

|| Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya ||

1) After Bhishma, Duryodhana appointed Drona, who was the teacher of weapons for all Kings, the best amongst chariot-warriors, an excellent scholar and the best student of the lord of the world Sri Parashurama, as the commander of the army.

2) Karna too, having not held the bow till Bhishma was around having been insulted by him, got ready for battle after taking Bhishma's permission. He climbed the chariot and followed Drona.

3) Duryodhana asked Drona to capture Yudhishtira and hand him over. He gave his word agreeing to do so. The Pandavas got to know of this and came ready to battle. A terrible war took place between them.

4) Using a bow that was pulled together as a circle, Drona released arrows powered by mantras and caused distraught amongst the enemies. Immediately Vrikodara let out a leonine roar and faced him. Ashwathama, Krupa and Shalya came to battle him (Bhima).

5-6) Bhimasena, the foremost in battle, pushed all of them back and faced Drona. Following him, Abhimanyu too faced the enemies. King Shalya stopped him. Shalya picked up a mace. A great battle took place between the two of them. Bhima faced him holding a mace. A (wonderful) battle took place between them. Both of them hadn't tasted defeat and were excellent in using the mace. Both of them were very powerful. They were the best amongst the strongest.

7) The two of them fought, causing amazement and surprise to those watching them. The whole world saw their battle, in which their diamond like strong bodies bore the marks of the maces, caused when they hit each other.

8) Due to Bhima's hit with the mace, King Shalya fell unconscious. Out of anger, Vrikodara moved his legs and rested on his knees. He then immediately got up.

Note: Bhima's blows caused Shalya to fall unconscious while Shalya's attack resulted in Bhima resting on his knees for a moment.

9) Even as the people around were watching Shalya falling unconscious and Bhima inviting him for battle, Krupa got Shalya inside his chariot and drove away.

Note: In the moola Mahabharata, Sri Vyasa says it was Krutavarma who carried Shalya away.

10) Maruti (Bhima), having defeated the King of Madra, let out a lion-like roar and returned to his chariot. Releasing a shower of arrows, he started hurting and chasing away the army of the enemies, right in front of Drona.

11) When Vrikodara chased away the Kauravas quickly, Drona defeated Abhimanyu, Satyaki and the others and rushed towards Yudhishtira in order to capture him. Arjuna, being seated in his chariot, faced him.

12) Arjuna, being in the chariot controlled by Sri Krishna, appeared to the world as the one causing the flow of the river of blood due to the destruction of elephants, horses and chariots using body-damaging, sharp arrows.

13) When Dharmaraja became safe and relieved from danger as the army (of the Kauravas) was destroyed greatly by Arjuna, Drona withdrew his army that was being destroyed by Bhima and Arjuna as nightfall came about, and returned.

14) At night, the son of Dhritharashtra condemned Drona with cruel words for having failed to capture Yudhishthira. Drona said – “Draw Arjuna away from the battlefield. I shall then capture the son of Dharma”.

15) Susharma, along with the Samshaptakas including great many warriors, was then appointed by Duryodhana to draw Arjuna away afar from the battlefield. He said “Yes”.

16) All of them invited Arjuna to the north-eastern side (of Kurukshetra) for battle. Arjuna went there and started fighting them. Over here, Bhima started destroying the elephant-army.

17) When Bhima started to kill elephants from all directions, due to which (many) Kings started running away after defeat, Bhagadatta, being requested by Duryodhana, rushed there along with (his elephant) Suprateeka, wielding a bow.

18) Bhima’s horses, being scared by that elephant, could not stand there. Later, Satyaki, Abhimanyu and the others faced that elephant. It picked them up along with their chariots and threw them into the sky.

19) Satyaki and the others, rendered chariot-less, jumped to the ground with great difficulty and stood up. Bhima brought the horses under control and got ready to battle. Sri Krishna noticed this.

20) “Bhagadatta, getting into trouble, may invoke the Vaishnavastra against Bhima. Therefore, I shall go there with Arjuna and receive that astra which cannot be borne by others due to the boon”.

Note: The Vaishnavastra, due to Sri Vishnu’s boon, could not be withstood by anyone else.

21) Thinking thus, Sri Krishna proceeded there with Arjuna. Then, the Trigartas stopped Arjuna from going. The brave Arjuna released the Sammohanastra against them.

22) Due to the effect of that astra, the Trigartas became disillusioned and started hitting each other confusing each other to be Sri Krishna and Arjuna. Then, Arjuna quickly proceeded towards Bhagadatta in order to kill him.

23) Bhagadatta quit the battle with Bhima and faced Arjuna, being seated on the elephant. He moved his elephant towards Arjuna’s chariot. Sri Krishna drove the chariot speedily around the elephant in the counter-clockwise direction.

24) Since Sri Krishna was driving that chariot in a circle at the speed of mind, the elephant could not catch it. Arjuna tormented Bhagadatta with extremely sharp arrows.

25) Arjuna and Bhagadatta, the two great warriors and best amongst the powerful, fought against each other with weapons and astras for a long time. Then, Arjuna cut off Bhagadatta’s bow. Bhagadatta invoked the Vaishnavastra in the (elephant’s) hook.

Note: The astra could be invoked on any object due to the power of the mantra. Bhagadatta did so on the hook used to control his elephant Suprateeka.

26) When Bhagadatta released that Vaishnavastra, Sri Krishna, the one with limitless valour, bore it. That astra adorned the shoulders of Sri Krishna, the one who bears all the worlds, in the form of a Vaijayanti mala.

Note: The astra became a garland of Vaijayanti flowers and adorned Sri Krishna's shoulders.

27) Seeing that (astra) being borne by Sri Krishna, Arjuna asked him – “Why did you take it upon yourself?”. Sri Krishna, the bearer of all the worlds, said – “Is it not me who bears everything at all times?”

28) “There is none equal to me. How then can anyone be superior to me? I take four forms for the welfare of the world. Through them, I perform liberation, dissolution, maintenance and creation. Possessing those four forms viz Vasudeva and the rest, I reside in the hearts of everyone in the form of Aniruddha”.

29) “The four-formed me had earlier, in my form as Varaha, given this astra to Narakasura in order to please Bhudevi. I had also granted him and his son invincibility and freedom from death till the possession of the astra”

30) “Apart from me, there is no one else who can escape death from this weapon. Therefore, I received this astra. Now that he is without the astra, you slay him”.

31) Hearing those words of Sri Krishna, Arjuna discussed with him and released an arrow aimed at the chest of King of Pragjyotisha. He shot another arrow that hit the top of the forehead of that elephant.

32) Bhagadatta and his elephant, both being mountain like, fell down as if hit by the Vajrayudha of Mahendra. Arjuna, of terrible prowess, killed both of them and rejoiced greatly, being worshipped by his people.

33) Then, Arjuna killed Achala and Vrushaka, two brothers of Shakuni, using arrows. He caused pain to Shakuni as well with his arrows. Shakuni then created a *maya*. Arjuna released the *vijnanastra* and destroyed that maya.

34) That evil-doer Shakuni ran away from there when his maya was destroyed. Later Arjuna showered that army (of Shakuni) with arrows and chased them away. Ashwathama then killed Neela, the King of Mahishmati, in battle.

35) Bhima destroyed the horses of Ashwathama and started to scatter the Kaurava army. Seeing his army being destroyed by Bhima and Arjuna, Drona quickly withdrew his army (for the day).

Note: The war on the twelfth day came to an end thus.

36) Because of Bhagadatta's killing and because Yudhishtira was not captured, Duryodhana became extremely downcast and went to Drona and chastised him with cruel words. Drona then told him.

