

|| Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya ||

1) Later King Duryodhana took the consent of the son of Drona and appointed Karna as the commander-in-chief. Karna put on his Kavacha and proceeded to battle.

2) Under the commandship of Karna, an extremely terrible battle took place between the Kauravas and Pandavas. Bhima came to the battlefield appearing like the rising pristine Sun on an elephant that was like the Udayadri mountain.

**Note:** Udayadri mountain – mountain/hill on the eastern side behind which the Sun rises.

3) Kshemadhoorti approached Bhima as the latter was hurting all the Kings. He killed Bhima's elephant. Facing that King who had swelled with pride over his strength, Bhima immediately dispatched him to the abode of Yama.

4) Having killed him, Maruti cut off the heads of the young fighters in the enemy camp. He put the enemy army into great turmoil, just as a lion does to a pack of jackals.

5) When that army was in such a tumultuous situation, Ashwathama climbed his chariot and faced Bhima. The battle between them was unprecedented, having never taken place between any two warriors before. It was terrifying and amazing.

6) As soon as they witnessed this battle, the Devas, Gandharvas and Munis spoke – “We have never seen such a great battle before. Neither will such a duel take place in future. All other battles are not equal to even one sixteenth of this one”.

7) “Such wealth of knowledge and strength is not present in anyone apart from Vayu and Shiva. Where else can these two get together? The strength of knowledge and prowess – both these have complete presence in these two”.

8) Even as the Devas spoke thus, Bhima and Ashwathama, the best amongst men and excellent fighters, filled all directions and the sky with their arrows. The other great warriors in that battlefield became frightened seeing this.

9) When Bhima cut off Ashwathama's bow, he rained many great astras at Bhima. The son of Vayu, being a powerful one himself, did not get perturbed and extinguished them with great astras of his own.

10) Once again, the two of them fought each other with arrows in the most amazing manner. Ashwathama then, being hurt badly by Bhima's arrows, fell deeply unconscious.

11) As Ashwathama departed from there after being unconscious, Bhimasena, who was only mildly tired, immediately recovered from battle fatigue and picked up his bow. Letting out a leonine roar that echoed from all directions, he proceeded to battle the elephant army.

12) When Bhimasena was destroying the elephants, Duryodhana went against Yudhishtira in battle. The two Kings fought against each other for a long time.

13) Yudhishtira quickly ensured Duryodhana was left chariot-less. Duryodhana then picked up a big mace. Bhima picked up his own mace and went after him.

14) Seeing Bhima, Krupa made Duryodhana climb his chariot and left from there. Thereafter Karna and Nakula started fighting forcefully with arrows.

15) Karna rendered Nakula chariot-less and, when the latter started running away, chased him speedily and jabbed at his neck with his bow.

16) Berating him with acerbic words, Karna let go off Nakula out of respect for his promise to Kunti, and went against others.

17) The terrifying fighter Satyaki faced Vinda and Anuvinda. He started raining them with numerous excellent arrows. An intense battle took place between him and the two of them.

**Note:** These two, named Vinda and Anuvinda, were the Kings of Kekaya country.

18) Being stopped by the two of them, Satyaki quickly decapitated Anuvinda. After that Vinda fought against him. In that excellent battle, the two of them destroyed each other's chariots.

19) Later those two experts in warfare held swords and shields in their hands and started fighting, like hawks in the sky. Destroying each other's shields they held excellent swords in their hands and rushed simultaneously at each other.

20) Satyaki then, with his hands, caused the head of Vinda that was (decorated) with ear-rings to fly in battle (i.e. decapitated him). Having killed the two of them, he was greatly worshipped by his folks and he proceeded further, causing tremors amongst the enemies.

21) Dhrishtadyumna saw Krupa approaching him and realized that he could hurt him with his *taposhakti* and took refuge in Bhima.

22) Arjuna went against Karna who was slaughtering the soldiers from all sides. He swiftly rendered Karna chariot-less, who then withdrew his army.

23) Karna, having been defeated by Arjuna, held Duryodhana's hand and said – "Arjuna defeated me when my mind was elsewhere".

24) "Parashurama has given me the chariot and divine indestructible bows that I need. However I do not have a charioteer like Krishna. If Shalya becomes my charioteer then I can kill your enemy".

25) When Karna spoke thus, Duryodhana requested Shalya to assume the charioteer-ship of Karna. Shalya acted as if he was angry. Duryodhana calmed him down, describing the greatness of charioteers over those who ride them.

26) "Only he who is better in intellect, strength, knowledge and courage than a rider should become the charioteer. Just like Krishna is to Arjuna and just as Brahma was to Shiva when the latter went to destroy Tripura".

