

|| Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya ||

- 1) When the night passed by and it turned morning, Duryodhana appointed Shalya as the commander-in-chief after taking Ashwathama's permission and proceeded to battle.
- 2) The Pandavas got ready for war with great enthusiasm and proceeded to battle. A great battle took place then between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.
- 3-5) Bhimasena was at the forefront of the Pandava formation. King Yudhishthira was in the middle and Arjuna, wielding the Gandiva and protected by Sri Krishna, was at the back. The twins protected the wheels of the King while Dhrishtadyumna and Satyaki were on either side of Dharmaraja. At the head of the Kaurava formation stood the Guru's son Ashwathama. Shalya stood in the middle and Duryodhana along with his brothers was at the back. Shakuni and his son Ulooka were the protectors of Shalya's chariot wheels while Krupa and Krutavarma stood on either side of him.
- 6) A big war took place between Bhima and Ashwathama then. Similarly, a terrifying battle took place between the King (Yudhishtira) and Shalya.
- 7) Without much of an effort, Bhima managed to easily render Ashwathama chariot-less with his arrows. Similarly, Shalya rendered the son of Dharma chariot-less.
- 8) Arjuna, the one with the monkey on his mast, faced Shalya at that moment. A great battle, that was amazing and hair-raising, took place between them.
- 9-10) Ashwathama climbed another chariot and went after Bhima. Duryodhana too covered Bhima from all directions with his arrows. Bhima stopped the two of them with a rain of arrows. A terrible superhuman clash took place between Bhima and them.
- 11) Together with Yutusu and the maternal uncles Shikhandi and others, the sons of Draupadi faced the brothers of Duryodhana.
- 12) Sahadeva faced Shakuni while Nakula took on Shakuni's son Ulooka. Dhrishtadyumna faced Krutavarma while Satyaki faced Krupa.
- 13) A small but unique battle took place between (each of) them. Shalya covered all sides of Arjuna with clusters of arrows.
- 14) Arjuna started hitting Shalya, who was shining in battle, with his arrows. A battle that was similar to the duel between Devas and Asuras took place between them and continued for a long time on equal terms.
- 15) After that Shalya picked up a diamond-like arrow and hit Arjuna in his chest. Arjuna fell unconscious.
- 16) Waking up again, Arjuna, the tormentor of enemies, cut off the bow of the clever Shalya in battle.
- 17) Shalya picked up another bow and started firing astras at Arjuna. When he released the Suryastra, Yamastra, Parjanyastra and other weapons, Arjuna nullified all of them with the Indrastra.
- 18) Arjuna became angry and cut off Shalya's bow once again. Shalya then picked up a mace and threw it at Arjuna's chest.

19) Arjuna then became unconscious. The enemies shouted in joy. Regaining his consciousness, Arjuna hit Shalya in his chest. Being weakened all over the body, Shalya leaned against his excellent flag.

20) Shalya recovered and threw an arrow that was like Yama's staff at Arjuna in that fight. That arrow split his chest. Tired, Arjuna leaned against the flag-pole.

21) Arjuna gathered himself and cut the bow of the King of Madra. He then quickly brought down the umbrella, flag and charioteer of Shalya.

22-23) Dharmaraja then climbed another chariot and killed the four horses of Shalya with four excellent arrows. Shalya climbed another chariot and covered all of them with a shower of arrows. He rendered Dharmaraja chariot-less.

24) Shalya, who could win against enemies, killed the horses of Satyaki and Dhrishtadyumna, cut the bows of Nakula and Sahadeva and blew his high-sounding conch.

25) Later, noticing Shalya gathering strength in that battle, the quick-footed Bhimasena halted him with excellent arrows. He quickly destroyed his chariot.

26) When Shalya returned having climbed another chariot, Bhima hurt him deeply in his vital parts with arrows and rendered him chariot-less. When Shalya climbed a third chariot, he destroyed that too.

27) Bhima cut off all weapons that Shalya picked up and caused him great pain by hitting arrows at his vital organs. Shalya then proceeded against Yudhisthira with raised fists.

28-29) Dharmaraja noticed Shalya – who had received wounds in his vital parts due to Bhima, who was without a *kavacha*, who was weaponless, who only barely preserved his breath, and who was approaching him only to die – and climbed another chariot and picked up an unparalleled Shakti weapon in order to kill him.

30-31) The son of Dharma combined that Shakti with other divine weapons and added the merits of his *Satya* and *Dharma* along with it and hurled it speedily at Shalya's chest. His chest having been sheared, the King fell down dead in front of Dharmaraja. Shalya, who was always engaged in Satya and Dharma, became Indra's guest.

**Note:** After his heroic death, Shalya reached Indra loka.

32) After the brave King of Madra was killed, Susharma went against Arjuna with the remaining Samshaptakas. Arjuna killed him.

33) Bhimasena killed the remaining brothers of Duryodhana and destroyed his troops completely.

34-35) After that, Sahadeva killed Ulooka and the most evil Shakuni. Bhima and Arjuna thereafter hurt Ashwathama, Krutavarma and Krupa repeatedly, rendering them chariot-less, and chased them away. They entered into a forest due to great fear.

36) Sanjaya, who was held by Satyaki, was made to be released by the omnipotent Sri Vyasa. Later, Duryodhana faced the Pandavas all by himself.

37) A terrible battle took place between the Pandavas and Duryodhana. With his arrows, Duryodhana caused Arjuna to fall unconscious many times. He also rendered Dharmaraja and the twins chariot-less.

38) Bhimasena then destroyed his chariot. He climbed an elephant and returned to battle again. He once again caused Satyaki, Shikandi, Dhrishtadyumna, the twins and the King to be weaponless.