37) “Tomorrow, when Arjuna goes afar, I shall capture Yudhishtira or kill another brave warrior equal to him” – undertaking an oath thus, Drona left, desiring battle on the next day.

38) Drona constructed a *padma-vyuha* that was impenetrable by enemies due to Sri Vishnu's boon and started fighting. Apart from Arjuna, the other Pandavas faced Drona. Arjuna engaged in battle with the Samshaptakas.

39) Even though the Pandavas came near the vyuha and tried, they could not break it. Bhima, although he naturally knew the *mantra* that would allow it to be broken, did not chant the same as it was a *kamya-karma*.

Note: To break the padma-vyuha one had to chant a mantra. Chanting of mantras for material pursuits is forbidden for anyone following the *shuddha-bhagavata-dharma*. Bhima therefore did not chant the mantra.

40) Dharmaraja then spoke to Abhimanyu, who knew how to break that vyuha, and said – “Son! You penetrate this vyuha. We shall follow you”.

41) Abhimanyu, the best amongst chariot-warriors, upon Yudhisthira’s instructions, cut through the vyuha and entered the enemy’s army. Although Bhimasena and the rest of them tried to enter behind him, the King of Sindhu (Jayadratha) stopped all of them.

42) When Jayadratha stopped him due to Rudra’s boon, although he was capable, Bhimasena did not override the boon knowing Sri Krishna’s decision that the son of Arjuna must be killed.

43) Even as Bhimasena and the others were fighting Shiva who was inside of Jayadratha, the brave Abhimanyu entered the vyuha and caused great tumult amongst that huge army of the enemy.

44) Even though he was being stopped by Drona, Duryodhana, Karna, Shalya, Ashwathama, Krutavarma and other great warriors, Abhimanyu moved around fearlessly amidst the enemy army and kept chopping off the heads of their followers.

45) Abhimanyu held Lakshana, the son of Duryodhana, by force and killed him right in front of his father. He killed Bruhadbala (too). Possessing excellent strength and initiative, Abhimanyu also killed ten thousand great chariot-warriors with his arrows.

46) Drona and the others, out of fear of Sri Krishna’s anger, failed to defeat Abhimanyu by facing him directly in battle. They discussed amongst themselves and, keeping Karna in front, quickly destroyed his bow, horses and chariot.

Note: None of the warriors tried to kill him in a face to face battle, fearing Sri Krishna’s wrath.

47) Using arrows, Karna destroyed Abhimanyu’s bow while Krupa killed his charioteer and Drona quickly slew his horses. Destroying the sword, shield and the wheel of the chariot that were in his hands, they made him stand empty handed.

48) Fearing Sri Krishna, when all of them hesitated to kill him, the son of Dushasana held a mace and faced Abhimanyu, who too was holding a mace. The two brave warriors died at the same time due to each other’s blows.

49) Hearing the noise of the enemies’ celebrating upon Abhimanyu’s death, Bhimasena, possessing terrible valour, defeated Jayadratha and the others and went towards Yudhishtira.

50) Then, Sri Vyasa, possessing unfathomable inherent greatness, consoled Dharmaraja and the others who were in sorrow. Having defeated the Samshaptakas, the great fighter Arjuna arrived there at night along with Sri Krishna.

51) Hearing the news of his son's killing, the brave Arjuna became very sorrowful and undertook an oath to kill Jayadratha. That night, Sri Krishna took him to Shiva.

52-53) Although Sri Krishna himself performs all activities of the world including protection and possesses unlimited strength, in order to show (the world) that he provides his grace only through one's Guru, he took Arjuna to his astra-guru Shiva in a nice manner and, through his blessings, got him a very potent weapon. He also got him special protection from Shiva.

54) Sri Krishna went to Upaplavya, consoled Subadhra and, in the morning, tied the chariot and went to war along with Arjuna.

55) Drona, having heard about the oath of Arjuna and having been requested by Duryodhana, himself took an oath declaring that he would protect Jayadratha at all cost and put together an impenetrable vyuha.

56) Drona prepared a divine and excellent Shakatabja-chakra vyuha and himself stood at its gate. He placed Jayadratha at the back, under the protection of Karna, Ashwathama, Krupa, Shalya and others.

Note: The shakatabja-chakra was a combination of three vyuhās – shakata, padma and chakra vyuhās. The outer vyuha was shakata or chariot-shaped. Inside it was the padma vyuha in the shape of a lotus. The inner most vyuha was a chakra-vyuha shaped like a disc.

57) After that, the fiery warrior and excellent archer Arjuna, protected by the eternal Sri Krishna, proceeded for war. He defeated Durmarshana at first and went to battle against Guru Drona.

58) Suspecting that he was running out of time, Arjuna bowed to Drona, circumambulated him and moved ahead. Sri Krishna drove the chariot at the speed of mind, such that Arjuna's arrows were falling behind the chariot.

Note: The speed at which Sri Krishna was driving the chariot was such that the arrows which Arjuna would release would fall behind the chariot by the time they hit the ground.

59) Arjuna defeated Krutavarma effortlessly and entered that army. Just as a powerful elephant disturbs a tranquil lake full of lotuses, Arjuna caused turmoil in the enemy army.

60) Arjuna, the *atiratha*, appeared radiant in that chariot with Sri Vasudeva just like Devendra together with Upendra. The terror of enemies, through his arrows that caused damage to bodies, cut off the heads of the enemies in all directions.

61) With two arrows, Arjuna killed Dhrudayu and Achyutayu and with two more arrows he sent Vinda and Anuvinda to the abode of Yama.

Note: Vinda-Anuvinda, killed by Arjuna on this day, were the Kings of Avanti. Duryodhana also had two brothers named Vinda-Anuvinda. Similarly, there were two Kings of Kekaya named Vinda-Anuvinda.

62) Arjuna killed the Kamboja King Sudakshina and Ambashta. He then faced Shrutayudha, who was born to Varuna from a river. Varuna had given him a divine and faultless big mace.

63-64) When he released sharp weapons against Arjuna, he was instantly rendered chariot-less by Partha. Climbing Arjuna's chariot, he smashed the mace against Sri Krishna, the wielder of the Chakra. That mace then hit Shrutayudha's head itself. His head split into a hundred pieces and he fell down on the ground.

65) "If you use the mace against a person who is not fighting then you shall die, without fail, due to your own head being quashed by the weapon. Otherwise, this mace shall never go in vain".

66) Varuna had earlier informed Shrutayudha thus. Since he used the mace against Sri Krishna, who was not fighting in the war, his own head was burst by the mace.

67) When his warriors were getting killed in hordes, and when his disturbed army started fleeing afar in groups, Duryodhana came to Drona and, in a miserable state, said – "O! You have neglected (the prowess) of Partha".

68) When Duryodhana said thus, Drona made him wear a *kavacha* that was impenetrable due to the power of great mantras. He told him – "Fight Arjuna with the same strength that you fight the rest of the Pandavas with. Go".

69) When Drona said this, Duryodhana picked up his bow and went against Arjuna, riding a golden chariot. Using arrows that were shining like fire, he stopped Arjuna.

70) Arjuna too fired many terrible and speedy arrows at Duryodhana. They however did not pierce the kavacha. Burning with anger, Arjuna then picked up a divine astra in order to pierce that kavacha.

71) Even as Arjuna was placing that divine arrow in the bow, Ashwathama, the *guru-putra*, broke it. Arjuna then killed the horses of Duryodhana and hurt him in his forearms. Ashwathama stopped Arjuna in battle using sharp arrows.

