are engaged with interest in acts of worldly prosperity.** (Shl 8) **But you say that only *moksha* can give ultimate peace & happiness.** We have heard from you that those who become liberated by being free of both *punya* & *paap* will enter the thousand rayed Paramatma. (Shl 9) For sure, this eternal *moksha dharma* is very difficult. It is for this reason that all *devatas* have given up this *moksha marga* and are enjoyers of *havya* & *kavya*. (Shl 10, 11, 12) Respected Vaishampayana! **Don't Brahman or Rudra, Indra, Surya or Chandra, Vayu, Agni or Varuna, Bhumi or Akash, or any other *devatas* know about the dissolution in the system created by Paramatma himself? Is it why they have not taken to the permanent, indestructible and undecaying *moksha marga*?** (Shl 13) There is this one blemish in those busy in *karmas* who have taken to *pravritti marga* with an eye on *swarga* etc fruits which are valid only for a limited duration. They are caught in the grip of *kaal* and are constantly experiencing auspicious & inauspicious fruits. (Shl 14) Great *vipra*! This doubt is stuck in my heart like a thorn. Please clear this doubt by narrating *itihasa*. **I have a great curiosity to understand about this *pravritti* & *nivritti margas*.**

(Shl 15) Why has it been stated that *devatas* are authorised to receive share in *havis* in *yajnas*? For what reason is *homa* performed addressing the *devatas*? (Shl 16) When *devatas*, who receive share in *yajna*, themselves perform *yajnas* to whom do they offer share?

Vaishampayana said: Maharaja! Surely you have asked a very secret question. One who has not studied Vedas, who does not know Puranas and who is not a *tapasvi* cannot ask this question. I had also posed the same question to my guru in the past. I will tell you whatever Maharshi Krishna Dwaipayana had told me at that time. Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, myself and Shuka, we five were disciples of Vyasa...He was teaching us the four Vedas and the fifth Mahabharata....We asked him the same question. He gave us appropriate answer. I will repeat the same answer that he gave us.

Vyasa said to his disciples: Great among disciples! .. (Shl 29) That whom those who know *Sankhya* & *yoga shastra* call Paramatma, also gets the name *Mahapurusha* due to his *karmas*. *Avyakta* was born from that *Mahapurusha*. Scholars call that same *avyakta* also as *pradhana*. (Shl 30) *Vyakta* was born from *Mahapurusha* & *avyakta* for the sake of creating *jagat* (that which moves, cosmos). **That same *vyakta* is *Aniruddha*. He is called *mahat tattva* in all *lokas*.** (Shl 31) That *Aniruddha* who had state of *vyakta* created *pitamaha* (*Brahma*). That *pitamaha* who is the form of all *tejas* (*sarva-tejo-maya*) is also called by the name *ahankar*. (Shl 32) **The five**

subtle *mahabhutas* viz *prithvi, vayu, akash, jala & agni* were born from *Ahankar*. (Shl 33) **Brahma, the form of *ahankar*, after having created these *mahabhutas*, created their qualities/attributes of *shabda, sparsha* etc.** I will tell which *murthys* (images, forms) were created from these *pancha-bhutas*. Listen. (Shl 34) *Marichi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulasthya, Pulaha, Kratu*, the great *Vasishta* and *Swayambhu Manu*—these are the derivative forms of the *pancha-bhutas* (*moorta-swaroopa*). (Shl 35, 36) These eight forms derived from *pancha-bhutas* should be understood as **eight *prakritis* (*ashta-prakriti*)**. All the *lokas* are established in these *ashta-prakritis*. **Brahma, the *loka-pitamaha*, created *yajnas* consisting of *Vedas, Vedangas* and *yajnangas* for accomplishment of actions in the *lokas* (*loka-siddhyartham*)**. This entire *jagat* is born from the above said *ashta-prakriti*.

Vyasa said: Great disciples! Then they all went to the northern shore of *kshira-samudra*. There they all began *tapas* as described in *Vedas*. That *tapas* called *Mahaniyama* was very severe *tapas*. (Shl 47) All their faces were turned upwards. All had lifted up their arms. Their minds were in full concentration. They were standing on one leg. They, who were performing *tapas* in a group, were looking still like pieces of logs.

(Shl 48) After they did such severe *tapas* for one thousand divine years, they all heard a sweet voice: (Shl 49) *Bhoh! Brahma & other devatas! Rishis* dedicated to *tapas*! I am welcoming all of you and saying these best of best words. (Shl 50) I know for what reason you are all here. The work you have intended is of great benefit to all *lokas*. **All of you should practice dharma based on *pravritti* (*pravritti yuktam kartavyam*)**. **These *pravritti karmas* will be the cause of your nourishment and increase in strength**. (Shl 51) Oh *devatas*! You have done very difficult *tapas* intending to worship me. You will all enjoy good fruits of this *tapas*. (Shl 52) **All of you including Brahma, the great guru of this entire creation and *loka-pitamaha*, should conduct a *yajna* addressed to me**. (Shl 53) *Lokeshwaras*! **Everyday all of you create a share for me in *yajna* and offer it to me. I will tell you your path to auspiciousness according to your authorities**.

Vyasa said: Best of disciples! **Hearing these words of *bhagawan*, the *devatas* were thrilled. Then all of them including Brahma performed *Vaishnav yaga* as prescribed in *Vedas*. In that *yajna* Brahma personally offered share to Mahavishnu. *Devatas & devarshis* also offered their respective shares. Those shares of *yajna* created according to the dharmas of *Kritayuga* were accepted by all**. (Shl 57) All the participants of the *yajna* praised Mahavishnu as *adityavarna, antaryami Purusha*, beyond the darkness of *tamas, brihat swaroopa, sarva vyapi, sarva gami, Ishwara, varada & sarva samartha prabhu*. (*prahur adityavarnam tam purusham tamasah param, brihantam sarvagam devam ishanam varadam prabhum*).

Then Shriman Narayan while remaining invisible said to all of them: (Shl 59) Whatever shares were offered by each one, have reached me correctly. I am highly pleased with the shares you have offered. **Now I will grace you all with fruits which are cyclical (or repetitive) (*avritti-lakshanam*) in nature**. (Shl 60) Oh *devatas*! By my grace you will obtain fruits having the characteristic of repetitiveness or being cyclical. **In every Yuga you can yourselves become *yajamanas* and perform *yagas* with very good *dakshinas***. By doing so, you will all become eligible for fruits having *pravritti dharma*. (Shl 61) *Devatas*! **In all *lokas* whoever wishes to worship through *yajnas*, will offer shares to you as prescribed in *Vedas***. (Shl 62) The *devata* who offered a proportion of share to me in this *yaga* will be eligible to receive that same proportion in all *yajnas* performed by man. I have already made arrangements in *Vedas* about which *devata* will get how much share. (Shl 63) **You can accept the share given to you by *yajamana* (one who performs the *yajna*) of the *yajna* and proceed to fulfill his desired wishes. According to your authorities you can think about the desires of all people. In this manner you can cause benefit to all *lokas***. (Shl 64) **Whatever *yajna-karmas* become popularised in the world, by receiving the share from those *yajnas* you will increase your might and bear (support) the *lokas*. You will be quite satisfied by receiving shares in all *yajnas* performed by men. Then you can satisfy me through *Vaishnav yajna*. This is my preaching to you**. (Shl 67, 68) I have created *Vedas* and *yajnas* consisting of *oshadhis* (herbs) for this reason. By implementing these *yajnas* on earth with faith, all the *devatas* will be pleased. *Lokadhiswaras*! These *yajnas* built with *pravritti gunas* have been created by me for your sake only. Keep thinking about the *loka-hita* (benefit to the *lokas*) according to your respective authorities till the end of *kalpa*.