39) When Bhima felled that elephant, Duryodhana climbed an excellent horse and returned to battle, unperturbed. The destroyer of enemies held a *Prasa* in his hand and moved around the battlefield and attacked Satyaki.

40) Satyaki, being hit by Duryodhana, fell unconscious. The twins too were hit by his *Prasa* and sat down in their chariots. Seeing him rushing towards the son of Dharma, Bhima killed his horse.

41) When Bhima destroyed that weapon called *Prasa*, Duryodhana, who had no vehicle either, picked up a big mace and went away. Having left in that manner, he entered a big pond called *Dvaipayana*.

42) In this way, six akshouhinis of the Kaurava army was destroyed by Bhimasena. Apart from half-akshouhini of the Kalinga army, Arjuna destroyed half of the total army.

**Note:** Bhima destroyed six akshouhinis while Arjuna destroyed five.

43) Out of the total army of eleven akshouhinis, the left over ones were destroyed by the others. Four akshouhinis of the Pandava army was destroyed by Ashwathama.

44) The remainder of the Pandava army was killed by the others. Out of these, Drona, Karna, Bhishma, Duryodhana and Bhagadatta were the main destroyers in that order.

45) When the noble Pandavas obtained victory and were celebrating by letting out roars, Duryodhana started chanting mantras after getting into *Jalastambhana*.

**Note:** *Jalastambhana* is a Yogic technique in which a person can stay inside water for as long as he desires.

46) Those mantras, granted to him by Sage Durvasa, could bring back life into those dead. If Duryodhana chanted those mantras remaining in water for seven days, all those dead (on his side) would come back to life and they could not be killed thereafter.

47) Knowing Duryodhana to possess such knowledge of mantras, the Pandavas started searching for him. From a few fishermen they got to know that he was hiding in the lake.

48) They proceeded towards the *sarovara* under Sri Krishna's leadership. They then saw Duryodhana, who had come out of the water, discussing with Ashwathama, Krupa and Krutavarma. As soon as the Pandavas saw them, they (the three of them) ran away.

49) Duryodhana entered the *sarovara* again. Seeing him, Yudhishtira, under the orders of Sri Krishna, berated him with sharp words and called him to come out.

50) Duryodhana then, provoked (by those words), and like a snake that hisses when hit by a stick, spoke deceitfully – "I shall proceed to the forest for *Tapas*. You can rule the whole world".

51-53) Dharmaraja then replied to him – “When Sri Krishna had come, you had refused to give even a needle’s tip worth of land to us. And now you are wishing to give the whole Earth after having gotten Bhishma, Drona and the others killed. But, we shall not accept it without killing you. Come and be firm in war. Being born in the Kuru clan, it is not worthy of you to have entered water out of fear”.

54) Listening to these and more tough words, an angry Duryodhana came out of the Jalastambhana like a hissing serpent.

55) Duryodhana said – “I am alone. Without a headgear or kavacha. You are many and possess kavacha and headgear”.

56) “In spite of this, if you consider it appropriate to battle me, then I shall fight all of you together or any one of you. I have no fear”.

57) When Duryodhana spoke thus, Dharmaraja, the personification of Dharma, said – “We shall give you kavacha and other accessories. Amongst the five, you may choose any one of us to engage in battle”.

58) “If you kill one of us then you can rule the Kingdom and the other four of us will proceed to a forest. If you get killed by him, we shall rule the entire world. You may choose whichever weapon you desire to win against enemies”.

59) When he said thus, Duryodhana replied – “I shall not engage with the four of you including yourself, for you are weak, or with Arjuna. I shall fight Bhima with a mace. *Gada* is my favorite weapon at all times. I cannot touch any other weapon”.

60) Listening to those words, the brave Vrikodara picked up a gada that was one and a half times heavier than his (Duryodhana’s) and got up, letting out a roar and intending to battle.

61-62) Sri Krishna, the primordial Lord Narayana, then said to Dharmaraja – “You did wrong. If this King Duryodhana stands wielding a mace even the Suras and Asuras cannot win against him. He can certainly kill the four of you including Arjuna. Bhimasena can somehow kill him in battle. There is none equal to Bhima in strength. But Duryodhana is powerful and he is also industrious”.

63-65) Bhima needed to break the thighs of that enemy Duryodhana in order to keep up his vow. However, those knowledgeable stood to call it as Adharma the act of him hitting below the navel. Therefore, in order to remove the stain of worldly condemnation, and to let everyone know that it was Apadharma, Sri Krishna said that Bhima would kill him ‘somehow’. But, in order to also convey that Bhima can kill him with certainty and without any excuses, he also said that Bhima’s strength was unparalleled.

**Note:** In the moola Mahabharata, it appears Sri Krishna makes a case for Bhima in this incident by saying that it was a time of great crisis and hence what was done would pass the test of “Apat Dharma”. Sri Madhwacharya explains here the rationale behind those words of Sri Krishna.

66) Bhima too possessed complete skill in wielding the mace. Duryodhana would put more effort in it. Since Bhima was all-capable, not putting much effort was a positive quality in him than a deficiency.

67-68) Sri Krishna and Vrikodara both knew that keeping one's vow, especially one made against evil, was special Dharma. This was a *Dharma-rahasya* which others did not know. Therefore, in order to clear condemnation from the public, they make it appear like a danger even when they (in reality) do not have any danger.

69) Later Bhima, in order to show the path of Dharma to the whole world, said – “As per my vow, I shall break both of your thighs. Let there be no doubt about this”.