72) Arjuna fought in battle against Ashwathama, Karna and the others. They stopped him with their arrows. For the sake of Jayadratha, a surreal and amazing battle took place between these warriors whose actions were full of extra ordinary prowess!

73) When Arjuna entered the midst of the Kaurava army, Drona quickly waded through the Pandava army. Chasing away the chariots of the Pandava side with speedy arrows, he killed (many) warriors.

74) Drona, the best amongst the brave, although aged, moved around the wielders of the bow appearing younger than the youngsters! Causing the heads of the terrible and valorous fighters to fall on the ground with his arrows, he approached Yudhishtira.

75) Satyajit, the son of Drupada, realizing the intentions of Drona to capture Dharmaraja, immediately stopped him. When he did thus, Drona beheaded him with an arrow.

76) That most brave Drona, having killed the smart warrior Satyajit, troubled Yudhishtira with a shower of arrows. Although Dharmaraja fought to the best of his ability, Drona quickly rendered him weaponless and destroyed his horses and chariot.

77) When he stood on the ground, with his hands lifted upwards, Drona rushed towards him to capture him. Dharmaraja then climbed the chariot of Sahadeva and speedily departed from that place.

78) Later Dhrishtaketu, the son of Shishupala, his sons, Sahadeva the son of Jarasandha, the King of Kashi, Shaibya and five Kekayas opposed Drona from all directions. Through their shower of arrows, they started hurting him.

79) Drona then beheaded them one by one with excellent arrows and sent them to the *lokas* that are reached traveling through the *surya-mandala* by those practicing *naishtika brahmacharya*.

80) When Drona was destroying the great army of the Pandavas, Bhimasena was slaying the Kaurava army. The warriors who survived started running away after being hurt by his blows.

81) At that time, a Rakshasa named Alambusa came to face the great hero Maruti. When Bhimasena hurt him badly with fiery arrows, he became invisible using his *maya*.

82-83) Staying invisible, that Rakshasa started troubling the assistants of Bhima. Seeing this, Bhima became furious. As per Sri Hari's orders, he picked up the *Tvashtara-astra* to demonstrate his competence (with astras). Although he would never undertake a *kamya-karma*, he did so due to *dharma-sankata*. Later, numerous arrows started to emerge from that astra. Those arrows hit the invisible Rakshasa and then entered the Earth by piercing it.

Notes: Alambusa was the older brother of Bakasura. Kamya-karma is any work that is pursued for material or worldly benefits. Dharma-sankata is a difficult situation where a kamya-karma may have to be undertaken to continue following the path of Dharma.

84) When Bhima hit him in this manner, Alambusa left him and ran afar. Later, Bhima, through arrows that were excellently executed, hurt and chased away the enemy soldiers.

85) After that, all the sons of Draupadi got together and killed Somdatta's son Shala in battle. Ghatotkacha then faced Alambusa. Both of them climbed their chariots and engaged in a duel.

86-87) Ghatotkacha rendered Alambusa chariot-less and, when the latter jumped into the sky, fought him there itself. The son of Bhima then caught him and threw him down to the ground. He smashed his head with his feet. The Rakshasa fell down dead amidst Kings when his head got crushed into pieces. After his death, Ghatotkacha chased away the battalion of Kaurava chariot-warriors from all directions.

88) Krutavarma then faced the Pandava army, showering them with arrows. Earlier, Sri Krishna had granted him a boon to win against everyone for a duration of one muhurtha, after Krutavarma had chanted and prayed to him.

89) Due to that boon, Krutavarma won against the Panchala warriors. Right in front of Bhima, he won against Nakula and Sahadeva. He hurt Bhima too with his arrows. Knowing Sri Krishna's boon to be working at that time, Bhima did not go against him.

90) Since Sri Krishna had granted him the boon of victory against all except the Yadavas, Satyaki killed his horses and hurt him with his arrows. He climbed another chariot and departed from there.

91) When Arjuna was engaged in battle with Karna, Ashwathama and the others, Sri Krishna, the Supreme one, blew the Panchajanya conch whose sound was unparalleled, in order to reduce the strength of the enemies.

92) When the Panchajanya conch filled its kernel with the air that emanated from Sri Krishna's mouth, it let out a loud sound that shook Brahma, Shiva, Devendra and the entire world, just as at the time of Pralaya.

93) When Dharmaraja could not hear the sounds of the Gandiva, he became worried and approached Satyaki and said – "Satyaki! It appears Sri Krishna may be fighting himself as Arjuna may have gotten caught amidst the enemy army".

94) "The sound of the Gandiva is not being heard now. The sound of the Panchajanya is being heard clearly. Therefore, go to Arjuna. Check if the helpless one is alive".

95) When Dharmaraja said thus, Satyaki worshipped Brahmanas there with gifts and obtained their excellent blessings for victory and proceeded to the entrance of the vyuha under the protection of Bhimasena.

96) Bhimasena quickly pierced the vyuha and got Satyaki inside that army. Satyaki fought against Drona, who neglected him (did not engage forcefully). Satyaki killed the charioteer of Drona and chased away his horses.

97) Then, due to the blessings of the Brahmanas and due to the boon of Sri Krishna, Satyaki's strength increased immensely. A pleased Krishna had granted him a boon that his strength would increase for a duration of one day.

98) After that, due to that immense increase in strength, Satyaki stopped Bhima at the entrance of the formation itself and proceeded further. As he started to destroy the army from all sides with showers of arrows, Krutavarma, the son of Hridika, took him on.

99) A terrible fight took place between them and Satyaki rendered Krutavarma chariot-less. The great archer Satyaki won against him and proceeded further, beheading youngsters along the way.

100) At that moment, Jalasandha came there to fight, being seated on an elephant. Satyaki killed that great fighter and difficult-to-face warrior Jalasandha when he came to stop him.

101) Satyaki killed the Kaurava army, including elephants, chariots, horses and foot-soldiers and caused a great turmoil. He also killed a battalion of tribal warriors who were hurling rocks at him, and chased away all the soldiers.

102) Satyaki came near Arjuna and Sri Krishna. Immediately, King Yupadhwaja came to battle against him. A terrible, intriguing, fiery and great battle took place between them for a long time.

Note: Yupadhwaja was another name for King Bhurishravas, the son of Somdatta and the grandson of Bahlika. He was very well known for having performed a great many Yajnas. Hence he was known as Yupadhwaja.

103) The two of them killed each others' horses and charioteers and destroyed their bows. Later, wielding swords and shields in their hands, they started fighting each other, showing a variety of battle moves.

104) The son of Somdatta felled Satyaki to the ground. Holding his hair in one hand, he placed his leg on Satyaki's chest and quickly lifted his sword to behead him.

105) Sri Vasudeva, the one whose eyes could see everything, noticed this and immediately told Dhananjaya – "Protect Satyaki in battle". Arjuna then cut off the the arm of Bhurishravas with a *bhalla*.

Note: Arjuna and Sri Krishna were at a distance of three yojanas from Satyaki and Bhurishravas. Bhalla was a special kind of arrow – a missile like weapon.

106) When his arm holding the sword was cut off, Bhurishravas sat down, condemning Arjuna. He sat on a mat of arrows, intending to give up his life. He was meditating on Sri Hari. Due to the Avesha of Asuras, he also engaged in condemnation of Sri Krishna.

107) As the Avesha of the Asuras waned off, he started meditating on Sri Garudadhwa with great devotion. The grandson of Shini (Satyaki) then got up and, in spite of being stopped by Arjuna and the others, cut off the head of Bhurishravas.