(Shl 82) **Now a great time called *Krita yuga* is in progress. In this *yuga* animals cannot be sacrificed in *yajnas***. It cannot go against this (Nothing in this *yuga* can go against non-violence). (Shl 83) In this *Yuga* there will be complete dharma with all four quarters. After this is over, *Treta*



Yuga will come. In that Yuga, *trayi dharma* will exist (dharma will be of three quarters). (Shl 84) In that *Yuga* animals made sacred by *mantras* & water will be sacrificed and one quarter of dharma will be lost. (Shl 85) After Treta, Dwapara will come. That *Yuga* will have mix of dharma & adharma. In that *Yuga* two quarters of dharma will be lost. (Shl 86) **After Dwapara is completed, Kali Yuga will start in Pushya nakshatra. In that Yuga only one quarter of dharma will survive.**

Hearing the words of Shriman Narayana, *devatas* & *devarshis* again questioned him: (Shl 87) *Devadeva!* In Kaliyuga if only one quarter of dharma will survive and only in some places, what should we do at that time? Tell us this. Bhagwan said: (Shl 88) Great *suras*! **You can find shelter in that country where Vedas, yajna, tapas, satya, indriya samyama and ahimsa dharmas are in vogue.** Let not *adharma* touch you even with its feet. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 340)

## Yajna as simile/Example

### Acts of Dharma & Yajna

- Bhishma: 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.** (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 130)
- Bhishma: (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. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 130)

### War as a yajna

- Bhima's beautiful reply to the brahmana who had come to invite them at the behest of Dushasana for Vaishnava *yaga*: (Shl 16) Oh messenger! I will tell this matter with extreme clarity, listen. Exactly by the time I sacrifice him in the fire, burning strongly with *astra* & *shastras*, my brother Yudhishtira will come there. Tell this same thing to Duryodhana. (Shl 17) **After completing 13 years, when my brother will perform the mahayaga called war and by pouring the havis called anger on the sons of Dhritarashtra and offer them in fire, then I will come to Hastinapura. Tell these words clearly to that Duryodhana.** (Vana; Ghoshatra; 256)
- Karna to Sri Krishna: (Describes entire Mahabharata war that will happen as a *yajna*): Varshneya! A major **shastra-yajna** (war-yajna) will take place here for Duryodhana. You will be the witness of this *yajna*.

You will have to do the job of *adhvaryu* also in this *yajna*. Bhishatsu, prepared with armor, Gandiva bow, inexhaustible quiver and flag of monkey (Hanuman) will be the *hotr*. Arjuna's Gandiva will be the *srut*. The valour of the courageous will be the *ajya*. The many *astras* of Arjuna like Aindra, Pashupata, Brahma, Sthunakarna will be the *Veda-mantras*. According to my knowledge Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra, is said to be equal or superior to his father Arjuna. Such Abhimanyu will do the singing of *gitas* & *stotras*. Meaning he will be the *udgatr*.

Madhava! That mighty Bhima who will be the god of death to the elephants in this war will be the *prastotr* of this *Shashtra-yajna*. Yudhishtira, the *dharmisht*, who is always engaged in *japa-homas* will take the role of *brahmatva*. Madhusudana! The various instruments which produce sounds of war will be the sounds of Subramanya which invites *devatas* & *kaal*. The brave Nakula & Sahadeva, sons of Madri, will perform the act of *vishasana* (one who sacrifices the animals in a yajna is known as *shamitara*). The line of chariots decorated with variety of colourful tall flag staffs will be the *yupa-sthambha* of this *yajna*. Many special arrows like Karni, Nalika, Naracha, Vatsadanta etc and other weapons will be the *soma-kalashas*. The bows will become the *pavitras* of that *yajna*. Swords will do the job of *kapala*. the heads of enemies will be the *purodasha*. The blood that flows from the bodies of enemies will be the *havis*. *Shaktyayudha* & *gadas* (maces) with no scratches on them will be the *idhya* & *paridhis* of this *shastra-yajna*. The disciples/students of Drona & Kripa will be the members of this great *yajna*. The arrows that will be released by Arjuna, Drona, Droni and other *Maharathis* will be its *paristoma* (the *darbhe* that is spread on all four sides of the *yajna-vedi*). Satyaki will do the task of *Pratiprasthanika* (assistant to *adhvaryu*). Dhartarashtra is the *deekshita* for this *yajna*. His huge army will play the role of his wife. Mahabahu! After this great *yajna* begins the mighty Ghatotkacha will perform the task of *shamitra* in the *atiratra-yaga* (or in midnight). Valorous Dhrishtadyumna, who is born from *agni*, will be in the form of *dakshina*.

Krishna! From the time you see me killed by Savyasachi the *punashchiti* of the *yajna* will begin. When roaring Bhima drinks the blood of Dushasana, then *sutya* (*somabhishava karma*) will get completed. When Shikhandi & Dhrishtadyumna kill Bhishma & Drona, it will be the *avasana* (interval during the *yajna*) of this *yajna*. Madhava! When mighty Bhima kills Duryodhana, then this *Shashtra-yajna* of Dhartarashtra will get completed. There will be many women who would have sacrificed their husbands in that war. When all these women come with Gandhari to the battlefield, wailing and crying, then it will be the *avabhrt* of the *yajna*. **(Udyoga; Bhagavadyana; 141; 5870-5873; V 11)**

- There is a detailed comparison of *yajna* and war (Indra narrates to Ambarisha) which includes all technical terms, materials and participants in a *yajna*. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 98) (Not translated here)**
- Sanjaya: *Maharaja!* ...Just as *havis* is divided into ten parts for offering to Indra and other *devatas*, Ashwatthama skilled in archery cut his elephant into six parts with five arrows (he had cut its four legs and the trunk), and with three arrows he cut king Pandya into four parts (two arms and head). **(Karna; 20)**
- Lubdhaka said: (Shl 32) *Devi!* Indra killed Vritrasura and gained a high position. **Parashiva with his trishul destroyed Daksha's yajna and got his portion of havis.** You should also behave like these *devatas*. Kill the serpent quickly. Let there be no doubt in your mind in this matter. **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 1)**

### Chatur-hotr yajna

Brahmana said (Shl 1) My dear! Scholars cite an old episode about the *yajna* performed by four *hotrs*. I will tell you the same. Listen. (Shl 3) **The four hotrs are – karana** (means of action), **karma, kartaa** (doer) and **moksha** (liberation). **The entire world is pervaded by these four.**

I will tell you what the *karanas* are for these *hotrs*. (Shl 4) Nose, tongue, eyes, skin, the ears, *manas* & *buddhi* -- these seven should be understood as means for the **qualities** of the *hotrs* (*guna hetavah*). (Shl 5) *Gandha* (smell), *rasa* (taste), *roopa* (form), *shabda* (sound), *sparsa* (touch), reflecting and understanding – these seven are means for **action**. (Shl 6) One who smells, who eats, who sees, who speaks, who hears, who reflects and who understands – these seven should be understood as causes for **doer**.

