

## Chapter 1329(1)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having offered water to all the well-wishers, the descendants of the Pandu lineage, Vidura, Dhritarashtra and all the women of the Bharata lineage, dwelt there. The great-souled sons of the Kuru lineage wished to spend a month of mourning outside the city.<sup>1</sup> When King Dhritarashtra, with dharma in his soul, had performed the water-rites, the great-souled siddhas, supreme brahmarshis, Dvaipayana, Narada, the great rishi Deva, Devsthana and Kanva, with their supreme disciples, and many other brahmanas who were accomplished in wisdom and learned in the Vedas and all the *snatakas*<sup>2</sup> in the householder stage, came to see the supreme among the Kuru lineage. When they came, the great-souled one<sup>3</sup> worshipped them, in accordance with the prescribed rites. The maharshis seated themselves on extremely expensive seats. They accepted the honours that were appropriate for the occasion.<sup>4</sup> In due order, they seated themselves around Yudhishtira. The king was on the sacred banks of the Bhagirathi and his senses were overcome with grief. Hundreds and thousands of brahmanas consoled him.

'At that time, Narada consulted the sages and spoke words that were appropriate for the occasion to Yudhishtira, with dharma in his soul. "O Yudhishtira! Through the valour of your arms and the favours of Madhava, you have resorted to dharma and have conquered the entire earth. It is through good fortune that you have escaped from this battle, which was fearful for the worlds. O Pandava! It is perhaps because you are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas that you have not rejoiced. O king! Once you have slain your enemies, will you not please your well-wishers? Having obtained this prosperity, I hope that grief is not standing in the way."

'Yudhishtira replied, "Resorting to the strength of Krishna's arms, the favours of the brahmanas and the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, I have conquered the entire earth. But this great grief is always circulating in my heart. Because of my avarice, I have caused a great carnage of my relatives. I have caused the death of Subhadra's son and Droupadi's beloved sons. O illustrious one! To me, this victory seems to be a defeat. What will my sister-in-law, Varshneyi,<sup>5</sup> tell me? When Hari Madhusudana returns, what will the residents of Dvaraka tell Krishna? With her sons slain and her relatives killed, Droupadi is distressed. She has always been engaged in our welfare. This is grieving me exceedingly. O illustrious one! O Narada! Let me tell you about something else. Kunti kept this as a secret and this is also a reason for my sorrow. He possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and on this earth, was an atiratha in battle. His gait was like that of a sporting lion. He was wise and compassionate. He was generous and endeavoured about his vows. He was the refuge of the sons of Dhritarashtra. He was proud and fierce in his valour. He was intolerant and always arrogant. From one encounter to another, he flung us away. He was swift in the use of weapons and colourful in fighting. He was accomplished and extraordinary in his prowess. He was secretly born from Kunti's womb. He was our brother, from the same womb. When the water-rites were performed, Kunti said that he was the son of the sun god. He possessed all the qualities, and in earlier times, was cast into the water. The world thought of him as Radheya, the son of a suta. But he was Kunti's eldest son and our brother from the same mother. Greedy for the kingdom, I have ignorantly caused him to be killed in the battle. This is consuming my limbs, like a mass of cotton in a fire. Partha, the one with the white horses, did not know that he was a brother. Nor did Bhima and the twins know this. However, the one who was excellent in his vows knew this. We have heard that Pritha went to him earlier.<sup>6</sup> She wished to ensure our welfare and told him, 'You are my son.' But that great-souled one did not listen to Pritha's wishes. Much later, we have heard that he spoke these words to his mother. 'I am incapable of abandoning King Duryodhana in the battle. If I do that, I will be ignoble, cruel and an ingrate. If I act according to your wishes and conclude an alliance with Yudhishtira, people will say that I am frightened of the one with the white steeds in a battle. Having defeated Vijaya<sup>7</sup> and Keshava in the battle, I will then conclude an agreement of peace with Dharma's son.' This is what we heard. Pritha again spoke to the one

with the broad chest. 'Then fight with Phalguna, but grant me safety for my other four sons.' The intelligent one joined his hands in salutation and told his trembling mother, 'Even if the other four sons come under my control, I will not kill them. O mother! Whether Partha is slain by Karna, or whether I am slain by Arjuna, it is certain that you will continue to have five sons.' Out of great affection for her sons, the mother told the son, 'As you desire their safety, ensure the safety of your brothers.' Having said this, Pritha took his leave and returned home. Our brave brother has been slain by Arjuna, a brother by a brother. O sage. Neither Pritha, nor he, ever divulged the secret. The brave and great archer was brought down by Partha. O supreme among brahmanas! I only got to know later that he was our brother. O lord! Pritha told us that Karna was our eldest brother. I have caused my brother to be slain and this is greatly paining my heart. Had Karna and Arjuna both been my aides, I would have been able to defeat even Vasudeva. When I was oppressed by the evil-souled sons of Dhritarashtra in the assembly hall, my anger was suddenly pacified on seeing Karna. This is despite the harsh and bitter words we heard from him in the assembly hall at the time of the gambling match, spoken for the sake of bringing Duryodhana pleasure. When I glanced at his feet, my wrath was destroyed. It seemed to me that Karna's feet were like those of Kunti's. I wished to determine the reason for this similarity between Pritha and him. But in spite of thinking about this, I did not understand. During the battle, why did the earth swallow up the wheel of his chariot? Why was my brother cursed? You should tell me this. O illustrious one! I wish to hear everything, exactly as it happened. You know everything that is to be known in this world, that which has happened, and that which will occur.'"

## Chapter 1330(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the sage Narada, supreme among eloquent ones, recounted everything about how the son of a suta had been cursed.

“O mighty-armed one!<sup>8</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. There is nothing that could have stood against Karna and Arjuna in a battle. O king! What I am about to tell you is unknown to even the gods. O great king! O lord! Therefore, listen to what happened in earlier times, about how the kshatriyas would be cleansed by weapons and would go to heaven. To engender that dissension, he was created in a virgin womb. He was energetic as a child and came to be known as the son of a suta. He went to the best of the Angirasa lineage, your preceptor,<sup>9</sup> to learn about the science of war.<sup>10</sup> O Indra among kings! He thought of Bhima's strength, Phalgun's dexterity, your intelligence, the humility of the twins, the friendship that the wielder of Gandiva has had with Vasudeva since childhood and the devotion of the subjects and was tormented. From childhood, he formed a friendship with King Duryodhana. This is because of the enmity he always bore towards you and natural destiny. He saw that Dhananjaya was superior to everyone in learning about dhanurveda. Karna secretly went to Drona and spoke these words. 'I wish to know about brahmastra and the secrets of releasing and withdrawing it. It is my view that I should become Arjuna's equal in battle. It is certain that the affection you bear towards your disciples is equal to what you bear towards your son. Because of your favours, make me accomplished and skilled in the use of weapons.' Drona was partial towards Phalgun. He also knew about Karna's wickedness. Having been thus addressed by Karna, he replied, 'The brahmastra can only be known by a brahmana who is observant of the vows, or by a kshatriya who has performed austerities, and by no one else.' Having been thus addressed by the best of the Angirasa lineage, he honoured him and took his leave. He then quickly went to Rama<sup>11</sup> on Mount Mahendra. Having approached Rama, he lowered his head in obeisance before him and said, 'O Bhargava! I am a brahmana.' This earned him respect. Rama welcomed him and asked him everything about his *gotra*.<sup>12</sup> He was extremely delighted at this warm welcome. Karna resided on Mahendra, supreme among mountains, and met gandharvas, rakshasas, yakshas and gods there. There, in the proper way, he obtained all the weapons from the best of the Bhrgu lineage. Because of this, he was loved by the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas.

“Once, near that hermitage, he was roaming around on the shores of the ocean. The son of the suta was wandering around alone, with a sword and a bow in his hand. O Partha! There was a person who was knowledgeable about the *brahman* and who performed the *aghnihotra* sacrifice every day. Unwittingly, he killed his *homadhenu*.<sup>13</sup> Having unwittingly performed this deed, Karna went and repeatedly told the brahmana, so that he might be pacified, 'O illustrious one! I have unwittingly killed your cow. Please show me your favours.' However, the brahmana censured him and angrily spoke these words, 'O wicked one! O evil-minded one! You should be killed. Therefore, reap this fruit. You have always sought to rival someone<sup>14</sup> and you have been striving against him every day. Because of this crime, when you are fighting with him, the earth will swallow up the wheel of your chariot. O worst of men! When you clash against your foe and are distracted because the wheel of your chariot has been devoured by the earth, he will exhibit his valour and sever your head. O stupid one! Leave this place. Just as you were distracted when you acted against me, another person will sever and bring down your head while you are distracted.' He again tried to secure the favours of that supreme among brahmanas. He gave him cattle, riches and jewels. However, he<sup>15</sup> again said, 'Nothing in all the worlds will be able to falsify the words spoken by me. You can go, or stay, or do whatever else you wish to.' Having been thus addressed by the brahmana, Karna was distressed and hung his head down. Terrified, he returned to Rama and thought about this in his mind.”

## Chapter 1331(3)

‘Narada said, “The tiger among the Bhrigu lineage<sup>16</sup> was pleased with the strength of Karna’s arms, affection, self-control and the service he showed towards his preceptor. He was also excellent in austerities. Therefore, in the proper way, that supreme of ascetics<sup>17</sup> taught him everything about brahmastra, about its release and means of withdrawal. Having obtained this knowledge, Karna was delighted and dwelt in the hermitage of the one descended from the Bhrigu lineage. His valour was extraordinary and he strove to learn dhanurveda.’

“One day, the intelligent Rama was wandering around near the hermitage, with Karna. He was afflicted because of the fasting and was also confident of Karna’s affection. Therefore, Jamadagni’s descendant went to sleep with his head on his lap. While the tired preceptor was sleeping, a terrible worm approached Karna. It fed on phlegm, fat, flesh and blood and was terrible to the touch. With blood-stained teeth, it penetrated his thigh. Because of fear on account of his preceptor,<sup>18</sup> he was unable to kill it, or fling it away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His thigh was pierced by that worm. But scared that his preceptor would wake up, the son of a suta ignored it. Karna bore that pain with fortitude and ignored it. He did not tremble and continued to bear Bhargava. Eventually, the blood from the limbs touched the extender of the Bhrigu lineage. The energetic one awoke and in torment, spoke these words. ‘Alas! I have become impure. What have you done? Cast aside your fear and tell me the truth about what has happened.’ Karna then told him how the worm had bitten him. Rama also saw that the worm looked like a pig. It had eight feet and sharp teeth and was covered with bristles that were like needles. It was known as Alarka and it shrivelled.<sup>19</sup> As soon as Rama looked at it, the worm gave up its breath of life. It shrunk in the blood that it had drunk and it was extraordinary.

“At that time, a rakshasa was seen in the sky. It was gigantic in form and was terrible in visage. Its neck was red, its limbs were dark and it was riding on the clouds. Its wishes having been satisfied, it joined its hands in salutation and addressed Rama. ‘O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! May you be well. I will go where I had come from. O supreme among sages! You have saved me from this hell.’ Jamadagni’s mighty-armed and powerful son replied, ‘Who are you? How did you descend into hell? Tell me about it.’ He said, ‘Earlier, in the yuga of the gods,<sup>20</sup> I was a great asura named Praggitsa. O father!<sup>21</sup> I was of the same age as Bhrigu. I forcefully abducted Bhrigu’s beloved wife. Because of the maharshi’s curse, I became a worm and fell down on earth. Your great grandfather<sup>22</sup> angrily spoke these words to me. “You will subsist on urine and phlegm. O wicked one! You will live a life that is like hell.” I asked him, “O brahmana! When will this curse come to an end?” At this, Bhrigu told me, “There will be Rama, born of the Bhrigu lineage, and he will free you.” It is because of this that I attained such a wicked end. O virtuous one! But having met you, I have been freed from that evil birth.’ Having said this, the giant asura bowed before Rama and departed.

“Rama angrily spoke these words to Karna. ‘O foolish one! No one who has been born as a brahmana can endure such great suffering. Your patience is like that of a kshatriya. I wish to hear the truth.’ Karna was frightened of being cursed. He sought his favours and said, ‘O Bhargava! Know me to be between a brahmana and a kshatriya, born as a suta.<sup>23</sup> People on earth speak of me as Radheya Karna. O brahmana! O Bhargava! Pardon me. I was greedy for the weapons. A father isn’t just the biological one. The lord, who is a preceptor and gives one the Vedas and learning, is also one such. That is the reason why, in your presence, I described myself as a Bhargava.’ The foremost among the Bhrigu lineage was incensed at this and he<sup>24</sup> had fallen down on the ground, trembling, distressed and hands joined in salutation. However, he<sup>25</sup> smiled and said, ‘You acted in this false way because of your greed for weapons. O stupid one! In a different place, when the time for your death has come, you will be engaged in a fight with someone who is your equal and the brahmastra will not manifest itself before you. The qualities of a brahmana will never remain with someone who is not a brahmana. Leave this place, since this is not

meant for an untruthful one like you. There will be no kshatriya on earth who will be your equal in battle.' Having been thus addressed by Rama, he took his leave and departed. He went to Duryodhana and said, 'I have become accomplished in the use of weapons.'”

## Chapter 1332(4)

‘Narada said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus obtained weapons from the descendant of the Bhargava lineage, together with Duryodhana, Karna amused himself. On one occasion, many kings assembled at a *svayamvara* ceremony organized by Chitrangada, the king of Kalinga. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a prosperous city named Rajapura there. For the sake of the maiden, hundreds of kings assembled there. On hearing that all the kings had gathered there, Duryodhana also went there on his golden chariot, accompanied by Karna. At that *svayamvara*, a great festival was organized. O supreme among kings! Many kings came there for the sake of the maiden. O great king! Shishupala, Jarasandha, Bhishmaka, Vakra, Kapotaroma, Nila, Rukmi, firm in his valour, Srigala, who ruled over a kingdom of women, Ashoka, Shatadhanva and the valiant Bhoja were among them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many others who resided in the southern directions, preceptors from among the *mlecchas*<sup>26</sup> and kings from the east and the north. All of them were adorned in golden armlets and were decorated in garlands made out of molten gold. All of them possessed radiant bodies and were crazy in their pride, like tigers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all those kings had seated themselves, the maiden entered the arena with her nurse, guarded by eunuchs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While the names of the kings were being recounted, the beautiful maiden passed by the son of Dhritarashtra.<sup>27</sup> Kouravya Duryodhana could not tolerate that he had been passed by. Ignoring all the kings, he asked the maiden to stop. Protected by Bhishma and Drona, he was intoxicated by his valour. He lifted the maiden up onto his chariot and challenged the kings. O bull among men! Karna wielded a sword and had donned arm-guards and finger-guards. Riding on a chariot, the best among all wielders of weapons guarded him<sup>28</sup> from the rear. O Yudhishtira. There was a tumult and a loud sound arose among the kings, as body armour was donned, chariots were yoked and they angrily attacked Karna and Duryodhana. They released showers of arrows, like clouds on a mountain. With razor-sharp arrows, Karna brought each of their bows, with arrows affixed to them, down on the ground. Deprived of their bows, some advanced, raising other bows. Some attacked with arrows. Others grasped javelins and clubs. Karna was supreme among strikers and oppressed them with his dexterity. He slew many charioteers and defeated the kings. At this, they themselves picked up the reins of their mounts and said, ‘Go away.’ Devastated in their hearts, the kings abandoned the battle. Protected by Karna, Duryodhana was assured. Bringing the maiden with them, they cheerfully returned to the city of Nagasahvya.”’

## Chapter 1333(5)

‘Narada said, “Having learnt about Karna’s strength, King Jarasandha, the lord of Magadha, challenged him to a duel. Both of them knew about the use of divine weapons and a battle commenced between them. In the encounter, they showered down many kinds of weapons on each other. Their arrows were exhausted. They were without bows. Their swords were shattered. The powerful ones descended on the ground and started to wrestle with each other with bare arms. While fighting with him in that terrible duel with bare arms, Karna was about to sever the two parts of the body that had been brought together by Jara.<sup>29</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that his body was about to face this hardship, the king cast aside all enmity and spoke these affectionate words to Karna. ‘I am pleased.’ He gave Karna the city of Malini. O tiger among men! Before this, the one who had defeated his enemies had ruled over Anga. But now, Karna, the afflicter of enemy forces, also began to rule Champa, after having obtained Duryodhana’s permission. You know about all this. Thus, through the power of his weapons, he became famous on earth. For the sake of your welfare, the king of the gods begged his divine and natural armour and earrings from him.<sup>30</sup> The extremely revered one was confounded by the maya of the god and gave away his natural earrings and armour. Deprived of his earrings and natural armour, while Vasudeva looked on, he was slain by Vijaya. There was the brahmana’s curse and that of the great-souled Rama. There was the boon that he had granted Kunti and Shatakratu’s maya. Bhishma disrespected him and described him as only half a ratha.<sup>31</sup> Shalya sapped his energy. There was Vasudeva’s policy. In a battle, the wielder of Gandiva obtained the divine weapons of Rudra, the king of the gods, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Drona and the great-souled Kripa. That is the reason Vaikartana Karna was

slain, though he was as radiant as the sun. This is the way your brother was cursed and deprived by many. However, since he has met his end in a battle, you should not sorrow over that tiger among men.””



## Chapter 1334(6)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having spoken these words, devarshi Narada stopped. However, rajarshi Yudhisthira was overcome by sorrow and continued to think. The brave one was distressed in his mind and his head hung down in sorrow. He sighed like a serpent and his eyes were full of tears. Kunti’s limbs were also overcome with sorrow and grief had robbed her of her senses. However, she spoke these sweet and important words that were suitable to the occasion. “O Yudhishtira! O mighty-armed one! You should not grieve. O immensely wise one! Conquer your sorrow and listen to my words. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Earlier, I tried so that he might let you know that he was your brother and so did the sun god, his father. In front of me, the sun revealed himself in a dream to him and told him words that a well-wisher who desired his benefit and prosperity would say.<sup>32</sup> But despite our entreaties and our affection, I or the sun god did not succeed. We could not persuade him. Nor could we persuade him to unite with you. He was under the subjugation of destiny and was engaged in fanning the enmity with you. He was engaged in causing you injury. So he was ignored by me.” When his mother said this, Dharmaraja’s eyes filled with tears. With his senses clouded by tears, the one with dharma in his soul spoke these words. “I am extremely distressed because you kept this a secret.” Tormented by extreme grief, the immensely energetic one cursed all the women of the world, “Henceforth, they will not be able to keep a secret.” The king remembered his sons, grandsons, relatives and well-wishers and his heart became extremely anxious. He lost control over his senses. Because he was overcome by sorrow, he was like a fire with smoke. Tormented and oppressed, the king yielded to despair.’

## Chapter 1335(7)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Yudhishtira, with dharma in his soul, was anxious and unconscious because of his sorrow. He remembered maharatha Karna and tormented by grief, sorrowed over him. Overcome by grief and sorrow, he sighed repeatedly.

‘He was oppressed by grief and on seeing Arjuna, spoke these words. “Had we survived by begging in the city of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, we would not have confronted this catastrophe and would not have deprived our relatives of all their menfolk. Our enemies have been successful in their objectives and the Kurus have obtained what they tried for. We have ourselves slain those who are our own. What fruits of dharma will we obtain? Shame on the conduct of kshatriyas and shame on the strength that chests hold. Shame on the intolerance that has taken us to this calamity. Forgiveness, self-control, purity, lack of enmity, lack of selfishness, non-violence and truthfulness in words are to be praised. Those who dwell in the forest practise these. But because of our greed and our delusion, we have resorted to arrogance and insolence. We have been brought to this state because of our hunger for a trifling kingdom. Even sovereignty over the three worlds will not delight us now, since we can see that those of our relatives who desired the flesh of the earth<sup>33</sup> have been slain. They did not deserve to be killed and were like the earth. But they have been slain for the earth. Having given them up, deprived of prosperity and with our relatives killed, we remain alive. We are not dogs. But like dogs, we fought over meat. That flesh has now been destroyed and so have those who would have eaten the meat. We shouldn’t have abandoned those who have been killed for the sake of the entire earth, heaps of gold or for all the cattle and horses. They were full of desire and passion. They were overcome by wrath and intolerance. They climbed onto the road to death and have gone to Vaivasvata’s<sup>34</sup> eternal abode. For the sake of their sons, fathers seek a lot of welfare on earth. They observe austerities and brahmacharya, chant and practise renunciation. In a similar way, mothers conceive after fasts, sacrifices, vows and auspicious ceremonies and bear them for ten months. ‘If they are born safely and remain alive after they are born, if they are full of strength, they may give us happiness in this world and the next.’ In pursuit of fruits, this is what those pitiable ones hope for. Those young sons, decorated with earrings, have been killed. At a wrong time, those hopes have become unsuccessful and have been abandoned. They have not enjoyed the pleasures of the earth. They have not repaid their debts to the ancestors and the gods. They have gone to Vaivasvata’s eternal abode. When they were born, the parents had wishes for them. But those kings have been slain when they became full of strength and beauty. They were full of desire and intolerance and experienced anger and delight. None of them enjoyed any of the fruits of birth. Because of our deeds, the Panchalas and Kurus who have been killed, and those of us who have not been slain, will obtain the worst of worlds. We will be known as the ones who caused the destruction of the world, even though we were deceived by Dhritarashtra’s son. He was skilled in deceit. He was full of enmity and subsisted through the use of maya. Though we had never caused him injury, he always used falsehood towards us. We have not succeeded in vanquishing them, nor have they defeated us. They have not enjoyed the earth, nor women, singing and music. They paid no attention to their advisers, nor did they listen to those who knew about the sacred texts. They could not enjoy the jewels, the earth or the wealth they had obtained. When he<sup>35</sup> saw our prosperity, he turned pale, ashen and lean. This was reported to King Dhritarashtra by Soubala.<sup>36</sup> Because of his affection, the father remained established in the ways of the son. He disregarded his father, Gangeya and Vidura. There is no doubt that Dhritrashtra is in the same state as I am. He did not control his inauspicious and greedy son who was overcome by desire. With his brothers, Suyodhana has fallen from his blazing fame. He has hurled these two aged ones<sup>37</sup> into the flames of grief. The evil-minded one was always full of enmity towards us. Which other relative, born into a noble lineage, would speak to well-wishers the way he did? In the presence of the one from the Vrishni lineage, the inferior one, wishing to fight, used such words.<sup>38</sup> We have also been de-

stroyed for an eternal period because of our own sins. Like the sun, we have scorched all the directions with our energy. That man, full of enmity towards us, came under the clutches of an evil planet that gave bad advice.<sup>39</sup> Because of Duryodhana's deeds, our lineage has been brought down. Having slain those who should not be slain, we will earn censure in this world. King Dhritarashtra made that evil-minded one the lord of the kingdom. He was wicked in his deeds and the exterminator of the lineage. Therefore, he<sup>40</sup> is grieving now. The brave ones have been slain. The wicked deed has been done. The prosperity has been destroyed. Having slain them, our anger has been overcome. This sorrow is restraining me now. O Dhananjaya! A wicked deed can be countered through a beneficial one. The sacred texts say that someone who has renounced does not perform a wicked deed again. The sacred texts say that someone who has renounced does not have to go through birth and death. Having attained perfection, that person, firm in his resolution, unites with the brahman. O Dhananjaya! He attains the knowledge of the sages and is without any sense of opposites.<sup>41</sup> O scorcher of enemies! I will take my leave from all of you and go to the forest. O destroyer of enemies! The sacred texts say that someone with possessions is not capable of attaining the best forms of dharma. I can see that. Because I desired possessions, I committed wicked acts and the sacred texts say that this can cause birth and death.<sup>42</sup> I will give up my possessions and the entire kingdom. I will depart, completely free, bereft of sorrow and devoid of fever. With the thorns having been removed, you rule over this pacified earth. O best of the Kuru lineage! This kingdom and the pleasures are not for me." Having spoken these words, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira stopped and the youngest Partha<sup>43</sup> replied.'

## Chapter 1336(8)

Vaishampayana said ‘Arjuna spoke, like a reviled person who is not ready to forgive. He was firm in his speech and valour and spoke these proud words. Indra’s son was terrible in his valour and revealed his fierce aspect. The immensely energetic one laughed and repeatedly licked the corners of his mouth. “Alas! What misery! What a great calamity! This is supreme frailty. Having performed a superhuman deed, you now wish to abandon this supreme prosperity. The enemies have been slain and the earth has been obtained by practising one’s own dharma. Having killed one’s foes, but for foolishness, why should one give everything up? When has a eunuch or one who procrastinates ever obtained a kingdom? Overcome with rage, why did you kill all the lords of the earth? A person desiring to live through begging can never use his deeds to enjoy anything. Even if he tries to be powerful, his fortune is destroyed and he is never renowned in the world as someone who possesses sons and animals. O king! If you resort to this wicked means of subsistence through mendicancy and abandon this prosperous kingdom, what will people say? O lord! Why do you wish to abandon all enterprise, giving up all your fortune? Like an ordinary person, why do you wish to roam around as a beggar? You have been born in this lineage of kings and have conquered the entire earth. Yet, because of your confusion, you wish to give up dharma and artha and want to go to the forest. When you have gone, if wicked people destroy the sacrificial offerings, the consequence of that sin will devolve on you. Nahusha<sup>44</sup> said, ‘It is not desirable to possess nothing. Without riches, cruel deeds are perpetrated. Shame on poverty.’ You know that the practice of rishis is not to keep anything for tomorrow. But that which is known as dharma is established on the basis of riches. When someone’s riches are stolen, his dharma is also stolen. O king! Who amongst us will pardon an act of our riches being robbed? If a poor person stands next to one’s own self, that poor person is abused. Poverty causes degradation in this world and you should not praise it. O king! One who is degraded sorrows. One who is poor sorrows. I cannot see any difference between one who is degraded and one who is poor. Here and there, all the rites are extended and accumulated through wealth, like streams flowing down mountains. O lord of men! Dharma, kama and heaven result from artha. Without artha, the world will not be able to sustain its life. Like an inferior river<sup>45</sup> during the summer, all the rites of a person with limited intelligence are destroyed in the absence of wealth. One who possesses riches possesses friends. One who possesses riches possesses relatives. One who possesses riches is a man in this world. One who possesses riches is learned. A person who doesn’t possess riches is incapable of obtaining riches only by desiring it. Riches follow riches, like elephants follow mighty elephants.<sup>46</sup> O lord of men! Dharma, kama, heaven, delight, anger, learning, self-control—all of these result from artha. The lineage is extended because of artha. Dharma is spread because of riches. O supreme among men! A person without riches does not possess either this world, or the next. One without riches cannot perform the acts of dharma. Dharma flows from riches, like mountainous streams from mountains. O king! A person is not called lean when his body is lean. He is lean when he is lean in horses, lean in cattle, lean in servants and lean in guests. Consider this according to the right principles. Look at the gods and the asuras. O king! The gods prosper after having slain their own relatives.<sup>47</sup> If one does not take away the riches of others, how can one observe dharma? The wise ones have determined this in the Vedas. The learned ones have said that one must study the three kinds of knowledge<sup>48</sup> and always make efforts to accumulate wealth and perform sacrifices. It is through violence and enmity that all the gods have obtained their stations in heaven. This is what the gods resorted to, and these are the eternal words of the Vedas. One must study, one must perform austerities, one must perform sacrifices and one must officiate at the sacrifices of others. But all these become better when one takes objects away from others. Nowhere do we see any wealth that has not been taken away from others. This is the way in which kings conquered the earth. Having conquered, they say that the wealth is theirs, just as sons say that the wealth of their fathers is their own. The rajarshis who have obtained heaven have proclaimed this to be dharma. In the overflow-

ing ocean, water spreads out in the ten directions. In that way, wealth that emanates from a royal lineage spreads throughout the earth. Earlier, the earth belonged to Dilipa, Nriga, Nahusha, Ambarisha and Mandhata.<sup>49</sup> It belongs to you now. O king! A prosperous sacrifice, with all the donations given, now awaits you. If you do not perform that sacrifice, you will cause offence to the gods. If a king performs a horse sacrifice and offers donations, everyone becomes purified because of that. Vishvarupa<sup>50</sup> Mahadeva performed a great sacrifice at which everything was offered. He offered all the beings as oblations and then offered himself. That is the eternal path of prosperity and we have heard that there is no other end that is possible. This is the great path known as *dasharatha*.<sup>51</sup> O king! Do not follow any other route.”