27) Shalya acted as if he was convinced with those and other words (of Duryodhana) and became the charioteer of Karna. Along with him, Karna placed his army in a vyuha.

28) While on the way to battle, Karna boasted out of pride and said – "I shall become pleased with anyone who shows me Arjuna and shall grant him unlimited wealth".

29) When Karna said thus, Shalya ridiculed him and said – “The Nivatakavachas have been killed by Arjuna. The Khandava was burnt (by him). Which human can win against such a person? All of you have seen him during the Uttara-gograhana also”.

**Note:** At the end of the thirteenth year of exile, Arjuna went with Uttara and rescued the cows of Virata, when the Kauravas had captured the cows on the northern side of Virata (Uttara-gograhana). At that time, he had single handedly defeated Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Krupa, Duryodhana and the rest.

30) “Like crows and jackals against *Hamsa* and Lions, do not go against Arjuna in battle. Do not get killed by him and reach Yamaloka” – when Shalya said thus Karna started incessantly berating the people of Madra country.

31) Shalya then replied saying every country has people who are low, average and excellent in nature. Keeping Arjuna’s well being in mind, he started charioteering Karna.

32) After that, Karna, being seated in the chariot driven by Shalya, reached the Pandava army and started hurting them from all sides with his arrows. Duryodhana, Krupa and the others and Ashwathama, that excellent knower of great astras, protected Karna in that battle.

33) The Pandava army, well protected by Bhima, Dhrishtadyumna and Satyaki, fought against Karna, showering him with arrows. Destroying that army with excellent arrows, Karna started hurting Yudhishtira badly with sharp arrows.

34) Karna quickly rendered Dharmaraja chariot-less and stuck his bow in his neck. He spoke cruel words against him in a loud voice. Seeing this, Bhima immediately caused Duryodhana to lose his chariot and also disarmed him. He started tormenting Duryodhana greatly.

35-36) Seeing Duryodhana in danger of losing his life, Shalya showed him to Karna and said – “For whom are you fighting this war? That person for whom you and your army exist is getting ready to go to Yama’s abode. Protect him immediately from Bhima’s torment. What is the purpose of such useless hurting of Yudhishtira?”. Listening to his words, Karna left Dharmaraja and rushed to protect the King.

37-38) As soon as he saw Karna, Bhima came against him like he was going to burn him in anger. Possessing immense radiance, Bhima sent Dhrishtadyumna and Satyaki to protect Yudhishtira. When he rushed towards Karna, he appeared like Narasimha who swallows Shiva, after the latter has caused the destruction of the entire world during Pralaya. The Earth shook vigorously due to his speed and the enemy soldiers lost direction and ran away.

39) When he was hit by a cluster of arrows from Karna, Bhimasena picked up an arrow that was as hard as a diamond and released it against him. Hit by that arrow, Karna fell down like a corpse. Bhima picked up a sword and went towards Karna on foot.

40) It was Bhima’s vow that he would cut off the tongue of the person who condemned Sri Hari, even if it was done indirectly. Therefore, he went towards Karna to cut his tongue.

41) Noticing Bhima approaching, Shalya stopped him with relevant justification and said – “Do not cause the vow of the son of Indra to go waste. Therefore O Bhima! Do not cut Karna’s tongue”.

**Note:** Sri Vadiraja Tirtha explains that cutting the tongue of a Kshatriya like Karna would be equivalent to killing him since his self-pride would be destroyed.

42) Saying thus, Shalya drove off Karna, in front of everyone, away from Bhima to a distance.

43) Having defeated Karna, Bhimasena started scattering away the Kaurava army that included Duryodhana and Ashwathama.

44) Bhima had by then quickly destroyed three akshouhinis. At the same time, Ashwathama tore into the Pandava army.

45) Ashwathama destroyed the Pandava army and rendered Dharmaraja chariot-less. Facing Dhrishtadyumna, Nakula-Sahadeva, Satyaki and the sons of Draupadi, he quickly destroyed all their chariots and made them weapon-less.

46-47) Ashwathama started filling the sky with arrows even as Yudhishtira and the others, their ego damaged, started retreating. Dharmaraja asked him – “Why are you, one is practicing *Paradharma*, causing pain to those of us Kshatriyas who are engaged in *Swadharma*? Do not harm us in this way”. When Dharmaraja spoke thus, Ashwathama laughed loudly and proceeded to where Sri Achyuta and Arjuna were present.

48) Once there, even as Arjuna, the son of Indra and great hero, was fighting the Samshaptakas, Ashwathama held up his arrow-wielding shoulders that were like a great snake and invited him to battle.