(Shl 7) **Ghrana etc indriyas have qualities/attributes (guna). Therefore they experience their respective qualities including auspicious & inauspicious ones. To one who knows the truth that, 'I am without gunas and am endless (nirgunah, anantah). I have no association/relationship with these', the seven indriyas will become means of attaining moksha.** (Shl 8) To those scholars who know the centres like nose etc as in *shastras*, **these gunas will become devatas who constantly accept havis.**

(Shl 9) An ignorant person when eating has a sense of 'mine' (*mamatva*) attached in respect of food being eaten. In the same way, one who cooks for himself also is destroyed due to the blemish of *mamatva*. (Shl 10) Eating what should not be and drinking alcoholic drink/wine destroys human being. This is how: A person with wrong addictions eats something which should not be and **destroys that food. Having destroyed that food, he himself is also destroyed by that food.** Such persons will become fallen ones. (Shl 11) That wise person who eats giving up *mamatva* becomes Ishwara himself and again creates pure food. In that wise person even smallest change will not occur due to the food eaten. The food eaten does not destroy the person.

(Shl 12, 13) That which is reflected upon by the mind (*manana*), that which is spoken about by speech, that which is heard by ears, seen by eyes, touched by skin, smelt by nose – all these, restrained through the mind, should be sacrificed into the *agni* in the centre of the body (*havishyam etani sarvashah*). (All the objects of senses experienced should be offered to the God). Paramatma, who is in the centre of our body in the form of *agni* and is presiding over such *homa* shines with these *havis*.

(Shl 14) My dear! **My *yajna* in the form of yoga has already started. This *yajna* will make the fire of *jnana* shine brightly. In this *yajna*, *prana* itself is the *stothra* (prayer, praise of god). *Apana* is the *shastra* (weapon). Giving up of everything is the greatest *dakshina*.** (Shl 15) *Karta* (*ahankar*, doer), *Anumanta* (*manas*, one who consents) and *Atma* (*buddhi*) – these three as forms of Brahma are *hota* (sacrificer), *adhvaryu* (officiating priest) and *udgtru* (one who chants from Samaveda) respectively. *Satya* (truth) becomes the weapon of *prashaasta* (A class of priests). *Moksha* is the *dakshina* of this *yajna*. (Shl 16) Those who know Narayana quote *riks* from Vedas as evidence/proof for this *yoga-yajna*. **In the ancient times, to attain Narayana, devotees were tying up the *indriyas* as sacrificial animals.** (Shl 17) Completely fulfilled devotees sing *Sama* after attaining *Bhagwan* due to the bliss experienced. Scholars quote statements (in Taittiriya Upanishad, '*etatsama gayannaste*' etc) as examples of this. You also should obtain the *jnana* of Shriman Narayana who is *sarvatma*. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 25**)

### Yajna of five & seven *hotrs*

- Brahmana said: (Shl 1) Oh fortunate one! **To show how the five *hotrs* participate in *yajna* an old episode is cited.** (Shl 2) *Prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *samana* and *vyana* – these are the five *hotrs*. Scholars consider these as great states. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 23**)
- Brahmana said: (Shl 1) Oh highly fortunate one! Scholars quote an ancient episode about this matter. **The method of *yajna* by seven *hotrs* is described in that.** I will tell you the same; listen. (Shl 2, 3) **The seven *hotrs* are:** nose, eyes, tongue, skin, ears, *manas* & *buddhi*. These seven remain separate. **Even though all of them are in the subtle body they do not see each other.** These seven have to be identified by their nature. (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 22**)
- Brahmana to his wife: (Brahmana Gita) (Shl 21) One who smells (*ghrata*), who eats (*bhakshayita*), who touches, who sees, who hears, who reflects (*manta*) and who understands (*boddha*) are the **seven great *ritvijs*** (priests) in the *yajna* related to *vaishvanar-agni*. (Shl 22) Oh fortunate one! Always focus your sight on that which is worthy of smelling, worthy of tasting, worthy of seeing, worthy of touching, worthy of hearing, worthy of reflecting upon and worthy of understanding (Treat them as *havis*). (**Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 20**)

### Internal *yajna* of ten *hotrs*

Brahmana continued: (Shl 1) Dear! In this matter scholars quote an old story. I will tell you how ten *hotrs* (one who does the sacrifice) join together and perform *yajna*. Listen. (Shl 2) Dear wife! Ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose, two legs, two arms, genitals and anus – these are the **ten *hotrs*** I talked about (**These total to nine!**) (Shl 3) Sound, touch, form, taste, smell, speech, action, direction/movement, discharge of semen & urine and discharge of faeces – these are **ten *havis*** (For ear, the *indriya* of hearing, sound is *havis* and so on). (Shl 4) Dear! Directions, *Vayu*, *Surya*, *Chandra*, *Prithvi*, *Agni*, *Vishnu*, *Indra*, *Prajapati* and *Mitra* – these are the **ten *agnis***. (Shl 5) **The ten *hotrs* sacrifice/offer the ten *havis* in the ten *agnis*** (In this way this *yajna* is happening within me all the time. This being so, how do you say that I am inactive or am not doing anything).

(Shl 6) In this internal *yajna*, it is *chitta* which has become the *sruva* (small wooden ladle), *vitta* (money) and the sacred & great *jnana* that performs the *homa*.

We have heard that this world also has been properly divided. (Shl 7) **This entire world to be known is indeed in the form of *chitta* itself.** *Chitta* by its nature desires *jnana* (light). **The *jeeva* which dons the body born from semen knows this *chitta*.** (Shl 8) **The *jeeva* which takes pride in the body is the *garhapatagni*. From it another *agni* is generated. *Manas* is the *ahavaniyagni*. *Havis* is offered in it.** (Shl 9) By offering *havis* in *ahavaniyagni*, *vachaspati* (Lord of voice or speech, *Vedavani*) appears. It is seen by the *samana vayu*. Then form is generated. That form (*roopa*) runs towards the mind. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 21)**

### Others

- Brahmana to his wife: (Shl 25) The quality of smell etc in *prithvi* & other *bhutas* are the form of *havis*. **They all enter *buddhi* which also takes birth in *vaishvanar-agni*. All these qualities enter & reside in the *buddhi*, and are born at appropriate times in their respective places of birth** (smell in nose, taste in tongue etc). **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 20)**
- Narada to Devamata: (Shl 10) It is the command of Veda that *agni* is the form of all *devatas*. Therefore it is from *agni* that brahmana obtains *jnana* combined with intelligence (*jnanam buddhi samanvitam*). (Shl 11) **The smoke of such *agni* is the form of *tamas*. Its ash is *rajas*. Therefore when *havis* is offered in such *agni*, *sattva* is generated from it.** **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 24)**
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 9) **As stated earlier when the *buddhi* of man desires a certain object of sense then it transforms to become *manas*.** It should be understood that whatever separate qualities the five *indriyas* have are all hidden in the *buddhi*. *Indriyas* are the purified *havis* that is offered into it as *homa*. Such *indriyas* should be completely conquered. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 248)**
- Bhishma: (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. **(Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 130)**