## Chapter 1337(9)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Listen attentively for an instant. Cast your mind and your hearing towards your own inner self. If you listen to my words in that way, you will find them to be acceptable. You will not be able to take me back to the path travelled by the prosperous again. I will leave. I will abandon the path of ordinary pleasures and depart. I will travel alone along that path of tranquility. If you ask me what that is, I will tell you. Even if you don’t wish to ask me, I will tell you. Listen. I will discard the pursuit of ordinary pleasures and torment myself through great austerities. I will dwell in the forest, sustaining myself on fruits and roots, and roam around with animals. I will pour oblations into the fire at the right time and perform ablutions at the right time. I will emaciate myself by eating little. I will cover myself with skins and rags and wear matted hair. I will endure cold, wind, heat and bear hunger, thirst and exhaustion. I will grind down my body through the prescribed austerities. In the forest, I will cheerfully listen to the pleasant notes, high and low, of the animals and birds that live there. They are pleasant to the mind and the ear. I will inhale the delicate fragrance of blossoming trees and creepers. I will observe the many beautiful forms of those who live in the forest. I will not offend the sight of those who have resorted to *vanaprastha*<sup>52</sup> and dwell there with their families. I will act so that I do not cause anything unpleasant to them, not to speak of those who live in villages. I will live alone and pass my time in contemplation, eating that which is ripe and that which is unripe.<sup>53</sup> I will satisfy the ancestors and the gods with wild fruits, water and eloquent words. I will follow the fiercest of rites prescribed for those who dwell in the forest. Serving in this way, I will await the end of my physical existence. Or, I will dwell alone and spend my night under different trees. I will shave my head and beg for a living, destroying my body. I will be covered with dust and seek shelter in empty houses. I will find an abode near the root of a tree and abandon everything that is pleasant and unpleasant. Sorrow and delight, praise and censure, will be equal for me. I will have no desire and be free of any sense of possessiveness. Opposites will mean the same and I will have nothing to receive. I will find pleasure in my own atman. I will find serenity in my own atman. I will be like one who is dumb, blind and deaf. There will be no occasion for me to have conversations with anyone else. I will not injure any of the four kinds of beings,<sup>54</sup> mobile and immobile, as they are engaged in their own dharma. I will behave equally towards all those who have life. I will not laugh at anything, nor will I frown at anything. My face will always be cheerful and all my senses will be well controlled. I will not ask anyone about the route. I will travel along any path and not wish to go to any special country or direction. I will advance impartially and not glance back. I will be upright and cautious, so that I avoid and do not frighten anyone along the path. Nature is most important and food and drink will take care of themselves. I will not think about all the opposite sentiments<sup>55</sup> that stand against this. If even a little bit of succulent food is not available at first, I will roam around and seek to find it in seven houses.<sup>56</sup> But I will go at the time when there is no smoke, when the pestles have been put away, when the coal in the fire has died down, when food has been eaten, when the handling of the pots is over and when all the mendicants have gone. At one time, I will roam around and beg from two to five houses.<sup>57</sup> I will roam around the earth, freeing myself from the noose of desire. I will be like one who does not wish to live. I will act like one who is about to die. I will not find delight or sorrow in either life or death. If someone severs one of my arms and another person smears the other with sandalwood paste, I will not think of doing good things to the latter and harming the former. There are acts that are done to improve the state of one’s life. I will abandon all of them. Blinking my eyes, I will give up attachment to all of them and abandon all the acts that are connected to the senses. When I have abandoned all resolution, I will purify myself well. I will have freed myself from all attachment and will have passed beyond all bonds. I will not be under the subjugation of anything and will follow the dharma of the wind.<sup>58</sup> I will roam around without any attachment and will obtain eternal satisfaction. It was because of my greed and ignorance that I performed extremely wicked deeds. There are men who per-

form good and wicked deeds because they are tied down, through cause and effect, to their relatives.<sup>59</sup> When the lifespan is over, the body is almost completely decayed. They then receive the fruits of those wicked deeds, but no one except the doer obtains the consequence.<sup>60</sup> The wheel of life goes on in this way, like the turning wheel of a chariot. This collection of beings meet each other. This collection of beings acts. Birth, death, old age, disease and pain are without any substance and transient. On this earth, one who can discard them is happy. The gods fall down from heaven and so do the maharshis from their appointed spots. Which person, if he desires to know about the reason and truth behind existence, would then desire to exist?<sup>61</sup> A king may perform many kinds of deeds, in accordance with the rites and auspicious signs. But that king will be bound down by the slightest bit of action. For a long time, this amrita of wisdom has presented itself before me. Therefore, I desire it and want the eternal and certain state, from which one does not decay. I will conduct myself in this virtuous way and roam around, without any connection to the material world. I will fearlessly place my body on that path.”

## Chapter 1338(10)

‘Bhima said, “O king! Your understanding has become clouded, just like a scholar of the Vedas who has limited intelligence and recites passages from the Vedas, without realizing their true purport. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you had made up your mind to be lazy and censure the dharma of kings, then what has been gained from this destruction of the sons of Dhritarashtra? Forgiveness, compassion, pity and non-violence—with the exception of you, there is no one who treads the path of kshatriyas who is tied down by these. Had we got to know that your intentions would be of this type, we would never have picked up our weapons and killed anyone. We would have roamed around and sustained ourselves through begging, until it was time to free ourselves from our bodies. This terrible battle between the kings would not have taken place. The wise ones have said that everything is meant to sustain life. Everything, mobile and immobile, is food to sustain life. Therefore, anyone who stands in the way of obtaining the kingdom must be slain. Those who are wise and learned about the dharma of kshatriyas have said this. Those killed by us were wicked. They stood in the way of the kingdom. O Yudhishtira! Having slain them, we should follow dharma and enjoy the earth. We are like a man digging a well, who stops in his task before having reached the water, and is therefore only covered in mud. We are acting like someone who climbs a tall tree for honey, but falls down and dies before he has been able to obtain it. We are acting like a man who sets out on a great journey with high hopes, but who despairs and returns. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! We are acting like a man who slays his enemies and then kills himself. We are acting like someone who is hungry, but having obtained food, does not eat it because he does not feel like it. We are acting like someone who is driven by desire, but having obtained a beautiful woman, does not perform the act. However, we are the ones who should be censured. We are the ones who are limited in our intelligence. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have followed you, merely because you are the eldest. We possess the strength of arms. We are accomplished in our learning. We are spirited. But because we follow the words of a eunuch, we are like ones who are incapacitated. We are the refuge of those who do not have a refuge. However, our prosperity will be destroyed and our objectives will be unsuccessful. When people see us in this way, what will they think of us? It has been instructed that renunciation should be resorted to in times of distress, by someone who has been overtaken by old age, or by someone who has been defeated by his enemies. Those who are accomplished in wisdom do not recommend renunciation in a situation like this. Those who are subtle in discernment think that this is a transgression of dharma. Therefore, how can you resort to a state that is not recommended for you? You should censure it too, and not faithfully accept it.<sup>62</sup> Men who are without prosperity and riches, those who are atheists, have propounded this view about the learning in the Vedas. This is falsehood in the garb of truth. If a man who is capable resorts to this state of shaving his head, he is deluding himself. He is resorting to false dharma. Though he subsists, he does not live. Then again, though he is capable of sustaining sons, grandsons, gods, rishis, guests and ancestors, he decides to lead a solitary life of happiness in the forest. Even animals, boars and birds cannot obtain heaven in this way. People do not say that this is an auspicious way of life. O king! If one could obtain success only through sannyasa, then mountains and trees would have swiftly obtained success. They are always seen not to cause injury towards others and are based on sannyasa. They have no possessions and always live on their own. If success can be obtained through one’s own fortune<sup>63</sup> and not that of others, one should undertake action. There can be no success without action. Aquatic creatures have no one but themselves to sustain. If that is the criterion, they would obtain success. Notice that everyone in this universe is preoccupied with his own tasks. Therefore, one should act. There can be no success without action.”’



## Chapter 1339(11)

‘Arjuna said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! On this, an ancient history is recounted, the conversation between the ascetics and Shakra. Some brahmanas abandoned their homes and went to the forest. They had still not developed beards.<sup>64</sup> Though they were born in good lineages, they were stupid and followed the wrong path. They thought that they were following dharma and decided to observe brahmacharya. They abandoned their homes and their fathers. Indra took pity on them. Adopting the form of a golden bird, the illustrious one came to them and said, ‘Men who eat leftover food perform an extremely difficult task. The lives of those who perform such meritorious acts should be praised. They are foremost among those who follow dharma and obtain the best of success and objectives.’<sup>65</sup>

“The rishis replied, ‘Aha! This bird is praising those who eat leftover food. It must be praising us, since we subsist on leftover food.’

“The bird said, ‘I am not praising you. You are covered in mud and dust. You are wicked ones who eat impure food. You are not the ones who eat leftover food.’

“The rishis replied, ‘We think that the path that we are following is the best. O bird! Tell us what is beneficial. We have great faith in you.’

“The bird said, ‘If you do not doubt me and do not cause a division in your own selves,<sup>66</sup> then I will speak words that are truly beneficial.’

“The rishis replied, ‘O father!’<sup>67</sup> We will listen to your words. You know about different paths. O one with dharma in your soul! Instruct us. We wish to be taught by you.’

“The bird said, ‘The cow is the best among quadrupeds and gold the best among metals. Mantras are the best among words and brahmanas the best among bipeds. Mantras determine the sacraments for a brahmana as long as he lives, from the time of birth to the time when he dies and is at the cremation ground. The rites of the Vedas are the supreme path towards heaven. All deeds are said to become successful through mantras. In this world, the firm words of the Vedas signify success, depending on the months, half-months, seasons, the sun, the moon and the stars.<sup>68</sup> In this life, all beings are attached to action in accordance with this. This<sup>69</sup> is sacred and the greatest stage of life and is the field for success. What path is followed by men who censure action? They are stupid, evil and are deprived of artha. Those foolish ones subsist, but have abandoned the eternal path followed by the lineage of the gods, the lineage of the ancestors and the lineage of Brahma.<sup>70</sup> They traverse a path not approved by the sacred texts. O ascetics! Therefore, this is the asceticism you should endeavour to follow. The offering of shares to the eternal lineages of the gods, the ancestors and Brahma and servitude to preceptors are said to be the most difficult of tasks. Having performed such difficult tasks, the gods obtained supreme prosperity. That is the reason I am telling you that the burden of a householder is an extremely difficult one to take up. There is no doubt that this is the best form of austerity for beings. It forms the base. Everything is established on the rules prescribed for a family. O brahmanas! Those who are not selfish and those who have gone beyond opposite sentiments say that this is the best form of asceticism. People say that going to the forest is a middling kind of asceticism. Those who live on leftovers and following the rites, morning and evening, divide up the food among relatives, attain an end that is extremely difficult to obtain. They first give to guests, gods, ancestors and relatives. They then eat the remnants and are said to be those who live on leftovers. They are established in their own dharma. They are excellent in their vows and are truthful. They become the preceptors of the worlds and are revered by everyone. They do not suffer from envy. They attain the world of heaven, Shakra’s heaven. Those people perform extremely difficult deeds and dwell there for an eternal number of years.’

“On hearing his words, which were full of dharma and artha, they abandoned the path of non-believers<sup>71</sup> and resorted to the dharma of householders.<sup>72</sup> O one who cannot be assailed! Therefore, you should also resort to eternal patience. O supreme among men! With all the enemies slain, rule over the entire earth.”

## Chapter 1340(12)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Arjuna’s words, Nakula glanced towards the king, who was supreme among those who upheld all forms of dharma. The immensely wise one was broad in the chest and mighty-armed.<sup>73</sup> His eyes were coppery red and he was temperate in speech. The scorcher of enemies spoke these words to his brother. “The gods established their fires in Vishakhayupa.<sup>74</sup> O great king! Know that the gods decided to base themselves on action. O king! The ancestors gave life to both believers and non-believers. However, consider that they performed deeds in accordance with the prescribed rites. Know that those who censure the Vedas<sup>75</sup> have been dislodged and are extreme non-believers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who abandons what is stated in the Vedas, despite all his action, does not attain the path of the gods and the vault of heaven. O lord of men! There are brahmanas who are learned and have carefully determined everything stated in the Vedas. Listen. They say that this<sup>76</sup> is the best stage of life. Wealth must be acquired in accordance with dharma and must be given away in the best of sacrifices. O great king! A man who thus perfects his soul is said to be one who truly renounces. However, a person who ignores this source of happiness is established on a higher plane, in the sense that he abandons his own self.<sup>77</sup> O great king! O lord! That is a *tamasa* kind of renouncing.<sup>78</sup> There may be a sage who does not have an abode. He roams around and finds refuge at the root of a tree. He does not cook and is always engaged in yoga. O Partha! He is one who renounces, but is a mendicant.<sup>79</sup> O lord of the earth! There may be a brahmana who disregards anger and delight and does not indulge in passions. He studies the Vedas. But such a person who renounces only serves his preceptor.<sup>80</sup> O king! The learned ones have considered all the ashramas<sup>81</sup> on a scale and have said that three of them on one side are equal to the stage of being a householder on the other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having considered, the maharshis, who know about the objectives of the worlds, determined that this was the path towards artha, kama and heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Someone who acts in accordance with these sentiments is one who truly renounces. Like a foolish person, he does not abandon his house and head for the forest. There are also those false ones, who are like bird-catchers trying to catch dharma. But because they cannot get rid of desire, the king of death<sup>82</sup> binds them around the neck with the noose of death. It is said that action done through pride does not lead to fruits. Tranquility, self-control, austerities, generosity, truthfulness, cleanliness, honesty, sacrifices, fortitude and dharma are always spoken of as the rites followed by rishis. Acts undertaken for the sake of gods, ancestors and guests are praised. O great king! In this mode of life, the three fruits are obtained.<sup>83</sup> One who follows this, observed by the brahmanas, and does not deviate, is one who renounces and never confronts catastrophe in anything. O king! The unblemished Prajapati<sup>84</sup> created beings. The one who is tranquil in his soul thought that they would worship him with sacrifices and perform sacrifices, with many kinds of gifts. Creepers, trees, herbs, animals fit to be sacrificed and oblations and other objects required for sacrifices were also created for the sake of sacrifices. The task of performing a sacrifice constrains those who are in the householder stage.<sup>85</sup> That is the reason the status of being a householder is a difficult task to perform and is not easy to obtain. O great king! There are householders who possess animals and grain, but do not sacrifice. Eternal sin awaits them. Some rishis say that studying is a sacrifice, others that knowledge is a sacrifice. There are others who perform great sacrifices in their minds. O king! There are brahmanas who become one with the brahman by adhering to the path that involves the act of giving. The residents of heaven envy them. O lord of men! There are many kinds of jewels that have been collected. By not giving them away in a sacrifice, you are thinking like a non-believer. For someone who has a family, I do not see any renouncement except through *ashvamedha*, *rajasuya* or *sarvamedha*.<sup>86</sup> O father!<sup>87</sup> There are also other sacrifices revered by brahmanas. O great king! Perform those, like Shakra, the lord of the gods. When a king commits the sin of being distracted, bandits plunder. When the subjects have no refuge, the king is said to be overcome by kali.<sup>88</sup> O lord of the earth! If we do not give away horses, cattle,

servant maids, adorned she-elephants, villages, countries, fields and houses to brahmanas, our consciousness will be destroyed by selfishness and we will be like kings overcome by kali. Kings who do not give and do not offer refuge obtain their share of sin. They enjoy unhappiness, never happiness. If you do not perform a great sacrifice, if you do not sacrifice to the ancestors, if you do not bathe in the waters of tirthas and instead depart, to roam around, you will face destruction, like a cloud that is dispersed and blown away by the wind. You will be dislodged from both the worlds<sup>89</sup> and be stationed between them. One who casts aside all attachment in his mind, internal and external, is one who truly renounces, not one who simply goes away. O great king! A brahmana who follows these rites prescribed for brahmanas is never dislodged.<sup>90</sup> The prosperous enemies have been swiftly slain in the battle, like the army of the daityas against Shakra. O Partha! Devoted to your own dharma, why should you grieve? O king! This is what has earlier been recommended in the sacred texts and practised by the righteous. You have conquered the earth through the valour and dharma of kshatriyas. O Indra among men! You know about mantras! Give it away and you will ascend the vault of heaven. O Partha! You should not sorrow now.”

## Chapter 1341(13)

‘Sahadeva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One does not obtain success by casting aside external objects. Even if one casts aside physical parts of the body, success may or may not occur.<sup>91</sup> There are those who cast aside external objects, but still desire them from inside the body.<sup>92</sup> Let the happiness that results from that kind of dharma devolve on those who hate us, not on us. There are those who cast aside both objects and the physical body. Let the happiness that results from that kind of dharma devolve on our well-wishers, but not on us. There are two *aksharas* in death and three *aksharas* in the eternal brahman. ‘*Mama*’ is death and ‘*na mama*’ is eternal.<sup>93</sup> O king! The brahman and death both dwell inside one’s own self. They are invisible inside beings and there is no doubt that they cause them to struggle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If it is certain that the soul cannot be destroyed, then, by destroying the bodies of beings, one does not cause any violence. On the other hand, if the soul is generated with the body and is also destroyed with the body, then the path of all these rites is completely futile. Therefore, a virtuous man should renounce internally and intelligently follow the path that has been followed by his ancestors earlier.<sup>94</sup> If a king obtains the entire earth, with all its mobile and immobile objects, and yet does not enjoy it, his life is certainly fruitless. O king! There may be a man who lives in the forest and survives on wild fare. However, if he still has attachment towards objects, he lives within the jaws of death. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Consider the brahman that is naturally within all beings. A person who can see that characteristic is freed from great fear. You are my father. You are my mother. You are my brother. You are my preceptor. Therefore, you should pardon me for this distressed lamentation that is the consequence of sorrow. O protector of the earth! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! What I have spoken may be true or false. But know that it results from devotion towards you.”’

## Chapter 1342(14)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kunti’s son, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, did not speak, while his brothers spoke many things about what the Vedas had said. Droupadi, supreme among women, was beautiful. She had large eyes and was descended from an extremely noble family. She addressed the Indra among kings. The king was seated like a bull, surrounded by his brothers. They were like lions and tigers and he was like the leader of a herd of elephants. She knew about dharma and could discern the nature of dharma. Though she was always cherished by the king, she was always somewhat haughty, especially towards Yudhishtira. Having been invited, the wide-hipped and extremely beautiful one glanced towards her husband<sup>95</sup> and spoke these gentle words. “O Partha! These brothers of yours are as parched as *stoka* birds.<sup>96</sup> They are stationed here and are warbling, but you do not pay them any attention. O great king! They are like crazy and large elephants. Gladden them with appropriate words. They have always suffered from sorrows. O king! Earlier, you were with your brothers in Dvaitavana and they were oppressed by the cold, the wind and the heat. Why did you speak such words to them? ‘Desiring victory in the encounter, we will slay Duryodhana in the battle and enjoy the entire earth, which is capable of granting every object of desire. O scorchers of enemies! We will deprive the rathas of their chariots and kill the mighty elephants. We will strew the field of battle with chariots. We will perform many grand sacrifices, at which a lot of gifts will be given away. Our sorrow of dwelling in the forest will become happiness.’ O supreme among those who uphold dharma! These were the words you yourself spoke then. O brave one! How can you then shatter their minds now? A eunuch cannot enjoy the earth. A eunuch cannot obtain wealth. There cannot be sons in a eunuch’s house, just as fish cannot exist in mud.<sup>97</sup> A kshatriya without the staff of punishment does not shine. There is no prosperity without the staff of punishment. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without the staff of punishment, a king’s subjects do not obtain happiness. O supreme among kings! Friendship towards all beings, donations, studying and austerities are dharma for a brahmana, not for a king. The wicked must be countered. The virtuous must be protected. Together with not running away from a battle, this is the supreme dharma for kings. A person who possesses both forgiveness and anger, who gives and also takes, who frightens and also grants freedom from fear and who chastises and also rewards—such a person is said to know dharma. You have not obtained the earth through learning, donations, conciliation, sacrifices or bribery.<sup>98</sup> The forces of the enemy had brave ones who were ready to strike, with elephants, horses and chariots. It was larger in three parts.<sup>99</sup> It was protected by Drona, Karna, Ashvatthama and Kripa. O brave one! It has been destroyed by you. Therefore, enjoy the earth. O great king! O tiger among men! O lord! You used a rod to crush Jambudvipa, with its many countries.<sup>100</sup> O lord of men! You also used a rod to crush Krounachadvipa, equal to Jambudvipa and to the west of the great Meru. O lord of men! You used a rod to crush Shakadvipa, equal to Krounachadvipa and to the east of the great Meru. O tiger among men! To the north of the great Meru is Bhadrashva, equal to Shakadvipa. You crushed it with your rod. There were many countries between one dvipa and another dvipa. O brave one! You immersed yourself in the ocean and crushed them with your rod. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These were the immeasurable deeds that were performed by you. O great king! The brahmanas honoured you. But despite that, you are not pleased. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Look at your brothers and delight them. They are like proud bulls and proud kings of elephants. All of you are like the immortals. All of you are scorchers of enemies and are capable of withstanding enemies. It is my view that even a single one of you would have been enough to bring me happiness, not to speak of when all of you tigers and men and bulls among men are my husbands, like the senses enervating the body.<sup>101</sup> My mother-in-law knows everything and can see everything. Her words cannot be false. She told me, ‘O Panchali! O excellent one! Yudhishtira will maintain you in happiness, after he has killed many thousands of kings through his valour.’ O lord of men! Now, because of your confusion, I see that you will make this futile. O Indra among kings! If the eldest brother is mad,

all the others follow him. Because you are mad, all the Pandavas will become mad. O lord of men! If these brothers of yours were not mad, they should have bound you up with the non-believers and ruled the earth. A person who acts stupidly does not obtain anything that is superior. A person who is on the path towards madness should be treated with incense, collyrium, treatment through the nose,<sup>102</sup> medicines and medical remedies. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I am the worst of all women in the world. Though I have been oppressed by the enemy, I still wish to remain alive. They<sup>103</sup> have struggled and have obtained this prosperity. But after having obtained the entire earth, you are acting so as to bring a disaster on yourself. O king! The kings Mandhata and Ambarisha were supreme among kings and were honoured by all the kings on earth. Be as radiant as them. In accordance with dharma, rule the goddess earth, with its mountains, forests and islands, and protect the subjects. O king! Do not be distressed in your mind. Perform many sacrifices and offer oblations into the fire. O supreme among kings! Give the brahmanas cities, objects of pleasure and garments.”

## Chapter 1343(15)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Yajnaseni’s words, Arjuna again spoke, showing honour to the mighty-armed lord who was his eldest brother. “The rod punishes all subjects. The rod protects them. When everything is asleep, the rod is awake. The learned say that the rod is dharma. O lord of men! The rod protects both dharma and artha. The rod protects kama. Is it said that the rod protects the three objectives.<sup>104</sup> Grain is protected through the rod. Wealth is protected through the rod. You know this and you should accept it. Consider the natural way of the world. Some evil ones do not perform wicked deeds because of their fear for the king’s rod, others because of their fear for Yama’s rod and others because of their fear of the life hereafter. There are other evil ones who do not perform wicked deeds because of their fear for each other. In this world that has come about, everything is based on the rod. It is because of their fear of the rod that some do not eat each other. Had the rod not protected, they would have been submerged in blind darkness. It controls those who are not disciplined. It punishes those who are wicked. It is because it controls and punishes that the learned know of it as *danda*.<sup>105</sup> Words are the danda for brahmanas, arms that for kshatriyas. Donations are said to be the rod for vaishyas. But it is said that there is no rod for shudras.<sup>106</sup> O lord of the earth! To ensure that there was no confusion among mortals, to protect riches and to establish boundaries in this world, danda was thought of. When danda strides around, dark and red-eyed,<sup>107</sup> there is exultation and subjects are not confused.

The wicked are not to be seen there. Men who are brahmacharis, householders, in the vanaprastha stage and mendicants remain stationed on their paths because of their fear of danda. O king! If one is not frightened, one does not sacrifice. If one is not frightened, one does not donate. A man who is not frightened does not wish to adhere to agreements. Without severing the inner organs, without performing terrible deeds and without killing like a fisherman, one does not obtain great prosperity. Without killing, there is no fame on earth, nor riches or subjects. Indra became the great Indra after slaying Vritra. The gods who have killed are worshipped much more by the worlds. Rudra, Skanda, Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama are killers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Time is a killer and so are Vayu, Death, Vaishravana,<sup>108</sup> Ravi,<sup>109</sup> the Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas and the Vishvadevas. It is because of their powers that people bow down before them, but never before Brahma, Dhata or Pushan. These<sup>110</sup> are neutral vis-à-vis all beings, self-controlled and prone to peace. But only a few men, who are peaceful in all their deeds, worship them. I do not see anyone alive in this world who does not act violently. Living beings sustain themselves through other living beings, the stronger live off the weaker. O king! The mongoose eats the rat. The cat eats the mongoose. The dog eats the cat. The carnivorous beast eats the dog. A man eats them all. Behold. That is the way of dharma. Everything, mobile and immobile, is food for living beings. Those are the principles laid down by the gods and a learned person is not confused by this. O Indra among kings! You should become the person you were born to be. Those who are stupid<sup>111</sup> control anger and delight and resort to the forest. Without killing, the ascetics cannot sustain their lives. There are many beings in water, in the earth and in fruits. It is not true that they are not killed. What can be more important than sustaining life? There are many beings so subtle that their existence can be determined only through inference.

Their bodies can be destroyed through a mere blinking of the eyelids. Men leave the village. They give up anger and pride. But in the forest, they are seen to be confused and live the life of householders with families.<sup>112</sup> They till the ground and destroy herbs and trees. They kill birds and animals. Such men perform sacrifices and obtain heaven. O Kounteya! In my mind, there is no doubt that when the rod is properly applied, the endeavours of all beings become successful. If danda did not exist on this earth, all these beings would be destroyed. Like fish on a stake, the strong will cook the weak. Brahma himself spoke these truthful words earlier. ‘When applied rightly, danda protects beings. Look at the fire, once it has been pacified and is not frightened. Scared of the danda, it



blazes up again.’ If danda did not exist in this world, there would be no difference between the virtuous and the wicked. Everything would be blind darkness and it would be impossible to distinguish anything. There are non-believers and criticizers of the Vedas, those who do not observe the boundaries. But stricken by the rod, even they can be made to follow rules. In this world, everyone is ruled by the rod. The pure man is extremely rare. It is because of fear of the rod that people can be made to follow rules. The rod was thought of by the creator, for the sake of protecting dharma and artha, so that the four varnas could be controlled and did not become confused. If they were not scared of danda, birds and carnivorous animals would have eaten up all the animals and men and all the oblations kept for sacrifices. Had the rod not protected, no brahmachari would have studied, no wonderful cow would have yielded milk and no maiden would have married.<sup>113</sup> There would be an end to the universe and all the boundaries would be broken down. Had the rod not protected, beings would not have recognized property. Had the rod not protected, people would not have been scared and would not have performed sacrifices throughout the year, giving away many kinds of donations, in accordance with the proper rites. Had the rod not protected, people would not have followed the dharma and dictates of the stages of life, nor would anyone have obtained learning. Had the rod not protected, camels, bullocks, horses, mules and asses would not have drawn vehicles, even after they had been yoked. Had the rod not protected, servants would not have listened to their instructions, nor would children have abided by what their fathers described as dharma. All beings are established on the basis of fear of the rod. That is what the learned say. Heaven and the world of men are established on the rod. Where the rod that destroys enemies is applied well, crookedness, sin and deceit are not seen there. When the rod is not raised, dogs are seen to lick oblations. If the rod does not protect, the crow steals the sacrificial cake. Be it through dharma, or be it through adharma, the kingdom has now been obtained. Our duty is not to sorrow, but to enjoy it and perform sacrifices. There are fortunate ones who dwell with their beloved wives. They roam around, attired in pure garments, and happily follow dharma. They eat the best of food. There is no doubt that all efforts depend on artha and that itself is based on danda. Behold the glory of danda. Dharma was declared so that the world could be sustained. There is non-violence and there is violence for righteous reasons. Of these, that which leads to dharma is superior.<sup>114</sup> There is nothing that possesses all the qualities, nor is there anything without any qualities. In all acts, something that is good and something that is evil are seen. Animals are castrated. Their horns are broken off. They are afflicted and made to carry many loads. They are tied down and chastised. This is the way the world goes on. It is on a crooked and decayed path. O great king! Therefore, you should observe the dharma that has been followed from ancient times. Perform sacrifices. Donate. Protect the subjects. Follow dharma. O Kounteya! Slay enemies and protect your friends. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should not sorrow because you have slain the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No sin has attached to you because of that. Someone who kills an assassin advancing to kill him does not suffer the sin attached to killing a foetus,<sup>115</sup> because that anger provokes the anger.<sup>116</sup> There is no doubt that the inner souls of all beings are incapable of being killed. If the soul cannot be killed, then how can it be killed by someone else? Just as a man enters a new house, in that way, beings successively enter new bodies. The old bodies are discarded and the new ones are acquired. People who know about the truth say that the face of death is nothing but this.”