49) Arjuna, who was fighting the group of war-mongering Samshaptakas, asked Sri Krishna what his duty was when Ashwathama invited him. Sri Krishna drove the horses towards Ashwathama.

**Note:** Arjuna was put in a quandary when two sets of people desired to engage him in battle. He was fighting the Samshaptakas already when Ashwathama invited him. Hence he took refuge in the wisdom of Sri Krishna.

50) Arjuna and Ashwathama, the chief amongst knowers of astras, immensely powerful and ones who swayed with pride, caused darkness in all directions with their arrows in that battle.

51) Ashwathama then rained such a shower of arrows that they came out relentlessly from the chariot, hairs of the horses, his own hair strands, flag and the bow. He then tied Arjuna in a cage of arrows.

**Note:** Ashwathama was firing so many arrows that it appeared, to onlookers, as if arrows were emanating from the chariot, hair of the horses and the hairs on Ashwathama’s body.

52) When Arjuna was tied up thus, Sri Krishna, one who cannot be comprehended, advised him. He also gave him a hug that increased his strength. Arjuna came out of it and started executing great astras.

53) Ashwathama relieved those astras with excellent astras of his own and cut off the string of the Gandiva. He showered many arrows too at Arjuna. Immediately, a new string appeared on the Gandiva and Arjuna tied the same.

54) After that, an angry Arjuna caused the head of Ashwathama's charioteer to fly by aiming a sharp arrow at him. Ashwathama then started charioteering his own vehicle.

55) Releasing arrows, while simultaneously riding the vehicle, Ashwathama once again tied up Arjuna with a cluster of arrows.

56) Sri Krishna once again hugged Arjuna and gave him strength that could destroy enemies. Arjuna came out of that entrapment and picked up his bow and arrows.

57) Arjuna, the destroyer of enemies, once again rained arrows on Ashwathama. In turn, Ashwathama once again cut off Gandiva's string. Arjuna tied it back again and cut off the ropes that were holding Ashwathama's horses.

58) Without the ropes (to contain), Ashwathama's horses ran away afar being tormented by Arjuna's arrows. Ashwathama brought them under control again and thought to himself – "It is not possible to go more than this against Arjuna".

59-60) "Sri Krishna is his charioteer. Hanuman sits in his mast. His bow is Gandiva. His quivers never get exhausted. Similarly his horses cannot be killed and his chariot cannot be destroyed. Therefore, although capable, I shall not proceed against Arjuna (any further) now".

61) Thinking thus, Ashwathama entered the Pandava formation. The King of Pandya came to face him. An amazing great battle took place between them. Both of them showered terrible clusters of arrows.

62) Ashwathama, in one eighth of the day, released arrows that were carried over eight carriages each driven by eight oxen.

**Note:** Ashwathama was so furious in war on that day that he exhausted arrows that had been carried in eight carriages, each of which were pulled by eight oxen. And he exhausted all these arrows in just one eighth of the day!

63) After that, Ashwathama, rendering him chariot-less, broke his bow and cut off his head that was resplendent with a crown and ear-rings.

64) Ashwathama started disintegrating the Pandava army with his arrows. Arjuna then killed one of the Kings of Magadha country by name Dandadhara.

65) Watching his army being chased away by Ashwathama, Dhrishtadyumna came there hurriedly. Ashwathama said to him – "I shall kill you in battle today for you are a great sinner, having killed the Guru".

66) When he said thus, Dhrishtadyumna showed him his excellent sword and said – "This sword which killed your father shall answer you".

67) Replying thus, Dhrishtadyumna picked up his bow and showered many arrows. An hair-raising duel took place between them on equal terms.

68-69) Ashwathama quickly rendered Dhrishtadyumna chariot-less and weapon-less. He shot many arrows at Dhrishtadyumna, wanting to kill him, but they did not even cut his skin. Ashwathama picked up a sword and pounced on him. Even with the sword and other weapons, his skin did not suffer any wounds. He then dragged him on to the ground and started pulling him with his bow.

70) Seeing Dhrishtadyumna being pulled in that manner, Partha and Bhima, impelled by Sri Krishna, started hitting him (Ashwathama) from both sides.

71) Being hit by the two of them with arrows that were hard as diamonds, Ashwathama let go off Dhrishtadyumna and climbed his chariot again.

72) Ashwathama proceeded elsewhere from there. Dhrishtadyumna too climbed another chariot and, lifting his bow, went against Krutavarma.