70) When Bhima said thus, Duryodhana proceeded to battle with him. A big fight started to take place. In order to show the world the nature of great souls, Bhima at first fought mildly.

**Note:** It is not wise to start off any fight or argument with full aggression. It rules out any possibility of an alternate solution. To teach such a lesson, Bhima started off mildly.

71) The two of them started showing awe-inspiring moves and variations in that mace-fight. At that time, Balarama came there. He tried to stop them.

72) Even as he tried to stop them, the two of them did not give up on the battle. After that, Balarama, having been accorded respect by Sri Krishna and the others, started watching that duel.

73-74) Bhima and Duryodhana, endowed with knowledge and strength, fought with each other showing different moves of mace-fighting. Then, in order to deceive Bhima, Duryodhana performed a somersault with his head down and legs in the air. Obtaining Sri Krishna's agreement, Bhima at that very moment hit him at the base of his back. It was neither above the navel nor below and still fulfilling his vow. Duryodhana fell down, his thighs having been broken.

75) In order to maintain the rules of Gada-yuddha, and to keep his victory clean, Vrikodara hit him at the center and not below the navel. In keeping with both his vows, he had broken both of his thighs.

**Note:** Bhima had taken a vow to break one thigh of Duryodhana when the latter had shown his thigh to Draupadi in the hall of dice. A little later, when they were moving out of the hall and into the forest, Bhima undertook a second oath to break the other thigh of Duryodhana when he mocked at the Pandavas.

76) Duryodhana had asked, during the game of dice, that Sri Krishna be kept as stake. Bhimasena, as per his vow at that time, crushed Duryodhana's head with his foot. He realized the 'rishabham maa samananam' sukta.

**Note:** Duryodhana had committed the greatest of sins demanding Sri Krishna, the Paramatma, be kept as a stake for a game of dice. Bhima had vowed that he would crush his head for committing this sin. While fulfilling this vow, Bhima also had realization of the 'Rishabha Sukta' of the Rig Veda (Mandala 10 Sukta 166)

77) Bhima, by crushing his head in that manner, took away all the *punya* he had earned and also all of his knowledge. He ensured that all of them would reach Tamas.

78) He reminded him of all the evil things he had done. Reminding him that he had contemplated arresting Sri Krishna, he crushed his head once again with his foot.

**Note:** When Sri Krishna had visited Hastinapura just prior to the war, Duryodhana and the others had hatched a plan to arrest him.

79) Watching Bhima do it again and again, the wielder of the pestle (Balarama) became very angry. He lifted both his arms and shouted that it was not Dharma.

80) Full of anger, and with red eyes, Balarama lifted his pestle and plough and rushed against Bhima. Vrikodara did not flinch.

81) When Bhima stood fearlessly, Sri Krishna stopped Balarama and said – “Duryodhana has been killed by Bhima by following the right Dharma”.

82) “One should not be hit below the navel when moving in circles or when approaching or moving away. But it is not a violation to hit (in such a manner) when one is cheating”.

83) “Vrikodara has undertaken a vow for the right reasons saying ‘I would break your thighs’ in order to teach the message of Dharma to the world. Therefore, Duryodhana has been killed in the path of Dharma only, by Bhimasena who is always adherent to Dharma”.

84) Listening to the words of Sri Krishna, Balarama said that it was deception of Dharma and proceeded to his city (Dwaraka) along with his followers.

85) After Balarama departed, Yudhisthira asked Sri Vasudeva – “Is this Dharma or Adharma?”. Sri Keshava replied.

86) “The most evil ones should never be killed through a literal interpretation of Dharma. Earlier, Devas too had killed their enemies, the Asuras, through deception only”.

87) “Therefore, the sinner Duryodhana has been killed by the way of Adharma itself. There is nothing wrong with this. When Bhishma, Drona and Karna have been killed through deception, what is the defect if the sinner Duryodhana dies in this manner?”

88) “Vrikodara broke his thighs in order to fulfill his vow. That vow made by him was also in accordance with Dharma. Therefore, in the eyes of the world, there has been no transgression of Dharma”.

89) “Those who are unaware of Bhima’s greatness will consider this as (an act of) Apaddharma. Due to his being free from death because of the boon of Shiva, and due to his knowledge of mace-fight and strength, Duryodhana is well known as the one equal to Jarasandha”.

90) Therefore Sri Krishna made it clearly known that Bhima’s act was Dharma indeed. Still, the lord of the world put Dharmaraja in a quandary.

91) Sri Krishna, the best amongst all, did all of that in order that Bhima may get the complete punya from having performed the seva of *bhu-bhara-harana*.

**Note:** The main purpose of Sri Krishna's Avatara was to eliminate the burden of evil from Earth or *bhu-bhara-harana*. In this task, Bhima was the main servitor of Paramatma. Hence Sri Krishna wanted the entire punya arising from this task to go to Vrikodara.

92) Even after Sri Krishna clarified repeatedly to Balarama and the other people that it was Dharma (what Bhima did), Yudhisthira did not give up his doubts and hence he did not obtain complete punya.

**Note:** Doubting the words of Paramatma cost Yudhishtira a lot of punya.

93) Still, Sri Krishna did not ensure all of Dharmaraja's doubts had been cleared. He conveyed the chief Dharma to Balarama and the other people.

94) Sri Krishna will firmly teach Arjuna in future that the killing of Dhritharashtra's son was through Dharma.

95) When Sri Krishna repeatedly insisted that Bhima had taken the route of Dharma in felling the King, the evil Duryodhana condemned Sri Krishna with so much anger that his lips shook.

