

|| Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya ||

1) At the start of the war, looking at the two ocean-like armies assembled there under the leadership of Bhīma and Bhishma, Arjuna said to Sri Krishna.

2) “O Achyuta! Place my chariot in the middle of the two armies” – when Arjuna requested thus, Sri Krishna did the same. Arjuna saw his relatives in both the armies. Out of the fear of sin, he gave up his bow.

3) Sri Krishna then said – “For Kshatriyas punishing the evil and protecting Dharma and knowledge is Swadharma. If this is forsaken then such a person shall be condemned and he shall definitely obtain the lower worlds”.

4) “By worshipping well through his Swadharma that Bhagavan, who is responsible for all activities of all beings and who is omnipresent, a human being attains *Siddhi*”.

Note: Siddhi in this shloka means attainment of Moksha.

5) “You do not have to mourn the killing of relatives. Because the destruction of the body cannot be avoided. At the same time, the eternal *Chetana* can never undergo destruction”.

6) “It is through me alone, and not through anyone else, that the creation, maintenance, destruction, knowledge, entrapment, release, activity and restrictions on perishable beings such as Brahma, Rudra and others and the imperishable one that is Mahalakshmi, the personification of nature, takes place”.

Note: Souls such as Brahma, Rudra and others come into the cycle of Samsara at the beginning of creation and attain Moksha or other appropriate states in the end during Pralaya. Their states (from bonded to released) are perishable in that sense, although the soul itself is eternal. Hence they are ‘Kshara’. Mahalakshmi is the presiding deity of Nature and she is eternal and never undergoes Samsara or any other form of modification or change. Hence she is ‘Akshara’.

7) “Since I possess complete independence, and since I am full of auspicious attributes, I am not subject to birth or other states through any other power. In this way, since there is none equal to or greater than me, everything is under my control”.

8) “Realizing the (truth about) death and other states of these relatives, and the dependence of sentient and insentient beings (on me), understand that you are not independent even to quit war. Focus your thoughts on me and engage in battle”.

9-10) “He who offers all his Karma in me, who realizes that I am the Supreme One, who meditates on me through undistracted *Yoga* and worships me – very soon I shall surely remove such a person, who focuses his mind on me, from the ocean of death and Samsara”.

11) “I, being formless, pervade this entire Universe. All beings are dependent upon me, while I am not dependent upon them”.

12) “All complete auspicious attributes are verily my body. I am the most capable one, without any defects, possess an eternal and excellent body and suffer no destruction” – when Sri Krishna said thus Arjuna requested him – “O Lord! Show me your universal nature”.

13) After that, Bhagavan Sri Krishna granted Arjuna divine vision and, in accordance with his merit (yogyata), showed him his form that was omnipresent, full of auspicious attributes without the constraints of space or time and divine.

14-15) When Arjuna requested, Sri Krishna once again took on his earlier form that was in accordance with the ways of the world. He continued granting him knowledge. He revealed to him (the intricacies of) knowledge, the knowable and Prakruti. Having received such knowledge from him, Arjuna picked up his bow and arrows.

16) When the war started after the armies had made their formations, Bhimasena attacked the Kaurava forces even as he let out a leonine roar. All of them tried to stop him.

17-18) They showered numerous arrows on his head. Since it was inappropriate to immediately respond to the attack of relatives, Bhima accepted those attacks without counter-attacking them. The Upapandavas (sons of Pandavas), Abhimanyu and other heroes showered unbearable number of weapons on the Kauravas.

19) The Kauravas, in turn, caused them pain by attacking them with weapons from all directions. Casting a shower of arrows (on the enemy), the son of Vayu rescued them.

20) Then, being tormented by Bhima's arrows, the Kauravas suffered from all directions and started to flee. Bhishma, knowledgeable in divine weapons, rushed to protect them.

21) Later, desirous of victory over each other, duels between Drona-Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki-Krutavarma and other heroes started taking place.

22-23) When duels started taking place between Dushashana and the younger son of Madri (Sahadeva), Nakula and Vikarna and the Upapandavas and Durmukha and the rest, except Satyaki all the others from the Pandava camp suffered defeats. Satyaki defeated Krutavarma.

24) After that, even as Bhishma, Drona and the others and similarly Bhagadatta and others were chasing away the (Pandava) army, Bhima stopped them.