73) The duel between Dhrishtadyumna and Krutavarma was amazing to watch. In that fight, Dhrishtadyumna, without much exertion, rendered Krutavarma weapon-less and chariot-less. Krupa took Krutavarma elsewhere from there.

74) Thereafter Duryodhana fought against Nakula and Sahadeva from his chariot. An amazing and terrifying battle took place between them. Without much effort, Duryodhana destroyed the chariots of those two.

75) King Yudhishtira then himself faced Duryodhana, who destroyed his horses, charioteer and flags in battle.

76) The brave Bhimasena faced Karna, who returned by then, and proceeded further. Right in front of him (Karna) Bhima rendered Duryodhana chariot-less.

77) Bhima stopped Karna with his arrows and cut the head of his son Sushena, who fell down on the Earth near his father. Similarly, Satyasena was also killed by him.

78) In the battle at night (on the 14th day) two brothers of Karna were similarly killed by Bhima in front of him. Seeing his son being killed, Karna became furious and, leaving Bhima, went on to destroy the (Pandava) army. He went against Dharmaraja, who was seated on another chariot that had excellent horses.

79) Satyaki, Dhrishtadyumna and the sons of Draupadi, along with the Panchala army, stopped Karna. He destroyed all of their chariots and faced Yudhishtira, who was with Nakula and Sahadeva.

80) Karna killed Yudhishtira's horses in battle. He rendered Nakula and Sahadeva weapon-less. When the three of them came together in a single chariot, he hurt them with his arrows and cruel words.

81-82) In order to get Yudhishtira released, Bhima destroyed Duryodhana's chariot and hurt him badly with many sharp arrows at his vital parts. Shalya then pointed him (Duryodhana) out to Karna, who let off Dharmaraja and went there. When Karna proceeded thus to protect Duryodhana, Yudhishtira quietly went back to his camp and slept off.

83) Ashwathama and Krupa too moved towards Duryodhana. Bhima faced Ashwathama and Karna. Duryodhana, who had been hit by the arrows coming out of Bhima's shoulders, was taken into his chariot by Krupa.

84) When Duryodhana was driven away by Krupa, both Karna and Ashwathama, who were hurt by the cluster of arrows from Bhima, left him and proceeded further, destroying the Panchala army with their flood of arrows.

85) Arjuna then, not seeing King Yudhishtira in the battlefield, being encouraged by Sri Krishna, started towards the camp. Dhrishtadyumna, seeing his army being destroyed by Karna, started troubling the Kauravas.

86) Ashwathama stopped Arjuna, the bearer of Hanuman in his flag, as the latter came forward. Dhrishtadyumna stopped Dushasana.

87) The two *Atirathas* Dushasana and Dhrishtadyumna started raining arrows on each other, causing darkness (in the sky).

88) Dushasana stunned Dhrishtadyumna in that battle. In spite of trying very hard, Dhrishtadyumna's efforts did not succeed and he ended up being rendered weapon-less.

89) Then the most terrible battle took place between Arjuna and Ashwathama. In that battle too, Ashwathama arrested Arjuna through a cage of arrows and cut the string of the Gandiva.

90) Arjuna then, with his strength enhanced by Sri Krishna, killed Ashwathama's charioteer and cut off the ropes of his horses. He chased him away with his arrows.

**Note:** Sri Krishna once again blessed Arjuna that caused his strength to increase. This allowed him to defeat Ashwathama.

91) When Partha proceeded further after winning against the son of his Guru, Karna started chasing away the army of the Pandavas with his arrows. Duryodhana too followed him.

92) Seeing Karna approaching, and chasing away his army, Dhrishtadyumna picked up another bow and faced him.

93) The two of them fought a great battle on equal terms for a long time relentlessly. At the same time, the brave Satyaki stopped Duryodhana.

94) Stopped by him, Duryodhana killed Satyaki's horses and broke Dhrishtadyumna's bow.

95) In the middle of this, Karna killed Dhrishtadyumna's horses and brought them down. As soon as Satyaki and Dhrishtadyumna lost their chariots, the Pandava army ran away.

96) Noticing his army being destroyed in many ways, Bhimasena, one with a lion on his mast, let out a roar that shook the Earth and took on the army of the Kaurava King.

97) Because of Vrikodara's roar, and due to his arrows, the Kuru army was destroyed and it ran away in all directions. Duryodhana lost his chariot and weapons to Bhimasena in battle.

98) Seeing this, the Pandava army returned to battle with an unstoppable force. Due to this, the Kaurava army lost and ran away farther and more.

99) Seeing the army of Duryodhana running away after getting hit by the Panchalas who had taken refuge in Bhima, Karna started burning in anger.