## Chapter 1344(16)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Arjuna’s words, the intolerant and energetic Bhimasena resorted to his patience and spoke to his eldest brother. “O king! You know about dharma. There is nothing on earth that is not known to you. We always wish to learn from your conduct, but are unable to do so. In my mind, I kept saying, ‘I will not speak. I will not speak.’ O lord of men! However, I am speaking out of great grief. Listen. Because of your confusion, everything is now uncertain. We have become perplexed and weak. This is the king of the world. He is accomplished in all the sacred texts. How can he be overcome by confusion and cheerlessness now, like an inferior man? You know about the coming and going of the world. O lord! There is nothing that has happened, or will happen, that is not known to you. O great king! O lord of men! This being the case, I will advance an argument about you ruling the kingdom. Listen with undivided attention. There are two kinds of diseases, physical and mental. Each one is generated from the other and they are not seen to exist independently. There is no doubt that a physical disease causes a mental one. It is also certain that a mental disease results in a physical one. Someone who sorrows over a physical or mental grief that has already occurred imposes a sorrow on a sorrow and doubles it. The three qualities of a body are cold, heat and wind.<sup>117</sup> When there is harmony between these qualities, that is said to be a sign of health. If one predominates over the others, remedies have been prescribed. Cold is checked through heat and heat is checked through cold. There are three qualities in the mind—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Sorrow is checked through joy and joy is checked through sorrow. Some are in a present state of happiness and remember past sorrows. Others are in a present state of sorrow and remember past unhappiness. But you were not sorrowful in the midst of woes, nor joyful in the midst of happiness. Nor should you remember sorrow in the midst of happiness, or happiness in the midst of sorrows. O Kouravya! Destiny is most powerful. O king! Or, perhaps it is your nature that is afflicting you. In her season, Krishna<sup>118</sup> was in a single garment and was brought into the assembly hall, while the sons of Pandu looked on. Having seen it, why don’t you remember that? We were exiled from our residence in the city in deerskins and took up abode in the great forest. Should you not remember that? Jatasura afflicted us, there was a battle with Chitrasena and Saindhava afflicted us.<sup>119</sup> How is it that you have forgotten that? Then again, while we lived in concealment, Kichaka kicked the noble lady with his foot.<sup>120</sup> O scorcher of enemies! You fought a battle with Drona and Bhishma. But you now have to fight this terrible battle in your mind. Arrows will serve no purpose here, nor friends or relatives. In this battle that has presented itself, you will have to fight internally. If you are defeated in this battle and give up your life, you will take up another body and have to fight again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you should fight this battle now. O great king! If you win in this, you will become successful. Having determined the nature of beings coming and going,<sup>121</sup> make up your mind. Follow the conduct of your father and grandfathers and rule the kingdom, as is appropriate. It is fortunate that the wicked Duryodhana and his followers were killed in the battle. It is fortunate that you have followed the course of Droupadi’s hair.<sup>122</sup> Perform a horse sacrifice in the proper way and give away donations. O Partha! We are your servants and so is the valiant Vasudeva.”’

## Chapter 1345(17)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Discontent, confusion, intoxication, passion, agitation, strength, delusion, pride and anxiety—you are overcome by all these sins and desire the kingdom. Do not be addicted. Be free, calm and extremely happy. The king who rules over this entire earth alone possesses only one stomach. Why are you then praising this course?<sup>123</sup> O bull among men! Desire cannot be satisfied in a day or a month. A desire incapable of being satisfied cannot be gratified in a lifespan. When it is fed, a fire blazes and when there is no kindling, it is pacified. Pacify the fire that has arisen in your stomach with a little bit of food. Conquer your stomach. This vanquished earth will then be conquered for the greater good. You have praised human desire, pleasures and prosperity. But those who do not enjoy objects of pleasure and are weak attain the supreme state. The kingdom’s acquisition and preservation, and both dharma and adharma, are based on you. Free yourself from that great burden and resort to renunciation. The tiger, for the sake of a single stomach, creates a great carnage. Other slow-moving animals sustain themselves on that.<sup>124</sup> An ascetic withdraws from material objects and resorts to sannyasa. However, a king is never satisfied. Behold the difference in their intelligence. Those who subsist on leaves, *ashmakuttas*,<sup>125</sup> *dantolukhalas*,<sup>126</sup> those who subsist on water and those who subsist on air are capable of conquering hell. Between a king who rules over every part of this entire earth and one who regards stone and gold as equal, the latter is the successful one, not the king. Do not act because of any intentions. Do not cherish hopes. Do not have a sense of ownership. Resort to the state that is without sorrow in this world and without decay in the next. Those who have no desire do not sorrow. Why are you grieving over desire? If you give up all desire, you will also be freed from these futile words.<sup>127</sup> The paths of *pitriyana* and *devayana*<sup>128</sup> are renowned. Those who sacrifice follow *pitriyana*, those who wish to be freed follow *devayana*. Through austerities, brahmacharya and studying, those purified ones are radiant after they free themselves from their bodies and go beyond the grasp of death. Worldly desire is a bond. Freed from the bonds of both desire and action, one attains the supreme objective. It is said that there is a chant sung by Janaka.<sup>129</sup> He was beyond opposite sentiments. He was free and could perceive complete liberation. ‘Though I possess nothing, my riches are infinite. If Mithila blazes up, nothing that is mine will be burnt.’ Just as a person who ascends a palace on a mountain looks down at the people on the world below, the wise person looks down at evil-minded ones who sorrow about what one should not grieve about. The intelligent person who looks and sees what should be seen, has sight. The person who knows what is not normally known is said to be intelligent. There are those who have cleansed their souls, are learned and have attained the brahman. A person who understands their words is greatly revered. When one sees all the different beings to be one and realizes that they are the extension of the brahman, one attains that exalted state, not those who are ignorant, of limited intelligence, without understanding and without austerities. Everything is based on understanding.’”

## Chapter 1346(18)

Vaishampayana said, 'The king became silent. Arjuna was tormented and overcome by sorrow and grief because of the stakes of the king's words. He spoke again. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! People speak about the ancient account of the history of a conversation between the king of Videha and his wife.<sup>130</sup> The lord of men made up his mind to abandon his kingdom and resort to a life of begging. The queen of the king of Videha was full of sorrow and addressed him. Janaka gave up riches, offspring, friends, the many jewels and the path of fire<sup>131</sup> and became one who shaved off his head. His beloved wife saw him resort to this life of begging, possessing nothing. He only had a fistful of grain. He was indifferent and without selfishness. He was without any fear. In an isolated spot, the angry and spirited wife approached her husband and spoke words that were full of reason. 'Why have you abandoned your kingdom? It was full of riches and grain. You have adopted a life of mendicancy and are wandering around with a fistful of grain in your hand. O king! Your resolution is of one kind, but your acts are of a different kind. O king! You have abandoned this great kingdom and are satisfied with only a little. O king! In this way, you will now be unable to support gods, guests, devarshis and ancestors. Therefore, your efforts are futile. O king! You have been abandoned by all the gods, guests and ancestors and are wandering around as a mendicant, without any action. You earlier supported thousands of aged brahmanas who knew about the three forms of knowledge.<sup>132</sup> You supported the world and now wish to be supported by others. Having abandoned the blazing prosperity, you are glancing around, like a dog. Your mother is without a son now and the daughter of Kosala is without a husband.<sup>133</sup> For the sake of dharma and kama, eighty kshatriya women served you.<sup>134</sup> Those pitiable ones hoped for the fruits of their actions. Having rendered them unsuccessful, what worlds will you go to? O king! Those bodies depended on you and their salvation is in doubt. Since you are the performer of wicked deeds, you have no superior world, in this world or in the next. Having abandoned the one who is your wife under dharma, you wish to live. Why have you abandoned garlands, fragrances, ornaments and many kinds of garments, living like a mendicant, without any action? You were like a pool<sup>135</sup> for all beings. You were their great cleanser. Having been a tall tree, you now serve others. When an elephant dies, many carnivorous beasts feed on it and so do many worms. But what purpose do you serve? How would you feel if someone broke this water pot, stole this *trivishtabdha*<sup>136</sup> and robbed you of your garment? You have abandoned everything and have accepted this fistful of grain. Even if this is equal to all gifts, what will you give me?<sup>137</sup> If this fistful of grain is all your riches, your pledge will be falsified.<sup>138</sup> Who am I to you? Who are you to me? What favours will you show me now? O king! Rule the kingdom and show me the favours of a place, bed, vehicle, garments and ornaments. There are those who have no hope of prosperity. They were without riches. They have no friends. They can renounce. But you have friends, servants and other riches. How can you renounce? There are those who receive a lot and there are those who always give. You know the difference between these two. Who is said to be superior? If one donates to a person who is always asking, even if that person is virtuous and without pride, those gifts are like oblations poured into a forest conflagration.<sup>139</sup> O king! A fire is not pacified until it has consumed everything. In that way, a brahmana who always asks is never satisfied. The Vedas and food are the natural sustenance of virtuous ones in this world. If one who is supposed to give does not give, where will those who desire salvation go?<sup>140</sup> In this world, householders result from food and those who beg result from them.<sup>141</sup> Life results from food. One who gives food, gives life. They<sup>142</sup> emerge from the state of being a householder, but have to resort to householders. Those self-controlled ones criticize the base of their powers.<sup>143</sup> A person cannot be said to be one who has renounced only because he is a mendicant, has shaved his head, or begs. Know that an upright person who happily gives up his wealth is one who renounces.<sup>144</sup> He is unattached, even if he roams around, as if attached. He is alone and has shed all bonds. O lord of the earth! He treats friend and foe equally and is truly free. There are those who roam around in search of alms. They have shaved off

their heads and wear ochre robes. But they are tied down by many kinds of bonds and are always thinking about unsatisfied desire. They cast aside the three types of learning,<sup>145</sup> their names, their livelihoods and their sons. They accept the trivishtabdhā and garments, but do not have understanding. Know that the ochre robe is not without desire for gain. Those with shaved heads wave the banner of dharma, but it is for the purpose of sustenance. That is my view. O great king! Conquer the world by conquering your senses and support those with ochre robes, those clad in skins, those clad in tatters, those who are naked, those who have shaved heads and those who sport matted hair. Who is superior to the one who maintains the sacred fire, performs sacrifices and gives away animals and other donations? From one day to another, incessantly give, as earlier. There is no dharma superior to that.' King Janaka knew the truth and the world sang about him. He was overcome by confusion. But you should not be confused. This is the dharma that is always followed by benevolent men. Without desire and anger, one should resort to the quality of non-violence. We should protect the subjects and base ourselves on donating. By being truthful in speech and honouring the brahmanas, we will obtain the worlds that we desire.'"

## Chapter 1347(19)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O son!<sup>146</sup> I know about the sacred texts and about this world and the next. The words of the Vedas ask one to act and also ask one to renounce action. Though the sacred texts give reasons, they cause confusion. I know what has been certainly prescribed, following the rites. You are only skilled in the use of weapons and base yourself on the conduct of heroes. You are incapable of comprehending the true meaning of the sacred texts. Those who are learned can determine the certainty of dharma. Those who know subtleties can appreciate the true purport of the sacred texts. If you had actually seen the nature of dharma, you would not have spoken those words to me. But those words were spoken by you out of fraternal affection towards a brother. O Kounteya! O Arjuna! Your words are full of reason and I am pleased with you. In the three worlds, there is no one who is your equal amongst those who know the dharma of fighting and are accomplished in all those acts. But the words that I am speaking about the subtlety of dharma will be difficult for you to understand. O Dhananjaya! You should not doubt my intelligence. You know about the science of fighting, but you have not served the elders. You do not know about the conclusions of learned ones who have considered these in their entirety. O son!<sup>147</sup> Austerities, renunciation and ritual action—those intelligent ones who have determined the way to the supreme objective have said that each of these is superior to the preceding one.<sup>148</sup> O Partha! You are wrong when you think that there is nothing superior to wealth. I will explain to you why it is not the most important. People who follow dharma are seen to follow austerities and practice studying. The rishis who attain eternal worlds observe austerities. There are those who have not grown beards and other wise ones who dwell in the forest. Though they are without riches, because of their studies, they go to the infinite heaven. There are aryas who abandon the darkness that comes from lack of intelligence and disassociate themselves from objects. They follow the northern path<sup>149</sup> and go to the worlds meant for those who renounce. You see that the southern path<sup>150</sup> is radiant. This is the world of those who follow action, but is a cremation ground. The path seen by those who desire salvation cannot be described. That is the reason renunciation is the most important, though it can only be explained with difficulty. Wise ones have followed the sacred texts, wishing to determine what is real and what is unreal, what is here and what is there. They have gone through the words of the Vedas and the sacred texts that are the *Aranyakas*. They have dissected them like the trunk of a plantain tree, but have not been able to see the essence. Some have attentively rejected and have decided that the atman, in this body with the five elements, has the attributes of desire and aversion.<sup>151</sup> It<sup>152</sup> cannot be seen by the eye. It cannot be expressed through words. Being driven by karma, it circulates in beings.<sup>153</sup> After having realized what is most beneficial, withdrawing all thirst from the mind and casting aside all forms of action, one becomes independent and happy. This is the subtle path traversed by virtuous ones. O Arjuna! This being the case, why are you praising wealth, which is harmful? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, there were people who could see and were learned in the sacred texts. They were always devoted to constant action, donations, sacrifice and deeds. They were learned and provided reasons and it was difficult to dissuade them. But there are foolish ones who rigidly adhere to those earlier texts. They say that it does not exist.<sup>154</sup> Those eloquent ones disregard what is immortal. They roam around the entire earth and speak in assemblies. Though they are extremely learned, they talk a lot. If we do not recognize them, who else will? But there are extremely wise and intelligent and virtuous ones, wise in the store of the sacred texts. They have great intelligence and perform great austerities. O Kounteya! They follow dharma and always obtain happiness through renunciation.”’

## Chapter 1348(20)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When there was a break in the conversation, the immensely ascetic and eloquent Devasthana spoke appropriate words in reply to Yudhishtira. “Phalguna spoke words to the effect that there is nothing superior to wealth. Listen attentively as I explain this to you. O Ajatashatru! You have conquered the entire earth through dharma. O king! Having won it, you should not give it up without reason. There are four steps on the ladder, established on action.<sup>155</sup> O mighty-armed one! O king! You should ascend it by stages. O Partha! Therefore, perform great sacrifices, with many donations. Rishis perform the sacrifice of austerities and others observe the sacrifice of knowledge. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must understand that those who are devoted to austerities also base themselves on action. O Indra among kings! We have heard the words of the *vaikhanasas*.<sup>156</sup> ‘One who does not strive for riches is superior to one who does. There are many sins associated with the pursuit of wealth and they only increase. For the sake of riches, people collect objects with a great deal of difficulty. One who thirsts after wealth is stupid and does not understand that a foetus is being killed.’<sup>157</sup> One may give to the undeserving and not give to the deserving. The dharma of distinguishing the undeserving from the deserving is extremely difficult. The creator created riches for sacrifices and man for protecting them<sup>158</sup> and performing sacrifices. Therefore, all riches should be used for performing sacrifices. Kama follows from that.<sup>159</sup> The immensely energetic Indra surpassed all the gods by performing many sacrifices that were full of food. He became the radiant Indra because of that. Therefore, all riches should be used for performing sacrifices. The great-souled Mahadeva offered himself in a sarvamedha sacrifice and became the exalted god of the gods. He surpassed all the beings in the universe with his deeds. He is the radiant Krittivasa and illuminates them.<sup>160</sup> Avikshit’s son, King Marutta, was mortal. But because of his sacrifice, he surpassed the king of the gods. All the vessels used were made out of gold and Shri<sup>161</sup> herself came to the sacrifice. You have heard about Harishchandra, Indra among kings. He performed sacrifices, earned merits and overcame his sorrow. Though he was human, he surpassed Shakra<sup>162</sup> with his prosperity. Therefore, everything must be used to perform sacrifices.’”

## Chapter 1349(21)

‘Devasthana said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is about what Brihaspati<sup>163</sup> said, when he was asked by Indra. ‘Contentment is the best heaven. Contentment is supreme happiness. There is nothing superior to contentment, since a person is well established in that. When one withdraws from desire, just as a tortoise draws in its limbs, then the radiance of the atman clearly manifests the atman itself. When one is not frightened and does not frighten anyone else, then one triumphs over desire and aversion and sees the atman. Whether in deeds, thought or words, when one is not angry towards anyone and does not injure anyone, then one attains the brahman.’<sup>164</sup> O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, beings look at this and that, and follow this dharma and that. Understand this.<sup>165</sup> Some praise tranquility, others praise exertion. Some recommend one or the other, others praise both. Some praise sacrifice, other people sannyasa. One praises giving, another receiving. Some say that everything must be renounced and one must be seated in silent meditation. Some praise the kingdom and the protection of everyone, through killing, cutting and piercing.<sup>166</sup> Others prefer solitude. Having examined all this, the wise have determined that the virtuous should have the view that dharma lies in not injuring any being and in non-injury, truthfulness in speech, sharing, fortitude, forgiveness, procreation on one’s own wife, gentleness, modesty and steadfastness. Svayambhuva Manu<sup>167</sup> said that riches constituted the most important component of dharma. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should make efforts to protect. A kshatriya who is established in a kingdom must be self-controlled and look on pleasant and unpleasant things equally. He must know the truth about what the sacred texts prescribe for kings and he must subsist on the remnants of sacrifices. He must be engaged in chastising the wicked and supporting the virtuous. He must establish the subjects on the path of dharma and must himself follow dharma. Having passed on the riches to his son, he can retire to the forest and sustain himself on forest fare, in accordance with what is prescribed for hermits, being attentive until his time comes.<sup>168</sup> Such a king acts in accordance with the dharma of kings. O king! Therefore, he is successful in this world and the next. It is my view that *nirvana*<sup>169</sup> is extremely difficult to attain. There are many obstacles along the path. Therefore, those who follow this dharma, are devoted to truth, generosity and austerities, have the quality of not causing injury, are devoid of desire and anger, are engaged in the task of protecting the subjects, are based on supreme self-control and fight for the sake of cattle and brahmanas, obtain the supreme objective. O scorcher of enemies! The Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, the Sadhyas and large numbers of rajarshis adopted this dharma. They were not distracted. Through their meritorious deeds, they obtained heaven.”’



## Chapter 1350(22)

Vaishampayana said, ‘During a break in this conversation, Arjuna again spoke. He spoke these words to the lord who was his eldest brother, whose mind was cheerless. “O one who is knowledgeable about dharma! You have obtained this supreme kingdom through the dharma of kshatriyas. O best among men! Having conquered it, why are you so severely tormented? O great king! It has been said that being slain in a battle is better for kshatriyas than many sacrifices. Remember the dharma of kshatriyas. It has been said that for brahmanas, austerities and renunciation are the best prescribed dharma for the state beyond death. O lord! Being slain in battle is recommended for kshatriyas. It has been said that the dharma of kshatriyas is extremely terrible, since weapons are always involved. O best among the Bharata lineage! At the right time, they should be slain by weapons in a battle. O king! Even when a brahmana bases himself on the dharma of kshatriyas, his life is praised in this world, because kshatriyas are based on brahmanas. O lord of men! Renunciation, begging, austerities and living off others are not recommended for kshatriyas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You know about all forms of dharma! You know about everything. You are an intelligent and accomplished king. You can distinguish the bad from the good. Abandon this torment and sorrow and armour yourself for action. In particular, the hearts of kshatriyas are as hard as the vajra. Having vanquished the enemy through the dharma of kshatriyas, you have obtained this kingdom, without any thorns. O Indra among men! Conquer your soul now and devote yourself to sacrifices and donations. Indra was the son of a brahmana, but he became a kshatriya through his deeds.<sup>170</sup> He killed his own wicked relatives eight hundred and ten times.<sup>171</sup> O lord of the earth! Those deeds of his should be honoured and praised. It has been said that this was how he became Indra among the gods. O great king! O Indra among men! When your fever eventually goes, perform sacrifices with many donations, just as Indra sacrificed. O bull among the kshatriyas! You should not sorrow at all about what has already happened. Following the dharma of kshatriyas, they have been purified by weapons and have attained the supreme end. O bull among the Bharatas! What has happened was going to occur. It was ordained. O tiger among kings! No one is capable of thwarting destiny.”’

## Chapter 1351(23)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by Gu-dakesha,<sup>172</sup> Kouravya Kounteya did not say anything in reply. Dvaipayana said, “O Yudhishtira! Bibhatsu’s<sup>173</sup> words are completely true. It has been said in the sacred texts that supreme dharma is vested in the status of a householder. O one who knows about dharma! In accordance with the sacred texts and following the stipulations, follow your own dharma. It is not recommended that you should give up the status of a householder and go to the forest. The gods, the ancestors, the rishis and the servants always sustain themselves on the householder. O lord of the earth! Support them. Birds, animals and other beings also owe their sustenance to householders. O lord of the earth! Therefore, garhasthya is the best of the ashramas. Among the four ashramas, it is the most difficult one to follow. O Partha! Those who are weak in their senses find it difficult to follow. Since you are not distracted, follow it. You possess all the knowledge of the Vedas. You have performed great austerities. You should therefore bear the burden of the kingdom of your father and grandfathers. O great king! Austerities, sacrifices, learning, begging, deprivation of the senses, meditation, solitude in conduct, contentment and donations—in a desire to be successful, these should be followed by brahmanas, to the best of their ability. Though it is already known to you, I will now tell you what it is for kshatriyas: sacrifices, learning, exertion, lack of contentment about one’s prosperity, wielding the fierce rod of chastisement, protecting subjects, knowledge of the Vedas, performing all the austerities, good conduct, the earning of many material objects and giving them to the deserving. O lord of the earth! These are the duties for kings. We have heard that, when performed well, they bring success in this world and in that world.<sup>174</sup> O Kounteya! Among these, wielding the rod of chastisement is said to be the best. There is always strength in the kshatriya and the rod is based on that strength. O king! These endeavours bring success for kshatriyas. On this, there is a chant sung by Brihaspati. ‘Like a snake swallowing up animals in their holes, the earth swallows up peaceful kings and brahmanas who do not leave their homes.’ It

has been heard that rajarshi Sudyumna wielded the rod and obtained supreme success, like Daksha, the son of Prachetasa.””<sup>175</sup>

## Chapter 1352(24)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O illustrious one! Through what deeds did Sudyumna, the lord of the earth, obtain supreme success? I wish to hear about that king.”

‘Vyasa replied, “An ancient history is recounted about this. There were two brothers, Shankha and Likhita, and they were controlled in their vows. They had separate and beautiful abodes on the banks of the Bahuda river and these were always lovely with trees that had flowers and fruit. On one occasion, Likhita went to Shankha’s hermitage. At that time, following his own wishes, Shankha had gone out of his hermitage. Likhita arrived at the hermitage of his brother, Shankha. He knocked down some ripe fruit. Having got them, without thinking about it, the brahmana ate them. While he was eating them, Shankha returned to his hermitage. On seeing him eating them, Shankha asked his brother, ‘Where did you get the fruit and why are you eating them?’ Embracing his elder brother and greeting him, he smiled and said, ‘I got them here.’ Shankha was overcome by great anger and replied, ‘By taking these fruits yourself, you have committed an act of theft. Go to the king and tell him what you have done. Say, “O best of kings! I have taken something that was not given to me. Know me to be a thief. Follow your own dharma. O lord of men! As a thief, quickly punish me.”’ O mighty-armed one! Having been addressed in these words, Likhita, rigid in his vows, went to King Sudyumna.

“Sudyumna heard from his guards that Likhita had arrived. With his advisers, the lord of men advanced on foot to greet him. Having approached the one who knew about the brahman, the king asked, ‘O illustrious one! Tell me the reason why you have come. It will be done.’ Having been thus addressed, the brahmana rishi replied to Sudyumna, ‘You have promised that you will do what has to be done. Now listen and act. O bull among men! I ate fruit that my elder had not authorized. O king! I ate those. Therefore, punish me immediately.’ Sudyumna replied, ‘O bull among brahmanas! If you think that the king has the authority to wield the rod, then he also has the power to pardon. O performer of auspicious deeds! O observer of great vows! You have been pardoned. Tell me what else you desire. I will certainly act in accordance with your words.’ The brahmana rishi was delighted with the great-souled king. But he wished for no other boon from the king than the boon of being punished. At this, the great-souled lord of the earth severed Likhita’s two hands.

“Having been punished, he<sup>176</sup> went to his brother, Shankha, and said in great distress, ‘I have been punished for my stupid intelligence. O illustrious one! You should now pardon me.’ Shankha replied, ‘O one who knows about dharma! I am not angry with you. Nor have you caused me any injury. You violated dharma and that is the reason you have been punished. Now quickly go to the Bahuda and according to the rites, offer oblations to the gods, the ancestors and the rishis. Do not set your mind on adharma again.’ On hearing Shankha’s words, Likhita performed his ablutions in the sacred river and also performed the water-rites. Instantly, his hands reappeared, like two lotuses. Astounded, he went to his brother and showed him his hands. Shankha said, ‘Do not doubt that this has happened because of my ascetic powers and because it has been ordained.’ Likhita asked, ‘O immensely radiant one! Why did you not purify me earlier? O supreme among brahmanas! After all, the strength of your austerities is like this.’ Shankha responded, ‘I had to act in this way because I was not the one who wielded the rod of chastisement. Other than you, the king and all his ancestors have also been purified.’ O best among Pandavas! Through his deeds, that king became supreme. He obtained supreme success, like Daksha, the son of Prachetasa. This is the dharma of kshatriyas, the protection of subjects. Anything else is a wrong path. O great king! Do not unnecessarily sorrow in your mind. O supreme among those who know about dharma! Listen to the beneficial words of your brothers. O Indra among kings! The dharma of kshatriyas is the rod, not the shaved head.”’