108) Sri Krishna then gave Satyaki a chariot, prepared especially for him, along with a charioteer. By that time, the horses of Arjuna had gotten tired due to thirst. Arjuna then exercised the Varunastra.

109) With the astra itself, Arjuna created a water fall. Using arrows, he also created a stable for the horses. Sri Krishna then untied the horses and made them drink water. Arjuna meanwhile kept tormenting the enemies.

110) Sri Krishna, the lord of all, plucked out arrows stuck in the horses and relieved them of their stress. He then tied them back to the chariot and started driving it. Arjuna climbed on to the chariot and continued fighting with the enemies like before.

111) After Satyaki's departure, Dharmaraja again became tense due to worry, and said to Bhima – "The sound of the Gandiva cannot be heard while only the sound of the Panchajanya is being heard loudly".

112) "As per my direction, Satyaki left. However, it appears to me that the task was overbearing for him. Therefore O Bhima! You proceed now and protect Arjuna and Yuyudhana, in case they are alive".

113) When Dharmaraja spoke thus, Bhimasena replied – “Being protected by Sri Krishna, even Brahma, Rudra and the others cannot win against Arjuna. How then can Ashwathama, Karna and the other archers win?”

114) “Due to Sri Hari’s grace, neither Dhananjaya nor Satyaki have anything to fear. My belief is that it is you who needs protection now. Drona is trying to capture you, isn’t he?”

115) When Bhima replied in this manner, Yudhishtira said – “As long as Ghatotkacha and Dhrishtadyumna, the best amongst bowmen, are still alive, Drona can never be successful in capturing me”.

116) “If you desire to do what is pleasing to me, proceed immediately towards Arjuna and Satyaki. Protect them and let out a leonine roar as soon as you see them and inform me”.

117) “Similarly, let me know after Jayadratha has been slain” – when Yudhishtira said thus, Bhima appointed the son of Hidimbaa and the commander of the Pandava army for his proper protection.

Note: The son of Hidimbaa was Ghatotkacha. Dhrishtadyumna was the commander of the Pandava army.

118) Dhrishtadyumna, the Senadhipati, said to Bhima – “You proceed towards Sri Krishna and Arjuna. As long as I am alive, Drona cannot be successful in capturing Dharmaraja. Ain’t I verily Drona’s death?”

119) When Dhrishtadyumna assured him thus, Bhima handed over Yudhishtira under his protection and proceeded against the enemy army, holding a mace, having strung a bow, and relentlessly showering clusters of arrows.

120) Drona blocked Bhima through a rain of arrows and said to him – “Out of affection for my students, I let Arjuna and Satyaki go inside. They were very humble towards me”.

121) “I gave up the vow undertaken for protecting Saindhava for the sake of Arjuna. However, I cannot provide you a way under any circumstance. Witness my divine and extraordinary capability with astras”.

122) As soon as he said thus, Bhima picked up a mace. Throwing it at Drona’s chariot, he said – “I respect you like a father. I shall always treat you with softness. I can never go tough against you”.

123) “Witness now what my strength is if I go tough” – saying thus he threw his mace. Immediately, Drona’s chariot, along with the charioteer, horses, flag, wheels and axle was crushed to pieces due to the blow from Bhima’s mace.

124) Noticing the mace hurtling towards him, Drona quickly jumped to the ground. He climbed another chariot that Duryodhana sent then, and started showering Bhima with arrows.

125) When Drona started discharging arrows that were powered by great astras, Bhima, the main source of action for the world and the son of Vayu, jumped from his chariot and started rushing towards him like an ox, leaning his head forward.

Note: Bhima was the Avatara of Mukhyaprana, the Devata who is the reason for all activity in the world, conducted as per the wishes of Sri Hari.

126) Bhima approached Drona at the speed of mind and instantly picked up his chariot and threw it into the sky. Through this, he gave him the message that he was not killing him out of respect.

127) That chariot came crashing to the ground and was blown to pieces along with the horses and charioteer. Drona once again escaped by jumping to the ground. By that time, Vishoka brought Bhima's chariot there. The extraordinary warrior Bhima climbed the same.

128) Drona ascended another chariot given by Duryodhana and proceeded against Yudhishtira. Dhrishtadyumna, the commander of the Pandavas, stopped Drona in battle when he desired to capture Dharmaraja.

129) Stopping his own army that was running away from Drona's arrows, Dhrishtadyumna halted Drona with arrows of his own and, even as Drona kept watching, chased away the opponent's soldiers.

130) Desiring the victory of the Pandavas and Kauravas respectively, a most special, amazing and terrifying battle, that involved a relentless shower of arrows, took place between Dhrishtadyumna and Drona for a long time.

131) Later Bhimasena, the one with unlimited valour, moved further slaying Duryodhana's army with his arrows. Twelve Kauravas, including the great warriors Vinda and Anuvinda, faced him.

132-133) Even as they hurled many arrows at him, Bhimasena cut off their heads simultaneously. When those great archers were killed, five ministers of Duryodhana named Satyavrata, Purumitra, Jaya, Brundaraka and Paurava rushed against Bhimasena. As they started showering arrows against him, Bhima picked up many sharp arrows together.

134) With those arrows, he caused their heads to fly. When they fell dead thus, the rest of them ran helter-skelter. Chasing the enemies away like a lion chases stray deer, Bhima faced the grandson of Hridika (Krutavarma).

135) When he obstructed by using arrows, Bhima quickly rendered him chariot-less and killed his horses and charioteer. Having been hurt very badly by Vrikodara, Krutavarma gave up battle and immediately left.

136) As soon as he won against Krutavarma, Bhima started scattering the enemies. Killing all foot-soldiers, horses and elephants, he got close to Sri Krishna and Arjuna.

137) Bhima became very pleased seeing Sri Krishna and Vijaya. They too saw him and engaged in conversation. Through a ferocious roar, Bhima indicated to Dharmaraja (about Arjuna's safety). Hearing that, Dharmaraja, possessing excellent intellect, rejoiced greatly.

138) When Bhima gave that leonine roar, the loud sound caused many Kaurava soldiers to urinate and excrete (out of fear). Others vomited blood and many died too. When all the Kings became scared then, Karna rushed towards Bhima. Vikarna and the other Kauravas too came there.

139) In that battle, Bhima killed Vikarna and Chitrasena. Later, he smashed the chariot of the son of Surya (Karna). When Bhima started hitting him repeatedly with fiery arrows, Karna immediately ran away far from there.

140) After recovering for a long time, Karna proceeded again against Bhima along with many Kauravas. Bhima killed all those Kauravas and destroyed Karna's horses. He broke Karna's weapons. Karna, once again, ran away from there quickly.

141-142) Even as Karna kept watching, twenty three brave sons of Dhritrashtra, including Vikarna and Chitrasena, fell down from their chariots, their heads being cut off by Bhima's arrows. All of them had come to help Karna.

143) In that battle, Karna lost his horses, charioteer, chariot and flags twenty one times, due to the fiery arrows of Bhima. He got hurt on his body too.

144) Worrying about his life, Karna kept leaving the battlefield out of sorrow and crying repeatedly even as everyone was watching.

145-146) In the twenty second duel, Karna ascended an extremely radiant and impregnable chariot given by Sri Parashurama. He picked up a bow called Vijaya given also by him. Bringing along two quivers that would never run out of arrows, he faced Bhima with great anger.

147) An extremely terrifying battle took place between Bhima and Karna for a long time. Both of them fought each other with blood-red eyes, covering the sky with clusters of arrows.

148-149) "I am fully capable of killing you even if you had possessed the kavacha and kundala you were born with" – in order to convey such a message the mighty armed Bhimasena cut off Karna's ear-rings and protective shield with his arrows and felled them on the ground in that battle.