### Paramatma & Yajna

- Then Yudhishtira went to Vasudeva and said to him: ... We are now enjoying everything only by your grace. It is you who have won this earth with your valour & intelligence. You are my *parama guru*. Therefore you please be the *dikshita* for this *yaga*. If this *yaga* is performed with you as the master (*yaajamanya*) we will become sinless. (Shl 22) **You are yourself the form of *yajna*. You are everything. You alone are dharma; you are Prajapati. You are the refuge for all living beings. This is my clear opinion.** Therefore it is fair that you perform this *yajna*. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 71)**
- Upamanyu: (Shl 223) I say that such Mahadeva who is free of all *karma-phalas* and whom *devatas* & *asuras* serve everyday through karma, ***yajna* & *kriya-yoga* is the ultimate cause of all.** .. (Shl 412) The following are capable of giving your presence (*sannidhya*): ***yajna*, *daan*, *adhyayana*, *vrata*, *niyama*, *lajja*, *keerti*, *shree*, *dyuta*, *tushti* and *siddhi*.** **(Anushasana; Daandharma; 14)**
- Vasudev to Uttanka: (Shl 8, 9) Great among Bhrigus! Understand that the four Vedas that begin with *OMkar* are me. **The *yupa*, *soma*, *charu*, *homa*, *hotra*, things used in *havan*, *adhvaryu*, *kalpaka*, *havis* are all my forms only.** (Shl 10, 11) **In major *yajnas*, it is me that the *udgatra* praises in loud voice by singing *Sama*.** Great among *dvijas*! In atonements brahmanas praise me, the Vishvakarma, through *shanti-suktas* & *mangala-suktas*. Understand that Dharma, who has kind feelings towards all, is my very dear eldest son born from my mental resolve. **(Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 54)**



- Sanatsujata: (Shl 28) The *Parabrahma vastu* cannot be found in Rig Veda or Yajur Veda or Atharvana Veda. It cannot be found in *vaishwanara* or *rathanthara* or *Barhadhratha Sama*. **It cannot be found in variety of *yajnas***. Because it is eternal it cannot be found in any of these. (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 44)
- Sanatsujata: (Shl 15) ***Sattwaguna* is the key for *brahma-jnana***. It cannot be said that by mere *indriya-nigraha shuddha sattwikatva* can be attained. ***Indriya nigraha* is also *tapas***. This *tapas* done with firm resolve can only help attain good *lokas*. *Brahmajnana* cannot be attained without *shuddha sattwikatva* (*shuddha sattwikatva* means total absence of any kind of resolves or desires). (Shl 16) **By not realising the *satya-swaroopa shuddha brahma* by *shuddha sattwikatva*, *yajnas* which are based on desires increase. These *yajnas* are of many types. Some perform the *yajnas* in the mind. Some others perform *japa-yajna*. Some others perform *yajna* which is in the form of actions. ...** (Shl 19) If there is no absence of desires (*nishkaama*) there is no possibility of realising God by virtuous acts like building wells, lakes etc. **An *ajnani* cannot attain immortality by performing *homa*, *japa*, *yajna* & *yagas*. Such a person will not attain peace even at his time of death.** (Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 45)
- Sri Krishna to Arjuna (about etymology of his names): (Shl 15, 16) Creation, dissolution & changes (*sarga*, *pralaya*, *vikriya*) all happen due to him. **He himself is *tapas*, *yajna*, doer of *yajna* and *purana-purusha***. He is *virat-purusha*. Being responsible/the cause for the creation & dissolution, he is called by the name **Aniruddha**. ... In the past *rishis* Nara and Narayana were seated in a chariot of dharma in Gandhamadana Mountains and were performing great *tapas*. **At that time the *yajna* of Daksha Prajapati started. In that *yajna* Daksha did not offer to Rudra the part due to him. Rudra destroyed Daksha's *yajna* as ordered by Dadhicha.** A raging Rudra kept on throwing his *trishul* in the *yajna*. That *trishul* completely destroyed the *yajna* and then came near us when we were in *tapas* near Badarikasharama. That *trishul* came with great speed & force and entered the chest of Narayana. Filled with the *tejas* of the *trishul*, Narayana's hairs turned to the colour of *munja* grass. Therefore I became **Manjukesha**. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 341)
- Vyasa to Shuka: (Shl 33) The Parabrahma-paramatma who causes clearness of mind and is like the body of the universe exceeds all the *lokas*. The *homa* (sacrifice) of *indriyas* etc done in this Paramatma pleases the *devatas*. Thus pleased the *devatas* sprinkle the nectar of *jnana* on such person's face and make him feel fulfilled. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 245)

## Equivalent/better alternatives, Limitations

### Alternatives

- Vaishampayana concludes by saying to Janamejaya: **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 always content, 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; 90)
- Pulasthya *Muni*: (Shl 9, 10) On who benefits from *Thritha-yatra* (pilgrimage): Has to have many difficult to acquire qualities. Also poor etc who cannot or are not eligible to perform *yajnas* can get good results by **undertaking *tirtha-yatras***. (Vana; 82)
- Dharma vyadha: (Shl 22) I get the fruits of all ***vedas* & *yajnas*** just by serving my parents. (Vana; Markandeya Samaasya; 214)
- Bhishma: (Shl 17) There is a great statement of *shruti* that ***tapas* is greater than *yajna***. I will tell you what the nature of such *tapas* is. Listen. (Shl 18) **Mere punishing of the body is not *tapas*. Having the following qualities is called *tapas*: *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya-vachana* (truthfulness), *akraurya* (no cruelty), *jitendriyatva* (control of *indriyas*) and kindness.** (Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 79)