## Chapter 1353(25)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Maharshi Krishna Dvaipayana again spoke these words, deep in purport, to Ajatashatru Kounteya. “O son!<sup>177</sup> O great king! O Yudhishtira! These brothers of yours dwelt in the forest like ascetics. Their desires that they cherished then must be satisfied. O best of the Bharata lineage! Let these maharathas get what they want. O Partha! Rule the earth, like Yayati, the son of Nahusha. You dwelt in the forest like ascetics and were full of sorrow. But that misery is over and these tigers among men must obtain happiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With your brothers, enjoy dharma, artha and kama. O lord of the earth! After having experienced that, do what you wish to do. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! You must first free yourself of the debts to guests, ancestors and gods. Only then will you go to heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Perform the sarvamedha and ashvamedha sacrifices. O great king! After that, you will go towards the supreme objective. Engage your brothers in all the sacrifices, with abundant donations. O Pandaveya! After that, you will obtain unsurpassed fame. O tiger among men! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! We know what you will say. But listen to my words about how a king acts, so as not to deviate from dharma. O Yudhishtira! O lord of men! Those who know about dharma have determined that a person who takes away someone else’s property should be fined exactly the same amount. A king who follows the sacred texts, resorts to intelligence and, considering the time and the place, punishes bandits in this way, is right. A king who levies a tax of one-sixth, but does not protect the kingdom, obtains one-fourth of the kingdom’s sins. Listen to how a king does not deviate from dharma. If he punishes in accordance with the dharma laid down in the sacred texts, if he does not fall prey to desire and anger, if he treats everyone equally, like a father, he has no reason to be scared. O immensely radiant one! When it is the time for undertaking a task, if a king is afflicted by destiny and distracted, not undertaking the task, this is not regarded as a transgression. However, enemies must be punished, either immediately, or after proper reflection. There must be no alliances with the wicked, nor must the kingdom be sold.<sup>178</sup> O Yudhishtira! Brave ones, aryaas and those who are learned must be treated well. In particular, those who possess cattle and those who possess riches must be protected. Those who are extremely learned must be employed in all tasks connected with dharma. An accomplished one<sup>179</sup> does not repose his faith on any single individual, no matter how many qualities he possesses. A king who does not protect, is insolent, proud and arrogant, and is also envious, is said to be one who is uncontrolled. When a king is struck by destiny and all the unprotected subjects are robbed by bandits, this is a sin devolving on the king. O Yudhishtira! If a task is performed with good advice, is based on good policy and is undertaken with enterprise, in accordance with the prescribed rites, that is not adharma. When something is undertaken, depending on destiny, it may, or may not, succeed. However, if there is enterprise, no sin touches the king.

“O tiger among kings! A story is recounted about this. O king! This is an ancient account about rajarshi Haya-griva. He was brave and unblemished in his deeds. O Yudhishtira! Having killed many enemies in a battle, he was himself slain. The brave one was without any aides and was defeated. Having done all that could be done to restrain the enemy and having protected men, he resorted to the best of yoga. Having performed deeds in that excellent battle, he obtained fame. Vajirgriva<sup>180</sup> now finds delight in the world of the gods. In the battle, he was mangled by assassins armed with weapons and attacked by bandits. But he was ready to give himself up. The great-souled Ashvagriva was devoted to his duties. He perfected his soul and finds delight in the world of the gods. The bow was his sacrificial stake. The bowstring was the rope. The arrow was the smaller ladle. The sword was the larger ladle. Blood was the clarified butter. The chariot, which could go anywhere at will, was the sacrificial altar. The battle was the fire. The best of horses were the four officiating priests. Having offered his enemies and himself as oblations into that sacrificial fire, the spirited lion among kings became free from all sins. Like taking a bath at the end of a sacrifice, he offered his life in the battle. Vajirgriva finds delight in the world of the gods. Earlier, he pro-

tected the kingdom with intelligence and policy. The great-souled one performed sacrifices and then gave himself up. The spirited one pervaded all the worlds with his fame. Vajigriva finds delight in the world of the gods. He obtained divine and human success. He used the rod and protected the earth, resorting to yoga. That is the reason the great-souled king Hayagriva, who followed dharma in his conduct, finds delight in the world of heaven. He was learned. He renounced. He was faithful. He was grateful. Having performed deeds, he gave up the world of men. There are worlds for those who are intelligent, learned and revered. Having given up his body, the king obtained those. He acquired the Vedas well. He studied. The great-souled one protected the kingdom well. He established the four varnas in their own dharma. Vajigriva finds delight in the world of the gods. Having been victorious in battles, having protected the subjects, having drunk soma, having satisfied the best of brahmanas, having sustained the subjects with the use of the rod and having been destroyed in the battle, he delights in the world of the gods. His conduct was praiseworthy. Virtuous and learned men, themselves deserving honour, show him reverence. He conquered heaven and went to the world meant for heroes. The great-souled one, the performer of auspicious deeds, obtained success.”

## Chapter 1354(26)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Dvaipayana's words and on seeing that Dhananjaya was angry, Kounteya Yudhishtira took Vyasa's permission and replied in these words. "Ruling over this kingdom and its many separate objects of desire do not please my mind now. The sorrow is making me tremble. O sage! On hearing the lamentations of the women who have lost their brave husbands and sons, I can find no peace." Having been thus addressed, Vyasa, supreme among those who know about yoga and knew about dharma, accomplished in the Vedas, spoke the following words in reply to the immensely wise Yudhishtira.

"A man does not obtain anything through deeds or thought, or by giving anything.<sup>181</sup> Everything that a man obtains progressively in the course of time has been ordained by the creator in successive arrangements. If it is not time, man is incapable of obtaining anything in particular, even by studying learned texts. Even a fool is capable of obtaining riches. Time determines the success of acts. When it is a time of adversity, crafts, mantras and herbs yield no fruits. When the right time arrives and it is a time for prosperity, it is these which ensure success. It is because of time that winds blow swiftly. It is because of time that rain is generated in the clouds. It is because of time that waterbodies have lotuses in them. It is because of time that trees flourish in the forest. It is because of time that the night is dark and cool. It is because of time that the disc of the moon becomes full. When it is not time, there are no flowers or fruits in trees. When it is not time, rivers do not flow with force. When it is not time, birds, serpents, small animals, elephants and large predatory beasts on mountains do not become crazy.<sup>182</sup> When it is not time, women do not conceive. When it is not time, winter, summer and the monsoons do not arrive. When it is not time, one does not die, nor is one born. When it is not time, a child does not begin to speak. When it is not time, youth does not arrive. When it is not time, seeds do not sprout. When it is not time, the sun does not appear. When it is not time, it does not set behind Mount Asta. When it is not time, the moon does not wax and wane, nor do the large waves of the ocean ebb and rise.

"O Yudhishtira! On this, there is an ancient history that is recounted. In great grief, King Senajit sang a song.<sup>183</sup> All mortals are touched by this extremely difficult revolution. All men are ripened by time and die. O king! Some men kill others, and in turn, those men are slain by others. O king! This is the understanding of the worlds. But no one is killed and no one kills. Some think there are killers. Others think that there are no killers. The creation and destruction of beings is determined by their nature. When prosperity is destroyed and one's wife, son or father dies, one cries out in grief. One reflects on this sorrow and acts accordingly. O stupid one! Why do you sorrow? Why do you grieve, since you will also be grieved over? Consider the sorrow amidst all the sorrows and the fear amidst all fears. This body is not mine. Nothing in the earth is mine. He who realizes that what is mine also belongs to others is not confounded. There are thousands of reasons for sorrow and hundreds of reasons for joy. From one day to another, the foolish are submerged in this, but not the one who is learned. In the course of time, there are separate reasons for affection and aversion and beings are whirled around in unhappiness and in happiness. There is only unhappiness and no happiness. This is sometimes perceived. However, unhappiness results from desire and happiness results from unhappiness. There is unhappiness at the end of happiness and happiness at the end of unhappiness. One cannot obtain unhappiness all the time. Nor can one obtain happiness all the time. There is unhappiness at the end of happiness. There is happiness at the end of unhappiness. Therefore, anyone who desires eternal happiness should discard these opposite sentiments. When there is sorrow or torment, when one is senseless with grief, one must abandon the root of that grief, like severing a limb of the body. Whether it is happiness or unhappiness, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, the one who is unvanquished in his heart will regard this as something that was bound to happen. If you do something that is only a little unpleasant towards your wives or your sons, you will know who, whose, why and how.<sup>184</sup> Those who are the greatest fools in this

world and those who have obtained supreme intelligence are the ones who are in the midst of happiness. Suffering is for those who are in the middle. O Yudhishtira! This is what the immensely wise Senajit said. He knew about cause and effect in this world, about dharma and about happiness and unhappiness. He who delights in the sorrow of someone else will never be happy. There is no end to sorrows, since there is a succession of them. Happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence, gain and loss and death and life touch everyone on this earth in turn. One with fortitude is not delighted or angry at this. For a king, it is said that fighting and protection are like the consecration at a sacrifice, appropriate use of the rod is yoga, the renunciation of wealth is the dakshina in a sacrifice and complete knowledge is the purification. By governing the kingdom with intelligence and policy, by controlling selfishness in the soul, by performing sacrifices and by roaming through all the worlds as someone immersed in dharma, after casting aside a body, a great-souled one<sup>185</sup> finds delight in the world of the gods. Being victorious in battle, protecting the kingdom, drinking soma, making the subjects prosper, upholding subjects with the rod of chastisement and dying in a battle, he finds delight in the world of the gods. Having studied all the Vedas and the sacred texts, having protected the kingdom well and having established the four varnas in their own dharma, the king purifies his soul and finds delight in the world of the gods. When a king has ascended to heaven, if men, inhabitants of the city and the country and advisers bow down before his conduct, he is the best of kings.”



## Chapter 1355(27)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Abhimanyu was a child and was killed. So were the sons of Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna and the two lords of the earth, Virata and Drupada. In the battle, so were Vasushena,<sup>186</sup> knowledgeable about dharma, King Dhrishtaketu and other kings who had come from many countries. I am unable to free myself from the sorrow of having caused the slaughter of my relatives. I am tormented. Because of my fierce greed for the kingdom, I have brought about the destruction of my own lineage. I played on Gangeya’s<sup>187</sup> lap and rolled around there. Because of my greed for the kingdom, I have brought him down. I saw him whirled around by Partha’s<sup>188</sup> arrows, trembling as if he had been struck by thunder, but glancing only towards Shikhandi. The tall grandfather, lion among men, was like an aged lion. When I saw him covered by sharp arrows, my mind was distressed. Because of the arrows, he fell down from his chariot. He sat down, facing the east, whirled around like a mountain. At that time, I was overcome by dejection. With a bow and arrows in his hand, Kouravya fought for many days with Bhargava, in a great battle in Kurukshetra.<sup>189</sup> For the sake of the maidens, in Varanasi, the brave son of the river had single-handedly fought a battle against the assembled kshatriya kings.<sup>190</sup> With the power of his weapons, he had scorched the unassailable king and emperor, Ugrayudha.<sup>191</sup> He has been brought down by me in the battle. He could himself decide on his time of death. Using his arrows, he did not bring down Panchala Shikhandi, but was brought down by Arjuna. O supreme among sages!<sup>192</sup> When I saw him lying down on the ground, covered in blood, a terrible fever overcame me. As children, we were protected and reared by him. I was wicked and greedy for the kingdom. I have slain my senior. For the sake of a temporary kingdom, I have foolishly killed him.

“The great archer, the preceptor, was worshipped by all the kings. I advanced against him in the battle and wickedly lied to him about his son.<sup>193</sup> My limbs burn because the preceptor told me, ‘O king! Tell me truthfully whether my son is alive.’ Expecting that I would speak the truth, the brahmana asked me. I lied, by hiding the fact that it was an elephant. Because of my extreme avarice for the kingdom, I was evil and caused the death of my preceptor. In the battle, I put a cloak on the truth. I told my preceptor, ‘Ashvatthama has been killed,’ though it was an elephant that had been brought down. Having perpetrated such a terrible deed, what worlds will I go to now?

“Karna did not retreat from the battle and I caused him to be killed. He was my fierce elder brother. Who is more evil-acting than me?

“Abhimanyu was a child. He was like a lion born in the mountains. In my greed, I made him penetrate the formation that was protected by Drona. I have been as guilty as one who kills a foetus. Since then, I have not been able to glance at Bibhatsu or Pundarikaksha Krishna. I feel extremely sorry for Droupadi. Her five sons have been killed. She is oppressed by grief and is like the earth when it has lost five mountains. I have my share in the sins. I am the destroyer of the earth. Seated here, I will dry up my body. Know that I am the slayer of my seniors. I will fast to death here, so that I am not reborn as a destroyer of the lineage.<sup>194</sup> I will not eat or drink anything. O one who is rich in austerities! Right here, I will dry up my beloved breath of life. Go wherever you wish and grant me this permission. I seek everyone’s leave, so that I can cast aside this body.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Partha was distracted because of sorrow on account of his relatives. Vyasa, supreme among sages, restrained him and said, “O great king! You should not indulge in this excessive sorrow. O lord! I am telling you again that all this was destiny. The union and separation of living beings is certain. They are like bubbles in the water, which are there, and then are not there. Everything ends in destruction. They rise, accumulate and then fall. Union ends in dissolution. Death is the end of life. Laziness brings temporary happiness, but ends in sorrow. Industry may seem to lead to sorrow, but gives rise to happiness. Affluence, prosperity, modesty, fortitude and success are based on industriousness. Well-wishers do not ensure happiness. Ill-wishers do not ensure sorrow. Wisdom does not ensure artha. Nor is happiness ensured by wealth. O Kounteya! You have been created by the creator

for tasks. Undertake them. O king! Success results from that. Otherwise, you will not have control over your at-man.”

## Chapter 1356(28)

Vaishampayana said, 'Vyasa dispelled the grief of the eldest son of Pandu, who was tormented by grief on account of his kin and wished to give up his life.

'Vyasa said, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. O tiger among men! O Yudhisthira! This is known as Ashma's song. Listen to it. King Janaka of Videha was overcome by sorrow, misery and doubt and asked a wise brahmana named Ashma.

"Janaka asked, 'When relatives and riches come and go, how should a man who desires his own welfare behave?'

"Ashma replied, 'As soon as the atman arises inside a man's body, all unhappiness and happiness are attached to it. Both of these are possible. But whichever of these he serves, overtakes his consciousness, just as the wind drives away clouds. "I have been born in a noble lineage. I am successful. I am not an ordinary man." His consciousness becomes sprinkled with these three kinds of sentiments. He becomes addicted to pleasures and gives up the wealth accumulated by his ancestors. When this is destroyed, he thinks that even stealing the property of others is good. He transgresses codes of honour and seizes what has not been given. Kings counter such greedy ones like animals with arrows. O king! Such men live for twenty years, or thirty years. They never attain one hundred years.<sup>195</sup> They are full of great misery. Using one's intelligence, one must glance here and there, at the conduct of all beings, and determine a medicine for them.<sup>196</sup> All mental sorrow is because of delusion of consciousness or the onset of a catastrophe. There is no third reason. The various kinds of sorrow a man faces is because of the external or the internal.<sup>197</sup> Old age and death are like two wolves that devour all beings, whether they are strong or weak, short or tall. There is no man who can escape from old age and death, even if it is someone who has conquered the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. Whether a being is confronted with happiness or unhappiness, all of it must be accepted and cannot be avoided. O lord of men! They must be faced in young age, middle age, or old age and cannot be avoided. But that which is wished for<sup>198</sup> never arrives. There is separation from that which is pleasant and association with that which is unpleasant. Following destiny, there is prosperity, adversity, happiness and unhappiness. The birth of beings, the giving up of their bodies, and gain and loss, have all been ordained. Smell, colour, taste and touch are naturally determined. Like that, happiness and unhappiness have been ordained. Depending on time, all beings observe sitting, lying down, going, getting up, drinking and eating. Physicians fall ill. The strong become extremely weak. They have women, or become eunuchs. Such is the wonderful progress of time. Birth in a noble lineage, valour, recovery from disease, patience, good fortune and pleasure—all of these are the result of destiny. Even if they do not wish to, the poor have many sons. Even if they wish for many and also try, the rich may have none. Disease, fire, water, weapons, hunger, predatory beasts, poison, rope and fall from height—these can be the reasons for a being's death. One's departure is determined by destiny and one follows that reason. No one has been seen to cross it. Nor will anyone cross it. O lord of men! It is seen that a prosperous man may die when he is young, and though he is in misery, a poor person may live for one hundred years. A man who has nothing is seen to live for a long time. However, a person who has been born in a noble lineage is destroyed like an insect. O lord of men! In this world, it is often the case that a prosperous person does not have the capacity to eat anything. But a poor person is capable of digesting wood. Driven by destiny, an evil-acting person or one who is not content, convinces his soul that what he is doing is good and thinks, "I am the doer." Women, gambling with the dice, hunting, drinking and acts that are condemned by the wise—many extremely learned ones are seen to be addicted to various such vices. Because of the progress of time, whether they are desired or not desired, many things are seen to touch all beings. However, the cause is not comprehended. Wind, the sky, fire, the moon, the sun, day, night, the stars, the rivers, the mountains—who has created them and who supports them? O bull among men!

Cold, heat and rain are brought about by the circling of time and happiness and unhappiness in men is like that. Herbs, learned texts, oblations and meditations cannot save a man who faces death or old age. Just as a log of wood touches another log of wood in the great ocean, beings approach one another, touch and then drift away. Some men are in the company of women, with singing and the playing of musical instruments. Others are without protectors and depend on others for food. Time acts equally towards both. In this cycle of life,<sup>199</sup> beings may have thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of sons and wives. But whom do they belong to? Whom do we belong to? No one belongs to a person. Nor does a person ever belong to anyone. Along the path, one meets large numbers of wives, relatives and well-wishers. Where was I? Where am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Why am I here? Who am I grieving for? Thinking in this way, one can pacify one's mind. One revolves in this cycle of life, and the association with the ones one loves is temporary. The world hereafter has not been seen. Nor can it be seen. Learned ones know about it. One should not doubt the sacred texts, but be full of devotion. One must follow dharma in acts towards the ancestors and the gods. In accordance with the prescribed rites, the learned must perform sacrifices and follow the three goals.<sup>200</sup> This entire universe is submerged in the deep ocean of time. Old age and death are the giant sharks.<sup>201</sup> But there are few who understand this. There are many physicians who have studied ayurveda<sup>202</sup> and nothing else. Even they are seen to be afflicted by disease. They drink bitter and oily potions. However, they cannot cross death, like the giant ocean against the shoreline. There are chemists who are extremely accomplished in chemistry. They are seen to be shattered by old age, like trees shattered by great elephants. There are those who torment themselves through austerities, are engaged in studying, give generously and perform sacrifices. But even they cannot overcome old age and death. Once beings have been born, days, months, years, fortnights and nights cannot be rolled back. Man is powerless and his existence is uncertain. He must tread this extensive and certain path of time, followed by all beings. Irrespective of whether the soul exists independent of life or whether life exists independent of the soul,<sup>203</sup> we meet our wives and other relatives along the path. There never is any permanent association with anyone. There is none with one's own body. How can there be with anyone else? O king! Where is your father now? Where is your grandfather? They can't see you now. Nor can you see them. There is no man who can see heaven or hell. O king! The sacred texts are the eyes of the virtuous. Act accordingly. Act like a brahmachari. Then procreate and perform sacrifices. Without any malice, repay the debt to ancestors, gods and maharshis. He<sup>204</sup> must perform sacrifices. He must procreate and generate offspring, after having practised brahmacharya first. He must divide himself into two.<sup>205</sup> He must worship heaven and this world. In this way, his heart will be freed from that which is false. The king who practises dharma and acquires objects in the proper way extends his fame in all the worlds, mobile and immobile, and keeps the wheel turning.”

‘Vyasa said, “The king of Videha understood all these words, which were full of reason. Having heard this, his intelligence became completely refined. He took Ashma's leave and, with his sorrow pacified, went towards his own house. O one without decay! In that way, free yourself from this grief. You are like Shakra. Arise in delight. You have won the earth through the dharma of kshatriyas. O son of Kunti! Enjoy and do not grieve.”’

## Chapter 1357(29)

Vaishampayana said, 'Kounteya Yudhishtira, Dharma's son, did not say anything. Pandava Gudakesha<sup>206</sup> addressed Hrishiksha. "Dharmaraja, the scorcher of enemies, is tormented by grief on account of his kin. O Madhava! He is immersed in an ocean of sorrow. Comfort him. O Janardana! All of us are now again faced with an uncertainty. O mighty-armed one! You should dispel this grief." Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Vijaya, the lotus-eyed Govinda Achyuta circumambulated the king. Since he was a child, Dharmaraja could never cross Keshava. He loved Govinda more than Arjuna. The mighty-armed one's<sup>207</sup> arms were smeared with sandalwood paste and were like stone pillars. Shouri seized them and delighted him with these words. His<sup>208</sup> face was beautiful and possessed excellent teeth, with lovely eyes. It was like a full-blown lotus when the sun had arisen. "O tiger among men! Do not indulge in this sorrow that dries up the body. Those who have been slain in the field of battle will not come back. They are like objects one sees in a dream. Once one awakes, they disappear. These kshatriyas have died in the great battle between kings. They did not turn their faces away from the battle. These ornaments of the battle were brave and have died. They did not turn their backs. Nor were they slain while running away. All of those brave ones fought and gave up their lives in the great battle. They were purified through weapons and have attained heaven. You should not sorrow about them.

"An ancient history is recounted about this.<sup>209</sup> Srinjaya was overcome by sorrow on account of his son and Narada spoke to him. 'O Srinjaya! I, you, and all the subjects, have to face happiness and unhappiness. We have to roam around and can't be free from this. What is there to sorrow about? I will tell you about the deeds of supreme and immensely fortunate kings. Listen. O king! Your sorrow will be dispelled. Hear about these immensely fortunate kings who died. Listen, as I tell you about them in detail. On hearing, your sorrow will be dispelled.

"O Srinjaya!<sup>210</sup> Hear about Marutta, the son of Avikshit. He died. The gods, with Indra and Varuna, with Brihaspati at the forefront, came to the sacrifice where the great-souled king offered everything. He wished to rival Shakra Shatakratu, the king of the gods. Wishing to ensure pleasure to Shakra, the learned Brihaspati refused to be the officiating priest at his<sup>211</sup> sacrifice. However, for the sake of spiting Brihaspati, Samvarta<sup>212</sup> agreed. O supreme among kings! When that virtuous king ruled, the earth yielded grain, even when it had not been ploughed and was radiant with garlands of holy sanctuaries.<sup>213</sup> At the sacrifice of Avikshit's son, the Vishvadevas were the courtiers, the Maruts were the attendants and the great-souled Sadhyas were also present. Large numbers of Maruts drank Marutta's soma. The gifts made surpassed those of gods, men and gandharvas.<sup>214</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

"O Srinjaya! We have heard about Suhotra, the son of Vitithi. Maghavan<sup>215</sup> showered gold on him for an entire year. Having obtained him as a lord of men, Vasumati's name became appropriate.<sup>216</sup> When he was the lord of the countries, the rivers flowed with gold. When he was honoured by the worlds, Maghavan showered down tortoises, crabs, crocodiles, makaras and dolphins into the rivers. When he saw hundreds and thousands of fish, makaras and tortoises raining down, Vitithi's son was astounded. He collected the gold that was strewn around and, performing a sacrifice in Kurujangala, gave it all away to brahmanas at the sacrifice. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son, who did not give anything away, nor perform sacrifices? Be pacified and do not grieve.

"O Srinjaya! We have heard about Vrihadratha of Anga. He died, after giving away a million white horses. In the sacrifice that he performed, as donations, he gave away a million maidens with golden ornaments. As donations, he also gave away a million bulls with golden harnesses, followed by thousands of cows. When the king of Anga performed his sacrifice on Mount Vishnupada, Indra was intoxicated with soma and the brahmanas with the gifts. The Indra among kings performed hundreds of other sacrifices too. The gifts given surpassed that of gods,

men and gandharvas. No other man has been born, or will be born, who has given away as much of wealth in the seven soma sacrifices.<sup>217</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Shibi, the son of Ushinara. Like a skin, he covered the entire earth. The earth resounded with the mighty roar of his chariot. On a single chariot, he brought the entire earth under a single umbrella.<sup>218</sup> At his sacrifice, Shibi, the son of Ushinara, gave away all the cattle, horses and wild animals that he possessed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!<sup>219</sup> Prajapati thought that amongst all the kings, from the past and from the future, there would be no one else who would be able to bear such a burden, other than rajarshi Shibi, the son of Ushinara. He surpassed Indra in his valour. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son, who did not give anything away, nor perform sacrifices? Be pacified and do not grieve.