25) Relying only on the power of his shoulders, that terrifying warrior Bhima defeated Drona, Bhagadatta, Krupa and Duryodhana.

Note: The term 'power of the shoulders' is used often to indicate warfare with material weapons, without relying upon divine astras. The term is not restricted to just physical prowess.

26) Shalya killed Uttara and chased away the army. After that, Arjuna and Abhimanyu faced Bhishma and Bhurishravas, who were chasing away the army by making use of great astras.

27) Bhishma moved ahead of the always-valorous Abhimanyu and started chasing away the Panchalas, even as Arjuna watched him.

28) Dharmaraja noticed the great heroics of Bhishma, and also the soft approach of Arjuna towards him, and withdrew the army in anger.

29) During the night, Yudhishthira became very worried and berated Arjuna. Sri Krishna and the others consoled him. He again left for battle.

Note: He left for the battleground on the second morning.

30) In this way, Bhishma commandeered the army for ten days and fought against the Pandavas. What he did was impossible for the others to emulate.

31-32) Having been classified as an *ardha-ratha* by Bhishma, Karna had not participated in the war. After Karna departed saying "I shall not participate in the war until you are doing so" Bhishma made a vow that he would kill ten thousand chariot-warriors every day. That best amongst the knowers of astras did fulfill his vow too.

33) Although Bhima and Arjuna were capable of killing Bhishma, they stopped (themselves) out of love for him. Out of respect for him, they acted favourably towards him (in the war).

34) Many thrilling battles took place there. Seated in their planes, Brahma, Rudra and the other Devatas, all the Gandharvas, Apsaras and Asuras viewed them from the skies.

35) Dhrishtadyumna, the best amongst archers, prepared *vyuhas* countering those prepared by Bhishma. Being undefeated against his enemies, he fought many battles.

36) Thereafter, noticing Arjuna fighting softly, Sri Krishna picked up the Chakra in his hand and proceeded towards Bhishma.

Note: This was on the third day of the war.

37) Bhishma chanted praises of Sri Krishna. Arjuna stopped him and bowed to him and fervently requested. Sri Krishna then climbed the chariot and blew his conch.

38) Later, Bhishma and Arjuna showered each other with many weapons and astras. Then, Arjuna defeated Bhishma without any significant effort.

39) In the battle, Arjuna killed many including ten thousand chariot-warriors. Bhishma and the others, having been defeated, withdrew their armies and left.

40) Once, Bhimasena led the battle from the front and rendered Bhishma and Drona chariot-less. Driving away their horses, he pierced their vyuha and rushed in.

Note: This was on the fourth day of the war.

41) Even after Bhishma and Drona, the great archers, fixed their chariots and came back again and tried howsoever hard, Bhima easily defeated them again. He slayed the Kauravas. Surprise!

42-44) Then, twenty-five powerful Kauravas were slain by Bhima. Bhagadatta, Ashwathama, Krupa, Shalya, Duryodhana and the others lost and fled from there. A large portion of the army was destroyed. Duryodhana, rendered chariot-less and weapon-less, was injured a lot and became deeply unconscious. Bhima did all this even as all the Kings kept watching. Later, driven by fear, the Kauravas withdrew their army.

45-46) At night, Duryodhana went to Bhishma's place. He was bleeding profusely due to injuries caused by Bhima's arrows. He bowed to Bhishma and asked him – "Why are we consistently losing? And why are the Pandavas winning and celebrating every day?"

47) Bhishma told him – “They are invincible Devatas who have come down to Earth. They are especially protected by Sri Krishna. They are always dear to him”.

48) “Earlier, in the Manasottara mountain, Brahma and the other Devatas had gathered. Then, only Brahma was able to see Sri Hari”.

49) “Brahma worshipped Sri Hari a lot, chanted his praises, and requested him to reduce Earth’s burden (eliminate evil). He then narrated to the Devatas what he heard from Sri Hari”.

50) “He is Deva Narayana. He, the one who is complete, eternal and an ocean of auspiciousness, has ordered all of you to take Avatara on Earth. The lord of the world will himself appear as the son of Devaki”.

51) “In this way, with Brahma ordering them, Yama, Vayu and the other Devatas, getting together with Indra and the Maruts, took Avatara as Pandavas and the rest”.