- Bhishma replied: (Shl 8) It is only by *dama* that brahmana's goals are accomplished. **Dama is superior to *daan*, *yajna* and study of Vedas.** (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 160)
- Bhishma: (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*. (Shanti parva; Aapadharma; 192)
- Bhishma: (Shl 20) **This *daan yajna* (giving to charity generously) accompanied with faith and *dakshina* is greater than all other *yajnas*. Therefore let this *yajna* of giving be always practiced.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 59)
- Bhishma: (Shl 18) **The following qualities give the same fruits as the *avabhrita snana* at the end of a *yajna*: non-violence towards all beings, sharing wealth with all according to what they deserve, restraint of *indriyas*, *tyaga* (sacrifice, renunciation), *dhairya* (courage) and *satya* (truthfulness).** (Shl 19, 20) This is the ***daan-yajna*** you should undertake with faith. This *yajna* is greater than all other *yajnas*. Let this take place in your home everyday. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 60)
- Bhishma said: (Shl 15) **Providing jobs for brahmanas is more auspicious to kings than performing *Rajasuya* or *Ashwamedha yagas*.** By doing this you will be freed of all sins. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 61)
- Bhishma: (Shl 24) One who donates land gets the fruits of *tapas*, *yajna*, study of Vedas, virtuous character, lack of greed, truthfulness, serving the guru and worship of gods. .. (Shl 29) The person who donates land which is capable of providing a means of living to the weak, the jobless, one whose condition is declining everyday and who is dying of hunger will get the same fruits as performing a *yajna*. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 62)
- Bhishma: (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*.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115)
- Brahmana to his wife: (Brahmana Gita) (Shl 9) *Rakshasas* started to destroy all things needed for *yajna* in streets and other places. The destruction of *karma-marga* started at that time. When I saw it, I developed indifference towards these *karmanas* and **started to focus on *atma* who is seated in the body.** I found my resting place in it. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 20)
- Brahma said: (Shl 9, 10) Those brahmanas are brave and *sadhu darshis* (well discerning) who consider *daan*, *yajna*, *adhyayan*, *vrata*, *parigraha*, *dharma* & *tapas* **associated with desires to be fulfilled as waste**, do only acts of *sattva guna* such as modesty, tolerance etc, completely depend only on *sattva guna* and have dedication only to Parabrahma Paramatma. (Shl 11) Such brave brahmanas will clear all their sins and become free of sorrows. After death they will go to *Swarga* and take on several bodies to enjoy the pleasures there. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 38)
- Brahma to *maharshis*: (Shl 4) *Munis* who have become content by *adhyatma-jnana*, who think about *adhyatma* and **who have found accomplishment in the *yajna* of *swadhyaya*** will obtain *sanatana lokas*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 41)
- Mongoose: (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*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 90)

- Shakuntala to Dushyanta: (Shl 102) It is better to have one well than a hundred potholes. **It is better to perform a *yajna* than digging a hundred wells. It is better to have one good son than performing a hundred *yajnas*.** The effect of being dedicated to path of truth is that of having a hundred sons. Therefore truth should never be forsaken. (Adi; Sambhava; 81)
- Brahmani to her husband: The main job of a wife is to engage herself in fulfilling the tasks dear & beneficial to husband. Even *yajna*, *tapas*, *niyama*, *daan* etc are second to the service of husband. (Adi; Bakavadha; 158)
- Monarch Manu desired to go to *swarga* and **handing over women to men** said: (Shl 11) Notice well that delivering babies, care & upbringing of the children, taking care of hospitality of guests for the sake of husband's love and such worldly affairs are the responsibilities of women. If you respect them, all your works will be successful. In respect of the duties of women, **Sita devi**, the daughter of king of Videha **has said the following verses:** (Shl 13) **Women do not have to do *yajna* etc *devata-karyas*, *shraadh* related work for *pitrus*, *vrats* like fasting etc. Serving their husband is their main duty. They will win *swarga* just by doing this.** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 46)
- Message of *pitrus* to Jaratkaru: None of the sacred karmas like *tapas*, *yajna* and such *punya karyas* are equal to good progeny. (Adi; Asthika; 45)
- Bhishma: (Shl 12) The builder of that lake in which water is filled in *hemant* season (winter, Nov to Jan) will get the fruits of performing a *yajna* in which many gold coins are donated. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 58)
- Bhishma: (Shl 32) Those who construct water-bodies, grow trees, the *dvija* who performs *yajnas* and one who speaks truth – they will all be honoured in *swarga loka*. (Shl 33) Therefore water-bodies should be built, groves should be grown, several kinds of *yajnas* should be performed and only truth should be spoken. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 58)
- Yudhishtira to Draupadi: (Shl 41) How can I give up **forgiveness** in which *brahma*, *satya*, *yajna* and all the *lokas* are incorporated? (Vana; Arjunabhigaman; 29)
- Shukra to Devayani: (Shl 6) The person who does not get angry for any reason & has the **quality of forgiveness** will derive more fruits than one who performs *yaga* every month for a hundred years. Devayani! Wise should not bother about what ignorant children/youngsters say or do. They should not be imitated also. They will not know our strengths & weaknesses. (Adi; Sambhava; 81)
- Markandeya's opinion: (Shl 14) If the fruits of performing a thousand *ashwamedha yagas* are placed on one side of a balance and **fruits of truthfulness** are placed on the other, the former may not weigh even half of the latter. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 22)
- Vidura: (Shl 16) The way (ease with which) brave attain *swarga* by sacrificing their life in a war, man cannot attain it with major *yajnas* or *tapas* or *adhyayana*. (Stree; Jalapradanika; 2)
- Bhishma: (Shl 25, 26, 27) If the power of brahmana also weakens, if the *kshatriya* 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. (Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 78)

- Bhishma said: (Shl 8) The fruits obtained by one who regularly practices *vrats* & performs Ashwamedha *yaga* 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. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 115)**
- Bhishma said: (Shl 13) The builder of that lake in which water is filled in *shishira* (dewey season, Jan to March) will get the fruits of *agnishtoma yaga*. (Shl 14) The builder of that lake in which water is filled in *vasant* season (spring) and thus helps animals satisfy their thirst will get the fruits of performing *atiratra yaga*. (Shl 15) The builder of that lake in which water is filled in summer will get the fruits of performing *ashwamedha yaga*. (Shl 17) The builder of that lake in which water drunk by thirsty cows, animals, birds and human beings will get the fruits of performing *ashwamedha yaga*. **(Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 58)**
- Sanatsujata: (Shl 40) Even that brahmana who knows all about the *devatas* who grant desired boons is not equivalent to a ***brahma-jnani***. Moreover, even the *devatas* whom the brahmana worships in the *yagas* for boons are not equivalent to a *brahma-jnani*. **(Udyoga; Sanatsujata; 42)**
- Vidura: (Shl 25) Oh king! One who provides assurance of safety to all animals will go to the eternal and great abode of bhagawan Vishnu. (Shl 26) The splendid fruits a man obtains by this **assurance of safety to all** cannot be obtained even by performing thousands of *yagas* or by regular fasting. **(Stree; Jalapradanika; 7)**
- Tuladhara to Jajali: (Shl 28) All the fruits that man can get here by *tapas*, *yajna*, *daan* and preaching about *jnana* can be gained by just ***abhaya-daan*** (assurance of safety). (Shl 29) One who gives the *dakshina* (fees) of *abhaya-daan* to all will gain the fruits of having performed all *yajnas*. He will also receive the *dakshina* of *abhaya-daan* from all others. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 262)**
- Bhishma: (Shl 9) The fruits obtained by thousands of Ashwamedha *yagas* and hundreds of *Vajapeya yagas* will not equal even one sixteenth of the fruits of ***yoga siddhi***. **(Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 323)**
- Syumarashmi said to Kapila: (Shl 16) **When Vedas are crying hoarse that man is born with debts towards *devatas*, *pitrus* & *rishis*, how can any man attain *moksha* without being freed of these debts?** (Shl 17) Some poor and lazy scholars propagate that, '*moksha* can be attained by giving up all *karmas*'. But in reality that opinion is a falsehood which appears like truth and is born out of lack of knowledge of *Veda-mantras*. (Shl 18) **Sins will not attack or will not attract towards themselves a brahmana who will implement *yajnas* as prescribed in Vedas & *shastras*. A brahmana who is dedicated to performance of *yajnas* will himself feel happy & lead a life of enjoyments and will cause the same to others.** After death he will go to *punya-lokas* along with the animals used for sacrifice in *yajna*. (Shl 19) No man can attain Parabrahma Paramatma by disrespecting Vedas or by haughtiness or by magic/illusion. Only by taking refuge in Vedas & *vaidic-karmas* can man realise the *mahad-brahma*.  
Kapila said: (Shl 20) *Karmas* such as *darsha* (half monthly sacrifice), *purnamaasa* (full moon sacrifice), *agnihotra* (oblations to god of fire) and *chaturmaasya* (sacrifices belonging to the four months period) have been prescribed for an intelligent man because *sanatana-dharma* is established in these *karmas*. (Shl 21) **But those firm minded *yatis* who being pure, take up *sanyasa-ashrama*, give up *yajna* etc *karmas* that are based on desires, get designated or recognised as those who are established in Brahma, and all the time desire to obtain the *Brahma-vastu*, will please the *devatas* with their *brahma-jnana* alone.** (Shl 22) **The path of *jnana* of a *yati*** who is like the *atma* for all beings and looks upon all beings with *atma-bhava* and does no *karmas* **will confuse even the *devatas*.** (Shl 23) Human being has four doors in the form of limbs, speech, stomach & genitals. Man should desire to be their security guard. Meaning, he should have these under control. The *Paramapurusha* having four faces in the form of four Vedas should be attained by restraint on these four doors and through the four yogas of *bhakti*, *jnana*, *karma* & *yoga* (*ashtanga*).