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Bharata, the son of Duhshanta and Shakuntala. He died. He was a great archer and possessed abundant riches and energy. Along the banks of the Yamuna, he tied thirty horses for the gods, twenty along the Sarasvati and fourteen along the banks of the Ganga. He performed one thousand horse sacrifices and one hundred royal sacrifices. Duhshanta's immensely energetic son, Bharata, performed these in earlier times. Among all the kings on earth, no one else could replicate Bharata's great deed, just as mortals cannot fly with the use of their arms. He tied down more than one thousand horses at sacrificial altars. Bharata gave away many treasures to Kanva.<sup>220</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Rama, Dasharatha's son. He too died. He was always compassionate towards the subjects, as if they were his own sons. In his kingdom, there were no widows, nor those without protectors. When he ruled over the kingdom, he was like a father to everyone. Rain showered down at the right time and the crops were succulent. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, there was always plenty of food. Beings did not drown in the water. Nor did fires burn unnecessarily. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, there was no fear from predatory beasts. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, the subjects lived for thousands of years and had thousands of sons. They were without disease and were successful in all their objectives. The women did not quarrel with each other, not to speak of men. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, the subjects always followed dharma. Without any calamity, the trees always bore flowers and fruit. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, each cow yielded a bucket of milk. The immensely ascetic one roamed around in the forest for fourteen years. He then performed ten horse sacrifices, at which a lot of gifts were given, with no bars on entry. He was dark and handsome, with red eyes. He was like a mad elephant in his valour. Rama ruled over the kingdom for ten thousand years. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about King Bhagiratha. He died. At his sacrifice, Indra drank soma and became extremely intoxicated. The illustrious chastiser of Paka, supreme among the gods, was invincible in the strength of his arms and defeated many thousands of asuras. In his sacrifice, he<sup>221</sup> gave away a million maidens, with ornaments of gold. Each maiden was on a chariot and each chariot was drawn by four horses. With each chariot, there were one hundred excellent elephants with golden harnesses. A thousand horses followed each elephant from the rear. A thousand cows followed each horse and there were one thousand goats and sheep behind each cow. When he dwelt in the mountainous regions earlier, Ganga Bhagirathi was seated on his lap and came to be known as Urvasi.<sup>222</sup> Bhagiratha, descended from the Ikshvaku lineage, performed sacrifices at which a lot of donations were given. Ganga, with three flows,<sup>223</sup> agreed to become his daughter. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard of Dilipa, the son of Ilavila. He died. The brahmanas recount his numerous deeds. In a great sacrifice, the lord of the earth willingly gave away the earth, with all its riches, to brahmanas. In each sacrifice that he performed, the officiating priest received one thousand golden elephants as a gift. For his sacrifices, there was a great and radiant sacrificial stake made out of gold. With Shakra as the foremost, the gods performed their tasks and sought refuge with him. The ring on top of the sacrificial stake was also made out of gold and six thousand divine gandharvas danced around it. In their midst, Vishvavasu<sup>224</sup> himself played the seven notes

of the veena and every being there thought, “He is playing for me.” No other king could replicate King Dilipa in this. Ornamented in gold, intoxicated women lay down on the road.<sup>225</sup> King Dilipa was truthful and fierce in wielding the bow. Any man who saw the great-souled one went to heaven. There were three sounds that never flagged in Dilipa’s residence— the chant of studying, the twang of the bowstring and the words, “I give”. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Mandhata, Yuvanashva’s son. He also died. The gods, the Maruts, extracted the foetus from his father’s flank.<sup>226</sup> The great-souled one developed in Yuvanashva’s stomach, having earlier been generated from the water. The handsome king would later conquer the three worlds. On seeing him lying down on his father’s lap, with the form of a god, the gods asked each other, “Who will suckle him?” Indra approached and said, “He will be suckled by me.” Thus, Shatakratu gave him the name of Mandhata.<sup>227</sup> For the sake of sustaining the great-souled one, a stream of milk issued forth from Indra’s hand, into the mouth of Yuvanashva’s son. O king! He drunk from Indra’s hand and grew and in twelve days, was like one who was twelve years old. In a single day, the entire earth came under the subjugation of that great-souled one. He had dharma in his soul and, in battle, was as brave as Indra. In battle, Mandhata defeated King Angara, Marutta, Asita, Gaya and Brihadratha from Anga. When Yuvanashva’s son fought against Angara in the battle, the gods thought that the stretching of his bow was shattering the firmament. From where the sun rises to where it sets, all of that was said to be the field of Mandhata, Yuvanashva’s son. He performed one hundred horse sacrifices and one hundred royal sacrifices. The lord of the earth gave brahmanas *rohita* fish made out of gold and each of these was ten yojanas long and one yojana wide.<sup>228</sup> What was left over was shared out among people who were not brahmanas. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Yayati, the son of Nahusha. He also died. He conquered the entire earth, with its oceans. O king! He travelled through the earth, throwing a *shami* stick<sup>229</sup> and performing a sacred sacrifice wherever the stick landed, thus dotting it with sacrificial altars. He performed one thousand sacrifices and one hundred horse sacrifices. He satisfied Indra of the gods with three mountains of gold. In the battle between the gods and the asuras, Yayati, son of Nahusha, slew daityas and danavas and divided up the entire earth. He abandoned his other sons, with Yadu and Druhyu as the foremost, and instated Puru in the kingdom.<sup>230</sup> With his wives, he then left for the forest. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Ambarisha, the son of Nabagha. He died. O supreme among kings! The subjects chose him as their sacred protector. He attentively performed sacrifices and gave brahmanas a million kings who had themselves performed sacrifices. No one had ever performed a task like this earlier, nor will anyone do so in future. Thus did Ambarisha, the son of Nabagha, delight them with dakshina. A hundred thousand kings and another ten thousand kings followed him in his horse sacrifices and went along the southern path.<sup>231</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Shashabindu, the son of Chitrasena. He died. The great-souled one had one hundred thousand wives. Shashabindu had a million sons who were excellent archers. All of them were clad in golden armour. Each of those princes married one hundred maidens, who followed him. One hundred elephants followed each maiden and one hundred chariots followed each elephant. One hundred horses, born in the country and adorned with golden harnesses, followed each chariot. One hundred cows followed each horse and one hundred sheep and goats followed each cow. O great king! In a great horse sacrifice, Shashabindu instructed that all these riches should be given away to brahmanas. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas. He died. For one hundred years, that king subsisted on what was left over from oblations. Agni wished to give him a boon. Gaya said, “O bearer of oblations! Through your favours, grant me the boons that even when I give, my riches are inexhaustible, my faith in dharma grows and my mind delights in the truth.” We have heard that he obtained all these wishes from the fire god. Whenever it was the new moon, whenever it was the full moon and at each interval of four months, the im-



mensely energetic one repeatedly performed sacrifices and this continued for one thousand years. For a thousand years, when he awoke in the morning, he gave away a hundred thousand cows and ten thousand horses. The bull among men satisfied the gods with soma, the brahmanas with riches, the ancestors with *svadha*<sup>232</sup> and his wives with sensual pleasures. He covered a part of the earth with gold. This was ten cubits wide and twenty cubits long, and in a great horse sacrifice the king gave this away as dakshina. O king! O bull among men! Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas, gave away as many cows as there are grains of sand in the Ganga. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about Rantideva, the son of Sankriti. He died. The immensely illustrious one satisfied Shakra properly and obtained a boon from him. “Let us have an abundance of food and guests. Let my faith never diminish and let me never have to ask anything from anyone.”<sup>233</sup> The illustrious Rantideva was extremely rigid in his vows and of their own accord, domestic and wild animals presented themselves before the great-souled one, so as to be sacrificed. Because of the discharge from this mass of hides, a great river was created and this great river became famous as Charmanvati.<sup>234</sup> When the king singled out brahmanas and proceeded to give them one golden coin each, they protested. So he gave each brahmana one thousand. There were vessels and implements used in the intelligent Rantideva’s sacrifices—pots, plates, frying pans, bowls and cups. There was not a single one that was not made out of gold. Whenever someone spent a night in the house of Rantideva, the son of Sankriti, twenty thousand and one hundred cows were sacrificed. But even then, adorned in bejewelled and excellent earrings, the cooks exclaimed, “There is plenty of broth. Take as much as you want. But now, there is no longer as much meat as there used to be earlier.”<sup>235</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about the great-souled Sagara. He died. The tiger among men was descended from the Ikshvaku lineage and was superhuman in his valour. Sixty thousand sons followed him at the rear. They were like a large number of stellar bodies in a sky without clouds and at the end of the rain, surrounding the lord of the stars.<sup>236</sup> In earlier times, the earth bowed down before him and was under a single umbrella.<sup>237</sup> He satisfied the gods with one thousand horse sacrifices. He gave deserving brahmanas palaces that were completely made out of gold, with golden pillars. They were full of beds and women with eyes like lotuses. The brahmanas got whatever they desired, superior and inferior, and on his instructions, divided this up among themselves. Because of his anger, the earth was dug out and came to be marked with the ocean.<sup>238</sup> It is after his name that the ocean came to be known as Saagara. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

““O Srinjaya! We have heard about King Prithu, the son of Vena.<sup>239</sup> He died. The maharshis consecrated him in the great forest. He was known as Prithu because he would extend the world. Someone who saves from injuries is said to be a kshatriya.<sup>240</sup> On seeing Prithu, the son of Vena, the subjects said, “We are attached to him.” Because of that affection, he came to be known as a raja.<sup>241</sup> The earth yielded crops without being ploughed. There was honey in every hole.<sup>242</sup> When Vena’s son ruled, all the cows yielded a bucket of milk. All the men were without disease, were successful in all their objectives and were free from fear. As they wished, they dwelt in their fields or their homes. On his instructions, the waters of the ocean were solidified.<sup>243</sup> The rivers did not swell up and obstruct the advance of his standard. In a great horse sacrifice, the king gave brahmanas twenty-one mountains of gold and each of these was three *nalas* high.<sup>244</sup> O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son? O Srinjaya! Why are you reflecting in silence? O king! You have not listened to my words. If you have not listened, my discourse, though spoken well, has been in vain, like medicine to someone who is about to die.’

““Srinjaya replied, ‘O Narada! I have listened to your words. They are wonderful in their purport, like a fragrant garland. Those rajarshis were great-souled and meritorious in their deeds. Their deeds are enough to dispel my grief. O maharshi! Your discourse has not been in vain. O Narada! Your sight alone has been sufficient to drive away my sorrow. O one who speaks about the brahman! I have listened to your words. However, like one drinking amrita, I am not satisfied. O one whose sight never fails! O lord! I am tormented on account of my son. Through your favours, let the dead one come back to life. Through your favours, let me be united with my son.’



“Narada replied, ‘Your beloved son, Svarnashthivi, was given to you by Parvata<sup>245</sup> and has departed. But I will give your son back to you. Hiranyanabha<sup>246</sup> will live for one thousand years.’”

## Chapter 1358(30)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How did Srinjaya’s son become Kanchanashthivi?<sup>247</sup> Why did Parvata give him? How did he die? At that time, men used to live for one thousand years. Why did Srinjaya’s son die while he was still a child? Was he Suvarnashthivi only in name? I wish to know the truth about Kanchanashthivi.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O lord of men! I will tell you the details about what actually happened. The rishis Narada and Parvata were worshipped by the worlds. They were maternal uncle and nephew.<sup>248</sup> Once they came down from the world of the gods. The lords, the maternal uncle Narada and the nephew Parvata, cheerfully roamed around in the world of men in those ancient times, discarding food in the form of sacrificial oblations and the food of the gods. Though they possessed powers of asceticism, they wandered around on the surface of the earth. They roamed around here and there, eating the food of humans. They were cheerful and had an agreement. ‘Whatever resolution either one of us has, good or bad, will be revealed to the other. If either one fails to do this and falsifies the agreement, he will be cursed.’ The maharshis, worshipped in the worlds, pledged this. They went to King Srinjaya, the son of Shvitya, and said, ‘O child! For the sake of your welfare, we will dwell with you for some time. O protector of the earth! Attend to our needs.’ The king acted accordingly and honoured them with hospitality. After some time, in great delight, the king told the great-souled ones who had arrived, ‘This is my beautiful daughter and I have only one. She will tend to your needs. Her limbs are lovely and she is virtuous in her conduct. This maiden is known as Sukumari and her complexion is like the filament of a lotus.’ Thus addressed, they agreed and the king instructed his daughter. ‘Tend to these brahmanas as if they are gods, or your father.’ The maiden followed dharma and, instructed by her father, agreed. As instructed by the king, she served them well.

“While she served them in this way, because of her unmatched beauty, there was a swift and violent urge of desire in Narada. That desire increased in the great-souled one’s heart, just as the moon slowly waxes during the bright lunar fortnight. Though he knew about dharma, he was greatly ashamed of his desire and did not tell his great-souled nephew, Parvata. Because of his ascetic powers and through signs, Parvata got to know. Enraged, he severely cursed Narada, who was overcome by desire. ‘You voluntarily had an agreement with me. Should there be any resolution in our hearts, good or bad, that would be disclosed to the other. You have falsified that. O brahmana! Those were your words and you are bound by them. Earlier, you did not tell me that you had this desire for the maiden Sukumari. Because of that sin, I will curse you. You are knowledgeable about the brahman. You are my senior. You are an ascetic. You are a brahmana. Despite that, you have falsified the agreement you made with me. In great rage, I am cursing you. Listen to my words. There is no doubt that Sukumari will be your wife. O lord! However, from the time you marry, your own form will be distorted. The maiden, and all other men, will see you as an ape.’ As soon as Narada got to know the words spoken by Parvata, he became enraged. The maternal uncle cursed the nephew, ‘You possess asceticism. You are a brahmachari. You possess truth and self-control. You are always united with dharma. Despite this, you will not dwell in heaven.’ Extremely enraged, those two rishis severely cursed each other. They rushed towards each other, like two angry and excellent elephants.

“The great sage, Parvata, roamed around the entire earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was honoured because of his energy. Narada, supreme among those who followed dharma, obtained the unblemished Sukumari, Srinjaya’s daughter, in accordance with the rites of dharma. Because of the curse, as soon as the mantras connected with receiving her hand were pronounced, the maiden beheld that Narada had assumed the form of an ape. Despite the devarshi having assumed the form of an ape, Sukumari did not disrespect him. She treated him affectionately. She presented herself to her husband and did not go to anyone else, not even in her mind. Faithful to her husband, she did not wish that a god, another sage or a yaksha should be her husband.

“After some time, the illustrious Parvata was roaming around in the forest and saw Narada there. Greeting Narada, Parvata said, ‘O lord! Show me your favours and let me go to heaven.’ Narada saw that Parvata was standing miserably before him, hands joined in salutation. But he was even more distressed and said, ‘You are the one who cursed me first and said that I would be an ape. When you spoke to me in this way, I later cursed you in revenge, to the effect that henceforth, you would never dwell in heaven. Since you were like my son, you should not have acted in that way.’ The sages then withdrew their curses from each other.

“Sukumari saw Narada in his prosperity, in a form that was like that of a god. Taking him to be someone else’s husband, she fled. On seeing that the unblemished one was running away, Parvata spoke to her. ‘This is your husband. You should not doubt that. This is the illustrious lord and rishi Narada, with supreme dharma in his soul. There is no doubt that his heart is completely yours.’ The great-souled Parvata entreated her in many ways. When she heard that her husband had been tainted because of the curse, she regained her natural state. Parvata went to heaven and Narada went home. The great rishi, Narada, was a witness to all this himself. O supreme among men! Ask him and he will tell you exactly what happened.”

## Chapter 1359(31)

Vaishampayana said, ‘At this, the king, Pandu’s son, addressed Narada. “O illustrious one! I wish to hear how Suvarnashthivi was born.” Having been thus addressed by Dharmaraja, the sage Narada told him the exact truth about Suvarnashthivi. “O great king! It was just as Keshava told you. Since you have asked me, I will tell you about the part that remains. I and the great sage Parvata, my sister’s son, went to Srinjaya, supreme among victorious ones, wishing to dwell with him. He honoured us with all the indicated rites. With all our wishes well tended to, we lived in his house. After many years had passed, it was time for us to leave. At that time, Parvata spoke these words to me and they were of grave import. ‘We have lived in the house of this Indra among men and have been greatly honoured. O brahmana! Now that the time of residing here is over, we should think about what is appropriate.’ O king! At this, I spoke to the handsome Parvata. ‘O lord! O nephew! In every respect, this is worthy of you. The king should be delighted with boons and let him obtain what he desires. If you so think fit, let him obtain success through our austerities.’ At this, Parvata, bull among sages, summoned the handsome Srinjaya and told him what we had decided. ‘O king! We are delighted with the great hospitality you have sincerely offered us. O best among men! With our permission, think of a boon that you desire. However, let it not cause injury to the gods or destruction to men. O great king! It is our view that you are worthy of respect and accept this from us.’ Srinjaya replied, ‘If you are pleased with me, that is sufficient for me. That is a great fruit and it has been my supreme gain.’ When the king repeated this again, Parvata said, ‘O king! Ask for a desire that has been in your heart for a long time.’ Srinjaya answered, ‘I desire a brave son, one who is full of valour and is firm in his vows. He should be immensely fortunate and have a long life. He should be like the king of the gods in his resplendence.’ Parvata said, ‘This desire of yours will come true. However, he will not live for a long time, since there is a desire in your heart that he should surpass the prosperity of the king of the gods. He will be Suvarnashthivi, since his excreta will be golden. He will be like the king of the gods in his radiance. But protect him from the king of the gods.’”

“Narada said, ‘On hearing the great-souled Parvata’s words, Srinjaya said, ‘Through your favours, let it not be that way. O sage! Through your powers of austerities, let my son have a long life.’ However, because of his partiality for Indra, Parvata said nothing. The king was miserable and I spoke to him again. ‘O great king! When it is time to remember me, think of me and I will show myself to you. When your beloved son has come under the subjugation of the king of the dead, I will give him back to you. O lord of the earth! Do not sorrow. I will again give him back to you in that form.’<sup>249</sup> Having addressed the king thus, we departed, as we desired. As he wished, Srinjaya also entered his own palace.

“After some time had passed, rajarshi Srinjaya had a son born to him. He was immensely valorous and blazed in his energy. As time passed, he grew, like a giant lotus in a pond. He became Kanchanashthivi, and not just in name.<sup>250</sup> O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This extraordinary fact came to be known throughout the world. Indra of the gods got to know this was because of the boon granted by the great-souled ones.<sup>251</sup> The slayer of Bala and Vritra was frightened<sup>252</sup> and, listening to the counsel of Brihaspati, sought a weakness in the child. He instructed his divine weapon vajra, which appeared in a personified form. ‘O lord! Become a tiger. Go and slay the prince. O vajra! Parvata gave Srinjaya his son and if he grows up, he may surpass me in valour.’ Having been thus addressed by Shakra, the vajra, the vanquisher of enemy cities, was always near the child, looking for a weakness. Having obtained a son who was the equal of the king of the gods in radiance, Srinjaya was delighted. The king, and all the women belonging to his inner quarters, began to reside in the forest. One day, on the banks of the Bhagirathi, the child was running around near that mountainous stream.<sup>253</sup> His nurse was the only other person with him. Though the child was only five years old, he was like a king of elephants in his valour. The immensely strong one suddenly ran into the tiger. The king’s son trembled as he was crushed. He lost his life and fell down on the

ground. The nurse screamed. As soon as the prince had been killed, through the maya of the king of the gods, the tiger instantly disappeared.

“Hearing the screams and weeping of the extremely distressed nurse, the king himself rushed to the spot. He saw the child lying down dead, covered in blood, and was distressed. It was as if the moon had been dislodged. He raised the mangled torso of his son, covered in blood, on his lap and wept in great grief. His mothers<sup>254</sup> also rushed to the spot where King Srinjaya was. Afflicted by grief, they also wept. At that time, with an attentive mind, the king remembered me.<sup>255</sup> Knowing that he had thought of me, I went and showed myself to him. He was stricken with grief. O lord of the earth! Therefore, I made him hear the words that the brave one from the Yadu lineage has told you about.<sup>256</sup> With Vasava’s permission, he was revived by me. It was destiny and it could not have been otherwise. After this, the child, the immensely famous Svarnashthivi, arose. The valiant one delighted the hearts of his father and his mother. When his father went to heaven, the lord ruled the kingdom for one thousand and one hundred years. He was terrible in his valour. He performed many great sacrifices at which large quantities of donations were given. The immensely radiant one satisfied the gods and the ancestors. He generated many sons who were the extenders of the lineage. O king! After a long period, he succumbed to the dharma of time.<sup>257</sup> O Indra among kings! Just as Keshava and the immensely ascetic Vyasa have told you, you must stem this sorrow that has been generated in you. Bear the burden of the kingdom that belonged to your father and grandfather. Perform great and auspicious sacrifices and obtain the worlds that are desired.”

## Chapter 1360(32)

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Yudhishtira was still silent and immersed in grief. The ascetic Krishna Dvaipayana, who knew about the true nature of dharma, spoke to him. “O one with eyes like a blue lotus! The dharma of kings is to protect subjects. Dharma is the standard used to measure people. One must always follow dharma. O king! Follow in the footsteps of your father and grandfather. The eternal dharma of brahmanas has been determined in the Vedas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That has been the eternal measuring rod, and the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect all this and any man who acts against this must be punished with the use of arms, since this is against the path indicated for the worlds.<sup>258</sup> In one’s confusion, one should not take the measuring rod to be something that is not the measuring rod. Whether it is a servant, a son or an ascetic—all those who act in a wicked way must be punished, even killed. If a king does not act in this way, he will commit a sin, since one who does not prevent dharma from being destroyed is guilty of slaying dharma. They<sup>259</sup> were the slayers of dharma and you have killed them and their followers. O Pandava! You were stationed in your own dharma. Why are you sorrowing? According to dharma, the king must kill such people, donate and protect the subjects.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O one rich in austerities! I do not doubt your words. O one who is supreme among all those who uphold dharma! Dharma is always in front of you. For the sake of the kingdom, I have slain many who should not have been killed. O brahmana! Those deeds are burning and tormenting me.”

‘Vyasa replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The doer may be the Lord, or it may be man. Or, as the learned texts say, the fruits in this world may be the consequence of past deeds. O king! If man performs good and evil deeds because he has been so appointed by the Lord, then the fruits also accrue to the Lord. If a man uses an axe to cut down a tree in the forest, the cause can never be the axe, nor does sin accrue to it. The implement cannot take over the fruits of that action. There is no sin if a man uses a weapon to inflict punishment. O Kounteya! One cannot reap the fruits of something that has been done by others.<sup>260</sup> Therefore, vest it on the Lord. Or perhaps it is the case that a man is the doer of both good and bad deeds. In that case, there is nothing like the hereafter. In that case, perform a good deed.<sup>261</sup> O king! There is no one who can act against destiny. There is no sin if a man uses a weapon to inflict punishment. O king! If you think that the world is established on past deeds, then there cannot have been an inauspicious deed, nor will there be. In this world, if it is necessary to assign good and bad deeds, then the king’s upraised rod of punishment is the determining factor in this world.<sup>262</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that in this world, people are whirled around, performing good and bad deeds and reaping the fruits. This is the truth and I am instructing you to perform good deeds because the fruits from deeds are certain. O tiger among kings! Therefore, abandon this fruitless sorrow in your heart. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resort to your own dharma, even if that brings censure. O king! This abandoning of your soul is not proper. O Kounteya! There are rites of atonement that have been laid down.<sup>263</sup> One must perform them while one has this body. Without the body, one will not succeed.<sup>264</sup> O king! Therefore, while you are still alive, perform those rites of atonement. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you do not perform rites of atonement, you will be tormented after death.”’

## Chapter 1361(33)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Because of my greed for the kingdom, sons, grandsons, brothers, fathers, fathers-in-law, preceptors, maternal uncles, grandfathers, great-souled kshatriyas, kin, well-wishers, friends, relatives and many kings who had assembled from many countries have been slain. O grandfather! They have been killed by me alone. O one rich in austerities! Those lords of the earth were always established in dharma. They performed good deeds and drank soma. Having caused such people to be killed, what will I obtain? Thinking repeatedly about this, I am incessantly being burnt. Those kings were prosperous and like lions. The earth is without them now. O grandfather! On seeing this terrible slaughter of relatives, the slaying of hundreds of the enemy and other men in crores, I am being tormented. What will be the plight of those beautiful women? They have been deprived of their sons, husbands and brothers. They are wan and distressed and are falling down on the surface of the ground. They are censuring us, the Pandavas and the Vrishnis, as the perpetrators of terrible deeds. On seeing their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, all those women are ready to give up their beloved lives and go to Yama’s eternal abode. O best among brahmanas! They are driven by affection. I have no doubt about this. It is evident that because of the subtlety of dharma, we will become the slayers of women. We committed an eternal sin by killing our well-wishers. We will be cast into hell, with our heads hanging downwards. O supreme one! We will perform terrible austerities and free ourselves of our bodies. O grandfather! In particular, tell me about the state of life I should resort to now.’”

## Chapter 1362(34)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Yudhishtira's words, the intelligent and accomplished rishi, Dvaipayana, thought for some time and then spoke to Pandava. "O king! Remember the dharma of kshatriyas and do not sorrow pointlessly. O bull among the kshatriya lineage! While following their own dharma, those kshatriyas were slain. They desired complete prosperity and great fame on earth. They followed the rules of death and, following time, were killed. They were not killed by you, Bhima, Arjuna, or the twins. Following the dharma of time, those living beings gave up their lives. Time has no mother or father, nor is it partial towards anyone. It is a witness to the deeds committed by people. O bull among men! This<sup>265</sup> is an instrument of time. In its form as lord, it uses beings to slay other beings. Know that time is the essence of deeds and is witness to the good and the bad. Time leads to happiness and unhappiness. Time is the one that yields the fruits. O mighty-armed one! Think of the deeds they<sup>266</sup> performed. Those led to their destruction and they have come under the subjugation of time. Know your own self and the rules and vows that you observe, and also that these deeds have been ordained by fate. An implement constructed by an artisan is under the control of the one who handles it. In that way, the universe is driven by deeds that are controlled by time. On seeing that the birth and destruction of men have no evident cause, sorrow and delight are both pointless. O king! However, your heart has been ensnared by that which is unreal. Because of that, perform deeds of atonement. O Partha! It has been heard that, in ancient times, the gods and the asuras fought with each other. The asuras were elder brothers and the gods were younger.<sup>267</sup> Because of rivalry over prosperity, they fought a great battle that lasted for thirty-two thousand years. The earth became a large ocean of blood. At that time, the gods killed the daityas and obtained possession of heaven. The brahmanas, knowledgeable about the Vedas, obtained the earth. However, because they were confounded by insolence, they began to help the danavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were known in the three worlds as shalavrikas.<sup>268</sup> There were eighty-eight thousand of them and they were killed by the gods. Those who destroy dharma, and those who seek the spread of adharma, should be killed, just as the evil-souled daityas were killed by the gods. If by killing a single person the rest of the lineage becomes virtuous and healthy, or if by killing a family the kingdom is saved, then that must be done. O lord of men! Sometimes, dharma has the appearance of adharma. Learned people should know that dharma may assume the form of adharma. O Pandava! Therefore, control yourself. You are learned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have followed a path that has been travelled by the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! People like these do not go to hell. O scorcher of enemies! Assure your brothers and well-wishers. A person who begins wicked acts and does not think about it, and, despite continuing to act in this way, does not feel any shame, then it has been said that all the sins accrue to him. There is no atonement for him. Nor are his wicked deeds ever diminished. You have been born in a pure lineage. Your deeds have been caused by someone else's crimes. You performed those tasks unwillingly. Having performed them, you are repenting. As atonement, a great horse sacrifice is indicated. O great king! Perform that and you will be cleansed of your sin. Having defeated his enemies with the help of the Maruts, Maghavan, the chastiser of Paka, performed one hundred sacrifices one by one and came to be known as Shatakratu.<sup>269</sup> He purified himself and won heaven. He obtained worlds that yield happiness. Surrounded by large numbers of the Maruts, Shakra was radiant and illuminated the directions. Shachi's consort is glorified in heaven by the apsaras. The lord of the gods is worshipped by the rishis and the gods. You have conquered this earth through your valour. O unblemished one! The kings have been defeated through your valour. O king! Surrounded by your well-wishers, go to their cities and kingdoms<sup>270</sup> and instate their brothers, sons and grandsons in their respective kingdoms. Assure the children who are still in the wombs. Delight all the citizens and rule the earth. Where there is no male child, instate a maiden. As a class, women are addicted to desire and will laugh away their sorrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, assure all the kingdoms. Perform a



horse sacrifice, just as the victorious Indra did in ancient times. O bull among the kshatriyas! You should not sorrow about those great-souled kshatriyas. Their destruction has been brought on by their own deeds and they have been confounded by the power of death. You have practised the dharma of kshatriyas and have obtained a kingdom that is free from taint. O Kounteya! Follow dharma and after death, you will obtain the best.”

## Chapter 1363(35)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “After what action does a man need to perform rites of atonement? O grandfather! What must be done to free oneself? Tell me that.”

‘Vyasa replied, “Having not done deeds that must be performed, having done what is forbidden and having acted in a false way, a man must perform rites of atonement. O Kounteya! A brahmachari who is asleep when the sun rises, one who goes to sleep before the sun sets, one with malformed nails, one with discoloured teeth, one whose younger brother gets married first, one who marries before his elder brother, one who maligns the brahman, one who is guilty of slander, one who is the husband of a *didhishu*, one whose first wife is a *didhishu*,<sup>271</sup> one who has violated his vow of chastity, one who kills a brahmana, one who teaches the brahman to an undeserving person, one who does not teach the brahman to a deserving person, one who performs a sacrifice for ordinary people, one who sells the king,<sup>272</sup> one who slays a shudra or a woman, one whose ancestors were contemptible, one who slays an animal without a good reason,<sup>273</sup> one who sets fire to a forest, one who subsists through deceit, one who goes against his preceptor, one who abandons the sacred fire, one who sells the brahman<sup>274</sup> and one who violates an agreement—all of these are sinners.<sup>275</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen attentively as I tell you about deeds that must not be done. Abandoning one’s own dharma, following the dharma of another, officiating at the sacrifice of someone who is not entitled to sacrifice, eating something that should not be eaten, abandoning those who have sought refuge, not supporting servants, selling liquor,<sup>276</sup> the killing of inferior species,<sup>277</sup> not performing tasks that one is capable of undertaking, not giving the gifts that must be given every day, not giving dakshina to brahmanas and humiliating them—those who know about dharma say that these are deeds that must not be done. A son who quarrels with his father, one who has intercourse with his preceptor’s wife and one who does not procreate according to dharma—these are people who follow adharma. These are deeds that should not be done and men must perform atonement for them. However, even when men perform these deeds, there are some situations when they are not tainted. If a brahmana who knows about the Vedas picks up a weapon and attacks you in a battle, wishing to kill you, then you are allowed to kill him. O Kounteya! On this, there is a mantra in the Vedas. This is dharma, as proved by the Vedas, and I am telling you this. ‘If a brahmana has deviated from his conduct and attacks like an assassin, killing him does not amount to the sin of killing a brahmana. This is said to be rage counter-acting rage.’ If a person drinks liquor in ignorance, or because he has been instructed that this will save his life,<sup>278</sup> he should thereafter be brought back to dharma through purification. O Kounteya! I have also told you everything about what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. For all this, purification through rites of atonement is prescribed.