52) “Deva Sri Narayana has made his appearance as the son of Devaki. Being protected by him, the Pandavas are the invincible personifications of Devatas. If you do not desire defeat, garner a truce with them”.

53) When Bhishma spoke thus, the cunning minded Duryodhana faked a show of worship to Sri Hari and left. The next day (however) the evil minded one got his army ready for war.

54) Due to the effect of the divine medicine prescribed by Bhishma, Duryodhana had ridden himself of all pain. Putting on his *kavacha* and other armaments, he left for war, keeping Bhishma in front.

55) On that day, a big battle took place between the brave followers of Bhima who never withdrew from battle and the Kauravas who were following Bhishma.

56) Dhrishtadyumna followed Bhima and fought the brothers of Duryodhana. Using the *sammohanastra*, he rendered Vikarna and the others unconscious and proceeded to destroy their army.

57) Drona then brought all of them back to consciousness by using the *vijanastra* and raced (to fight) against Dhrishtadyumna. Bhimasena caused Drona to end up without a charioteer and chased away the enemies by showering them with arrows.

58) Later Krutavarma came to face Dhrishtadyumna on his chariot. Both of them showered a terrible reign of arrows against each other. Dhrishtadyumna rendered Krutavarma chariot-less.

59) When that great chariot-warrior Krutavarma was defeated thus, Duryodhana went against Dhrishtadyumna. Bhima then caused Duryodhana to lose his chariot and all weapons. With one arrow he hit Duryodhana with great force, aiming at his neck.

60) Krupa carried away the blood spilling and deeply unconscious Duryodhana from the battlefield lifting him on to his chariot. Bhimasena started chasing away the Kaurava army through a flood of arrows.

61) After that, riding on the chariot being driven by Sri Krishna, Arjuna caused chaos amongst the enemies with a shower of arrows and drove twenty-five thousand chariot-warriors to the abode of Yama.

62) Satyaki, that excellent archer, followed Arjuna even as he chased away the Kaurava army. Bhurishravas went ahead and challenged him. A terrible battle, involving great astras, took place between the two of them.

63) The brave Bhurishravas killed and felled ten of Satyaki's children right in front of him. He hurt Satyaki too with arrows that almost tore his body apart. The two of them destroyed each others chariot.

64) Then, seeing Bhurishravas confront the sword-wielding Satyaki with a great sword of his own, Bhimasena got Satyaki to climb his chariot.

65) Duryodhana boarded Bhurishravas on to his chariot and fled afar from Bhimasena. Arjuna, the one who is equal to Mahendra, faced Bhishma in battle.

66) Even as Devatas looked on, Bhishma and Arjuna, both being extremely strong warriors, full of pride and best amongst knowers of astras, hurt each other by hurling arrows that were like the poison of great serpents.

67) Arjuna, that great chariot-warrior on Earth, defeated Bhishma with his prowess. Bhishma withdrew his army. Since it was getting dark, the Pandavas too withdrew their army.

68) The next day, both the armies resumed battle with Bhima and Bhishma leading them from the front. Bhimasena immediately caused Bhishma to lose his charioteer and rushed towards the enemies.

69) Duryodhana, Bhishma, Drona, Ashwathama and the others fled the battleground even as Bhimasena destroyed chariots, elephants and horses. The rest of them started fleeing, losing their sense of direction.

70) Then, Bhagadatta climbed a big elephant and arrived. He started hurling arrows at Bhimasena. When many arrows started falling on Bhima Ghatotkacha, the son of Bhima, stopped his rushing father and, with his maya, sat on four different elephants in four different forms, and faced Bhagadatta.

71) Bhagadatta possessed a Vaishnava astra which, due to Sri Hari's boon, was insurmountable for anyone apart from Sri Vishnu himself. Knowing this, Bhimasena did not continue after his son Ghatotkacha went after him (Bhagadatta).

72) Bhima knew very well that he was invincible due to the foremost grace of Sri Vasudeva. However, in order to make his words come true due to great devotion towards him, he did not go directly against the enemy.

73) "When he is defeated by my son, has it got to be said separately that he would be defeated by me?" – in order to convey such an impression Bhima did not face him. Whenever Bhagadatta would forget that weapon, Bhima would face him. He very well knew that Bhagadatta would not use that Vaishnavastra against anyone apart from himself or Arjuna.