96) "Pandavas engaged in sin because of you. Therefore it is you alone who are the greatest sinner" – when Duryodhana said thus, Sri Krishna replied – "There is no sinner equal to you".

97) "Since Bhishma and the others followed you who was firm in sin, the sin of killing them would also go to you. There is no sin if a sinner or the followers of sinners are killed".

98) "Neither by nature nor by their activities, the Pandavas do not possess even a little sin. They are the best in character. They believe in me. Who can accuse even an iota of sin in them?"

99) "Since you got even those who were on the path of Dharma to ride the path of sin, and because you yourself always engaged in sin, and because you are by nature most evil, you will obtain the end result that will surpass the terrible fate that even the biggest sinners get".

**Note:** Sri Krishna says here that Duryodhana will attain *Andhantamas* which is the state reserved for the most evil souls.

100) Sri Krishna, who had spoken thus, was asked by Duryodhana – "Who else can get a happy ending such as mine? What is sinful in whatever I did?"

101) "I performed Yajnas; built lakes and wells (performed *ishta-poorta*); stomped the heads of enemies in war; found death even as I was fighting in the battlefield; What more is there?"

102) "I have enjoyed all the pleasures I wanted. I shall obtain an excellent *gati* going forward. The Pandavas, who have experienced sorrow and engaged in a deceitful war, shall only obtain sorrow in future too".

**Note:** *Gati* stands for the world the soul reaches after death. Duryodhana here claims he will attain one of the superior worlds.

103) “There are no more heroes, like the Sun and Moon, nor noble men who are followers of Dharma, on this Earth. There are no jewels (wealth) either. Let the Pandavas experience (rule) such a (barren) Earth”.

104) As soon as Duryodhana spoke thus, the shower of flowers made by Devatas fell there. They did so in order to firm up his belief about his evil doings and ensure he falls in Tamas.

**Note:** Sri Madhwacharya here explains the real reasons behind the *pushpa-vrushti* performed by the Devatas on Duryodhana. He was a Tamasic jeeva who was destined to fall into Andhantamas. If he developed any sort of remorse, his sins would reduce thereby qualifying for a lesser degree of punishment in Andhantamas. Evil souls such as Duryodhana fully deserve the darkest Tamas. Hence, in order to firm up his beliefs in his own evil actions, the Devatas showered flowers on him.

105) How can a special Tamas not be the destiny for the one who boasted about himself, while condemning Sri Vasudeva and his devotees?

106) Sri Krishna got this (shower of flowers) done in order to convey that even when one of the sins are done it leads to greater sorrow. What then to say of someone who did all of them? He then said – “All of what you have done is a waste”.

**Note:** Even if a person just praises himself when sins are committed or if a person condemns devotees of Vishnu or if he condemns Sri Hari himself, deeper sorrow is guaranteed. When Duryodhana has done all of these sins, there is no question about his eventual state, which is nothing but Andhantamas.

107) If a cruel person, an ingrate, or someone who always hates the noble can obtain the punya of Dharma, then it has to be said that darkness can illuminate like Sun!

108) Sri Krishna, who grants the desires of devotees, saying thus repeatedly, conveyed to his devotees that Bhima had definitely killed Duryodhana through the path of Dharma.

109) When Sri Krishna thus established the real nature of Dharma, all the noble people there became convinced in their hearts. All of them concluded with certainty that the sinner King had been killed through the means of Dharma.

110) Dharmaraja, being always concerned about sins, got into a doubt because of the shower of flowers. Due to affection over Duryodhana, Ashwathama, Sanjaya and Balarama claimed his killing to be Adharma.

111) After that, Sri Krishna, together with the Pandavas and the Panchalas who were rejoicing with shouts of victory, left from the battlefield with a smile, being greatly worshipped by Brahma, Shiva, Indra and the other Devatas.

112) Then, after hearing the news of Dhritharashtra’s sorrow from Sanjaya, Yuyutsu went to him as per the directions of Sri Krishna and Yudhisthira. Sri Krishna also went behind him.



113) Sri Krishna consoled Dhritarashtra with words of comfort that were in accordance with Dharmashastras and full of truth and in line with the ways of the world. He then returned to the Pandavas.

114) In order to cause the destruction of those on the side of the Pandavas, who were Avatars of Devas, Sri Krishna proceeded towards the Kaurava camps along with the Pandavas and Satyaki.

**Note:** The time had arrived for ending the Avatars of many Devas who had taken birth and had sided with the Pandavas in the war such as Dhrishtadyumna, sons of Draupadi and others.

115) At the same time, Ashwathama, along with Krupa and the son of Hardika (Krutavarma) went to Duryodhana, who was down with broken thighs. By that time, dogs, jackals and *pisachas* had already started eating his body. He was breathing heavily.

116) Ashwathama, who was immersed with sorrow and mourning, condemned the Pandavas and asked – “O King! What should I do?”. Duryodhana said – “Ensure that the Pandavas are eliminated” and consecrated him with dust.

**Note:** Even under the dire circumstances, Duryodhana did not give up his hatred of the Pandavas. He made Ashwathama his commander and, in the absence of water, poured dust on his head to consecrate.

117) With the unstated desire that the Pandavas must be eliminated and then progeny must be had with his wife and then the world must be ruled by those children, Duryodhana consecrated Ashwathama in that manner. Ashwathama agreed to it and left.

**Note:** It was Duryodhana’s hidden message to Ashwathama to marry his wife after killing the Pandavas and obtain children who could then rule the Kingdom.

118) Out of fear of Sri Krishna, Bhima and Arjuna, Ashwathama sat in a chariot along with Krupa and Krutavarma and entered a dense forest.