100) Karna picked up an unassailable astra by name Bhargava whose propitiating Devata was Sri Parashurama. It was an astra that could destroy all other astras and had no counter-astra.

101) Karna released that potent astra against the army where Bhima and others were present. Due to Sri Parashurama's grace Bhima was spared by that astra.

102-107) Some of them ran from it. Few others reached the abode of Yama. That astra would not kill anyone who ran away from it. Dhrishtadyumna and the other Panchalas, the sons of Draupadi, Satyaki and others survived as they ran from it. Arjuna too saw the astra approaching and, knowing that it did not have a counter, did not face it and requested Sri Krishna – "I shall leave elsewhere leaving Karna. Otherwise one cannot survive against this astra". When he spoke thus, Sri Krishna, the doer of all activities, ensured he got away from Karna and took him to Bhima through another route. There, Arjuna requested Bhima – "Please proceed to check upon Yudhishtira. Get his news and come back. The remaining Samshaptakas are inviting me. Therefore I shall proceed in battle against them".

108) When Arjuna spoke thus, Bhima, who knew his own strength that none else could comprehend, told him – "I alone shall face and battle the Samshaptakas, Karna the son of the charioteer and the Kauravas. You approach the King".

109) "I shall never go from here quitting battle. No one should be able to ridicule me saying I was scared of battle" – when Bhima spoke thus, the omnipotent Sri Krishna praised his most dear one with great affection.

110) Sri Krishna went to Yudhishtira's camp in order to see him, along with Arjuna. Dharmaraja saw them and, assuming Karna was dead, started praising them.

111) Arjuna bowed down to him and said – "I will kill Karna soon". When he said thus, Dharmaraja condemned Arjuna and said – "Hand over the Gandiva to Sri Krishna. He shall kill Radheya. There is no doubt about this".

112) "Or if you quit the war, Bhima will himself fell him down. Kunti giving birth to you was a waste. You are a *shanda*. You make false vows".

113) "I on the other hand am alive due to the bravery of Bhima, after I was subject to torment by Karna" – when the elder brother spoke thus, Arjuna pulled out an excellent sword from his sheath.



114) The omniscient Sri Krishna asked him – “What is this?”. Arjuna replied – “It is my solemn vow that I shall slay him who asks me to hand over my Gandiva to another person. Therefore, I shall kill him now”. Sri Krishna then said.

115) “Truthful words are indeed beneficial. However, it is very difficult to ascertain what is truth. That which does good to the noble is alone the truth!”

116) “Following the path of Dharma is beneficial indeed. However, knowing what is Dharma is difficult. That which leads to protection of the noble is Dharma. This is certain”.

117) “A brahmana by name Kaushika once revealed to dacoits the place where villagers were hiding. Due to this he reached Naraka”.

**Note:** Once a few villagers were being chased by dacoits to loot their wealth. The innocent villagers hid in the ashrama of Kaushika. When the dacoits asked him, Kaushika, having a faulty understanding of Satya, revealed their place of hiding. The dacoits killed the innocent people. This led to great sin being accumulated by Kaushika and he consequently reached Naraka after death.

118) “Once a hunter killed a deer in order to feed his parents and obtained Swarga due to this. That deer was actually an Asura that was performing tapas to cause harm to the world. Hence his state”.

**Note:** Although the hunter killed a deer and undertook violence, it caused benefit to his aged parents. Not only that, the deer was actually an Asura in disguise and the hunter indirectly rid the world of an evil. Hence he obtained Swarga.

119) “Therefore, know that that which causes the sustenance of the noble alone is Dharma. Therefore, do not kill the King. Address him in singular and thereby fulfill your vow”.

**Note:** According to Shastra, disrespecting an elder is equivalent to killing them. And calling an elderly person using the singular is a great disrespect. Hence Sri Krishna’s advice.

120-121) When Sri Krishna advised thus, Arjuna angrily berated Dharmaraja with many words saying – “You are cruel, ingrate and without any valour. You always speak in vain. We do not have any joy due to you. You have no right to condemn me. Only Bhima, who is our refuge, can condemn me. Even now he is out there fighting the brave warriors. You can only speak ill of others”. Berating him with these and more words, Arjuna withdrew his sword once again, this time in order to kill himself.

122) When Sri Krishna asked him again, Arjuna conveyed his decision. Hearing that, Sri Janardana scolded him and said again.

**Note:** Arjuna had, in the fit of anger, berated his elder brother. But the fact that he had transgressed Dharma by abusing his father-like older brother caused him great distress, and he decided to commit suicide.