150) Felling them thus and conveying the message "I can kill you" Bhima tormented Karna once again with great many sharp arrows.

151) Bhima then thought – "He has been granted a boon by Sri Parashurama that he shall win against everyone if he doesn't battle with a sense of competition. Being in danger from me, he is not fighting with me in competition".

152) "Still, Bhagavan Parashurama, due to his extreme grace, is granting me victory without considering his own boon. However, I have to respect Sri Hari's words at all times. Therefore let me provide space (an opportunity) for Karna now".

153) Thinking thus, when Bhima allowed it, Karna cut Bhima's bow with the prowess of astras he possessed. He cut off the ropes of the horses too. Later, in order to display his true strength, Bhima gave up his chariot and alighted.

154) In order to let everyone know that he needed neither the chariot nor the bow, that excellent warrior Vrikodara jumped into the sky and instantly landed on Karna's chariot.

155) A frightened Karna hid below the pole of the chariot. Vrikodara then, having shown that he could control the enemy even when without a weapon, jumped out of the chariot.

156) Even though Bhima was fully capable of capturing Karna, or kill him, or take away his chariot or bow in battle, or to do to him what he did to Drona, he respected Sri Parashurama's words out of devotion.

157) In order to make Arjuna's vow come true, and because Karna was a Vaishnava, Bhima went a little away from there and stood, so he could release arrows at him.

158) Then, knowing that Bhimasena has stood there to respect the words of Sri Parashurama, Karna started hitting him with arrows. Bhima stopped his arrows using dead elephants. Karna started cutting off the dead corpses of the elephants.

159) Approaching Bhima who was throwing dead elephants, Karna pierced him with the edge of his bow. Even though he knew Bhima's valour very well, he spoke dirty words in order to please Duryodhana.

160) When Karna was uttering filthy words against Bhima, Arjuna attacked him with excellent arrows. Being troubled by Partha's arrows, Karna ran away from there, having lost his kavacha. Bhima climbed his chariot.

161) Since Karna had informed Kunti that he would not hurl the Shakti weapon against anyone but Arjuna, he did not use the weapon given by Indra against Bhima. Even through that Shakti, Bhima was always indestructible.

162) Even when the Narayana-astra fell on his head and remained there for a long time, it did not burn even his hair. What then could Indra's Shakti do to him? Similarly, what could other great astras and weapons do to him?

Note: The episode involving the Narayana astra will be narrated subsequently in this adhyaya.

163) Knowing Sri Krishna's *sankalpa* that the Shakti should become the reason for Ghatotkacha's death, Bhima did not desire to pick it up even when he had climbed Karna's chariot.

164-166) Later Karna climbed another chariot and went after Arjuna. Due to Sri Krishna's control of his mind, he feared Arjuna would take away his divine chariot and bows and hence brought with him only the Shakti weapon, to battle and kill Arjuna. He would never bring the (divine) chariot, bow and Shakti weapon together. His thinking was that even if one of them was taken away, he would still possess the others. Due to the strategy of Sri Krishna, the one with unlimited radiance, he always remained in fear.

167) At the time of his death, he had decided to die and hence he climbed that chariot. Before that, he knew that his time of death had not yet arrived.

168) Noticing the presence of the Shakti in his chariot, Sri Krishna stopped Arjuna and, after granting him his own chariot and the necessary strength, ordered Satyaki to fight Karna.

169) “Arjuna has sent his incapable student to fight me” – interpreting thus, Karna fought Satyaki in battle with a sense of competition. Satyaki, who was riding Sri Krishna’s chariot, in turn rendered Karna chariot-less.

170) No one seated in Sri Krishna’s chariot could get defeated. Hence Satyaki was not defeated by Karna then.

171) Sri Parashurama, who had established the art of archery, had established a rule that princes must undertake a *vrata* at the time of learning weapons.

172-173) Such a *vrata* must facilitate the destruction of enemies. It must be something not done by others, secretive, unopposed to Dharma, pleasing to Sri Parashurama and not against the welfare of the world. Therefore Lord Bhima had undertaken a secret *vrata* that he would kill anyone who would call him *toobara*.

Note: The word *toobara* means a person who hasn’t developed beard or a moustache. It was used as an insult in those days.

174) Knowing that it would never cause harm to the world, Bhima thought no one would call him a *toobara* since he had a lush beard and moustache and thus undertaken that vow. He had once mentioned the same to Arjuna out of affection, when they were alone.

175) Arjuna’s vow was to kill anyone who would ask him to hand over the Gandiva to someone else. He had learnt in advance from Sage Narada that he would get the Gandiva. Apart from Bhima, none else knew about it (the secret vow).

176) When Bhima was mentioning his secret vow to Arjuna, Duryodhana had overheard it and he had informed Karna of the same.

177) When Karna called him a *toobara* to enrage him, even when he was not, Bhima told Arjuna thus.

178-179) “You are aware of my vow. Similarly, I too know about your oath. Karna has now become fit for killing by me. As per my directions, an oath about his killing has been taken by you too. Therefore, right now, either of us has to kill him”.

180) When Bhima spoke thus, Arjuna requested – “I shall kill him. Since I am yours, me doing this is equivalent to you doing it as well”.

Note: The younger brother fulfilling an oath is equivalent to an older one doing it, as per Shastras. The phrase “I am yours” (*tvadeeyaH ahaM*) means “I am your family, your younger one”.

181) “However, what you perform does not count as done by me. Aren’t you the elder one? Therefore it shall be me who will kill him” – saying thus he then addressed Karna.

182) “Even as Sri Krishna was listening, you have used filthy words against Bhima. Similarly, all of you got together and killed Abhimanyu, who was alone”.

183) “Therefore I shall kill you. I shall also kill your son in front of you” – when Arjuna spoke thus, Karna climbed another chariot and proceeded to protect Jayadratha.

184) Arjuna could not kill Jayadratha who was being protected by Ashwathama and Karna. Ashwathama then increased his efforts to stop Arjuna.

185) In spite of a lot of effort, Arjuna could not get past Ashwathama. An exciting, contained, duel took place between them for a long time.

186) Bhagavan Sri Krishna noticed it. He saw the Sun turn red. Ashwathama did not look like losing. Jayadratha’s slaying was not yet done. Therefore, desiring victory for Arjuna, Sri Krishna created deep darkness.

187) When the entire sky was engulfed with darkness, all of them including Drona thought that the Sun had set and relaxed. Saindhava too considered Arjuna as having failed in his vow and approached him to see his (defeated) face.

188) Then, as per Sri Krishna’s orders, the son of Indra acted as if he was about to enter a fire (to give up his life) and cut off Jayadratha’s head with an arrow. Sri Krishna then told him.

189) “Do not allow his head to fall on the ground” – when Sri Krishna said thus, Arjuna, using the power of the Pashupatastra, created a stream of arrows back to back and held the head in the sky. Sri Garudadhwhaja again said.

190) “Make this fall on his father’s hands. He has previously given him a boon – ‘Whosoever causes your decapitated head to fall on the ground will have his own head broken into a thousand pieces’”

Note: Jayadratha’s father’s name was Vruddhakshatra.

191) “Therefore it is required to kill his father as well” – when Sri Krishna said thus, Arjuna immediately made Jayadratha’s head fall on the lap of his father who was doing his *sandhyavandana*. Out of shock, he threw the head on the ground.

192) His (Vruddhakshatra’s) head burst into a thousand pieces. Sri Krishna then destroyed the darkness. When the Sun again became visible to all, there was a huge commotion in the Kaurava army.