74) Seated on four elephants in four forms, Ghatotkacha hurt Bhagadatta and his elephant Supratika with various hits and made it appear, in front of everyone, as if their survival itself was in doubt.

75) Bhishma and the others heard the pain-filled cry of that elephant and rushed there. Seeing Ghatotkacha in that huge form, and Bhima standing guard behind him, they became very frightened. Bhishma and the others, being very afraid, withdrew their armies and went back towards their camps.

76) The next day, Pandavas and the Kauravas faced each other once again. Iravanta, born to Arjuna in the Naga-kanya (Uloopi), faced six sons of Shakuni all by himself.

77) When they hurt him with a weapon called *Prasa* held in their hands, the brave Iravan became very angry and cut off their heads with a sword. This caused a great fear to engulf the Kauravas.

78) Seeing the terrible Iravan, Duryodhana said – “Kill this son of Arjuna quickly” and sent a Rakshasa by name Alambusa. He took on the son of the Naga.

79) An amazing and terrible war took place between them, in which both of them used *maya*. Alambusa used *maya* and created horses and horsemen which killed the cavalry of Iravan. Then, even as Iravan took on the form of a snake, the Rakshasa took on the form of a Garuda and quickly killed him.

80) Hearing the news of the death of Arjuna’s son, the son of Bhima (Ghatotkacha) roared out of anger. His roar then caused oceans, trees, hills and the ground to quake.

81) Seeing the powerful son of Bhima, Alambusa fled the battlefield out of fear. The army of Duryodhana too started running away. Then, Duryodhana faced Ghatotkacha.

82) Duryodhana killed the powerful ministers and other assistants of the son of Bhima. When those remaining alive started to flee, Ghatotkacha immediately started hitting Duryodhana using a lot of strength.

83) Duryodhana, troubled in that manner, pierced Ghatotkacha’s body with an arrow. When he was hit in that manner by the powerful one, Ghatotkacha’s senses took a beating. He gathered himself somehow even as he was about to fall down. Then, he once again started releasing arrows against Duryodhana.

84) The King of men and the King of Rakshasas fought against each other for a long time. Neither of them could win against the other. Noticing this, Drona and the others, capable of facing enemies, rushed there in order to protect Duryodhana.

85) Ghatotkacha, standing in the skies, showered huge arrows at great speed against Drona, Shalya, Ashwathama, Krupacharya, Bhurishravas, Krutavarma and the rest.

86) Seeing him being alone and attacked by great warriors, Bhimasena came there to face all of them. Drona, being hit by the arrows of Bhima and suffering great pain, fell unconscious.

87) In an instant, Bhima rendered Ashwathama, Krupa and others and Duryodhana and the rest to lose their chariots. As Bhima stopped those warriors, Ghatotkacha (once again) started showering arrows upon them.

88) The Kauravas , while being tormented by the shower of tree-sized arrows from Ghatotkacha in the sky, were also pained by the arrows of Bhima on the ground. Falling down, they let out cries due to pain. Being very afraid, they ran away in all directions.

89) Chasing away all the Kauravas, apart from Bhishma, into their camps, Bhimasena and Ghatotkacha roared with their great voices that filled the whole world.

90) Later, Duryodhana got together with his people and went to the battlefield again. Approaching Bhishma, he asked him how he could win against Ghatotkacha. Bhishma told him – “Do not go against him”.

91) Bhishma sent the King of Pragjyotisha (Bhagadatta) against Ghatotkacha. The powerful Bhagadatta approached the Rakshasa and started to battle him. The son of Hidimbaa caused trouble to him and his elephant.

92) Bhagadatta, tormented by Ghatotkacha, hurled a spear at him, who leapt into the sky, held the spear and broke it after placing it on his knees. The Devatas felt great joy seeing this.

93) Bhagadatta then started killing the assistants of the son of Bhima, seeing which Bhima went to battle against him. Bhagadatta rushed his elephant against him. Bhima immediately stopped that elephant with his arrows.

94) When that elephant was stunned due to those excellent arrows, Bhagadatta troubled Bhima’s horses with arrows. Seeing this, Bhimasena, wanting to kill him along with his elephant, rushed towards him, having picked up his mace.