123) “Causing harm to one’s own body knowingly is a route to great sin. Isn’t one’s body the instrument to achieve Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha?”

124) “Therefore do not forsake your body. But you do praise yourself. Addressing Gurus and elders in singular is killing. Praising oneself is suicide”.

125) When Sri Krishna said thus, Arjuna greatly praised himself out of pride.

126) Guru-ninda and self-praise can never be instruments for achieving Dharma. Still, Sri Krishna brought to light the mindset of Arjuna in that manner. Sowing the seeds of modesty in him, he relieved the ego that was growing.

127) Sri Krishna got all of that done through Arjuna in order to nicely inculcate the lesson that he was unaware of the greater Dharma and that Sri Krishna was his resort, and also to remove all defects in him.

128) The King (Yudhishtira), being unaware of all of this, got angry and said – “Let Bhima become the King. You become the prince. Kill me. Or I, being useless, shall proceed to the forest”. Saying thus, he got up from his bed.

129) Sri Krishna, the leader of the world, stopped him and explained all the reasons and calmed him. Arjuna fell at the feet of Dharmaraja and asked forgiveness. Dharmaraja became very pleased.

130) The two brothers, being relieved from great danger due to the grace of Sri Krishna, became very pleased. They praised the lord of the Universe profusely and said – “O Hari! Who other than you is our biggest well-wisher?”

131) Arjuna later bowed down to his elder brother and was hugged by him out of affection. Being complimented with his blessings, he proceeded for battle.

132) When Arjuna expressed doubts over his ability to win against Karna and started to sweat, Sri Hari reminded him of his previous accomplishments and increased the Avesha of Nara in him. With this, Arjuna’s confidence became firm.

133) Bhimasena by then was chasing away the enemy army. He killed all those brave warriors who came for battle. And he did all of this while having a jovial chat with his charioteer (Vishoka).

134) Shakuni then went to fight against Bhimasena, along with his army and a few brothers of Duryodhana. Bhima quickly rendered him chariot-less and weapon-less and brought him down on the ground, hitting him with his arrows.

135) Since it was his own arrangement in the hall of dice that Shakuni was Sahadeva’s portion, Bhima did not kill him. Duryodhana carried away Shakuni, who was unconscious with only his breath remaining, on his chariot.

136) Ten brothers of Duryodhana ran away speedily from Bhimasena in that battle. Seeing Sri Krishna and Arjuna then, and getting to know about the well-being of Dharmaraja, he became pleased.

137) Dushasana picked up a bow and attacked Bhimasena, who was killing warriors from the enemy side and chasing away their army. Bhima attacked him like a lion.

138) Even as Dushasana kept on uttering cruel words, Bhimasena quickly rendered him chariot-less and brought him down on the ground after seizing him. With a blow of his mace, he cracked his chest.

139) Pressing his neck with his foot, he sat on his abdomen and, seething with anger, stared at his face and drew out his great sky-hued sword from its sheath and knifed his chest with it.

140) Creating a big pool of blood in his chest, he drank the blood as he liked, just as a thirsty person drinks Amruta. Even as Dushasana's eyes started to roll, Bhima reminded him of the sinful things he had done in the past.

141) He reminded Dushasana again and again all the arrow-like sharp words he had spoken earlier. Knowing very well human blood to be unfit for consumption, Bhima ensured that the blood did not go beyond his teeth.

142) Still, in order to create fear amongst the enemies, he repeatedly appeared to taste the blood and drink it. Remembering Sri Narasimha, the Bhagavan and Lord of all, he realized the Manyu Sukta with great devotion.

**Note:** Bhimasena had realization of the Manyu Sukta as he killed Dushasana and offered it as a sacrifice at the feet of Lord Narasimha.

143) The sukta starting with 'yaste manyo' has Narasimha as its Devata. Bhima saw Narasimha himself while offering the blood as *Somarasa* in that battle which was like a *Yajna*. Thinking of the enemy's chest as *Soma* he chanted the Sama mantra started with '*Iha*' and crushed it with the mace.

144) Bhimasena, the foremost amongst men, fulfilled his vow in front of the whole world and said – "All those women who had husbands earlier are now without husbands. But the one who was called as being husband-less is now with her husband".

**Note:** Bhima was referring to the mocking of Draupadi during the game of dice by Duryodhana, Dushasana and Karna who had addressed her as being without any husband.

145) "See the amazing power of Sri Hari, the best amongst all. He who was known as a potent seed earlier has now become an impotent seed. He is being held by me. If there is any man amidst you, he can come here and get him released".