193) Bhimasena then defeated Shalya, Duryodhana, Krupa and the others and let out a huge roar in order to assist Arjuna. Satyaki became extremely pleased with Jayadratha’s death.

194) Sri Krishna blew the Panchajanya. With great joy, Arjuna blew his Devadatta. Hearing the sounds of the Panchajanya along with the roar of Bhima, Dharmaraja gathered Jayadratha had been slain and became very pleased. Duryodhana experienced great sorrow.

195) Then Bhimasena faced the army that was commandeered by Ashwathama. Arjuna took on the remaining army that was being led by Karna. After that, the armies of Ashwathama and Karna lost.

196) Dhristadyumna and the others entered the midst of that scattered army. They arrived at the place where Bhima and Arjuna were present.

197) The Pandavas and Panchalas, having been united, started chasing away the enemies. Overcome by fear, they (Kauravas) started running in all directions.

198) Seeing his army being chased away in that fashion, Duryodhana, angered due to Jayadratha's killing, pounced on the enemies.

199) Showering Bhimasena, Dhananjaya, Yudhishtira, the sons of Madri, Dhristadyumna, Satyaki and the sons of Draupadi with clusters of arrows, he faced them all alone.

200) They hit back at him with many arrows. Discounting that attack, he cut off a number of different types of bows belonging to many of those great warriors. He rendered Nakula-Sahadeva chariot-less.

201) All of them picked up different bows and rained a shower of arrows on Duryodhana. Disregarding all of those, he stopped them alone with arrows of his own.

202) Seeing Duryodhana stuck in the midst of numerous enemies, Drona, Ashwathama, Krupa and the others picked up their bows and started protecting him with relentless arrows.

203) Duryodhana said to Karna – "Kill this Bhima in battle". Karna replied – "It is not possible even for Indra and the other Devas to win against him".

204) "O King! Having been tormented by him, it is divine grace that I am still alive. Therefore let us try till our strength allows. Victory is left to providence".

205) Duryodhana then condemned Drona – "Due to your neglect Saindhava was killed by Arjuna. My army has been destroyed by Bhima and Satyaki".

206) "Out of love for the Pandavas, you have forsaken your vow" – when Duryodhana said thus, Drona got angry and once again made a vow.

207) "From now on, I shall not return from battle, be it night or day. I shall not remove my kavacha under any circumstances".

208) "You should inform my son thus – 'Do not spare any Panchala, including the grandsons from the daughter's side'" – saying thus, Drona burst into the Pandava army even as nightfall occurred.

Note: Drona instructed Ashwathama to kill Draupadi's sons as well. Draupadi's sons were 'dauhitra' for the Panchala King Drupada.

209) When he entered the enemy formation thus, Dhristadyumna immediately took him on. At the same time, Bhimasena rendered Ashwathama and Duryodhana chariot-less. Having done so, he chased them away, even as all the Kings were watching.

210) By that time, seven akshouhinis had been killed in both the armies (together). Out of those Bhima had destroyed three and Arjuna had destroyed two.

Note: By the evening of day 14, 7 out of the total of 18 akshouhinis had been killed.

211) Abhimanyu, Satyaki and the others had destroyed one sixteenth out of five akshouhinis. Ghatotkacha, Dhrishtadyumna and the others had destroyed one tenth out of three akshouhinis.

212) Bhishma, Drona and Ashwathama had killed two akshouhinis of the Pandava army. The rest of them had killed a quarter of that number.

213) Later that night, the Pandavas with their army of five akshouhinis and the Kauravas with their army of six akshouhinis formed their own vyuhās and engaged in the most terrible battle.

214-215) Karna went against Bhima who was scattering away his army. In front of Karna himself, Bhima squashed Dushkarna and Karna, two brothers of Duryodhana, with his foot. The two of them vanished along with their chariots, horses, masts and charioteers.

Note: Duryodhana had a brother who too was named Karna.

216) “You had rudely called him as empty-handed then. I was fully capable of killing you with my feet even without any weapons”.

217) In order to give such an indication to Karna, Bhima killed the two of them with just his feet. He killed Kalinga with his fist.

218) “Should I state separately that I can kill you with just my fist too? Still, I have spared you” – in order to indicate to him thus, the omnipotent Bhima crushed Kalinga with this fist, along with his horses, charioteer, mast and chariot.

219) When Bhishma was the commander, Bhima had killed Ketuman, the father of Kalinga, in a sword fight, along with Shakradeva, Shrutayudha and an entire akshouhini army.

Note: In order to revenge the death of his father Ketuman, Kalinga had attacked Bhima. But he too was killed.

220) In that night, Bhima killed many brothers of Karna including Dhruva. Understanding the signal given by Bhima, Karna hurled another Shakti weapon at him.

Note: This was not the Shakti given by Indra to Karna but another one.

221) In order to tell Bhima – “I did not exercise the (Indra given) Shakti. Therefore you are still alive” – Karna did thus. Realizing this, Bhima jumped instantly to the sky, held the Shakti with his hand and hurled it back at Karna at great speed.

222-223) “If you had used the Shakti back then, it would have killed you” – Bhima conveyed this message in return. Since he wanted to spare Karna, he threw the Shakti at Karna’s right shoulder. That

Shakti pierced his shoulder and then pierced the ground and entered it. It delivered a message to Karna as well.

224) Later Bhima returned to his chariot, picked up his bow and started scattering the enemies in all directions, right in front of Karna!

225) Karna then tried to stop Bhima by hurling arrows having sharp and bent edges. Bhima threw his mace at Karna's chariot with great speed.

226) In order to hit Bhima's mace, Karna invoked the *Sthunakarna* astra. The mace, being hit by that astra, returned to Bhima.

227) Bhima then picked up that mace and climbed Karna's chariot. He smashed the chariot's yoke into pieces.

228) "I can kill you too in this manner. However, I am deliberately sparing you" – conveying such a message through that act, he returned to his chariot.

229) Once again, in front of Karna, Bhima started to kill numerous soldiers. Karna left him and proceeded towards Sahadeva.

230) Rendering him chariot-less, Karna held Sahadeva's neck with his bow and insulted him a lot. Sahadeva became very depressed.

231) Reminding himself of the promise to Kunti, Karna did not wish to kill Sahadeva. Defeating him in battle, he started killing the Pandava army.

232) Ashwathama then started killing Arjuna's army from all directions using many varieties of arrows. Being hit by that expert in warfare, the army could not find any respite like a fly on the verge of death.

233) Noticing the army being destroyed in this manner by Ashwathama's strength, Ghatotkacha invited him to battle. Ashwathama then said – "O Son! No. No. Being son-like, do not face me now".

234) When Ashwathama said thus, Ghatotkacha replied – "You are not father-like to me. However, it is true that you are a friend of my father. But you are my enemy (now) since you have joined the enemy's camp". Ashwathama then said – "If you consider me as your enemy then I shall surely behave like one".

235) Speaking thus, Ashwathama strung his bow that was radiant like Indra's bow and rushed against Ghatotkacha at a frightening speed, flooding him with arrows. Ghatotkacha faced him with his army.

236) The powerful Ghatotkacha, together with a lakh Rakshasas and many brave men, along with an army of one akshouhini, tormented Ashwathama, the Guru's son, with arrows.

237) Having been troubled greatly by Ghatotkacha's numerous arrows, Ashwathama was hurt all over his body. He started bleeding everywhere. Rolling his eyes out of anger, he pulled his great bow and caused darkness with his arrows.

Note: Ashwathama fired so many arrows into the sky that it caused darkness in the battlefield.