95) Noticing Bhima angrily rushing towards him in order to kill, and Arjuna and Sri Krishna approaching from the back in order to snatch the Vaishnava astra, the scared Bhagadatta fled from there.

96) When Bhagadatta fled in that matter, and when all the groups of Kings were chased away by Bhima and Arjuna, Bhishma withdrew the army and left. That night, Duryodhana came to Bhishma.

97) When Duryodhana spoke cruel words, Bhishma gave him his assurance to forsake the fear of death and kill enemies, deploying his complete strength. The next day, he did the same too.

98) The Kauravas protected Bhishma as much as they could. The Kings of Chedi, Panchala and Matsya countries, tormented by Bhishma, fled from the field. Being very scared of Bhishma’s arrows, they became saddened like stray deer troubled by a lion.

99) When the son of Arjuna (Abhimanyu) went against Bhishma after stopping those Kings from fleeing, the Rakshasa Alambusa came in his way. Abhimanyu won against him and rushed towards Bhishma. Then, Duryodhana faced him.

100) A special, most-amazing and terrible duel took place between him and the son of Partha, which went on equally (i.e. both faring equally) for a long time. Later, Duryodhana suddenly cut off and felled the bow and mast of Abhimanyu.

101) Later Duryodhana rained a shower of arrows on Abhimanyu and also killed his charioteer. Bhima then faced Duryodhana and killed his horses.

102) Drona, Ashwathama, Bhagadatta, Krupa and Chitrasena surrounded Bhimasena. After making all of them fall back, Bhima then picked up a mace for Chitrasena.

103) Seeing him pick up the mace in that manner, all of them fled from there. Chitrasena jumped on to the ground even as his chariot was blown to pieces by Bhima's mace. Seeing Chitrasena (still) alive, all the Kauravas became happy.

104) Bhishma, possessing the most intense radiance, killed fourteen thousand great chariot warriors belonging to the Kings of Panchala, Karusha and Chedi. Just as a wolf scatters sheep, he chased away the enemies.

105) Chasing away the army of the Pandavas, spreading his fame all over the world, Bhishma withdrew his army as night befell and returned to his camp, being praised by the Kauravas (all along).

106) Drona slew Virata's son Shankha right in front of him. He defeated Virata too. Chasing away the Pandava army, he joyfully joined Bhishma and returned.

107) Bhima and Arjuna too killed the enemies and chased away many brave warriors. As Dharmaraja withdrew the army due to Bhishma's fear, they too returned to the camps.

108) Being scared of Bhishma's valour, Dharmaraja went to him at night, seeking to know from Bhishma himself the means to kill him. Sri Krishna and his brothers too followed him as Bhishma was their grandfather.

109) Although Bhima and Arjuna were most capable of killing Bhishma, they did not desire to do so without his permission. The reason for this was the fact that Bhishma was most worship-worthy by virtue of having practiced the path of excellent Karma always. For the sake of Pandavas, Sri Krishna too went there.

110) Having obtained his consent for killing, the Pandavas got ready for battle and left, placing Shikandi in front as per his (Bhishma's) words. The Kauravas too started for battle with Bhishma in front.

111) Arjuna proceeded as Shikandi's protector. Dushasana stood in front of Bhishma. All the others too (on the Kaurava side) started protecting Bhishma. Bhimasena and the others moved to stop them.

112) The Rakshasa Alambusa interrupted Satyaki who was going against Bhishma. The Yadava hero hurt him with arrows that were hard as diamonds. He (Alambusa) then created a terrible maya.

113) Using an astra, the brave Satyaki destroyed his maya and chased him afar. After he ran away, Satyaki followed Arjuna in his chariot, holding a bow, and proceeded towards Bhishma.

114) The son of Vayu (Bhima) stopped Drona, Ashwathama, Duryodhana, Bhurishravas, Bhagadatta, Krupa, Shalya, Bahlika, Krutavarma, Susharma and the entire army.

115) The brave Bhima repeatedly rendered all of them chariot-less. He hurt Bhagadatta, who was trying to stop Arjuna, and chased him away along with his elephant. Arjuna then started nearing Bhishma.