**Note:** Dushasana and the others had mocked the Pandavas during the game of dice calling them 'shanda-tila' or oil-seeds without potency. Hence this retort by Bhima.

146) Speaking thus, Bhimasena started drinking his blood just as the best amongst Devatas drank Amruta. Later, even as he was still breathing, Bhima let go off him and started going around the enemies, holding no weapons, letting out a leonine roar and started dancing.

147) "All those who had mocked us earlier calling us 'Ox! Ox!' – we will mock them now by dancing and calling them 'Ox! Ox!'"

**Note:** When the Pandavas were departing the hall of dice, the Kauravas had mocked their walk animatedly and had called them Oxen. Hence this retort by Bhima.

148) Speaking thus, Bhimasena danced around the enemies and roaringly called them to battle. At that moment, Karna, Ashwathama, Duryodhana and the others did not even dare to look at him.

149) Out of fear, Karna's bow slipped from his hands. He closed both his eyes. When repeatedly called out by the King of Madra (Shalya) he regained sense and somehow survived as he was destined to be Arjuna's share (of victims).

150) Ashwathama left Bhima's vicinity and went afar. Bhimasena said – "I have performed *Somapana* in the battlefield today. Now, Duryodhana must be killed in order to please Sri Hari".

151) As soon as he declared thus, he left the dead Dushasana and rushed angrily against the enemy Duryodhana. Seeing the terrifying warrior Bhima approach him, a scared Duryodhana ran away from there.

152) Apart from Sri Krishna and Arjuna, both the armies had left Bhima and ran away from the field out of fear. The battlefield was empty for one muhurtha. Bhima then danced out of joy with tiger like footsteps.

153) Seeing Bhima resolving, like a tiger, to kill enemies like animals and dance (after that), Sri Krishna laughed with joy. Arjuna too laughed. With great joy, both of them praised Bhima.

154) Due to Bhimasena, the battlefield became empty for a muhurtha. After that the brothers of Duryodhana faced the great warrior Bhima, showering him with a flood of arrows.

155) Using excellent arrows, Maruti cut off their heads and quickly dispatched them to the abode of Yama. On that day, twenty Kauravas were killed by Bhima. The remaining ones ran away.

156) When Bhima was thus accomplishing tasks impossible for others to succeed in, the enemy camp got very frightened. Karna too closed his eyes out of fear. Vrushasena, Karna's son, then went against Nakula.

157) Nakula halted Vrushasena with a flood of arrows, who in turn rendered him chariot-less. Nakula then picked up a sword and shield and killed three thousand followers (soldiers) of Vrushasena.

158) Vrushasena cut off his shield and also showered many arrows against Bhima and Arjuna. With a single arrow, and in one go, Arjuna then cut off the neck, arms and thighs of Vrushasena.

159) When his son was killed by Arjuna, Karna rushed against him. An amazing and most terrifying duel took place between those two foremost knowers of all astras.

160) Devatas and Asuras took sides between them. Other *Jeevas* too gathered in the skies. A big dispute arose between them. Shiva then requested Brahma.

161) “For the Suras and Asuras, Bhima and Duryodhana are the refuge. Arjuna and Karna are, in turn, dear to these two and equal to their own lives. Hence, the Suras and Asuras are getting into a fight over them”

**Note:** Bhima, being an Avatara of Mukhyaprana, was the best amongst Devatas and Duryodhana, being an Avatara of Kali, was the refuge of the Asuras.

162) “This could cause a great calamity to the world. Therefore, let there be an equal fight between these two” – when Shiva said thus, Brahma replied – “Where there is Krishna, there is victory”.

163) “Sri Krishna’s decision never goes wrong. It is his wish to grant victory to Arjuna”. Indra then said – “Let Arjuna emerge victorious. Also, may Karna be slain”. He then bowed down to Brahma, who said – “May it be so”. Brahma then addressed the Asuras and Devatas.

164) “Neither for Karna-Arjuna, nor for Bhima-Duryodhana should you fight amongst yourselves anywhere. You should only watch their battle” – when Brahma said thus, all of them calmed down and started watching their duel.

165) Both Karna and Arjuna started showering great many weapons and powerful astras. Bhima, who was in his chariot, started protecting Arjuna. Satyaki, Dhrishtadyumna and the rest surrounded Arjuna and stood there powerfully, letting out loud roars.

166) Duryodhana, Ashwathama and others surrounded Karna in order to protect him. A battle ensued then. In that duel, Karna exceeded Arjuna and started hurting him with clusters of arrows. Bhimasena then picked up a mace out of anger and said.