119-120) Thinking of Drona’s killing and the end of Duryodhana, Ashwathama could not get sleep. There, he noticed a very powerful owl killing many thousands of crows perched on the banyan tree under which they were sitting. Immediately he said to Krupa and Krutavarma.

121) “Because of this analogy I have been directed by Paramatma. I am leaving now to kill the Pandavas” – saying so he climbed his chariot.

122-123) Even as the two of them stopped him, he refused to listen to them and went towards the (Pandava) camp. The two of them followed him. At the door of the camp, he saw his own self in the form of the terrible Rudra. Sri Krishna had surrounded him (Rudra) with crores of forms. Seeing Sri Krishna, Ashwathama became stunned with fear.

**Note:** Ashwathama was the Avatara of Rudra. So he saw his own form when he noticed Rudra standing at the door.

124) As per the orders of Sri Krishna, Shiva engaged in battle with his own form of Ashwathama. Very swiftly he swallowed all the weapons of Ashwathama.

125-126) The strength of Sri Hari is unfathomable. Even those who commit suicide see it, don't they? Therefore, Shiva, inspired by the strength of Sri Hari, swallowed the weapons of his own other form. Then, Ashwathama performed a *manasa yajna* in which he thought of himself as the sacrificial offering for Vishnu residing in him.

127) Being pleased with that yajna, Shiva, directed by Sri Hari, returned all weapons to his own form of Ashwathama, the son of Drona.

128-129) "As per the orders of Sri Vishnu, the omnipotent, I had guarded the doors of this camp till now. As per his wish, I am now letting you. Similarly, I am giving you weapons so you can kill all the people here".

130) Saying thus, Shiva, the *Vrushabhadhwaja*, gave all the weapons to Ashwathama and disappeared from there. Ashwathama then said to Krupa and Krutavarma.

131) "Whosoever comes out of the camp may be killed by the two of you". Saying thus, Ashwathama, wielding a bow and a sword, entered that camp like Yama.

132) Having rushed into the camp, Ashwathama went to Dhrishtadyumna and kicked him hard with both his legs. Woken up from his sleep, Dhrishtadyumna requested – "I know that you are the son of my Guru".

133) "You are a hero. After I get up and hold my weapon you may kill me with your weapon. That is Dharma for the brave ones. With that, I too shall obtain the meritorious lokas meant for those who die wielding their weapons" – when he requested thus, Ashwathama replied angrily.

134) "Sinner! Those who commit *Brahmahatya*, especially those who cheat their Gurus, shall never attain *punya-lokas*. It is also not appropriate to kill great sinners like you in a *Dharma-yuddha*".

135) Realizing that his death was inevitable, Dhrishtadyumna became silent. Even in his dreams he used to see his death everyday.

136) After the death of Drona, Dhrishtadyumna used to see Ashwathama and that dark night every day in his dreams.

137) The son of Drona sat on his chest and put his bow's string around his neck tightly and started to pull it. Dhrishtadyumna gave up his body after a big struggle. Wasn't he the Avatara of Agni after all?

138) After that, (he) killed Shikhandi, Yudhamanyu, Uttamaujas and Janamejaya and went towards Draupadi's sons, fuming in anger.

139-141) All of them got up and started hitting him with arrows. Ashwathama killed them by waving his sword in the clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. In that way, he killed all the sons of the Pandavas, apart from the grandson of the King of Kashi and son of Bhima, known as Sharvadrata. An invisible Shiva

carried him to Kailasa at that moment. Therefore, he became known as Sharvatrata and stayed there later too. Earlier, Kashiraja had requested Shiva (a boon) that his daughter's son must live forever. Hence Shiva saved him out of compassion.

142) Realizing Sri Krishna's decision to hand over the Kingdom to Parikshita, Shiva prevented him from going back to *Bhu-loka*.

143) Ashwathama's general prayer when releasing the *Brahma-shirostra* was that the lineage of the Pandavas must be destroyed. However, since Shiva was the very essence of Ashwathama, he had intended Sharvatrata to be excluded.

**Note:** Subsequently in this very parva, Ashwathama releases a *Brahma-shira-astra* and makes a *sankalpa* that the entire lineage of the Pandavas must be destroyed. Sri Krishna, of course, ensures Parikshita lives. However, the question of how Sharvatrata, who was Bhima's son, continued to live, arises. It puts a question mark on the power of the *Brahma-shirostra*. Hence Sri Madhwacharya gives the *nirnaya* here. Ashwathama and Shiva are one and the same. Hence their two *sankalpas* must be seen in unison. Sharvatrata was therefore automatically excluded from Ashwathama's *sankalpa* the moment Shiva undertook *sankalpa* to protect him.

144) Since Shiva and Ashwathama are one and the same, the *Brahma-shirostra* did not kill Sharvatrata. Ashwathama went on to kill Chekitana and the others.

145) The heroic Ashwathama killed all the Chedi, Panchala, Karusha and Kashi warriors. The terrible one lit fire to the camp from all sides, intending to kill all the children and women too.

146) All those who tried to run out of the camp, desiring to live, were killed by Krupa and Krutavarma who were standing at the camp's door. Due to divine providence, the charioteer of Dhrishtadyumna alone survived.

147) Seeing Krutavarma swerve his sword forcefully, he thought he would get hit and fell down even before it touched him. Due to darkness, he (Krutavarma) did not realize it.

148) When Krutavarma was busy killing others, he ran to Draupadi. He informed Draupadi of all that had happened. A sorrowful Draupadi narrated everything to Bhima, who climbed his chariot and went after Ashwathama, holding a bow in his hand.