116) Shakuni, along with a cavalry of ten thousand excellent men, stopped Dharmaraja who was proceeding towards Bhishma along with Nakula and Sahadeva.

117) The three of them completely destroyed the cavalry and the horses, defeated Shakuni and reached Bhishma. The sons of Draupadi, as well as Virata, Drupada and Kuntibhoja arrived there.

118) When Dhrishtadyumna tried to go against Bhishma, Jayadratha stopped him with his arrows. Dhrishtadyumna killed his horses and charioteer and chased him away along with his army. The brave one then quickly approached Bhishma.

119) Shikandi, protected by Arjuna, faced Bhishma in battle and started hurting him with his arrows. Knowing him to be a woman, Bhishma did not hurl arrows back at him. Shikandi though kept hurting Bhishma repeatedly.

120) Durmarshana tried to stop Shikandi with his arrows. He kept rolling his eyes out of anger. Shikandi could not cross him and move forward. Dushasana then stopped Arjuna.

121) Arjuna, although one of the great heroes of the world, was not able to move past Dushasana when he stopped him and reach Bhishma. His arrows, which were capable of piercing mountains, were not able to go past Dushasana.

122) The brave Arjuna and Dushasana were enraged and fought with each other for a long time. Even as Devas and the Kings watched, their battle went on amazingly, and on equal terms.

123) Then Bhuri, Shala, Somadatta, Vikarna and the Kekayas used their strength and stopped Virata, Drupada, Kuntibhoja, Upapandavas, Kekayas and Chekitana.

Note: A faction of the Kekayas (one of the states) fought on the side of the Kauravas.

124) They defeated all of them and moved towards Bhishma. Arjuna then got past Dushasana and, after releasing Shikandi from Durmarshana, started hurting Bhishma with arrows that could destroy enemies.

125) Bhishma, being hit by a large number of weapons, was hurt very badly in vital parts of his body. Later, with arrows enjoined with the bow, he rendered Satyaki, Dhrishtadyumna, Dharmaraja and the others chariot-less.

126) Bhishma shone like the fire at the time of *Pralaya* and sent twenty five thousand chariot-warriors belonging to the Chedi, Panchala, Karusha and other countries to the abode of Yama.

127) Noticing Bhishma shining like the Sun in the battlefield, Arjuna, the hero of the world, being motivated by Sri Krishna, cut off his bow with a crescent shaped arrow. Bhishma immediately picked up another bow.

128) Arjuna cut that bow too. In this way, he cut off eight bows, a Shakti-ayudha, a shield and a sword. The son of Indra cut off other bows that were given (to Bhishma) by the assistants of Duryodhana.

129) Later Dharmaraja and the others started hitting him with arrows that were shining like the rays of the Sun. Being tormented by those arrows, Bhishma fell down on the ground. He then held his life till (the arrival of) Uttarayana.

130) When Bhishma fell down, Bhimasena chased away Drona and the others and arrived there. They too kept their weapons on the ground and gathered (around Bhishma). The Pandavas, Kauravas and all the other warriors came together at that place.

131) Having bowed to Bhishma, all of them went back to their camps as per his words. The next day, all of them came to Bhishma. Sri Krishna, the lord of the Yadavas, too came there.

132) Bhishma, who had gotten a pillow made from arrows through Arjuna the previous day, was troubled by thirst and asked for water from an appropriate source.

133) Arjuna, knowing that which the Kauravas were unaware of, released the Varunastra and pierced the ground to create a fountain of perfumed water and made it fall on Bhishma's mouth. Being satisfied with it, Bhishma then spoke.

134-135) "O Kauravas! You have witnessed the knowledge of weapons that Arjuna possesses. You are witness to the strength of Bhima in battle again and again. You also know the unfathomable and endless greatness of Sri Krishna. In the Sabha, you have witnessed it in front of all".

136) "Therefore, stop this war. Let the Kings live peacefully. Divide the Kingdom appropriately and enjoy it" – when Bhishma said thus, Duryodhana silently returned home.

137) Dhritrashtra felt great sorrow after getting to know everything from Sanjaya, who possessed divine vision granted by Sri Vyasa. The Pandavas, knowing Sri Krishna to be the Supreme Being, got back to their camps and experienced great joy as per Sri Krishna's orders.

|| End of chapter 25, known as 'Bhishma Paata', from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||