“A man incurs no sin if intercourse with the preceptor’s wife is for the sake of the preceptor. Through a disciple, Uddalaka had Shvetaketu as a son.<sup>279</sup> If one steals for the sake of imparting prosperity to one’s preceptor, one is not bound down. That happens if one steals a lot because of desire, or if it is for one’s own sake. If one takes from those who are not brahmanas, there is no sin and one is not touched by the crime, as long as it is not for one’s own self. Lying is allowed provided it is for the sake of saving one’s own life or that of someone else, for the sake of one’s preceptor, when it is among women and in connection with a marriage. A vow is not broken if semen is released through a wet dream. Offering oblations into a blazing fire are prescribed as atonement. If the elder brother has become an outcast or has renounced the world, there is no sin from marrying before him. When someone else’s wife solicits you, there is no taint or adharma from indulging her. One should never kill an animal without good reason or cause such an act to be done. Animals deserve kindness and a violation requires due purification. If one gives to an undeserving brahmana in ignorance, there is no sin, nor if one gives to an undeserving person or does not give to a deserving person, provided there is a reason for this. There is no crime in casting off a wife who

is of bad conduct.<sup>280</sup> If such a woman is purified, the husband is not to be blamed. There is no crime in selling soma if one knows the truth about it.<sup>281</sup> If an incompetent servant is discarded, there is no crime. There is no crime if a forest is burnt for the sake of cattle.<sup>282</sup> I have told you about deeds that do not lead to sin when they are done. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you in detail about rites of atonement.”

## Chapter 1364(36)<sup>283</sup>

‘Vyasa said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through austerities, deeds and donations, a man is purified, as long as he does not commit wicked deeds again. A person who has killed a brahmana can free himself of the crime of killing a brahmana by eating once a day, roaming around for alms, performing all his tasks himself, holding a skull in one hand and a bedpost in the other,<sup>284</sup> following brahmacharya, by always being enterprising, showing no malice, sleeping on the bare ground and disclosing his deed to the worlds. He has to do this for a full twelve years. If he lives on a diet of hardship, a man who kills a brahmana can be purified in six years.<sup>285</sup> If he eats from one month to another, he is freed in three years. If he eats only once a month, there is no doubt that he is freed in one year. O king! If one does not eat at all, one is freed very soon. There is no doubt that one is purified through a horse sacrifice. In this way, there are men who have bathed after a horse sacrifice. There are supreme learned texts which say that all their souls have been cleansed. If one is killed in a battle for the sake of a brahmana, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. If the slayer of a brahmana gives one hundred thousand cows to deserving recipients, he is freed from all sin. If one gives away twenty-five thousand milk-yielding brown cows, one is freed from all sin. At the time of death, if one gives one thousand milk-yielding cows with calves to virtuous and poor people, one is freed from sin. O protector of the earth! If one gives away one hundred horses from Kamboja to self-restrained brahmanas, one is freed from sin. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If someone gives something that another person wishes for and does not brag about his generosity, he is freed from sin.

“When a brahmana has drunk liquor, if he drinks that liquor when it is as hot as fire, he purifies himself in this world and the next. Or he can fling himself down from Mount Meru, or enter a fire, or embark on the great journey.<sup>286</sup> He will then be freed from all sin. However, a brahmana who has drunk liquor can again be admitted into an assembly of brahmanas, provided he follows the injunctions of Brihaspati laid down in texts concerning brahmanas. O king! If a man who has drunk liquor casts off envy and gives away land, without indulging in that act again, he is cleansed and purified.

“If one has had intercourse with a preceptor’s wife, one should lie down on a heated slab of stone. Alternatively, one should cast one’s eyes upwards and roam around, holding one’s penis in one’s hand.

“By giving up the body, one is freed from all wicked deeds. If women endeavour to be restrained for a year, they are freed from such deeds. If one observes a great vow, gives away everything that he owns, or is slain in a battle for the sake of a preceptor, one is freed from all wicked deeds. If one acts falsely towards a preceptor or opposes him, one is freed from that crime by giving him something agreeable.<sup>287</sup> If one has deviated from a vow of chastity, one should follow the atonement vows prescribed for a killer of a brahmana. Alternatively, one can wear the hide of a donkey for six months. One will then be freed from that crime. A person who has abducted another person’s wife or stolen another person’s possessions must observe a vow for one year to be freed from that sin. If a person has stolen the property of another, he must use every means possible to return riches that are of an equal measure. He will then be freed from that sin. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A younger brother who has married before the elder brother, or an elder brother whose younger brother has married before him, are both naturally freed by eating the hardship diet for twelve nights, or at least for ten. But, to save the ancestors, he<sup>288</sup> must get married. The wife<sup>289</sup> is not tainted by this and no blemish attaches to her. Those who know about dharma say that, after giving birth and after a period, women are cleansed and purified through a *chaturmasya* vow. When there is suspicion about a woman’s wicked conduct, it is known that there should be no sexual intercourse with her. However, she is purified through her menstrual flow, like a vessel with ashes.

“The four parts of dharma are decreed for brahmanas. For kings, it has been ordained that dharma will be reduced by one quarter. The vaishya’s will be a quarter less than that and the shudra’s a quarter less than that too. In

this way, one determines the seriousness or lightness of the crime and the atonement.

“If a person kills a bird or an animal, or cuts down a large number of trees, that man should only subsist on air for three nights and proclaim his crime. O king! If a person has intercourse with someone he should not have intercourse with, the atonement has been laid down. For six months, he should sleep in wet clothes and lie down on ashes. These are the decrees laid down in the brahmana texts,<sup>290</sup> explaining all the deeds, the forms of atonement and the detailed reasons. If one recites the *savitri* mantra<sup>291</sup> in a secluded place, while eating little, abjuring violence and hate and speaking little, one is freed from all sin. During the day, one must be under the open sky and during the night, one must also sleep there. Thrice during the day and thrice during the night, one must immerse oneself in the water, wearing one’s garments. A brahmana who is observing this vow must not speak to women, shudras and those who have become outcasts because of deviation in their conduct. He will then be freed from any sins that he may have committed in ignorance.

“The witness to a being<sup>292</sup> obtains good and bad fruits after death. Depending on which of the two<sup>293</sup> is more, the doer reaps the consequences. Donations, austerities and deeds lead to auspicious fruits. In that way, they increase and become greater than wicked deeds. If wicked deeds have been performed, that is a reason to perform auspicious ones. By constantly giving away riches, one is freed from sin. The rites of atonement are in proportion to the wicked deed. However, no atonement is recommended for a *mahapataka*.<sup>294</sup> O king! Eating what should not be eaten and speaking what should not be spoken—for these, atonement depends on whether these are done knowingly or unknowingly. Crimes that are knowingly committed are said to be grievous. Those that are unknowingly committed are light and there is atonement for both. The methods and rites described are capable of cleansing the sin. But those recommendations are for the believers and the faithful. Those rites are never seen to be for men who are non-believers, and unfaithful and those who are prone to insolence and wickedness. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Good conduct is the dharma of the virtuous. O tiger among men! For the sake of happiness after death, they must serve this. O king! Because of the motives behind your earlier crimes, you will be freed. You wished to save by killing them. Alternatively, you were following the duty of kings. However, if you abhor what you did, follow the path of atonement. Like those who are not arya, you will then not confront destruction because of your deeds.”

## Chapter 1365(37)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by the illustrious one, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira thought for some time. He then asked that store of austerities, "What should be eaten and what should not be eaten? What is said to be a praiseworthy gift? Who is a deserving person and who is an undeserving one? O grandfather! Tell me that."

'Vyasa replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation that took place between the Siddhas and Prajapati Manu. The Siddhas were engaged in supreme austerities and vows. In ancient times, they approached the brave lord and Prajapati while he was seated, and asked him about dharma. 'What food should be eaten? What gifts should be given? How should we study? What austerities will we observe? What should be done and what should not be done? O Prajapati! Tell us everything about this.' Having been thus addressed, the illustrious Svayambhuva Manu spoke.

“Listen to me as I expound the true nature of dharma, briefly and in detail.<sup>295</sup> The signs of dharma are: not taking what has not been given, donations, studying, austerities, non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger and forgiveness. However, if practised in the wrong place and at the wrong time, dharma may become adharma. It has been said that in some situations, not giving, lying and violence are dharma. Those who are learned know that there are two aspects to both dharma and adharma. People who are learned know that there can be both action and withdrawal from action. Inaction leads to immortality and the fruits of action are mortality.<sup>296</sup> One knows that evil acts lead to evil and good acts to the good. This determines whether acts are good or bad, whether they lead to heaven, whether they lead to one's union with heaven, whether they lead to life, or whether they lead to death. However, even if one did not think about it before committing the act, there may be good consequences from an evil act. On considering the consequences, they may have led to uplifting life on earth. But if an act is undertaken without thinking about it, atonement is recommended. If acts are undertaken in anger or out of delusion, without considering the consequences or the reasons, if they lead to torment of the body, or cause pleasant and unpleasant sensations in the mind, then they must be pacified through atonement, like using herbs and mantras. One must also entirely ignore dharma that concerns *jati*,<sup>297</sup> *shreni*,<sup>298</sup> *adhivasa*<sup>299</sup> and family. These are not dharma, because there is no real dharma in them.<sup>300</sup> There may be doubts about what constitutes dharma. In such cases, whatever ten people who know about the sacred Vedas, or three people who read about dharma, describe as acts that should be done, constitute dharma.

“Red earth, red ants, the *shleshmataka*<sup>301</sup> and poison must not be consumed by brahmanas. Brahmanas must also not eat fish that are without scales, frogs and four-footed aquatic animals, with the exception of turtles. Vultures, swans, eagles, *chakravakas*,<sup>302</sup> herons, ducks, curlews, diver-birds, vultures,<sup>303</sup> crows, owls, all predatory birds, all quadrupeds with horns and all quadrupeds that have two teeth or four teeth must not be eaten by brahmanas. Nor must they drink the milk of sheep, mares, she-donkeys, she-camels, cows that have just calved, women and deer. Food offered to a dead man, food cooked by a woman who has just given birth within the last ten days and food cooked by someone unknown must not be eaten. Until ten days have passed, the milk of a cow that has just given birth must not be drunk. One must not eat food given by a carpenter, a person who strips off animal skins, a whore, a washerman, a physician and a guard. Nor should one eat food given by a person who has been thrown out of the village assembly, one who earns a living through dancing girls, a man whose younger brother has married before him, a eunuch, a professional bard and a skilled gambler. One must avoid food given to a prisoner, putrid and stale food, that which has been laced with alcohol, that which has been partly eaten by others and left-over food. Cakes stuffed with meat, sugar cane and vegetables, rice cooked with milk and sugar<sup>304</sup> when it has gone bad, coarsely ground meal, grain and food that has been kept for a long time should not be eaten. Rice

cooked with milk and sugar, dishes made of sesamum and grain<sup>305</sup> and meat and cakes that have been prepared unnecessarily<sup>306</sup> should not be eaten. They should not be eaten by brahmanas who are in the householder stage. A householder must eat after worshipping the gods, the ancestors, men, sages and other household gods. A brahmana who dwells in his own household is like a mendicant who is wandering around. If he conducts himself in this way, with his beloved wife, he will obtain the benefits of dharma.

““One must not donate for the sake of praise. Or give out of fear, or as a mark of favour to the recipient. One who follows dharma does not give to a person who earns a living through singing and dancing, a jester, a person who is intoxicated or mad, a thief, a physician, one who cannot speak, one who has a pale complexion, one who doesn't have a limb, a dwarf, a wicked person, one born in an inferior lineage and one who has not followed the sacraments. Giving to a brahmana who does not know about the Vedas, or does not know about the brahman, is a dead gift. An inappropriate gift and an inappropriate recipient bring bad consequences to both the giver and the recipient. A man who tries to cross the ocean with the support of a branch of a *khadira* tree<sup>307</sup> or a stone sinks. The giver and the recipient sink in that way. When wood is wet, it does not blaze. An inferior recipient, without austerities, studies and character, is like that. Water in a skull and milk in the bladder of a dog become unclean because of the receptacle. To a man without good conduct, learning is like that. One without mantras, one without vows and one without knowledge of the sacred texts, may be without malice and distressed. One may give to him out of compassion. But even out of compassion, one should give to a distressed person who causes injury. There are brahmanas who have deviated from dharma. One should not give to them, thinking that this is dharma, or that their behaviour is good. This is fruitless. The receptacle is tainted and there is no need to reflect on this. A brahmana who has not studied, an elephant made out wood and a deer made out of skin are similar. All three have nothing but their names. A eunuch has no fruit with a woman. A cow has no fruit with another cow. A brahmana without mantras is like that and is like a bird without wings. Giving to him is futile, since he is like a village that has no granary, like a well that has no water and like oblations made where there is no fire. He destroys offerings and oblations made to the gods and the ancestors. He is like a stupid enemy who robs one of one's riches. He does not deserve to obtain any worlds.’

““O Yudhishtira!<sup>308</sup> This is the exact truth and it has been recounted to you, as it was said. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is a great and extensive discourse and deserves to be heard.””

## Chapter 1366(38)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O illustrious one! O great sage! O best among brahmanas! I wish to hear in detail about the dharma of kings and everything about that for the four varnas. What is the policy decreed for a king in times of distress? While resorting to the path of dharma, how can one conquer the earth? This discourse about atonement and about what should be eaten and what should not be eaten has satisfied my curiosity and has engendered great delight in me. Following dharma and ruling the kingdom are always opposed to each other. That is the reason I am confused and am thinking about it all the time.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The immensely energetic Vyasa, supreme among eloquent ones, who knew everything that was ancient, glanced towards Narada and spoke to him.<sup>309</sup> “O Yudhishtira! O mighty-armed one! If you wish to hear everything about dharma, go to Bhishma, the aged grandfather of the Kurus. He will dispel all the doubts that you have about the secrets. He is Bhagirathi’s<sup>310</sup> son and knows everything, everything about all forms of dharma. The river which has three flows, the celestial goddess, gave birth to him. He has seen all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, in person. O king! The lord has honoured the devarshis, with Brihaspati at the forefront, and having satisfied them, has studied policy.<sup>311</sup> Ushanas,<sup>312</sup> the brahmana who was the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, knew the sacred texts. All those, with their commentaries, were obtained by that supreme one among the Kuru lineage. In addition, the immensely intelligent one received the large corpus of the Vedangas from Bhargava Chyavana and Vasishtha, who was careful in his vows. In ancient times, he studied the truth about transcendental paths from Kumara, the eldest son of the grandfather, who blazed in his energy.<sup>313</sup> He obtained everything about the dharma followed by ascetics from the mouth of Markandeya himself. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He obtained weapons from Rama<sup>314</sup> and Shakra. Though he has been born as a man, the time of his death depends on his own wishes. Though the virtuous one has no offspring, it has been heard that he will obtain the sacred worlds in heaven. The sacred brahmarshis are always his courtiers. There is no knowledge that deserves to be known that is unknown to him. He is learned about dharma and the true subtleties of dharma and artha. He will tell you. Before the one who knows about dharma gives up his life, go to him.” The immensely radiant one, Vyasa, farsighted in his wisdom, spoke these words.

‘Kounteya spoke these words to Satyawati’s son, supreme among eloquent ones. “I have created a great carnage among kin and it makes the body hair stand up. I have caused injury to everyone and I am the cause behind the destruction of the earth. He fought fairly and I brought him down through deceit. Therefore, what grounds do I have to question him?” Desiring the welfare of the four varnas, the mighty-armed and immensely radiant one, foremost among the Yadu lineage,<sup>315</sup> again spoke to the best of kings. “It is not appropriate that you should be tied down so much through grief now. O supreme among kings! Act in accordance with what the illustrious Vyasa has said. O mighty-armed one! These brahmanas and your immensely energetic brothers are waiting before you, like those afflicted by the summer season wait for the rains. O great king! All the kings who remain and the four varnas from your kingdom of Kurujangala have assembled here. O scorcher of enemies! O slayer of enemies! For the sake of bringing pleasure to the great-souled brahmanas, instructed by the infinitely energetic Vyasa, your senior, for the sake of the distressed well-wishers, us and Droupadi, do what brings us pleasure. Do what ensures the welfare of the worlds.” Having been thus addressed by Krishna, the king, with eyes like blue lotuses, arose for the sake of the welfare of the immensely ascetic ones in the world. The tiger among men had been requested by Vishtarashrava<sup>316</sup> himself, Dvaipayana, Devasthana<sup>317</sup> and Jishnu. There were many others who had also entreated him. The great-minded Yudhishtira abandoned the distress in his mind and the torment. He was accomplished in learning and knowing what should be learnt. He was learned in his words and a store of learning. The descendant of the Pandu lineage obtained peace in his mind.



‘The king was surrounded by them, like the moon by the nakshatras. With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, he proceeded to enter his own city. Having decided this, the one who knew about dharma, Kunti’s son Yudhishtira, worshipped the gods and thousands of brahmanas. He ascended a new and sparkling chariot that was covered with blankets and hides. It was yoked to sixteen white bullocks that were marked with auspicious signs. The maharshis praised and honoured him with sacred mantras. It was as if the moon god had ascended his immortal chariot. Kounteya Bhima, terrible in his valour, grasped the reins. Arjuna held aloft a radiant and white umbrella. As that white umbrella was held aloft his head, it looked like a white cloud in the sky and was as resplendent as the king of the stars.<sup>318</sup> Madri’s brave sons grasped two whisks to fan him with and these were white, like the rays of the moon. Ornamented, the five brothers ascended the chariot. O king! They looked as if the five elements had gathered together. O king! Yuyutsu followed the eldest of the Pandavas at the rear. He was on a white chariot, yoked to extremely swift horses. With Satyaki, Krishna followed the Kurus. He was on a golden and sparkling chariot, to which, Sainya and Sugriva were yoked.<sup>319</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Gandhari, Partha’s eldest father<sup>320</sup> advanced ahead of Dharmaraja, on a palanquin borne by men. With Vidura at the forefront, all the Kuru women, with Kunti and Krishna Droupadi advanced on various vehicles, superior and inferior. There were many chariots, ornamented elephants, foot soldiers and those on horses who followed them at the rear. As the king advanced towards the city of Nagasahvya,<sup>321</sup> he was praised with sweet chants by bards, minstrels and raconteurs. The advance of that mighty-armed one was unmatched on earth. There were delighted and healthy people, who created a tumult of rejoicing. As Partha advanced, the men, the residents of the city, decorated the city and the royal road appropriately. There were white garlands, flags and banners. The royal road was made fragrant with incense. The king’s palace was full of fragrant powders, scents, many flowers, *priyangu* creepers and garlands. New and firm pots filled with water were placed at the gates of the city. Here and there, there were beautiful maidens and goats. In this way, with his well-wishers, the descendant of the Pandu lineage entered the city through the decorated gate. He was praised through auspicious words.’

## Chapter 1367(39)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the Parthas entered, the people, the residents of the city, wished to see them and assembled in many thousands. The royal road and the squares were decorated and beautiful. O king! It was like the giant ocean swelling when the moon rises. The large houses along the royal road were bejewelled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Full of women, they seemed to tremble at the weight. Because they were bashful, they softly praised Yudhishtira, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the two Pandavas who were Madri's sons. "O Panchali! You are blessed and fortunate, since you serve those best among men, like Goutami tending to the maharshis.<sup>322</sup> O beautiful one! You have followed your vows and your deeds have not been fruitless." O great king! At that time, the women praised Krishna<sup>323</sup> thus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of the delighted sounds of these words of praise, the city resounded. Having been thus addressed, Yudhishtira passed through the royal road and arrived at the ornamented and radiant royal palace. All the ordinary people, the residents of the city and of the countryside, came there from different sides and spoke words that were pleasant to the ear. "O Indra among kings! O destroyer of enemies! It is through good fortune that you have defeated the enemy. It is through good fortune that you have regained the kingdom, through dharma and strength. O great king! May you rule over the kingdom for one hundred autumns. O king! Protect the subjects through dharma, as Indra does over the thirty gods." At the gates of the royal residence, he was worshipped in this auspicious way. In every direction, he received benedictions from the affectionate brahmanas. The king entered the palace, which was like the residence of the king of the gods. Hearing those victorious sounds, he descended from his chariot.

'Entering inside, he approached the prosperous gods<sup>324</sup> and worshipped all of them with jewels and fragrant garlands. The prosperous and immensely illustrious one again emerged. He saw the handsome brahmanas who presented themselves. He was surrounded by those brahmanas, who wished to pronounce benedictions over him. He was as resplendent as the sparkling moon, surrounded by a large number of stars. In the prescribed fashion, Kounteya honoured the brahmanas. O Indra among kings! With the preceptor Dhomya<sup>325</sup> and his eldest father<sup>326</sup> at the forefront, he cheerfully worshipped them with sweets, jewels, large quantities of gold, cattle, garments and many other objects that they desired. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Auspicious sounds arose and reached up to the sky. These auspicious sounds were pleasant to hear and generated delight among the well-wishers. O king! The brahmanas were learned in the Vedas and their chants resounded like the noise made by swans. It was as if Bharati could be heard there, with meanings, lines and syllables.<sup>327</sup> There was the roar of drums and the beautiful sound of conch shells. O king! Those sounds were heard and proclaimed the news of victory.

'When the brahmanas there became quiet again, the rakshasa Charvaka, disguising himself as a brahmana, spoke to the king.<sup>328</sup> He was a friend of Duryodhana's and was in the form of a mendicant. He was a *samkhyā*.<sup>329</sup> He had a tuft of hair on his head. He held triple staff in his hand.<sup>330</sup> He was proud and without any fear. He was surrounded by all those brahmanas, who wished to pronounce their benedictions. O Indra among kings! There were thousands of others who had immersed themselves in austerities and rituals. Without taking their permission, the evil and wicked one censured the great-souled Pandavas and spoke to the king. "All these brahmanas have asked me to speak on their behalf. O wicked king! Shame on you. You have slain your kin. O Kounteya! Having caused the destruction of kin, what will you gain from the kingdom? Having slain your elders, it is better to be dead than to be alive." On hearing the terrible words of the rakshasa, the brahmanas were distressed. Afflicted by those words, they roared. O lord of the earth! Together with King Yudhishtira, all the brahmanas were ashamed and greatly anxious and then fell silent. Yudhishtira replied, "I am bowing down before you. Show me your favours. You should not reprimand me. I have just recovered from a catastrophe." O king! O lord of the earth! All the brahmanas shouted, "O king! These are not our words. May you be prosperous." Those brahmanas were

learned in the Vedas and had cleansed themselves through austerities. Through the sight of their wisdom, they recognized him.<sup>331</sup> The brahmanas said, “This is Duryodhana’s friend and a rakshasa named Charvaka. In the form of a mendicant, he is trying to ensure his welfare.<sup>332</sup> O one with dharma in your soul! We have not spoken in that way. Do not have any fear on that account. Let good fortune wait on you and your brothers.” Senseless with anger, all the brahmanas shouted.<sup>333</sup> They were pure and by censuring the wicked rakshasa, killed him. He was burnt and brought down by the energy of the ones who knew about the brahman. It was like the shoots of a tree charred by the great Indra’s vajra. Having been honoured, the brahmanas congratulated the king and departed. With his well-wishers, the Pandava king was delighted.

‘Vasudeva said, “O father!<sup>334</sup> In this world, brahmanas have always been revered by me. They are like gods roaming around on earth. They have poison in their speech, but are also easy to please. O father! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was a rakshasa named Charvaka. O mighty-armed one! For many years, he tormented himself through austerities in Badari.<sup>335</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Brahma repeatedly offered him boons and he opted for the boon that he should have nothing to fear from all beings. The lord of the universe granted him the supreme boon of fearlessness from all beings, as long as he did not disrespect brahmanas. Having obtained the boon, the rakshasa, immensely strong, terrible in his deeds and infinitely valorous, began to oppress the gods. The gods united and told Brahma, ‘His strength is unnatural. Ensure the rakshasa’s death.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He told the gods, ‘I have already thought of a means, so that he confronts his death soon. O king!<sup>336</sup> He will be a friend to a king named Duryodhana. Because he will be bound down by affection towards him,<sup>337</sup> he will insult brahmanas. The brahmanas will be incensed at the injury he causes brahmanas. Through the strength of their speech, they will destroy the wicked one and he will perish.’ The rakshasa has been killed by the curse of brahmanas and is lying down. O best among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Do not sorrow over Charvaka. O king! Know that all of them have been slain because of the dharma of kshatriyas. Those bulls among kshatriyas were brave and great-souled and have gone to heaven. O one without decay! You must now do what is good. You should not show weakness. Kill the enemy. Protect the subjects. Sustain the brahmanas.”’

## Chapter 1368(40)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king who was Kunti’s son was freed from his fever. Cheerfully, he sat down on a supreme and golden seat, facing the east. Satyaki and Vasudeva, the scorchers of enemies, were seated on a seat facing him and it was strewn with expensive coverings. With the king between them, the great-souled Bhima and Arjuna were seated on soft seats decorated with gems. Pritha, with Nakula and Sahadeva, was seated on a sparkling seat that was made out of ivory and decorated with gold. Sudharma,<sup>338</sup> Vidura, Dhoumya and Kourava Dhritarashtra were seated on separate seats and seemed to blaze. Yuyutsu, Sanjaya and the illustrious Gandhari sat down where King Dhritarashtra was seated.

‘Seated there, with dharma in his soul, the king<sup>339</sup> cheerfully touched the white flowers, the *svastika* signs, the unhusked grain, the ground, gold, silver and jewels. With the priest at the forefront,<sup>340</sup> all the ordinary people came to see Dharmaraja. They brought many auspicious objects with them—earth, gold, many kinds of gems and all the other vessels and equipment required for the consecration. There were full pots that were made out of clay, gold, copper and silver. They were filled with water, parched grain, sacrificial grass and milk. There was kindling of shami, *palasha* and *pumnaga*.<sup>341</sup> There was honey and clarified butter. There were ladles made out of *udumbara*<sup>342</sup> and gold-embellished conch shells. With Dasharha’s<sup>343</sup> permission, the priest Dhoumya marked out an auspicious altar that sloped towards the north and the east. The great-souled one and Krishna, Drupada’s daughter, were made to sit on a soft *sarvatobhadra*<sup>344</sup> seat with sturdy legs, covered with the skins of tigers. It was as radiant as the fire. The intelligent one<sup>345</sup> poured oblations into the fire. Pronouncing mantras, he sprinkled water on Yudhishtira, Kunti’s son, instating him as the lord of the earth. So did rajarshi Dhritarashtra and all the ordinary people. Cymbals, small drums and kettledrums were sounded. Following dharma, Dharmaraja received all this. He then honoured the brahmanas, who pronounced benedictions on him, in the proper way and gave away large quantities of donations and one thousand golden coins. These brahmanas were accomplished in studying the Vedas and of good conduct. They were delighted and wished the king well. Making sounds like those of swans, they praised Yudhishtira. “O Yudhishtira! O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! It is through good fortune that you have been victorious. O immensely radiant one! It is good fortune that you have obtained this through your own dharma and valour. O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Bhimasena, you and the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons are well. You have slain the enemy and have escaped from a battle that has been destructive of heroes. O Pandava! Swiftly do the tasks that must be undertaken next.” Dharmaraja Yudhishtira was thus honoured by those virtuous ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his well-wishers, he received that large kingdom.’

## Chapter 1369(41)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words of the subjects, appropriate to the time and the place, King Yudhishtira replied to them. “The sons of Pandu are fortunate in this world. The assembled bulls among brahmanas have praised their qualities, whether they possess them or not. It is my view that you have certainly shown us a favour. Without any selfishness, you have spoken about the qualities that we possess. However, the great king, Dhritarashtra, is our father and our supreme god. If you wish to ensure what brings me pleasure, ensure his pleasure and remain under his rule. Having caused a great destruction of the kin, I live for him alone. Constantly and attentively, my duty is to serve him. O well-wishers! If you wish to show your favours towards me, then you should behave towards Dhritarashtra as you used to do earlier. He is the lord of the universe and mine too. The entire earth belongs to him and so do all the Pandavas. In your minds, you should always remember these words I have spoken. Taking the permission of the king, go wherever you wish to.” The residents of the city and the countryside took their leave of the descendant of the Kuru lineage.<sup>346</sup>

‘Kouravya instated Bhimasena as the heir apparent. He cheerfully instructed that the intelligent Vidura should be the adviser for the six kinds of policy.<sup>347</sup> Sanjaya, who possessed many qualities and could think about what had been done and what should be done, was put in charge of finances and wealth. The king instructed Nakula to supervise the size of the army, make sure salaries were being paid and also take care of the workers. Yudhishtira, the great king, instructed that Phalguna should act against the circles of enemies and punish those who were unruly. The scorcher of enemies instructed that Dhoumya, best among priests, should take care of all the rites laid down in the Vedas and duties connected with the brahmanas. O lord of the earth! Sahadeva was instructed to always remain nearby, so as to protect the king.