149) Amidst this, Ashwathama collected the heads of the sons of Draupadi and, along with Krupa and Krutavarma, went cheerfully to Duryodhana, who was on the verge of death.

150) The sinner Duryodhana saw the heads of the Upa-pandavas, and after listening to Ashwathama, praised him and gave up his life after rejoicing (over their deaths). Fearful of Bhima and Arjuna, and of Sri Krishna, Ashwathama and the others went separately.

151) When Ashwathama set out alone in his chariot, Bhima chased him on his own chariot. Seeing Bhima chase him, a fearful Ashwathama drove his horses extremely fast and ran away.

152) Seeing Bhima continuing to chase him, Ashwathama returned in anger and fought a battle with him and lost. He then released the Brahma-shirostra.

153-154) In the middle of all this, in order to show both Bhima and the astra as unassailable, Sri Krishna arrived there, along with Dharmaraja and Arjuna. Bhimasena could not be killed (by that astra). That astra too was unmatched. Both of these were the very *sankalpa* of Vishnu. Bhima was anyways the astra itself.

155) Gayatri was the mantra for that astra. The Devata to be meditated upon was Brahma. Sri Narayana, the creator of the world, was verily the presiding deity!

156-157) Sri Krishna then narrated to Dharmaraja and Arjuna what Ashwathama had done (earlier). He narrated the incident when he was meditating upon himself when Ashwathama arrived, sought his weapons and became unable to even lift them. When Sri Krishna asked him why he needed them, Ashwathama replied he wanted to get rid of Sri Krishna himself from the face of the Earth so Duryodhana could then rule. Sri Krishna had them warned him "Do not do this again".

158-159) Noticing the Brahma-shirostra, that had been released by Ashwathama with the intention of eliminating the lineage of the Pandavas, arriving with a burning intensity, Arjuna, being instructed by Sri Krishna, released the very same Brahma-shirostra as a counter to that astra, along with a prayer for the well-being of the son of Drona, all living beings and himself too.

**Note:** While Ashwathama revealed his mindset by praying for the destruction of a lineage, Arjuna revealed his character by praying for the welfare of even the person who had released such a destructive weapon!

160) When that astra is released against those who do not have knowledge of astras, it kills the very person who released such a weapon. Hence, Arjuna asked for the well-being of the son of Drona, out of devotion to his Guru.

**Note:** The son of a Guru is also equivalent to a Guru. Hence Arjuna tried to prevent the killing of his teacher since the astra had a specialty that it would kill the person who released it, in case it was targeted at innocent people or those who did not have the knowledge of astras to defend themselves.

161) When the two Brahma-shirostras collide, destruction of living beings too takes place. Therefore, the compassionate Arjuna prayed for their well being too.

162) Still, the collision of those two astras certainly causes loss of lives. Hence, in order to stop their collision, Sri Vyasa stood between them at that very moment.

163) Sri Krishna (Dwaipayana), the omnipotent one, the Supreme Being and the son of Satyawati, stopped the two astras at a distance and said to the two of them.

164) "Earlier too, there were people who knew this astra. Still they had never done such a thing. How can a noble person do something like this that is harmful to the world?"

165) When Sri Vyasa spoke thus, Arjuna said – “O Lord! I invoked this astra as a counter when there was great danger. Kindly excuse me”.

166) Ashwathama too said similarly. Sri Vyasa then said to the two of them – “Withdraw your astras”. Arjuna immediately did so. But, Ashwathama was unable to withdraw it. Sri Krishna then started to speak.

167-168) “Arjuna is a Brahmachari since his childhood and possesses the *Tejas* of a Kshatriya. Therefore, he was capable of withdrawing the astra. However, even though Ashwathama is the son of Drona, he was unable to withdraw it since he has lost his Brahmacharya”. Then Sri Vyasa said to Ashwathama – “Since you are unable to withdraw the astra, handover the jewel that is present on you as a natural (jewel)”.

**Note:** Ashwathama had promised Duryodhana discretely to unite with his wife and produce progeny that would rule the world. This was a great sin for a Brahmana and hence he had lost his Brahmacharya.

169) “Since you have already lost to Bhima, handover that precious and radiant stone to him and withdraw the astra from the Pandavas at least in your words”.

**Note:** Although Ashwathama could not withdraw the astra physically, Sri Vyasa wanted him to at least utter his intention of withdrawing it from the Pandavas.

170-171) When Sri Vyasa said thus, Ashwathama plucked out that jewel – that relieves one from ageing and death and ensures one does not feel hunger, thirst or tiredness, that carried a divine fragrance, that relieved darkness and was auspicious – from his head and gave it to Bhima. He wished for the astra to only spare the five Pandavas. Then, Sri Vyasa, the lord of the Vedas, said to Arjuna.

**Note:** Ashwathama refused to comply with Sri Vyasa’s instructions. Instead of wishing for the relief of all Pandavas, he wished that the astra spare only the five brothers.

172) “Arjuna! Nullify the astra that Ashwathama released” – when he said thus, Arjuna bowed to him and nullified that astra too.

173) Sri Krishna, the head of the Yadavas, said to Ashwathama – “Call out the sparing of at least one progeny of the Pandavas with your words”. When he said thus, Ashwathama replied.

**Note:** Sri Krishna asked Ashwathama to say it in words that he would like the astra to spare at least one of the progenies of the Pandavas.

174) “Out of favoritism, you intend to save your nephew. But I shall direct the astra to fall on Uttaraa’s womb itself”.