167) “I shall kill Karna with my mace. Else, you show your valour and kill him immediately” – when Bhima spoke thus, Sri Krishna advised him in order to ensure the Avesha of Nara inside him manifested further.

168) Arjuna then became manifest with increased strength and rendered Duryodhana, Ashwathama, Krupa and Krutavarma chariot-less with his arrows. The destroyer of enemies hurt them with arrows that had excellent feathers.

169) All of them started watching that amazing duel from a distance. Seeing the superhuman achievement of Arjuna there, the son of Guru Drona held Duryodhana by his hand and said.

170) “You have seen Bhima’s strength and also Arjuna’s power. You have also seen how we lost to them. Enough of enmity with them. Get together and rule the Kingdom. I am with you”.

171) “If I stop him, Arjuna will halt the battle. Sri Krishna never likes enmity. Bhima is one who always follows Sri Krishna’s words. Yudhisthira is calm minded. The twins are also similar”.

172) “I have spoken thus for your well being. Understand it. I am not saying all of this out of fear. I cannot be killed in any way. My maternal uncle (Krupa) too is likewise. (Therefore) You need not doubt my words”.

173) When Ashwathama said thus, Duryodhana replied – “Bhima has just drunk Dushasana’s blood. He has danced like a tiger. Therefore, there can never be a truce with him in any way”.

174) When he spoke thus, the son of Drona became silent. Karna and Arjuna filled the entire sky with their shower of great astras, leaving no gaps.

175) With the intention of killing each other, they fired the Agneyastra, Varunastra, Aindrastra and other weapons at each other. In the end, they fired the Brahmastra too at each other and roared. They shone (in front of everyone) by countering each other’s astras.

176) Arjuna’s strength slowly started to increase in effect. Unable to fight him, Karna released an excellent arrow at him that had the Brahmastra and included a serpent weapon.

**Note:** That serpent-arrow was none other than a *sarpa* named Ashwasena that had escaped the fire when Arjuna had burnt the Khandava forest, and was keen on taking revenge. So it had entered the quiver of Karna waiting for a suitable occasion.

177) Sri Krishna pressed the chariot with his feet and rendered the astra futile. That weapon destroyed the divine crown of the son of Indra. The *naga* which was in the arrow returned towards Karna.

178-180) When Arjuna’s chariot was sunk into the Earth by five inches, the arrow that was aimed at his forehead destroyed Arjuna’s crown. When it was traveling (towards Karna) in the sky, Arjuna, being instructed by Sri Krishna, killed that enemy who was the son of Takshaka with arrows and brought him down on the Earth, even as Karna was watching. Karna had learnt how to speedily execute a Brahmastra from Sri Parashurama.

**Note:** That snake was the son of Takshaka and was called Ashwasena. When Arjuna had burnt the Khandava forest, Ashwasena had managed to survive and, since then, was seeking revenge on Arjuna. For this purpose, he had entered the quiver of Karna as an arrow. Due to Sri Krishna’s grace, Arjuna escaped from it and also managed to kill the snake in turn.

181) When Karna started battling Arjuna again with great astras, the Earth below started to swallow the wheel of his chariot. At the same time, due to the curse of Sri Parashurama, he could not remember any divine astras.

**Note:** Karna had once been cursed by a Brahmana that the wheel of his chariot would sink in battle at a crucial time. Sri Parashurama had cursed him to forget divine astras at a critical juncture in war as he had lied to him about being a Brahmana.

182) Karna, desiring to lift the wheel of the chariot, requested Arjuna to give him time for the same. Sri Krishna said – “Not possible”. Arjuna then picked up the most terrible Anjalika astra that Shiva had given him.

183) Combining that astra with the *Punya* of his accumulated *Satya* and *Dharma*, Arjuna released that arrow for killing Karna. He cut off Karna’s head with that weapon even as Karna was readying to release an arrow.

**Note:** In order to ensure that the arrow did achieve the desired result of killing Karna, Arjuna poured the entire punya accumulated by him over the years through Satya and Dharma.

184) On the second day and during the second half of the day, the son of Indra cut off the head of the son of Surya. That (head) flew up into the sky with speed and fell down.

**Note:** It was the second day of Karna's commandership and the 17th day of the war.

185) When Karna was (thus) killed, Duryodhana became sunken faced and he withdrew his army and went away along with Shalya. Dharmaraja heard the news of Karna's killing and rushed there and saw his body.

186) He praised Sri Krishna, Arjuna and Bhima profusely. Other great battle heroes too praised them. They returned to their camps along with Sri Krishna and, remaining subservient to him always, rejoiced there happily.

|| End of chapter 27, known as 'Karna Vadha', from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||