(Shl 31) The *muni* who can roam around happily in the garden of dualities without being bothered by any of these dualities & who does not worry about others' happiness or grief, is considered a brahmana by *devatas*. (Shl 32) One who has completely understood this whole *jagat*, *Prakriti* and its variations or transformations & who knows the secret of creation and dissolution of all beings is considered a brahmana by *devatas*. (Shl 33) One who has no fear from any being and whom no being fears, who is like the *atma* of all beings (by virtue of his having merged with Brahma is the *atma* of all beings) is considered a brahmana by *devatas*. (Shl 34) **But the ignorant ones will not know anything other than *swarga* & such fruits obtainable by *yajna*, *daan* etc.** Having no knowledge of *moksha*, *atma-sakshatkara*, *brahma-bhava* etc they are interested only in *swarga* etc. (Shl 35) The *tapas* of *jnanis* who are engaged in *swakarma* and practice the virtuous ways of yoga that are ancient and are permanent & steady becomes fearsome to the ignorance of *samsara*. (Shl 36) People who are devoted to *pravritti-marga* are incapable of practicing the things indicated (such as *yama*, *niyama* etc) in *yoga-marga*. These *karmas* of *yoga-marga* are free of dangers. They cannot be defeated by *kaam*, *krodh* etc. (Shl 37) **The *karmas* stated in *yoga-marga* can give great and permanent fruits. They take the *sadhak* to higher levels. But those in *pravritti-marga* feel that *yoga-marga* has no merit and does not give assured results.** (Shl 38) The attributes of *yajnas* (its nature or form, methods & ways, the materials etc) are very difficult to understand. Even if they are understood, implementing them is quite difficult. Even if executed properly, they do not yield permanent fruits. You also know these matters. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 269)

### Limitation

- Brahma to *maharshis*: (Shl 21) Whatever be the *yajna*, *daan*, *adhyayana*, *vrata*, *niyama* – all these (their fruits) will finally be destroyed. **But there is no end to *jnana* (*jnanasya anto na vidyate*).** (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 44)
- Brahma to *maharshis*: (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*. (Ashwamedhika parva; Anugita; 46)
- Bhishma said: Oh great wise man! Oh Sinless! You are always looking for dharma etc *purusharthas* by appropriate methods. Therefore your question is worthy of you. (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-shuddhi*) with dharmas like *yajnas* etc that dharma is not needed for other goals (like *moksha-sadhana*).** (Shl 4) **The route which goes to the eastern sea can never go to the western sea. Similarly there is only one route to *moksha*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 274)
- Bhishma: (Shl 104) Yudhishtira! **Always be thinking thus: 'The one and only Paramatma is mine. There can be none dearer than him.' Do not think of anything else.** (Shl 105) The person who does not know the nature of *avyakta Prakriti* and the form of *saguna – nirguna Paramatma* (and is an expert only in *karma marga*) should undertake pilgrimages and variety of *yajnas*. (Shl 106) Kurukumara! ***Moksha* or *parama-pada* cannot be attained by *swadhyaya* (Self study of *shastras*), *tapas* or *yajnas*. Man can become great only by knowing the true form of *avyakta Prakriti*.** (Shl 107) Similarly, by worshipping *mahat-tattva* or *ahankara* the *sadhak* obtains the place of those *tattvas*. But a *sadhak* should try to get states higher than these. (Shl 108) Those who have dedicated themselves to the study of *shasstras* will know the *sat-asat swarupa Paramatma* who is greater than *Prakriti*, is eternal, free of birth & death and free of all kinds of attachments. (Shl 109) Yudhishtira! I obtained this divine *jnana* from Janaka in the past. Janaka learnt it from Yajnavalkya. ***Jnana* is greater than all other means. *Yajnas* are not like it. Man can cross this impossible ocean of *samsara* only by *jnana*. But it is not possible to cross that ocean with *yajna*.** (Shl 110) ***Jnanis* say that the physical birth & death are difficult to be traversed. It is not possible to escape this birth & death by *yajnas* or *tapas* or by regular & strictly practiced *vrats*. But men can go to *swarga* with these. Once the *punya* decays they will be born on Earth.** (Shl 111) Yudhishtira! Therefore you should worship Brahma who is beyond *Prakriti*, is *mahanta*, is sacred, auspicious, pure and *moksha-swarupa*. **If you worship the *yajna* called *jnana* with the understanding of which is *kshetra*, you will become a *rishi* who knows *tattva*.** (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 318)

- Bali to Indra: (Shl 56, 57) Shakra! **Do not think that, 'I alone have done 100 Ashwamedha yagas.'** All the people I have mentioned had performed 100 *yajnas* each. All were practicing **dharma diligently**. All had the ability to travel in the sky. All faced the enemies and fought. (Shl 58) All of them had strong body. They all knew hundreds of *mayas* (illusion tricks). They were capable of taking on any form they wanted. (Shl 59) When they went to fight a war, no one had ever heard of their being defeated. All were truthful. They were travelling wherever they wished to go. (Shl 60) All were interested in *vratas* prescribed in Vedas. All were scholars in several *shastras*. They who were *lokeswaras* had whatever wealth they desired. (Shl 61) Those *mahatmas* never had the intoxication of wealth. They were all giving to charity generously. They were free of envy & hated. (Shl 62) They were all behaving suitably with all living beings. All were born to *Daksha-kanyas*. They who were very mighty were children of Kashyapa *prajapati*. (Shl 63) They looked like flames due to the power of their *tapas*. They caused much 'heat' to the enemies. **All such great persons were killed by kaal. Even you will have to give up this position when the time is ripe.** But at such a time you will not be able to withstand the grief. (*Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 227*)