The lord of the earth joyfully appointed each one to a separate task, depending on what was suitable. The destroyer of enemy heroes, always devoted to dharma and with dharma in his soul, told Vidura, Sanjaya and the immensely intelligent Yuyutsu, “Arise! Get up and accomplish every task for the king who is my father.<sup>348</sup> Perform all the appropriate tasks so that everyone is well. Always act for the residents of the city and the countryside. Having taken the king’s<sup>349</sup> permission, follow dharma and perform all those tasks.”

## Chapter 1370(42)

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Yudhishtira, greatly generous, then had the funeral rites separately performed for all the kin who had been slain in the battle.<sup>350</sup> For the funeral rites of his sons, the immensely illustrious King Dhritarashtra gave away all the objects of desire, full of qualities, cattle, riches, many kinds of jewels and other extremely expensive objects. In a similar way, with Droupadi, Yudhishtira donated for Karna, the great-souled Drona, Dhristadyumna, Abhimanyu, the rakshasa who was Hidimba’s son,<sup>351</sup> Virata and the other well-wishers who had done good deeds for him, Drupada and Droupadi’s sons. He instructed that thousands of brahmanas should separately be given grain, garments, gems and cattle. There were other kings who had no relatives and the king instructed that their funeral rites should also be performed. To perform the funeral rites of the well-wishers, Pandava had many halls, reservoirs of water and lakes constructed. He repaid his debts and ensured that the worlds would not censure him. Having done this, the king followed dharma and protected the subjects. He honoured Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Vidura, all the Kourava advisers and servants, as he used to do earlier. There were some women whose brave husbands and sons had been slain. Compassionately, the Kourava king honoured and protected all of them. The lord, the king, was full of compassion and non-violence and showed his favours to the distressed, the blind and the miserable with houses, garments and food. Having conquered the entire earth and having repaid his debts to his foes, the king was happy and without any rivals. Yudhishtira enjoyed himself.’

## Chapter 1371(43)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely wise Yudhishtira was consecrated. The pure one<sup>352</sup> joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Dasharha Pundarikaksha. “O Krishna! O tiger among the Yadu lineage! It is through your favours, your strength, your intelligence and your valour that this kingdom of my father and grandfather has again been conveyed to me. O Pundarikaksha! O scorcher of enemies! I repeatedly bow down before you. You have been spoken of as the only man. You are the lord of the Satvatas.<sup>353</sup> I bow down before you. The supreme rishis have praised you under many names<sup>354</sup>—(1) Vishvakarma;<sup>355</sup> (2) Vishvatma;<sup>356</sup> (3) Vishvasambhava;<sup>357</sup> (4) Vishnu; (5) Jishnu; (6) Hari; (7) Krishna; (8) Vaikuntha; (9) Purushottama; (10) Aditya, since in ancient times, you were in her womb for seven nights;<sup>358</sup> (11) Prishnigarbha, one who is spoken of as having been born in different forms in the three yugas;<sup>359</sup> (12) Shuchishrava;<sup>360</sup> (13) Hrishikesha;<sup>361</sup> (14) Ghritarchi<sup>362</sup> is a name you are addressed by; (15) Trichakshu;<sup>363</sup> (16) Shambhu, the single one; (17) Vibhu;<sup>364</sup> (18) Damodara; (19) Varaha;<sup>365</sup> (20) Agni; (21) Brihadbhanu;<sup>366</sup> (22) Vrishana;<sup>367</sup> (23) Tarkshyalakshana;<sup>368</sup> (24) Anikasaha;<sup>369</sup> (25) Purusha; (26) Shipivishta;<sup>370</sup> (27) Urukrama;<sup>371</sup> (28) Vachishtha;<sup>372</sup> (29) Ugra; (30) Senani; (31) Satya; (32) Vajasanirguha;<sup>373</sup> (33) Achyuta; (34) Yavana-arinam;<sup>374</sup> (35) Samkriti; (36) Vikriti; (37) Vrisha; (38) Kritavartma;<sup>375</sup> (39) Vrishagarbha; (40) Vrishakapi; (41) Sindhukshidurmi;<sup>376</sup> (42) Triaku;<sup>377</sup> (43) Tridhama;<sup>378</sup> (44) Trivid-achyuta;<sup>379</sup> (45) Samrat;<sup>380</sup> (46) Virat;<sup>381</sup> (47) Svarat;<sup>382</sup> (48) Surarat;<sup>383</sup> (49) Dharmada; (50) Bhava; (51) Bhu;<sup>384</sup> (52) Abhibhu;<sup>385</sup> (53) Krishna; (54) Krishavartma;<sup>386</sup> (55) Svishtha;<sup>387</sup> (56) Kridbhishagavarta;<sup>388</sup> (57) Kapila; (58) Vamana; (59) Yajna; (60) Dhruva; (61) Patanga;<sup>389</sup> (62) Jayatsena;<sup>390</sup> (63) Shikhandi;<sup>391</sup> (64) Nahusha; (65) Babhru;<sup>392</sup> (66) Divaspriktva;<sup>393</sup> (67) Punarvasu;<sup>394</sup> (68) Subabhru;<sup>395</sup> (69) Ruksha;<sup>396</sup> (70) Rukma; (71) Sushena; (72) Dundubhi; (73) Gabhastinemi;<sup>397</sup> (74) Shripadma; (75) Pushkara; (76) Pushpadharana; (77) Ribhu; (78) Vibhu; (79) Sarvasukshma;<sup>398</sup> (80) Savitra; (81) Ambhanidhi;<sup>399</sup> (82) Brahma; (83) Pavitra; (84) Dhama;<sup>400</sup> (85) Dhanva;<sup>401</sup> (86) Hiranyagarbha; (87) Svadha; (88) Svaha; (89) Keshava; (90) Yoni;<sup>402</sup> (91) Pralaya;<sup>403</sup> (92) Krishna; (93) Vishvamagra, the foremost creator of everything in the universe; (94) Vishvajoni, who controls everything in the universe; (95) Sharnga-chakra-asi-pani.<sup>404</sup> I bow down before you.” Having been thus praised in the midst of the assembly hall by the eldest Pandava, the eloquent Krishna Pundarikaksha, foremost among the Yadavas, spoke words to delight the descendant of the Bharata lineage.’



## Chapter 1372(44)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king dismissed all the subjects and instructed them to return to their own homes. King Yudhishtira then spoke to Bhima, terrible in his valour, the intelligent Arjuna and the twins and pacified them. “In the great battle, your bodies have been mangled by the enemy with many kinds of weapons. You are exhausted and extremely tormented by sorrow and intolerance. O best of men! You have suffered hardships in the forest because of me. You have endured that, like inferior men. Now enjoy this victory in happiness, as you wish. After having rested and recovered your sense, meet me again in the morning.” Duryodhana’s house was as beautiful as a palace. It was strewn with many gems and full of male and female servants. With Dhritarashtra’s permission, it had been given to Vrikodara by his brother.<sup>405</sup> The mighty-armed one received it and entered, like Maghavan. Just like Duryodhana’s house, Duhshasana’s house was also adorned with the garlands of many palaces and was decorated with golden gates. It was stocked with male and female servants and had a lot of riches and grain. On the instructions of the king, the mighty-armed Arjuna received this. Durmarshana’s supreme abode was even better than Duhshasana’s house. It was like Kubera’s residence and was decorated with jewels and gold. Nakula had suffered in the great forest and deserved this. O great king! Dharmaraja Yudhishtira happily gave him this. Durmukha’s foremost residence was prosperous and decorated with gold. It had many beds and was full of women who had eyes that were like the petals of lotuses. Sahadeva always did what brought him pleasure and he<sup>406</sup> gave it to him. Having obtained it, he<sup>407</sup> delighted himself, like the lord of riches<sup>408</sup> on Kailasa. Yuyutsu, Vidura, the immensely radiant Sanjaya, Sudharma and Dhoumya<sup>409</sup> went to their own houses. With Satyaki, Shouri,<sup>410</sup> tiger among men, went to Arjuna’s residence and entered it, like a tiger entering a cave in the mountains. Those places were stocked with food and drink. They spent the night happily there. Having cheerfully awoken in the morning, they presented themselves before King Yudhishtira.’

## Chapter 1373(45)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! After having obtained the kingdom, what did the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishtira do next? You should tell me that. O rishi! What did the illustrious Hrishikesha, the supreme preceptor of the three worlds, do? You should tell me that in detail.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O Indra among kings! Listen. O unblemished one! I will recount that in detail, about what the Pandavas did, with Vasudeva at the forefront. Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishtira instructed the four varnas to be engaged in their own dharma. He announced that one thousand great-souled snataka<sup>411</sup> brahmanas would be given one thousand golden coins each. He arranged sustenance for the servants and the guests who sought refuge and gratified their desires, even the distressed ones who were prone to debating.<sup>412</sup> He gave tens of thousands of cows to the priest, Dhoumya, and also riches, gold, silver and many kinds of garments. O great king! He behaved towards Kripa as one would towards a preceptor. With dharma in his soul, he was careful in his vows and honoured Vidura. The supreme among generous ones gave food, drink, many kinds of garments, beds and seats and satisfied all those who resorted to him. O supreme among kings! Having obtained peace, the immensely illustrious king honoured Yuyutsu, Dhritarashtra’s son. King Yudhishtira offered the kingdom to Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Vidura and informed them that the kingdom was safe. O Janamejaya! He satisfied everyone in the city in this way.

‘With hands joined in salutation, he then went to the great-souled Vasudeva. He saw Krishna seated on an expensive couch, decorated with jewels and gold. He looked like a blue rain cloud atop Mount Meru. Decorated with divine ornaments, his form blazed. He was attired in yellow silk garments and was like a jewel set in golden jewellery. The *koustubha* jewel was on his chest, radiant amidst other gems. He looked like Mount Udaya,<sup>413</sup> with the sun blazing its crown. There was no one like him in the three worlds. He approached the great-souled Vishnu, an idol in human form. Smiling first, he addressed him in gentle words. “O supreme among intelligent ones! Have you spent the night in comfort? O Achyuta! I hope all your senses are at ease. O supreme among intelligent ones! We sought refuge with you and the goddess of your intelligence. That is how we obtained our kingdom back and the earth is under our subjugation. O illustrious one! Through your valour, you covered the three worlds in three steps<sup>414</sup> and you have shown us your favours. Hence, we obtained victory and the best of fame. Nor have we deviated from dharma.” Dharmaraja Yudhishtira spoke to him in this way. However, the illustrious one was meditating. He remained silent and did not say anything in reply.’

## Chapter 1374(46)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O infinitely valorous one! It is wonderful that you should be meditating thus. O refuge of the worlds! I hope the three worlds will be safe. O Purushottama! You have resorted to the fourth stage of meditation.<sup>415</sup> O god! You have withdrawn and my mind is surprised. You have stilled the five winds that perform action in the body.<sup>416</sup> You have established all the senses in your mind. You have restrained your senses and your mind in your intelligence.<sup>417</sup> O god! All those groups have been immersed in your soul.<sup>418</sup> Your body hair is still and so are your intelligence and your mind. O Madhava! You don’t seem to be here and are like a pillar, a wall or a rock. O Achyuta! You are as still as the blazing flame of a lamp where there is no wind. O illustrious one! O god! Firm in your resolution, you are as immobile as that. O god! If I deserve to hear it and if it is not a secret, show me your favours and dispel my doubts. You are the creator and the transformer.<sup>419</sup> You are the one who decays and you are the one who does not decay. You are without a beginning and without an end. O Purushottama! You are the one who is here now. I am bowing down my head before you. With devotion, I am seeking refuge with you. O supreme among upholders of dharma! Tell me the truth about this meditation.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The illustrious one, Vasava’s younger brother, then brought his mind, his intelligence and his senses to their usual state. Smiling first, he said, “Bhishma is lying down on a bed of arrows, like a fire that has been pacified. The tiger among men was thinking of me and my mind was concentrated on him. The sound of his bowstring against his palm was like thunder with lightning. Even the king of the gods could not tolerate that. My mind had gone out to him. In earlier times, when he swiftly attacked the assembled circle of kings and abducted the three maidens,<sup>420</sup> my mind had gone out to him. When he fought for twenty-three nights with Bhargava Rama<sup>421</sup> without being overpowered, my mind had gone out to him. In the proper way, Ganga had carried the king in her womb. O father!<sup>422</sup> He was Vasishtha’s student. O king! My mind had gone out to him. The extremely energetic and intelligent one wielded divine weapons and knew the four Vedas and the Vedangas. My mind had gone out to him. O Pandava! He was the beloved disciple of Rama,<sup>423</sup> Jamadagni’s son. He was the store of all kinds of knowledge. My mind had gone out to him. He united his senses, controlled his mind and his intelligence and sought refuge with me. My mind had gone out to him. O bull among men! He knew the past, the present and the future and upheld the best forms of dharma. My mind had gone out to him. O Partha! When that tiger among men has ascended to heaven because of his own deeds, the earth will be like a night when there is no moon. O Yudhishtira! Gangeya Bhishma is terrible in his valour. Go to him and carefully ask him about what is in your mind. O lord of the earth! Ask him about the four Vedas, the four rites of sacrifice,<sup>424</sup> the four stages of life and the dharma of the four varnas. Bhishma, has borne the great burden of the Kouravas, and with him, all that knowledge is about to set. That is the reason I am asking you to approach him.” When he heard Vasudeva’s excellent words, which were full of purport, the one who knew about dharma<sup>425</sup> addressed Janardana in a voice that was choking with tears. “O Madhava! O one who shows honours! There is not the slightest bit of doubt in my mind about the truth of what you have said about Bhishma’s powers. I have heard the great-souled brahmanas talk about the immensely fortunate and great-souled Bhishma’s powers. O destroyer of enemies! You are the lord of the worlds and there cannot be any doubt about what you have said. O Madhava! If your mind is so inclined towards showing me your favours, then, with you at the forefront, let us go and see Bhishma. When the illustrious sun god has turned around,<sup>426</sup> he will leave for those worlds. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, Kourava should also see you. You are the origin of the gods. You are the one who is destroyed and you are also the one who is not destroyed. You are the storehouse of the brahman. Therefore, seeing you is a true gain.” On hearing Dharmaraja’s words, Madhusudana instructed Satyaki, who was next to him, that his chariot should be yoked.

‘Satyaki departed from Krishna’s presence and went and told Daruka that Krishna’s chariot should be yoked. The different parts of that supreme chariot were decorated with gold. Its parts were adorned with sapphires and crystals. The wheels were encrusted with gold. It was swift and possessed the complexion of the sun’s rays. It was decorated with many kinds of gems and jewels. It blazed like the rising sun. The wonderful standard had Tarkshya<sup>427</sup> atop it. It was as swift as thought and its different parts were embellished with gold. Sugriva, Sainya and the best of horses were yoked to it. On hearing Satyaki’s instructions, Daruka quickly yoked it properly. O lion among kings! Hands joined in salutation, he then went and informed that it had been readied.’

## Chapter 1375(47)

Janamejaya asked, ‘The grandfather of the Bharatas was lying down on a bed of arrows. How did he give up his body? What kind of yoga did he resort to?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! O tiger of the Kuru lineage! Purify yourself and listen attentively to how the great-souled Bhishma gave up his body. Pierced by hundreds of arrows, Bhishma was stretched out, like the sun with its rays. As soon as the sun turned towards uttarayana, he controlled himself and immersed himself in his atman. In his supreme prosperity, he was surrounded by the best of brahmanas — Vyasa, known for his learning in the Vedas, Narada, the rishi of the gods, Devasthana, Vatsya, Ashmaka and Sumantu. These, and large numbers of other immensely fortunate and great-souled sages surrounded him. With faith and self-control, they surrounded him, like the moon by the planets. Bhishma was a tiger among men, in his deeds, thoughts and words.

‘Lying down on that bed of arrows, he joined his hands in salutation and worshipped Krishna. In a loud voice, he praised Madhusudana, the lord of yoga, Padmanabha,<sup>428</sup> Vishnu, Jishnu, the lord of the universe. He joined his hands in salutation and purified himself. Bhishma was supreme among eloquent ones and had great dharma in his soul. He praised the lord Vasudeva. “O Krishna! I wish to worship you. O Purushottama! May you be pleased with my words, which will be both brief and extensive. You are pure. You are the essence of purity. You are the swan.<sup>429</sup> You are supreme. You are the supreme creator. You are in all atmans and you are the lord of beings. You enter and are established in all beings in the universe. You are the qualities in beings. You are the lord of qualities, like a string which holds gems together. Your limbs constitute the universe. You perform deeds in the universe. Everything in the universe is strung together in you, like a garland strung together by a firm thread. You are Hari. You are the one with one thousand heads. You are the one with one thousand feet and one thousand eyes. You are known as the god Narayana. You are the refuge of the universe. You are finer than the finest. You are larger than the largest. You are heavier than the heaviest. You are better than the best. In the *vakas*, the *anuvakas*, the *nishads* and the Upanishads, you are the one who is praised as the performer of truthful deeds.<sup>430</sup> You are truth. You are in the truth of the samas. There are four parts to your atman.<sup>431</sup> You are in all understanding and you are the lord of the Satvatas. Your supreme and secret names are worshipped by the celestial gods. You are the god who was born to the goddess Devaki and Vasudeva, for the sake of protecting brahmanas on earth and they were like two sticks rubbed together to kindle a blazing fire. When one cleanses oneself, controls and withdraws from all desire, desiring the infinite, one sees the unblemished atman of Govinda in one’s own atman. In the Puranas, you have been spoken of as Purusha. At the beginning of a yuga, you are Brahma. When the time for destruction has arrived, you are known by the name of Samkarshana. I am worshipping the one who should be worshipped. Your deeds surpass those of Vayu and Agni. You surpass the sun and the fire in your energy.

Your atman is beyond the reach of intelligence and the senses. I am seeking refuge with that Prajapati. You are the creator of the universe. You are the lord of everything in the universe. That is how the universe speaks of you. You are the supervisor. You are without decay. You are the supreme state. Your complexion is like that of gold. Though you are one, for the sake of destroying the daityas, Aditi bore twelve different parts in her womb.<sup>432</sup> I am bowing down to the one whose atman is the sun. I bow down before the one whose atman is the moon. He is the king of the brahmanas and gratifies the gods in shuklapaksha and the ancestors in krishnapaksha.<sup>433</sup> You are the blazing and resplendent being who is beyond the great darkness. Knowing you, one goes beyond death. I am bowing down to the one who is everything that there is to be known. In the great ukthas,<sup>434</sup> the large number of brahmanas chants of you as the great one and as the fire in the great sacrifice. You are the soul of the Vedas and I bow down before you. Your abode is in the Rig, Yajur and Sama hymns. You are the five kinds of oblations.<sup>435</sup> You are the seven strands.<sup>436</sup> You are the soul of a sacrifice and I bow down before you. You are the bird named Yajur. The

metres are your limbs and the three forms of chanting<sup>437</sup> constitute your head. The *brihat* and *rathambara*<sup>438</sup> are the eyes. You are the hymns and I bow down before you. When the creators performed a sacrifice with one thousand flows,<sup>439</sup> you were the rishi who appeared. You are the bird with a golden complexion. Your atman is the swan and I bow down before you. I bow down to the one whose atman is speech. He is said to be the eternal akshara.<sup>440</sup>

The words<sup>441</sup> are his limbs. The joints are *sandhi*.<sup>442</sup> The vowels and the consonants are the manifestations. For the sake of the virtuous, you build a bridge from the false to the truth. Your limbs are the use of dharma and artha. I bow down to the one who is the truth. There are those who follow different dharmas. They desire fruits through the pursuit of these different kinds of dharma. They worship you through these different kinds of dharma. I bow down to the one who has dharma in his soul. The maharshis think of you as the unmanifest within the manifest. You are the kshetrajna in the *kshetra*.<sup>443</sup> I bow down to the one who has his atman in the kshetra. I bow down to the one who is the atman of samkhya, who is spoken of in samkhya as the seventeenth and who, firm with the atman in the self, is surrounded by the sixteen qualities.<sup>444</sup> Without sleep, controlling the breath, established in the self and restraining the senses, those who are engaged in yoga see a light. You are the atman of that and I bow down before you. Without any fear of rebirth, peaceful sannyasis obtain the supreme you, beyond the good and the bad. You are the atman of salvation and I bow down before you. At the end of one thousand yugas, you are the blazing flames of fire and devour all beings. You are the atman of the terrible and I bow down before you. Having consumed all beings and having rendered the entire universe into a single ocean, you sleep alone, like a child. You are the atman of maya and I bow down before you. You are the thousand-headed being and your atman is infinite. I bow down before the one who is the atman of this yoga of sleep, in each of the four oceans in turn.<sup>445</sup> You are the lotus in the navel of the one who has not been born. The entire universe is established in you. You are Pushkara and Pushkaraksha. I bow down before the one who is the atman of the lotus. The clouds are your hair. The rivers flow through all the joints of your body. The four oceans are in your stomach. I bow down before the one who is the atman of water. You flow through the yugas in the form of days, seasons, *ayanas*<sup>446</sup> and years. You are the cause of creation and destruction. I bow down before the one who is the atman of time. The brahmanas are your mouth, the kshatriyas are your arms, the vaishyas are your thighs and stomach and the shudras find refuge in your feet. I bow down before the one who is the atman of the varnas. The fire is your face. The firmament is the crown of your head. The sky is your navel and the earth constitutes your feet. Your eyes are the sun. The directions are your ears. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the worlds. You are present in objects in the form of *vaisheshika* qualities.<sup>447</sup> You are spoken of as the protector of objects. I bow down before the one whose atman is in all protection. You are the one who sustains beings through food, drink and riches and extends their juice and breaths of life. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the breath of life. You are beyond time. You are beyond sacrifices. You are beyond notions of truth and falsehood. You have no beginning. You are the origin of the universe. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the universe. He is the one who confounds beings through the bonds of affection and hatred. This is for the sake of preserving creation. I bow down before the one whose atman is in confusion. Knowledge about the atman is knowledge one can obtain while still remaining established in the five.<sup>448</sup> Those who obtain that knowledge go to him. I bow down before the one whose atman is in knowledge. His body cannot be measured. His infinite eyes see everything. He is infinite and cannot be measured. I bow down before the one whose atman is in thought. He is matted and always carries a staff.

His body has an elongated stomach. The water pot is his quiver.<sup>449</sup> I bow down before the one whose atman is in Brahma. He wields a trident and is the lord of the gods. He is great-souled and three-eyed. His body is smeared in ashes and his linga is turned up.<sup>450</sup> I bow down before the one whose atman is in Rudra. He is the embodiment of the five elements. He is the creator and destroyer of all beings. He is without anger, without malice and without confusion. I bow down before the one whose atman is in peace. Everything is in him. He is in everything. He is everything. Everything comes from him. He is always made up of everything. I bow down before the one whose atman is in everything. I bow down before the one whose deeds are the universe. You are the soul of the universe. The universe originates in you. Established beyond the five,<sup>451</sup> you are the fulfilment of all beings. In the three worlds, I bow down before you. I bow down before you in everything that is beyond those three. I bow down before you in all the directions. You are the refuge of everything. I bow down before the illustrious Vishnu, the origin

of the worlds. O Hrishikesha! You are the unvanquished creator and destroyer. I see your divine form in the three paths.<sup>452</sup> I can see the truth about your eternal form. The heaven is pervaded with your head and the goddess earth with your feet. You are the eternal being whose valour is in the three worlds. Your complexion is like the *atasi* flower.<sup>453</sup> You are Achyuta in your yellow garments. Those who bow down before Govinda have no fear. Just as truth is full of Vishnu, oblations are full of Vishnu. Since everything is full of Vishnu, the wicked deeds that I have done will be destroyed. Faithfully, I am seeking refuge with you. I wish to attain the best objective. O Pundarikaksha! O supreme among gods! You will think of what is best. You are the source of learning and austerities. You are Vishnu, who has no origin. I have worshipped the god with my words. May Janardana be pleased with me.” With devotion in his mind, Bhishma spoke these words. Having said this, he bowed down before Krishna.

‘Through his powers of yoga, Madhava got to know about Bhishma’s devotion and went there.’<sup>454</sup> Hari gave him divine knowledge and sight about the three kinds of time.<sup>455</sup> When the immensely wise Bhishma’s words ended, those who were knowledgeable about the brahman applauded him loudly, their voices choking with tears. The foremost among brahmanas praised Keshava Purushottama. Then, in gentle words, all of them again praised Bhishma. On discerning Bhishma’s yoga of devotion, Purushottama was joyful. He suddenly arose and ascended his vehicle. Keshava and Satyaki advanced on a single chariot. The great-souled Yudhishtira and Dhananjaya were on another one. Bhima and the two twins were on a single chariot. Kripa, Yuyutsu and the suta Sanjaya went on another chariot. Those bulls among men went on chariots that were like cities. These made the earth tremble with the roar of their axles. As he<sup>456</sup> advanced along the road, the best of men was extremely joyful on hearing the words of praise spoken by the brahmanas. There were other men who bowed down before him, hands joined in salutation. The slayer of Keshi<sup>457</sup> was delighted and greeted them.’

## Chapter 1376(48)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hrishikesha, King Yudhishtira, Kripa and the others and the four Pandavas rode on chariots that were like cities, adorned with standards and flags. On horses that were swift, they quickly went to Kurukshetra. They got down in Kurukshetra, full of hair, marrow and bones. That was where the great-souled kshatriyas had given up their bodies. The bodies and bones of elephants and horses were piled up in heaps, like mountains. The heads and skulls of men were strewn around like conch shells. Thousands of funeral pyres had been lit, with armour and weapons piled on. It looked like a drinking ground that had been used by Death and had just been abandoned. Large numbers of demons wandered around and large numbers of rakshasas frequented it. The maharathas quickly went and saw Kurukshetra.

‘While they were going there, the mighty-armed one, the delight of all the Yadavas, spoke to Yudhishtira about the valour of Jamadagni’s son. “O Partha! There, in the distance, you can see the five lakes created by Rama.<sup>458</sup> Earlier, he used the blood of kshatriyas to offer oblations to his ancestors. On twenty-one occasions, the lord emptied the earth of kshatriyas. It is only now that Rama has refrained from that task.” Yudhishtira replied, “You have told me that Rama emptied the world of kshatriyas twenty-one times. I have a great doubt about this. O bull among the Yadu lineage! O infinitely valorous one! If the seed of the kshatriyas was burnt, how were the kshatriyas generated again? O bull among the Yadu lineage! How were the kshatriyas exterminated by the illustrious and great-souled Rama? How did they prosper again? O supreme among eloquent ones! In the Mahabharata war, crores of kshatriyas have been slain. The earth is strewn with kshatriyas. O Varshneya! O one with Tarkshya<sup>459</sup> on your standard! Sever my doubt. O Vasava’s younger brother! O Krishna! Our supreme knowledge comes from you.” As they proceeded, the lord who was Gada’s elder brother<sup>460</sup> told the infinitely energetic



Yudhishtira the complete truth about that account and about how the earth again became full of kshatriyas.'

## Chapter 1377(49)

‘Vasudeva said, “O Kounteya! Listen to what I heard when the maharshis were talking about Rama’s birth and the reasons behind why Jamadagni’s son killed crores of kshatriyas. Those who were born in royal lineages in Bharata<sup>461</sup> were again slain. Jahnu’s son was Ajahnu and his son was Ballava. King Kushika, knowledgeable about dharma, was his son. He was an equal of the one with the thousand eyes<sup>462</sup> on earth and performed fierce austerities. He wished to obtain a son who would not be defeated and would be the lord of the three worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him engaged in those terrible austerities, the thousand-eyed Purandara knew that he was capable of giving birth to a son who would be his<sup>463</sup> equal. O king! Therefore, having gone there, the chatiser of Paka, the lord of all mobile and immobile objects, himself became Kushika’s son, by the name of Gadhi. O king! O lord! His daughter was the maiden named Satyavati. The lord Gadhi gave her to Richika, the son of a wise sage.<sup>464</sup> O Kounteya! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Bhargava<sup>465</sup> was pleased at this. For the sake of a son for himself and for Gadhi, he cooked some *charu*.<sup>466</sup> Bhargava Richika summoned his wife and said, ‘This charu is for you and that one is for your mother. She will give birth to a blazing bull among the kshatriyas. He will be invincible before all the kshatriyas on this earth. He will destroy the bulls among the kshatriyas. O fortunate one! Your son will be steadfast and full of austerities. He will be peaceful in his soul. This charu will make him foremost among the brahmanas.’ Having spoken these words to his wife, the intelligent Richika, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, went away to the forest to engage in austerities.