**Note:** Ashwathama says here that Sri Krishna intends to save Subhadra’s grandson – the child of Abhimanyu and Uttaraa.

175) Sri Krishna said again – “If you are intent of killing the womb, desist firmly from invoking the astra on it”.

176) “O egoistic Ashwathama! Get the astra to fall on Abhimanyu’s dead body. (If you release it on the womb) I shall bring to life once again the fetus that will die from your astra.

177) Even then, Ashwathama stated that he would release the astra against the womb. At that moment, Sri Krishna, appearing to be a little angry, told him.

178) “O evil minded one! See what my capability is! You do whatever you can. Even if you try with all your might I shall bring that fetus back to life”.

179) “The progeny of the Pandavas shall definitely last a thousand years on this Earth. Being protected by me, none can ever become capable of destroying it”.

180) “I know your crooked thinking about killing the progeny of the Pandavas and giving rise to the progeny of Duryodhana. That shall never happen”.

181) “Just as the desire for Moksha of a person who turns away from Sri Hari never fructifies, your resolve on this issue too will fail. Therefore you shall always move around sitting on humans. Let Earth be inaccessible for your movement”.

**Note:** Ashwathama is cursed by Sri Krishna here. He becomes incapable of walking by himself and will be carried always by other humans.

182) “O dull witted one! Till the lineage of the Pandavas remains, may you roam around in forests always, emanating bad odour and always being filled with wounds”. Sri Vyasa too concurred with the curse of Sri Krishna and said – “May it be so”.

183) When the two forms of Sri Hari said thus, Ashwathama requested Sri Krishna Dwaipayana – “O Lord! May I get your company whenever I desire. May I not get any obstacle for the same”.

184) When he requested in this way, Bhagavan Badarayana said – “May it be so”. Ashwathama bowed to him and left from there, thinking of what he saw in his dreams.

185-187) Ashwathama thought of all the events he had seen in his dreams – his killing of Draupadi’s sons, Arjuna taking an oath to kill him, Arjuna capturing him and taking him to the camp, Draupadi asking he be released, Bhima refusing to do so and snatching his jewel as per Sri Krishna’s words and sending him out of the country. Thinking of these and other incidents he had dreamt, Ashwathama felt all those incidents had in effect come true. The best amongst wielders of weapons then entered the forest.

**Note:** All the incidents mentioned in this shloka are given as actual incidents in the Srimadbhagavata. In the Skanda Purana, these incidents are said to have been in his dreams. Sri Madhwacharya beautifully integrates together all three granthas in this manner.

188) Ashwathama will undergo all (the difficulties) Sri Krishna had imposed and will later obtain the *shishyatva* of Sri Vyasa and classify the Vedas in the next Dwapara Yuga.

**Note:** A new Vyasa arrives in every Dwapara Yuga. In the next Dwapara, Ashwathama will take over the position of Vyasa and classify the Vedas.

189) He will then become one among the *saptarshis* and, due to the grace of Sri Vyasa and due to devotion to Sri Krishna, will attain unison with his original form (of Rudra).

190) Krupa then went to the Pandavas and was accorded great respect as a Guru. He then became *Acharya* to those born in that lineage.

191) After that, he will once again become the *shishya* of Sri Vyasa and serve him. He will become, along with his nephew, one of the Saptarshis. Krutavarma obtained the consent of Sri Krishna and returned to Dwaraka.

192) Bhimasena gave that precious jewel handed over by Ashwathama to Draupadi and consoled her a lot. Draupadi, giving up her anger due to Bhima's words, gave that jewel to the King.

193-194) If that jewel which is fit for Kings was given by Bhima to her, then ordinary citizens and Dharmaraja may suspect Bhima to be partial towards women. Thinking thus, Draupadi gave that precious stone to the King. She used to always engage herself in doing that which was pleasant to her husband. The King wore that stone on his head and became resplendent like the Sun.

195) Like noble-men who win over inner-enemies, the Pandavas entered their capital city, along with Sri Vyasa and the best amongst the Yadavas and their wives.

196) When, after Yudhishtira, Bhima went forward to bow at the feet of Dhritharashtra, Sri Krishna, the Supreme Being, moved him aside and placed an iron replica of him in front of the King.

197) That replica was used by Duryodhana for practicing mace-fight. Hugging it, Dhritharashtra smashed it into pieces. Even as he was bleeding (from his mouth), he exclaimed – "O Son! Bhima!". Shouting thus, he fell down.

198) Sri Krishna told him – "Bhima is not dead. He cannot be killed, neither by you nor by anyone else. Your thinking has become clear to us. O King! It appears that your mindset is still sinful".

199) "Due to defective thinking, you supported your sons who were of the most evil nature, and came under their control. You are experiencing the results of that now. It is not fair to get angry at Bhima".

200) When Sri Krishna said thus, Dhritharashtra invited Bhima with a calm mind. Bhima bowed at his feet. His brothers and the others too bowed to him.

201) Bhima's body was tougher than a diamond. If Dhritharashtra had hugged him directly, he would have suffered no deformity and Dhritharashtra's defect (of wishing evil) would never have surfaced. Hence Sri Krishna deceived him in this way.

202-203) The King hugged all of them with affection and blessed them. “I am the sinner who has caused the destruction of our clan. I am deserving of your curse” – when Dharmaraja said thus to Gandhari, she became angry and stared at his beautiful toe-nails through the edge of the cloth tied to her eyes. Due to the fire of her anger, his toe-nails were burnt. Thereafter, he became one with black toe-nails.

204) With anger and great pain, when Bhima approached in order to bow to her, she asked him – “O Bhima! How could you have killed my son through Adharma?”.