## Hate/Opposition/Disinterest

- Sri Krishna to Arjuna: Hidimba-Baka-Kirmira etc **who were destroying brahmanas and yajnas** were killed by Bhimasena. In the same way *mayavi* Alayudha was killed by Ghatotkacha. Ghatotkacha was also killed due to a trick of mine by Karna's Shakthyayudha. (Shl 25) If Karna had not killed this son of Bhima then I would have had to kill him myself. (Shl 27) It is only to please you that I had not killed him earlier. **This Ghatotkacha was a *brahma-dweshi*, *yajna-dweshi*, *dharma-lopi*, *paapatma*.** Therefore I used a trick to have him killed. (Shl 28) Pandava! I caused the Shakthyayudha given by Indra to Karna to leave from his possession. Whoever does *dharma-lopa* (lapse of dharma) will be killed by me. (*Drona; Ghatotkachavadha; 181*)
- Sundopasunda to their military commanders: We have to mainly eliminate brahmanas & *rajarshis* on this earth. **Because, by performing *yaga-yajnas* and *havya-kavya* these people increase the *tejas* & might of *devatas*.** *Devatas* & asuras are born enemies. Therefore these people are our enemies also. Therefore we have to concentrate all our might & destroy them. (*Adi; Viduragamanarajyalamba; 210*)
- Brahma said: (Shl 5) The person who steals and sells cows will get the same amount of sins as the person who destroys the *yajnas* of brahmanas. (*Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 74*)
- Shibi: (Shl 26) May he get the **sins of one who dies without performing *agnihotra*, one who causes obstacles to performance of *yajna*,** and one who buys enmity with *tapasvis*.
- Nahusha: (Shl 28) May he get the sins of one who, in spite of being a guest, resides permanently in that house, **who in spite of being a *yajna dikshita* (initiated into sacrifice) has uncontrolled behaviour,** and to one who accepts wages to teach. (*Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 94*)
- Bhishma responded: "I will tell you how kings and kingdoms were born in the beginning of Krita Yuga. Listen with attention. In the past there were neither kingdoms nor kings. There was no *danda* or punishment. All were living on the path of dharma and hence protected each other. By protecting mutually by following dharma, after some time it resulted in distress to many. Then they were all overtaken by *moha* (delusion). Once they were overwhelmed by *moha* and failed to protect mutually, they lost the sense of what is the right thing to do and what is not (*kartavya* and *akartavya*). This resulted in decay of dharma. Greed took over. **They started trying to get what they could not. Then their minds were 'occupied' by another enemy called 'kaama'.** Then another demon called '*raga*' also took root in them. Having become slaves to *raga* they were not discriminating between right and wrong deeds (*karya, akarya*). (Shl 20) They met even those who were unworthy of being met. They were not rejecting anything among worthy of speaking, unworthy of speaking; worthy of eating, unworthy of eating; having defects, not having defects. (Shl 21) **Thus due to the agitation in the society, the study of Vedas also stopped. Once this happened, all the dharmic activities like *yajna-yagas* also stopped.**

As a consequence of this, fear enveloped the minds of *Devatas*. They went to Brahma and said to him, “**The human world is in the grip of evil feelings of greed and delusion. As a result the ancient traditions of *yajna-yagas* have stopped.** Therefore we are afraid of the consequences. (Shl 25) **Due to the destruction of *vaedic-jnana*, the *yajna-dharma* has also been destroyed. For this reason we have become equivalent to humans.....**Pitamaha! Therefore think what can be done to bring auspicious times to us. The *daivatva* that we have got due to your grace should not be destroyed for any reason.

Brahma replied, “I will think about your auspiciousness. Give up the fears in your mind.” Then Brahma created a *neeti-shastra* with one lakh (100,000) *adhyayas*. (**Shanti; Rajadharmanushasana; 59**)

- Bhishma: (Shl 9) Pandunandana! All people who desire dharma seek refuge of *shudra*, *vysya* or *kshatriya* for help/support. **Therefore for those *varnas* who are not interested in *moksha-dharma*, Bhagawan Vishnu does not like to preach the methods of *moksha-dharma*.** (Shl 10) In case Mahavishnu preaches *moksha-dharma* to even those who do not desire it, there would be no happiness related to *pravritti-marga* in this *loka*; it would not be there in any *lokas*; there would be no *chaturvarna* or *Vedadhyayana*. **No *yajnas* of any kind would be performed.** There would be no worldly affairs. There would have been no *ashramas* like *brahmacharya* etc. (**Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 63**)
- Bhishma: (Shl 22) If a king does not govern a country with dharma, **no *yajnas* would be performed**, there would be no auspicious events like marriage and no social activities would happen. There would have been no organised society. (**Shanti parva, Rajadharmanushasana; 68**)
- Kashyapa replied to Aila (Pururava): (Shl 8) *Maharaja*! What the *satpurushas* believe in this matter is that, the country in which opposition occurs between *kshatriya* and brahmana will break up. Thieves and rogues will come with armies and take control of the kingdom. They will make people of all *varnas* their servants. (Shl 9) When *kshatriyas* relinquish brahmanas, then knowledge of Vedas will not grow among the *kshatriyas*. Once study of Vedas lapses princes will not grow (in their knowledge). Churning of curds will stop (cattle wealth will decline). ***Yajna-yagas* will also stop.** Children of brahmanas will also not study Vedas (due to lack of protection & safety). (Shl 10) Auspicious events will stop in the houses of those *kshatriyas* who relinquish brahmanas and consequently their wealth will not grow. **Their children will not study Vedas and consequently they will not perform *yajnas*.** Such *kshatriyas* will be rejected by all and will live like thieves and rogues (as they lack foundations in dharma). (**Shanti parva; Rajadharmanushasana; 73**)
- Lakshmi devi to Indra explaining why she left the abode of daityas: (Shl 30) **In the past *daityas* were engaged in *dana*, *adhyayana* & *yajna-yagas*.** They were also worshipping the *pitrus* through *tarpana* etc. They were treating *gurujana* & *atithis* respectfully. Moreover they were truthful. ... (Shl 57) *Daityas* have started to eat feast themselves without giving/sharing first to alms or *vaishvedeva-bali* or *yajna* or to *pitrus*, *devas*, *atithis* & *gurus*. (**Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 228**)

## Miscellaneous

- Bhishma said: (Shl 143) **One should not go anywhere uninvited. But to see the performance of *yajna* one can go uninvited.** If one goes anywhere uninvited and is not treated well, the longevity will reduce. (**Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 104**)
- Bhishma: (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; 274**)
- Aswini *Devatas* brought out Maandhata from the abdomen of **his father Yavanashwa** by surgery. Yavanashwa had (to quench his thirst) unknowingly drunk a vessel full of curds mixed with ghee

which was endued by *mantras* in a *yajna*. This liquid became a child in his abdomen. (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 62)