238) Firing large arrows in an instant, Ashwathama decimated the akshouhini sized army and all the Rakshasas. He also killed Ghatotkacha's son called Nishtya. Earlier, Nishtya was known as Anjanavarma.

Note: In some recensions of the Mahabharata, Nishtya is known as Anjanavarma. Six generations had participated in the war. Anjanavarma belonged to the last generation.

239) Seeing his army, along with his son, being killed, Ghatotkacha hit Ashwathama very deeply with an arrow. Hurt badly by that, Ashwathama rested against the flag(pole). He recovered very soon.

240) Getting up, Ashwathama fixed an arrow that was like Yama's *danda* into his bow and, pulling it greatly, released it at the Rakshasa. Ghatotkacha, hit badly by that arrow, fell down unconscious in his chariot.

241) Even as everyone was watching, his charioteer carried away the deeply unconscious Ghatotkacha far away from battle. Ashwathama started scattering the Pandava and Panchala armies with excellent sharp arrows.

242) Having regained his consciousness, Ghatotkacha became furious and immediately entered the Kaurava formation. With a shower of arrows he chased them away. He shook many great warriors too.

243) Noticing Karna arriving to battle with Arjuna, Sri Krishna, the lord of the world, then sent Ghatotkacha. His intention was to get the Shakti thrown against him in order to protect Partha.

244) Ghatotkacha invited Karna and engaged with him in a duel. He also fought against Duryodhana, Drona and the others who had come with him (Karna) and stopped them single-handedly and troubled them excessively.

Note: Rakshasas get additional strength when dark. Hence Ghatotkacha had become very powerful on the 14th night.

245) Having been hurt badly by that powerful one, all of them engaged with him, keeping Karna in front. In that battle, the great knower of astras Karna excelled with his abilities and continued fighting without losing hope.

246) Bhima then stopped Guru-putra Ashwathama while the son of Indra stopped the Samshaptakas. At that time, a Rakshasa by name Alambala rushed at the son of Bhima, wanting to kill him.

247) Ghatotkacha engaged in battle with him and, after bringing him down on the ground, beheaded him with a sword. He threw the head at Duryodhana. All the Kings (fighting on the Kaurava side) there were greatly dejected.

248) A Rakshasa called Alayudha then rushed at Ghatotkacha, the terrible and valorous man-eating Rakshasa. Facing him, Ghatotkacha battled him for a muhurtha and then made him a *yajna-pashu*, felling him on the ground.

Note: In a yajna, a pashu or animal is sacrificed. Hence the word yajna-pashu here means Ghatotkacha killed Alayudha.

249) After that, he cut his head and threw it angrily at Duryodhana's chest. Duryodhana and the others were bewildered by this.

250) Alayudha, who had been spared by Bhimasena although being capable of killing him so Ghatotkacha could express his strength, was slain by Bhaimasena.

Note: Bhaimasena means the son of Bhimasena.

251) All of them started requesting Karna to use the Shakti against him. "If he dies then all of them are (effectively) dead. What can Arjuna then do to us?" – they said.

252) Being repeatedly requested by the Kauravas who were tormented by Ghatotkacha, and because he himself was troubled greatly by him, Karna picked up the eminent Shakti that was agreeable to Indra.

253) Karna hurled the Shakti, that was like the tongue of death himself and was shining in all directions, at Ghatotkacha who was like a mountain in the sky and incomparably valorous.

254) With his chest torn apart by that Shakti, Ghatotkacha started falling down. Even though he was getting killed, he fell upon the enemy soldiers and crushed them. When he died, the Kauravas rejoiced. Jeering loudly, they tore up their clothes (in joy).

255) Sri Krishna then started dancing. Hugging Arjuna tightly, he blew his conch and let out a leonine roar. He laughed with a loud voice.

256) A sorrow-filled Gudakesha asked him – "O Lord! When our brave elder son has been killed why are you expressing joy in this manner?"

257) Bhagavan Sri Krishna replied – "Arjuna! By divine providence, you have been spared. Karna utilized the Shakti preserved for you against the Rakshasa".

258) After that Yudhishtira started boiling with anger against Karna due to sorrow (of Ghatotkacha's death). Then, the omnipotent Sri Vyasa arrived there and said.

259) "Ghatotkacha has been killed by the Shakti which was supposed to kill Arjuna. Therefore, O King, do not mourn. Due to divine grace Arjuna is alive" – saying thus Sri Vyasa departed. The war continued.

260) When the Kaurava army was destroyed by Bhima and Arjuna, and the Pandava soldiers were getting killed by the Kauravas, all of them, including those holding lamps and the fighters, came under the influence of sleep.

261) Seeing all of them under the sway of sleep, Arjuna said – "All of you sleep till moonrise". When he said thus they thanked him and slept in whatever condition they were in.

262) Then, when the moon rose, all of them resumed battle, showering weapons and great astras. Somadatta and Bhuri faced Satyaki. He started fighting the two of them all by himself.

263) Both of them fell down on the ground, slain by Satyaki. Then, Bahlika faced him in battle. The brave Bahlika rendered Satyaki chariot-less and released an arrow intending to kill him.

264) Bhimasena cut that arrow released by Bahlika into three pieces. The latter then threw a weapon called *Shataghni* at Bhima. Bhima acted like he was jolted by it and hit Bahlika with his mace. Bahlika fell down dead.

265) Bahlika had earlier affectionately requested – “Bhima! You alone should kill me in battle out of love for me. I shall then attain fame, *punya* and excellent lokas”.

266) When Bahlika requested thus, Bhima told him – “You should cause me a lot of pain. Only then shall I slay you in battle. I will not do so otherwise. Causing such pain to me will only lead you to attain *punya* due to your service”. Thus, Bahlika was killed there by Bhimasena.

267) When Bahlika was killed, Karna, Duryodhana and the other Kaurava heroes rushed against Bhimasena, keeping Ashwathama and Drona at the head. Dhrishtadyumna, joined by his brothers and Satyaki, faced Guru Drona.

268) Arjuna engaged in battle with the Samshaptakas. That battle was extremely terrible and amazing. In that battle at night, an army of one akshouhini was killed by Bhima and Arjuna.

269) Then, the Sun rose. Drona then performed the most dreadful task in the war. Entering the chariot formation of the Panchalas, he killed elephants, horses, chariots (chariot warriors) and foot-soldiers.

270) Drona caused even great warriors to run away. In that darkness caused by arrows (of Drona), they couldn't find any peace. Although aged, Drona, the most knowledgeable expert on astras and a terrifying archer, moved around in battle like a youngster.

271) Twenty thousand chariot-warriors were killed by Drona, the battle-expert! A thousand times more foot-soldiers were killed. Horses numbering a tenth of the soldiers died while twenty thousand elephants too were slain.

272) Similarly, with two arrows, Drona dispatched Virata and Drupada from the war-world to the other-world. After that, Bhimasena won against Guru-putra Ashwathama and others and engaged in protecting Dhrishtadyumna.

273) Under the protection of Bhimasena, Dhrishtadyumna tried very hard to kill Drona. With a flood of arrows, Drona stopped Dhrishtadyumna forcefully, who then hit him very hard with an arrow. Drona fell unconscious due to that blow.

274) Dhrishtadyumna quickly picked up a sword and shield and started climbing the excellent chariot of Drona. By that time, Drona, having regained consciousness, started hurting him with arrows that were yard-long in length.

275) Pained by those arrows, Dhrishtadyumna returned and climbed his chariot. The two of them tried extremely hard and battled again, raining arrows at each other.