205) When she asked thus, desiring to extinguish her anger first, Vrikodara said – “When there is danger to one’s life, it is not sin to kill a sinner through unfair means”.

206-207) Having said thus, Bhimasena, who knew very well he faced no other danger apart from that of not fulfilling his vow, said to her – “How have I have committed Adharma as a Kshatriya when all I did was to fulfill my vow of killing the brothers in battle? There is no life if a vow is broken (for a Kshatriya)”.

208) “Shruthi says sinners must never be killed through chaste Dharma. Unlike noble men, killing sinners through fair means is sin, says Shruthi. Therefore, Devatas have always killed the deceiving Asuras through unfair means”.

209) The followers of the Paingī *shakha* always chant the Shruti that goes as – “Deception must always be demolished through deception. It is only the adherents of Dharma who must not be slain through deception”.

210) When Bhima spoke thus, Gandhari asked again – “Being a human, how could you have drunk human blood?”. To this Bhima replied – “I did not drink”.

211) “Your son’s blood did not go beyond my teeth. In order to fulfill my vow, and to take revenge, I did so to him”.

212) “In order to scare the enemies I acted as if I drank it. Doing so to sinners is the Dharma as taught by the Vedas”.

213) When Bhimasena spoke thus, Gandhari asked him – “You killed all hundred sons. You did not spare even one supporting stick for this blind couple?”.

214-215) Bhima replied to Gandhari – “All of them were sinners. They had committed sin that qualified for the punishment of death. Therefore, I killed them all”. Gandhari then asked again – “Did you not find even one who hadn’t sinned?”. Bhima replied – “All of them had together planned to arrest Sri Krishna”.

**Note:** When Sri Krishna visited Hastinapura just before the war as a messenger of peace, Duryodhana and all his brothers had planned to capture him. Bhima points this out as the greatest sin committed by them.

216-217) “Earlier too they had committed great sins. In the Sabha, when Sri Krishna was instructing Dharma, they rejected it repeatedly and followed Duryodhana out of the hall” – keeping all of this in mind, Bhima replied.



218) “There was not even one among them who had not offended me (in the past). When you yourself were incapable of advising them, why are you angry at me without reason?”.

219) When Bhima asked thus, Gandhari became silent. Then, all the other Pandavas bowed to her. She calmed down when Sri Vyasa spoke to her again.

220-222) The Pandavas, with their wives, proceeded to the battlefield along with Gandhari who had brought her daughters-in-law ahead of her, Dhritharashtra, Vidura and the others, Sri Vyasa, Sri Krishna and Kunti. Intending to reduce the merits of her Tapas so the Pandavas are safe, Sri Vyasa gave Gandhari divine vision.

**Note:** Gandhari was a great pati-vrata. She had accumulated great punya over the years using which she was capable of invoking great curses against the Pandavas. In order to avoid this, Sri Vyasa gave her divine vision. Seeing the corpses of her sons and family, she cursed Sri Krishna out of anger and sorrow, thereby burning away her punya.

223) In the battlefield, Gandhari saw the dead bodies with her divine vision and, out of sorrow, cursed Sri Krishna – “You have caused our *kula* to get destroyed due to infighting. Therefore may your *kula* too get destroyed due to each other”.

224-225) When she said thus, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, although capable of making the curse go futile, said – “It is my sankalpa too. May it be so”. Because of that, her Tapas got destroyed. She became lesser in merit than her husband Dhritharashtra. Isn’t Sri Hari the one who destroys *punya* that is more than one’s worth?

**Note:** Each jeeva has an inherent swabhava or nature. As per the qualification arising from that nature, one is entitled to a certain level of punya, through which the jeeva obtains proportionate bliss. If any jeeva accumulates more than the qualified punya, Sri Hari ensures its destruction. The Ahalya incident was similarly in order to burn away the excess punya accumulated by Sage Gautama.

226) Later, Sri Krishna took Draupadi and showed her the widows of Duryodhana and the others who were hugging the dead bodies of their husbands and crying. Draupadi praised Sri Krishna, the one with complete auspicious attributes, profusely.

227) Thereafter, the Pandavas themselves performed the last rites of those well known warriors who were noble. They got others to cremate the bodies of others keeping Dhritharashtra in front (for that activity). Through their five charioteers they got many other corpses to be thrown into the Sarasvati river.

228) Out of affection, Dharmaraja and the twins had not engaged their charioteers in the war. Since the corpses were innumerable, many probably remained where they were.

229) Then, as the Pandavas were giving *tarpana* to the fallen relatives in the Ganga, Prithaa (Kunti) informed them that Karna was their older brother and said – “Give him *tarpana* too”.

230) Dharmaraja then became infested with great sorrow. Exclaiming “Oh! No!” repeatedly, he let out a curse saying – “May no secret ever remain in the hearts of women”.

231) “Oh Mother! Your courage has led us to this downfall! Having killed our older brother, who is equivalent to one’s father, what *gati* can we obtain now?”.

**Note:** Dharmaraja is referring to the other-world which souls obtain after death. Gati here means Swarga or Naraka or associated worlds.

232) Dharmaraja, who was speaking thus, was consoled by Sri Krishna and Sage Narada through comforting words. They praised the qualities of Karna.

233) After that, all of them performed the post-death rituals. The eldest of the Pandavas then ascended the post of Chakravarti!

**Note:** Yudhisthira obtained the seat of Emperor of the entire world.

|| End of chapter 28, known as ‘Pandava Rajya Prapti’, from the Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, composed by Srimadanandatirtha Bhagavatpada ||

|| Sri Krishnarpanamastu ||