- Lomasha to Yudhishtira: The sound you are hearing is coming from 300,000 *yojanas*; this *yajnavedi* reaches till the bottom of the ocean & is resting on that support. (Vana; Tirthayatra; 114)
- The tall towers of splendorous buildings around the *yajna vedike* were posing an obstacle to the movement of *vimanas* of *devatas*. The *devatas*, who came to see the *yajna*, parked their *vimanas* on top of these buildings & observed the beauty of Indraprastha. The buildings decorated with lined up *vimanas* of *devatas* looked even more splendorous. (Sabha; Rajasuya; 35)
- Sanjaya: (Shl 10) *Maharaja!* There are two types of beings in this world: '*chara*' and '*sthavara*'. The *chara* (that which moves) or *jangama* have three kinds of birth. *Andaja* (born from egg—such as birds), *Swedaja* (born from 'sweat'—perhaps indicates unclean water—such as flies & such insects, and *Jarayuja* (born from womb, such as humans, animals etc). (Shl 11) Among these *jarayujas* are the best. Among *jarayujas* human beings & animals are best. (Shl 12) Human beings and animals have different forms. According to Vedas these are of 14 types. **Those humnas & animals in which *yajna* is established are better than the others.** (Bhishma; Jambookhandavirmana; 4)
- Yudhishtira: (Shl 31-33) *Sarparaja!* What you say is also correct. But, **I feel it is not possible to determine the *jaati* of a human being.** Though we can say that if a brahmana marries a brahmana girl the person born will be a brahmana, since there is a possibility of mixing up of *varnas* (*varna-sankara*) it is impossible to determine the *jaati*. Men of all *varnas* mate with women of all *varnas*. Now the only common factors among human beings are: language, sexual union, birth and death. In this matter even the ancient evidences (*arsha-pramana*) are also decisive. **That's why before starting the *yajna*, we proclaim "*ye yajamahe*" meaning we who belong to some *jaati* have gathered to perform the *yajna*.** Therefore *tattva-darshis* (persons in the know of truth principle) have the opinion that only *sheela* (character) should be considered as the main factor for determining *jaati*. But good *samskaras* can fetch you *brahmanatva* (the quality of being a brahmana). (Yudhishtira-Nahusha; 180)
- Yaksha prashna: (Shl 53-54) What constitutes the most important *sama* in *yajna*? (Prana)  
What constitutes the most important *yajus* in *yajna*? (Manas)  
Which of these supports (*vruthe*-choose, as in marriage; correct English word not known) the *yajna*? (Important Ruk)  
Without which the *yajna* cannot be performed? (Ruk). ..  
(Shl 84) How does *yajna* die? (Without *dakshina*) (Vana; Araneya; 313)
- **About resource mobilisation for *yaga***  
Yudhishtira sat alone and again thought. He was not satisfied with the suggestions given by them (ministers, *ritwijas* etc). He might have got a doubt that ministers & brothers may have been overwhelmed by their respect for him and hence may have supported him without having thought through the significance of the task he had planned. Therefore he again started thinking about it. 'My work should only result in welfare of the world and not the least of difficulties/troubles. What are my current incomes & expenditures? Is it possible to conduct this *mahayaga* with the current income? I should not levy more taxes on citizens under the pretext of this *yaga*. By what methods can I collect the resources needed for the *yaga*? Etc. (Sabha; Sabhakriya; 13)
- Narada describing the *yagas* of King Ambarisha: Knowing quite well that intoxicating drinks were sinful, many would drink plenty of it for their pleasure while enjoying music & dance. Intoxicated, thousands of them would sing as they liked. (Drona; Abhimanyuvadha; 64)
- Bhishma (Shl 23) Manu does not approve marriage where a girl is married off to an unwilling boy. Therefore, for whatever reason, not allowing a marriage that has been decided with the consent of the boy, girl and the *acharya* to happen is *adharma* and brings infamy. It only hurts dharma. (Shl 24) There is no blemish in the act of boy taking the girl to his house after the marriage has been solemnised by the parents of the girl and her relatives by proper formalities. Similarly, there is no blemish when the girl is taken to his house after the *kanya-shulka* is paid. Since the



formalities and rules of marriage are like this, where is the blemish? (Later verses contradict it and give much more freedom in changing promises made!!) (Shl 25) **After obtaining the consent of girl's parents and relatives, homas should be performed with appropriate mantras.** Then those *mantras* will also yield their results. **If the girl is not given away with the consent of parents then there is no scope for homas & mantras.** Even if done, they will not accomplish the desired things. (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 44)

- Bhishma: (Shl 53, 54) According to the opinion of some, in case the person who had paid *kanya-shulka* dies, the girl can mate with the younger brother of the boy. In the opinion of some others this is only optional and not the rule to be followed. After suitably aggregating the opinions scholars have concluded as follows: Before the formal event of *pani-grahana*, even if certain other auspicious ceremonies like *haridra-snana* etc have happened, even if the father of the girl has made the resolve that he will do the *kanya-daan*, **even if some prior procedures like homa etc have been completed**, if instead of an unworthy boy a better boy is found, the girl can be given to that boy instead of to the unworthy boy. In such situations the father of the girl will only accrue the sin of telling a lie. (A girl is not treated as married until the ceremony of *panigrahana* is completed). (Shl 55) **All the mantras of pani-grahana find their success/fulfilment only in the seventh step of sapta-padi. After the seven steps of sapta-padi are completed with the boy holding the hands of the girl is the pani-grahana accomplished.** Only after the father of the bride makes the resolve and gives away his daughter by way of pouring water does she become his *dharma-patni* (lawful wife). **She becomes his dharma-patni only after the daan is done. Sapta-padi and kanya-daan are important acts in marriage.** That is how scholars have defined the formalities of marriage. (Before these two acts nothing else that has taken place solemnises the marriage). (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 44)
- Vayu to Arjuna: (Shl 13) Arjuna! Even *agni* is Brahmana. Why are you worshipping him everyday? **Don't you know that it is he who carries havis to all lokas?** (Anushasana parva; Daandharma; 153)
- Vyasa to his son Shuka: (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; 231)
- Bhishma: Yudhishtira! Conversing in this manner, they were all very happy. After some time the disciples (of Vyasa: Sumantu, Vaishampayana, Jaimini and Paila) who were highly skilled in speaking said to their guru: (Shl 4) *Mahamuni!* Now we wish to go to the land areas from this mountain. The purpose of our travel is to divide Vedas in various ways and spread its knowledge. If you also like this plan of ours, kindly permit us to leave. Yudhishtira! Hearing these words of disciples, Bhagawan Vyasa said the following words of dharma for the welfare of the disciples: (Shl 6) Disciples! If you like, you can either go to *bhuloka* or *devaloka*. **But you have to spread the knowledge of Veda carefully. Because, there are many who commit fraud with it.** Having said this he permitted them to go. They all prostrated to him and left that place. **The disciples of Vyasa climbed down from the mountain, entered the land area and publicised all karmas starting from agnihotra to somayaga.** They married girls from noble families, entered *grihasthashrama* formally, and **helped the dwijas (brahmana, kshatriya, vysya) perform yajna etc and lived happily.** Over a period of time they, who were always engaged in these activities and also were rich, became quite well known. (Shanti parva; Mokshadharma; 328)
- Due to the many *yagas* that Nriga *chakravarthi* performed, **Indra drank too much somarasa & got intoxicated.** (Vana; Tirthayatra; 88)

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