276) Drona stopped Dhrishtadyumna with arrows and invoked the Brahmastra and burnt numerous Panchalas in that war. Purujit, Kuntibhoja and others were killed by him then.

277) One after the other, Bhima, Arjuna and Satyaki stopped Ashwathama and his big army at a distance.

Note: By stopping Ashwathama in this manner, they made it possible for Dhrishtadyumna to challenge Drona to try and kill him.

278) Bhima and Arjuna stopped Karna, Duryodhana and the others, including Shalya, Krutavarma and Krupa in that battle, through a flood of arrows.

279) Bhima then destroyed an army of elephants and a King of Magadha named Jayatsena. He also destroyed a large contingent of chariots belonging to the Magadhas.

280) At that time, seeing an elephant named Ashwathama, belonging to the King of Malava, being killed by Bhimasena, King Yudhishthira, provoked by Sri Krishna, said – “Ashwathama is dead”.

281-282) Drona himself had earlier told Dharmaraja that he would not be able to continue fighting the war after hearing about Ashwathama’s death. Therefore, he asked Yudhishthira – “Tell me the truth”. Dharmaraja replied – “It is the truth” but added the word “elephant” in an unclear voice. Drona underwent a lot of pain due to that (news).

Note: Dharmaraja said “Ashwathama hataH kunjaraH”. The word kunjara was uttered in a very unclear (low) voice by him, which Drona did not hear. Assuming that Dharmaraja was talking about his son, he became dejected.

283-284) Bhima held the pole at the front end of Drona’s chariot and told him – “It doesn’t befit a noble person such as yourself to live doing what is not your natural Dharma”. The sages who had gathered in the skies invited him saying – “It is enough. Come back now”. Realizing all of this, Drona gave up his weapons.

285) Drona submitted all his Karma performed till then to Sri Vasudeva. Sitting in yoga and meditating on Sri Krishna, the Lord of all, the one who is free from all defects and the best amongst all, Drona gave up his body and returned to his *loka*.

286) Sri Krishna, the Pandavas and Krupa saw Drona returning back to his world through the skies. In spite of being stopped by the Pandavas, Dhrishtadyumna picked up his sword and shield and went where Drona was present.

Note: Drona had already left the world. Only his body remained, which Dhrishtadyumna approached.

287) He beheaded him with his sword and quickly climbed his chariot again. Seeing this, Krupa became very scared and, having climbed his horse, ran away quickly from there.

288) When Dhrishtadyumna cut Drona's head thus, Arjuna and Yudhisthira condemned him. Satyaki too became very angry.

289) Dhrishtadyumna asked both of them – "How did you kill Bhurishravas?". This angered Satyaki a lot and he attacked him, holding a mace in his hand.

290) Without getting perturbed, Dhrishtadyumna invited Satyaki for a duel. Bhima then, having been prodded by Sri Krishna, held Satyaki. Bound by his love for Dhrishtadyumna, he got Arjuna to calm down.

291) After being advised specially by Sri Krishna, all of them became friendly with each other like before. Holding their weapons, they became ready for battle and left. Then, Ashwathama arrived, holding his bow.

292) Getting to know of his father's killing, Ashwathama undertook an oath to kill all enemies sparing none. Enraged, he invoked the Narayana astra. Then, except Bhima, all of them became scared.

293) Yudhishtira, with a heavy heart, said – "Let Satyaki and the others get away from here. I shall fall victim, along with my brothers, to the excellent astra of the son of Drona". Sri Krishna then replied.

294) "Bow down to the astra. Then you shall be released from it". Immediately Arjuna and the others bowed down to it. Bhima did not do so. That astra fell on his head. He stood in the middle of the astra like a fire standing amidst another fire.

295) When Bhima stood there like a fire that doesn't get burnt by another fire, Arjuna, in order to show his affection, invoked the Varunastra to protect Bhima.

296) When an astra falls in that manner on the body, sprinkling water from outside is of no use. Still, bound by his friendship (brotherly love), Arjuna attempted to provide protection through that astra.

297) Conveying (to everyone) that his astra was unassailable and the fact that Bhima could never be killed, Sri Krishna climbed Bhima's chariot along with Arjuna.

Note: The Narayana astra is Sri Vishnu's weapon. Hence Sri Krishna is its owner.

298-299) Because of the cover provided outside by the Varunastra, because of Sri Krishna's company and because of Nara's Avesha in him, the Narayana astra did not burn Arjuna. The astra became extinguished as the two of them (Sri Krishna and Arjuna) brought Bhima down from his chariot and took away his weapon.

300) Vrikodara was the adherent of the pristine Bhagavata Dharma at all times. Hence, even when all others got down from their vehicles and prostrated before the astra, Bhima alone stayed in his chariot holding his weapon and fought that Narayana astra which even the most powerful Devatas could not tolerate.

301) When the situation is such that one's Swadharm is about to be harmed, it is duty to advise friends to not violate. Therefore, Bhima asked the others also to not bow down to the astra.

Note: Bhima asks all the warriors around him to not bow down to the astra. Since he followed the Bhagavata Dharma it was his duty to encourage his friends to follow the same path too. Hence his advice.

302) Although the astra is worthy of worship, when it is released by an enemy in war, it is not appropriate to bow to it out of attachment over life. Therefore, Bhima did not bow down to it.

303) Sri Vayu is the presiding deity of the Narayana astra while Sri Hari himself is the deity propagated by it. Therefore, since the astra was the very essence of Bhima, it did not burn him, just as a fire does not burn another fire.

Note: Every divine astra has a *abhimani devata* or presiding deity. This deity controls the astra. Every such astra also has a *pratipadya devata* or propagating deity. This is the Devata that is served by the astra.

304) Bhimasena paid his respects to the astra and its Devata Sri Hari in his mind itself. However, in accordance with Kshatriya Dharma, he did not bend his head externally.

305) Showing (to everyone) that his astra and Bhima were both unfailing, Sri Krishna, the omnipotent, started driving the horses once again.

306) Duryodhana pleaded fervently with Ashwathama to invoke the astra once again. Saying that it was not possible, the son of Drona proceeded against Dhrishtadyumna.

307) Seeing the son of Guru (Drona) approaching Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki too joined the battle. Ashwathama hurt both of them with his arrows. The two of them fell down unconscious.

308) Ashwathama chased away the horses of Bhima when he arrived there. Even as Bhima controlled the horses, Arjuna saw Ashwathama.

309) Arjuna then came there to fight Ashwathama. Condemning him with cruel words, Ashwathama invoked the Agneyastra. That astra surrounded the Pandavas from all sides.

310) One akshouhini sized army was then destroyed (by that astra). Sri Krishna protected Arjuna along with the chariot. Seeing Arjuna escaping alive, Ashwathama threw away his bow in anger and went away.

311) Sri Vyasa, the one who composed the Brahmasutras and one whose body is verily the six auspicious attributes, arrived there and told him – "Do not leave. You are verily the Avatara of Girisha. To accomplish the task of the Devatas, you, the powerful one, have taken birth on Earth".

312-313) "I know that you need to accomplish a great task in future. Therefore undertake that soon" – when Sri Vyasa said thus Ashwathama said – "In the morning" and bowed to the propagator of the

entire Vedas and left. Behind him, Duryodhana and the others too held their heads low out of sorrow and fear and went to their camps.

314) All the Pandavas, being overjoyed, sang praises of Sri Krishna, the Supreme One, and went to their camps. There too, they remembered the auspicious qualities of Sri Hari at night, and felt great joy together.

|| End of chapter 26, known as 'Narayana Astra Upashamana', from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||