“At that time, King Gadhi had decided to visit the tirthas. With his wife, he arrived in Richika’s hermitage. O king! Satyavati picked up the two charus and cheerfully gave them to her mother, forgetting in her haste, her husband’s words. O Kounteya! The mother gave her own charu to her daughter and ignorantly, consumed her<sup>467</sup> charu herself. The destroyer of kshatriyas was conceived in Satyavati’s womb. His form blazed and he was terrible to look at. While he was engaged in the yoga of meditation, Richika saw this. O tiger among kings! He told his beautiful wife, ‘O fortunate one! The charu has been exchanged and your mother has deceived you.<sup>468</sup> You will give birth to an extremely powerful son who will be the performer of cruel deeds. Your brother will be born as a store of austerities, immersed in the brahman. Through my austerities, I have given him the universal brahman.’ Having been thus addressed by her husband, the immensely fortunate Satyavati trembled. She lowered her head at his feet and said, ‘O illustrious one! O great sage! You should not speak such words to me now. “You will have a son who will be the worst among brahmanas.”’ Richika replied, ‘O fortunate one! This is not what I had envisaged for you. You will have a son who is terrible in his deeds. The charu and your mother are the reason for that.’ Satyavati said, ‘O sage! If you wish, you can create the worlds. But what about me? O supreme among those who meditate! I desire a son who is peaceful and upright.’ Richika replied, ‘O fortunate one! I have never wilfully uttered a falsehood. Why will I do it after igniting a fire and pronouncing mantras for the charu?’ Satyavati said, ‘O supreme among those who meditate! Let our grandson be like that. But let our son be like you. I desire a son who is peaceful and upright.’ Richika replied, ‘O one with a beautiful complexion! I see no difference between a son and a grandson. O fortunate one! It will be according to your words.’ Satyavati gave birth to Bhargava Jamadagni. He was peaceful and engaged in austerities. He was peaceful in his soul. Gadhi, the descendant of Kushika, obtained Vishvamitra as a heir. He was united with the universal brahman and was a brahmarshi.

“Jamadagni, Richika’s son, had the extremely terrible Rama as a son. He was foremost among those who knew all forms of learning. He was accomplished in dhanurveda. He was the slayer of kshatriyas and like a blazing fire. At that time, Kritavirya had a powerful son. He was an energetic kshatriya in the Haihaya lineage and his name was Arjuna. He scorched the entire earth with its seven continents<sup>469</sup> and cities, using the strength of his own arms and weapons, but also using supreme dharma. O Kouravya! Chitrabhanu<sup>470</sup> was thirsty and approached him for

alms. The powerful and thousand-armed one<sup>471</sup> gave Agni the alms. Chitrabhanu blazed from the valiant one's arrows and burnt down villages, fortifications, hamlets and cities. Because of the powers of that Indra among men, Kartavirya, the one with the great heat burnt down mountains and forests. Aided by the wind and with Haihaya, Chitrabhanu consumed and emptied the hermitage of Varuna's son.<sup>472</sup> O unblemished one! O great king! When his hermitage was burnt down, Apava<sup>473</sup> angrily cursed Kartavirya Arjuna. 'Because of your delusion, you did not spare my forest. O Arjuna! Therefore, in a battle, Rama will burn down and sever your arms.' O great king! After this, the powerful Arjuna always turned to peace. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He became the generous granter of refuge to brahmanas and brave ones. His extremely powerful sons caused him to be slain through the curse. Those powerful ones were always cruel and became the cause. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In their intolerance, they seized Jamadagni's calf, though the intelligent Haihaya Kartavirya did not know about this. O Indra among kings! At this, the lord<sup>474</sup> used his manliness to sever Arjuna's arms and brought the weeping calf back to Jamadagni's hermitage, back from where it was wandering around in the inner quarters.<sup>475</sup> Arjuna's sons lost their minds because of this. Foolishly, they went to the great-souled Jamadagni's hermitage. O lord of men! With broad-headed arrows, sharp at the tip, they severed and brought down his head from his body. This happened when the great-souled Rama had gone out in search of kindling and kusha grass. Rama was overcome with great rage and anger at his father's death. He grasped his weapons and pledged to empty the earth of kshatriyas. The tiger among the Bhṛigu lineage used his valour to quickly kill all the sons and grandsons of the valiant Kartavirya. Overcome by great anger, he killed thousands of Haihayas. O king! Bhṛgava covered the earth with the mud of blood. Thus, the extremely energetic one emptied the earth of kshatriyas. Having done this, he was overcome by great compassion and retired to the forest.

“Thousands of years passed. The lord was naturally angry and confronted a fierce agitation. O great king! Paravasu was a great ascetic and was the son of Raibhya and the grandson of Vishvamitra. He angrily addressed him<sup>476</sup> in an assembly of men. 'O Rama! When Yayati fell down,<sup>477</sup> virtuous ones assembled at a sacrifice. There were Prataradana and others. Were they not kshatriyas? O Rama! Your pledge has been false. Why do you boast in the assemblies of men? Because of your fear of these brave kshatriyas, you have sought refuge in the mountains.'<sup>478</sup> On hearing Paravasu's words, Bhṛgava again picked up his weapons and, overcome by rage, again covered the earth with hundreds of kshatriyas. O king! However, there were hundreds of kshatriyas who remained alive. Those immensely valorous ones prospered and became lords of the earth. O lord of men! He quickly slew them again, including the children and those who were in the wombs. The earth was again covered. As soon as babies were born from wombs, he killed them again. However, some kshatriya women managed to protect their sons. On twenty-one occasions, the lord emptied the earth of kshatriyas. In a horse sacrifice, he then gave it<sup>479</sup> to Kashyapa as *dakshina*. O king! Wishing to save the remaining kshatriyas, Kashyapa held the sacrificial ladle<sup>480</sup> in his hand and spoke these beneficial words. 'O great sage! Go to the shores of the southern ocean. O Rama! You should not dwell within my dominion.' Because of its fright of Jamadagni's son, the ocean created the country known as Shurparaka, on the other side of the earth. O great king! Kashyapa received the earth. Having made arrangements for the brahmanas to dwell there, he entered the great forest.

“O bull among the Bharata lineage! The shudras and the vaishyas acted as they wished. They descended on the wives of the foremost among the brahmanas. When there is no king in the world of the living, the strong oppress the weak. There are no restraints and no one is the lord of his own possessions. At that time, the earth entered *rasa-tala*.<sup>481</sup> At that time, she was not protected in the proper way by kshatriyas, who should be protecting in accordance with dharma. O king! As the earth was submerging, Kashyapa held her on his thigh. That is the reason the earth is known as Urvi.<sup>482</sup> The goddess earth sought Kashyapa's favours and asked that she should be protected by kshatriyas who possessed strength in their arms. 'O brahmana! I have protected some virtuous men who are bulls among kshatriyas. O sage! They have been born in the lineage of the Haihayas. Let them protect me. There is a lord who is a descendant of the Pourava lineage. He is Viduratha's son. O brahmana! The bears have reared him on Mount Riksha.<sup>483</sup> There is another one who is the son of Sudasa. Because of compassion, Parashara's infinitely energetic son has protected him and has performed sacrifices for him. Like a shudra, he performs all the tasks for that rishi and is known by the name of Sarvakarma.<sup>484</sup> Let that king protect me. Shibi's immensely energetic son is known by the name of Gopati. The cows have protected him in the forest.<sup>485</sup> O sage! Let him protect me. Pratar-

dana's son is the immensely illustrious Vatsa. The calves have reared him in a pen.<sup>486</sup> Let that king protect me. There is Dadhivahana's grandson, the son of Diviratha. He is Anga and he was protected on the banks of the Ganga by Goutama. The mighty-armed Brihadratha is foremost on the earth because of his prosperity. The immensely fortunate one was protected on Gridhrakuta by *golangulas*.<sup>487</sup> There are three kshatriyas in the lineage of Marutta. They have been protected by the ocean and are like the Maruts in their valour. Here and there, these sons of kshatriyas have been heard of. Protected by them, I will no longer move. For my sake, Rama, unblemished in his deeds, killed their fathers and their grandfathers in a battle. There is no doubt that it is my duty to honour them.<sup>488</sup> I do not desire to be protected by someone who always lacks valour.' Kashyapa brought together the ones whom the earth had indicated. He consecrated those valorous kshatriyas as the lords of the earth. The present lineages are based on their sons and grandsons. O Pandava! This is the ancient account that you have asked me about.'"

Vaishampayana said, 'The foremost among the Yadu lineage spoke thus to Yudhishtira, supreme among those who uphold dharma. He then swiftly departed on his chariot, like the illustrious sun god penetrating the three worlds with its rays.'<sup>489</sup>

## Chapter 1378(50)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard of Rama's deeds, King Yudhishtira was filled with great wonder and replied to Janardana. "O Varshneya! The great-souled Rama is like Shakra. Through his valour and anger, he emptied the earth of kshatriyas. The extenders of the kshatriya lineage were frightened because of Rama and were protected by cattle, the oceans, golangulas, bears and apes. O Achyuta! It is amazing. Men on earth are fortunate that such an act of dharma was performed by the brahmana." O son!<sup>490</sup> That is the way Achyuta and Yudhishtira proceeded together. They went to the spot where the lord Gangeya was lying down on a bed of arrows. They saw Bhishma lying down on that bed of arrows. He was like the evening sun or the fire, surrounded by a net of his own rays. That spot, on the banks of the river Oghavati, was extremely auspicious. The sages surrounded and honoured him, like the gods around Shatakratu. From a distance, Krishna, the king who was Dharmaraja, the four Pandavas and Sharadvata and the others saw him. They descended from their vehicles and controlled their agitated minds. They concentrated their senses and approached the great sages. Govinda, Satyaki and the Kouravas greeted Vyasa and the other rishis and then presented themselves before Gangeya. Gangeya was rich in austerities. All the Yadus and the Kouravas, bulls among men, asked about his welfare and then sat down around him.

'Gangeya was fading, like a fire that had been pacified. Somewhat distressed in his mind, Keshava told Bhishma, "O king! I hope your knowledge is as clear as it used to be. O supreme among eloquent ones! I hope anxiety has not affected your intelligence. I hope the wounds from these arrows are not causing great pain to your limbs. Mental pain makes the physical one stronger. O lord! Your father Shantanu, devoted to dharma, granted you the boon that you could choose when to die. But that does not reduce the pain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The slightest of stakes generates pain in the body, not to speak of this storm of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you so wish, you can instruct the gods on the origins, the prosperity and the destruction of all living beings. O bull among men! You are revered for your age and wisdom. It is as if the past, the present and the future are inscribed on the palm of your hand. O immensely wise one! For beings, you know about the fruits of dharma and the cycle of death and rebirth. You are a store that is full of the brahman. You were established in this prosperous kingdom and your limbs were without disease. You were surrounded by thousands of women. However, we have seen you hold up your seed. O king! With the exception of Shantanu's son, Bhishma, there is no one in the three worlds who is as devoted to the truth, as immensely valorous, as brave and as conscious of dharma. O father!<sup>491</sup> You are about to die and we have not heard of anyone else who, lying down on strewn arrows, is so full of natural power. In truth, austerities, generosity, performing of sacrifices, dhanurveda, the Vedas, non-violence, purity, self-control and engagement in the welfare of all beings, we have not heard of any other maharatha like you. There is no doubt that you are capable of vanquishing the gods, the gandharvas, the *suras*,<sup>492</sup> the asuras and the rakshasas on a single chariot. You are the mighty-armed Bhishma, like a Vasava among the Vasus. The brahmanas always refer to you as the ninth, but you are not the ninth in qualities.<sup>493</sup> O supreme among men! I know who you are. Because of your own capacity and great strength, you are renowned among the thirty gods. O Indra among men! Among men, there is no man on earth who is your equal in qualities, none that has been seen or heard of. O king! In all the qualities, you surpass even the gods. Through your austerities, you are capable of creating worlds, with mobile and immobile objects. The eldest son of Pandu is tormented because of the destruction of his kin. O Bhishma! Dispel his sorrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You know everything about what is said to be the dharma of the four varnas and the four ashramas.<sup>494</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is said to be the eternal dharma, spoken about in the four Vedas, followed by the four officiating priests<sup>495</sup> and stated in samkhya yoga.<sup>496</sup> O Gangeya! There is one single dharma followed, and not contravened, by any of the four varnas and that is also known to you.<sup>497</sup> You know all the *itihasa*<sup>498</sup> and the Puranas. All the Dharmashastras<sup>499</sup> are

always established in your mind. O bull among men! With the exception of you, there is no one else in this world who can dispel any doubt that may arise about their meanings. O Indra among men! Using your intelligence, dispel the sorrow that has arisen in Pandaveya's mind. You possess many kinds of extensive intelligence and you should assure the people who are confused.”

## Chapter 1379(51)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing the words of the intelligent Vasudeva, Bhishma joined his hands in salutation and raising his head a bit, spoke the following words. “O illustrious Vishnu! I bow down before you. You are the origin of the worlds. O Hrishiksha! You are the unvanquished creator and destroyer. I bow down before the one who is the doer in the universe, who is the soul of the universe and who is the creator of the universe. You are the objective and you are beyond the five elements. I bow down before the three worlds. I bow down before the one who is beyond the three worlds. I bow down before the one who is the lord of yoga. You are the final refuge of everything. O Purushottama! I have sought refuge in your words and am able to see your divine form in the three paths.<sup>500</sup> I can also see your true and eternal form. Your infinite energy bears up the wind along seven paths.<sup>501</sup> Your head extends up to the firmament and your feet are on the goddess earth. The directions are your arms. Your eyes are the sun and Shakra is established in your valour. In our mind’s eye, we see your undecaying form. It has the complexion of the atasi flower. It is attired in yellow garments. It is like a cloud tinged with lightning. With a desire to attain the best objective, I have faithfully sought refuge with you. O Pundarikaksha! O supreme among gods! Think of my welfare.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O bull among men! O king! Since you have supreme devotion in me, I have shown you my divine form. O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not show this self to one without devotion, one with false devotion, or one without self-control. You have always been my devotee and you have always been devoted to the truth and have resorted to control, austerities, truth, generosity and attachment to purity. O Bhishma! O king! It is because of your own austerities that you have been able to see me. The worlds from which there is no return<sup>502</sup> are there for you. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Fifty-six days still remain in your life. O Bhishma! After that, you will cast aside your body and obtain the auspicious fruits of your deeds. These gods, the Vasus, are astride their celestial vehicles and all of them are like blazing fires. Though they are invisible, they are protecting you until it is the northern solstice. O illustrious one! O foremost among men! As soon as the sun turns in the northward direction with the progress of time, you will go to the worlds obtained by those with knowledge, and from where there is no return. O Bhishma! O brave one! When you go to that world, all the knowledge you possess will be destroyed. That is the reason all of these have assembled before you, for an analysis of dharma. Yudhishtira’s knowledge has been affected by sorrow over his kin, though he is firmly based on truth. Tell him about the union of dharma and artha. Speak meaningful words that will dispel his sorrow.”’

## Chapter 1380(52)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Krishna’s words, full of dharma and artha, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, joined his hands in salutation and spoke these words to him. “O lord of the worlds! O mighty-armed one! O Shiva! O Narayana! O Achyuta! Having heard your words, I am flooded with delight. You are the lord of speech. What can I say in your presence? Everything that can be said exists in your words. O god! Whatever has been done in this world, what should be done, and what is being done, all emanate from you. The worlds are pervaded by your intelligence. In the presence of the king of the gods, who can speak about the world of the gods? Before you, only such a person can talk about dharma, kama and artha in the sacred texts. O Madhusudana! My mind is suffering from the wounds of these arrows. My limbs are weak and my intelligence is unclear. I lack the capacity to talk about anything. O Govinda! These arrows are like poison and the fire and are oppressing me. My great strength is leaving. My breath of life is ebbing away. My inner organs are scorched. My consciousness is distracted. The weakness is affecting my words. How can I be interested in speaking? O virtuous one! O descendant of the Dasharha lineage! Show me your favours. O mighty-armed one! Pardon me. O Achyuta! I will not say anything. In your presence, even Vachaspati<sup>503</sup> would refrain from speaking. I cannot distinguish the directions, nor the sky or the earth. O Madhusudana! It is only because of your valour that I am still here. O lord! You should yourself quickly tell Dharmaraja about what is beneficial. You are the learning that is there in all the sacred texts. You are the eternal doer in the worlds. When you are present in the world, how can someone like me speak? That will be like a disciple before a preceptor.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O one who has borne the great burden of the Kouravas! These words are worthy of you. You are immensely valorous and are established in great spirits. You can see the purpose behind everything. O Gangeya! You have spoken to me about the pain from the wounds of these storms of arrows. O Bhishma! O lord! Through my favours, accept a boon from me. O Gangeya! You will not be affected by debility, unconsciousness, fever, pain, hunger and thirst. O unblemished one! All knowledge will manifest itself before you. Your intelligence will be clear and will not be distracted. O Bhishma! There will always be spirit in your mind. You will like the king of the stars,<sup>504</sup> free of the clouds and without dusk and darkness. Whenever you think about dharma and artha, your intelligence will back this up first. O tiger among kings! O infinitely valorous one! By resorting to your divine sight, you will be able to see the four kinds of beings<sup>505</sup> that have been created. O Bhishma! Through the sight of knowledge, you will be able to see the truth about the four kinds of beings, like a fish in clear water.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘With Vyasa, all the maharshis worshipped Krishna with hymns and words from the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda. In every direction, a divine shower of flowers rained down from the sky and fell down at the spot where Varshneya, Gangeya and the Pandavas were. Celestial instruments were sounded and large numbers of apsaras arrived there. Nothing unpleasant was seen anywhere there. An auspicious and pleasant wind began to blow and it carried all the fragrant and sacred scents. The directions were calm and the animals and the birds also became calm. In an instant, the illustrious sun god, with the one thousand rays, was seen in the west, like a fire burning the extremity of a forest. All the maharshis arose and honoured Janardana, Bhishma and King Yudhishtira. Keshava bowed before them, and so did the Pandavas, Satyaki, Sanjaya and Kripa Sharadvata. When those who were always devoted to dharma<sup>506</sup> were honoured in the proper way, they said, “We will return tomorrow,” and quickly left, as they wished. Keshava and the Pandavas took their leave of Gangeya. They circumambulated him and ascended their sparkling chariots. The poles of those chariots were decorated with gold and ivory. There were crazy tuskers that looked like mountains. There were horses that were as swift as eagles. There were foot soldiers with bows and arrows. Extremely fast, that army advanced in front and to the rear of those chariots. In front and to the rear, it was like the great river Narmada, separated into two by Mount Rikshavat.<sup>507</sup> In the



east, the illustrious moon arose, delighting the army. The sun had drunk up the juice from the herbs and it again restored their original qualities. The bulls among the Yadus and the Pandavas entered the city,<sup>508</sup> which was as radiant as a city of the gods. They were exhausted and entered those supreme and appropriate abodes, like the lord of deer<sup>509</sup> returning to a cave.'

## Chapter 1381(53)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Madhusudana entered his residence and slept. He awoke when one *yama* was left of the night.<sup>510</sup> Madhava engaged in meditating on all forms of knowledge. After that, he thought of the eternal brahman. There were those who were learned in the sacred texts and the Puranas, possessing melodious voices. They praised Prajapati Vasudeva, the creator of the universe. They recited, clapped their hands and sang songs. Thousands of conch shells, drums and tambourines were sounded. There were the beautiful sounds of veenas, cymbals and flutes. Like a drawn-out laugh, they were heard to emanate from his residence. Loud and pleasant words, with auspicious sounds, were also heard for King Yudhishtira, mixed with songs and the sound of musical instruments. Dasharha Achyuta arose. He bathed. Joining his hands in salutation, the mighty-armed one lit a fire. Standing before it, he meditated on a secret mantra. There were thousands of brahmanas who were learned about the four Vedas. Madhava promised each of them one thousand cows. Having touched an auspicious object, Krishna then looked at himself in a spotless mirror and told Satyaki, “O descendant of the Shini lineage! Go to the king’s residence and ascertain if the immensely energetic Yudhishtira has prepared himself for visiting Bhishma.” At Krishna’s words, Satyaki quickly went to King Yudhishtira and told him, “O king! The intelligent Vasudeva’s supreme chariot is yoked. Janardana is ready to leave for the son of the river. O Dharmaraja! O immensely radiant one! Krishna is waiting for you. You should now do what must immediately be done.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O Phalguna! O infinitely radiant one! Let the supreme chariot be yoked. There is no need for the soldiers to go. We will go alone. Let us not afflict Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma. O Dhananjaya! Let the advance guard also refrain. From today, Gangeya will speak about supreme secrets. O Kounteya! I do not desire that ordinary people should assemble there.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, paid heed to these words. As instructed, the bull among men had that supreme chariot prepared and informed him. King Yudhishtira, the twins, Bhima and Arjuna went to Krishna’s residence, like the five elements assembled together. As the great-souled Pandavas arrived, together with Shini’s descendant, the intelligent Krishna went out and ascended his chariot. Astride their chariots, they asked each other whether they had spent the night in happiness. Then the maharathas left on those supreme chariots, with a roar like that of the clouds. Daruka goaded Vasudeva’s horses, Meghapushpa, Balaha, Sainya and Sugriva. O king! Goaded by Daruka, Vasudeva’s horses tore up the ground with their hooves. Those immensely strong ones departed with great force, seeming to devour the sky. They passed over all of Kurukshetra, the field that was full of dharma. They went to the spot where the lord Bhishma was lying down on his bed of arrows. He was in the midst of brahmarshis, like Brahma amidst a large number of gods. Govinda and Yudhishtira descended from their chariots and so did Bhima, the wielder of Gandiva, the twins and Satyaki. They raised their right hands and honoured the rishis. They then surrounded the king, like the nakshatras around the moon. They approached Gangeya, like Vasava towards Brahma. He was lying down on a bed of arrows, as if the sun had fallen down. On seeing this, the mighty-armed one<sup>511</sup> was struck with fear and timidity.’

## Chapter 1382(54)

Janamejaya asked, 'He had dharma in his soul. He was great in spirits and did not waver from the truth. He had conquered his soul. He was immensely fortunate and without decay. Devavrata was lying down on that bed of arrows. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was lying down on a bed meant for heroes. The Pandavas presented themselves before Gangeya, tiger among men. What conversation took place at that gathering of heroes, after all the soldiers had been killed? O great sage! Tell me that.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhishma, who bore the great burden of the Kouravas, was lying down on the bed of arrows. O king! The rishis and siddhas, with Narada at their head, arrived there. There were also the kings who had not been slain, with Yudhishtira at their head, Dhritarashtra, Krishna, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins. They approached the great-souled grandfather of the Bharatas. They sorrowed over Gangeya, who was like the sun when it has fallen down. Narada, who looked like a god, thought for a short while. Then he spoke to the Pandavas and all the remaining kings. "The time has come for Bhishma to be asked. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!<sup>512</sup> Like the sun, Gangeya is about to set. Before he gives up his breath of life, everyone should question him. He knows everything about the diverse kinds of dharma followed by the four varnas. He is aged and has already obtained worlds, for the time when he gives up his body. Quickly ask him about any doubts that you might have." Having been thus addressed by Narada, the kings approached Bhishma. But they were unable to ask him and glanced towards each other.

'Yudhishtira, Pandu's son, then spoke to Hrishikesha. "No one other than Devaki's son is capable of questioning the grandfather. O invincible one! O Madhusudana! You ask first. O son!<sup>513</sup> Among all of us, you are the one who knows about the supreme forms of all kinds of dharma." Having been thus addressed by Pandava, the illustrious Keshava approached the unassailable one.<sup>514</sup> Achyuta spoke to him. Vasudeva said, "O supreme among kings! Have you spent the night in happiness? Is your intelligence present and clear? O unblemished one! Is your entire knowledge shining? Is your heart without pain? Is your mind without anxiety?" Bhishma replied, "O Govinda! O unblemished one! Because of your favours, subjugation, confusion, exhaustion, fatigue, languor and agony have just disappeared. O supremely radiant one! Like a fruit in my hand, I can see everything in the past, the present and the future. O Achyuta! Because of the boon you have granted me, I can see everything about the dharma laid down in the Vedas and uttered in Vedanta.<sup>515</sup> The dharma cited for virtuous ones is circling around in my heart. O Janardana! I know the dharma for countries, clans<sup>516</sup> and families. The dharma of the four types of ashramas is established in my heart. O Keshava! I understand everything about the dharma of kings. O Janardana! I will state everything that needs to be said. Through your favours, an auspicious intelligence has penetrated my mind. I have been strengthened by meditating on you and seem to be young again. O Janardana! Through your favours, I am able to speak about what is beneficial. Why don't you yourself tell Pandava about what is beneficial? O Madhava! Quickly tell me why you are not doing this."

'Vasudeva replied, "O Kourava! Know me to be the source of fame and everything that is beneficial. All sentiments, good and bad, originate in my soul. Who in the world will wonder if it is said that the moon's rays are cool? In that way, who will wonder that I am full of fame? O immensely radiant one! However, I desire that your fame should be kindled. O Bhishma! That is the reason my greatness has pervaded your intelligence. O protector of the earth! As long as the earth exists, it is certain that your undecaying deeds will circulate throughout the world. O Bhishma! On being asked by Pandava, whatever you say will be established on the surface of the earth, like the declarations of the Vedas. Anyone who himself follows what you have adduced as proof will, after death, reap the fruits of all meritorious deeds. O Bhishma! That is the reason I have granted you divine intelligence. I have granted you a fame that will spread. How can it be extended further? It is certain that as long as a man's fame is spoken of

among people on this earth, so long does he possess an undecaying state. O king! The kings who have not been slain are seated around you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They wish to ask you about dharma. Tell them. You are aged and senior. You possess learning and good conduct. You are accomplished about the past and future dharma of kings. Since you were born, no one has seen any transgression in you. All the kings know you as someone who is conversant with the dharma of Manu.<sup>517</sup> O king! Address them, like a father to his sons, and tell them about supreme policy. You have always worshipped the rishis and the gods. As I see it, you should speak to them without leaving anything out. These virtuous ones have repeatedly asked you and wish to learn about dharma. The wise say that when a learned one is asked about dharma, he must speak. O lord! If one does not answer, one suffers from a sin. Your sons and grandsons have asked you about eternal dharma. They desire learning. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you should speak to them.”

## Chapter 1383(55)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The greatly energetic descendant of the Kourava lineage then spoke these words. “In that case, I will speak about dharma. My speech and my mind are firm because of your favours. O Govinda! You are the eternal soul of all beings. O unblemished one! However, King Yudhishtira must ask me about dharma. In that case, I will be pleased and will speak about dharma. When that rajarshi was born, all the great-souled rishis, with dharma in their souls, were delighted. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. All the Kurus follow dharma and are blazing in their fame. But among them, there is no one who is his equal. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. Fortitude, restraint, brahmacharya, forgiveness, power and energy are always found in him. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. Truthfulness, generosity, austerities, purity, peace, mental vigour and honour—all of these are in him. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He does not act in accordance with adharma, for the sake of desire, intolerance, fear or prosperity. He has dharma in his soul. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He welcomes and treats equally relatives, guests, servants and those who seek refuge. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He is always truthful. He is always forgiving. He is always learned. He is devoted to guests. He always donates to the righteous. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He always observes rites and studies. He always follows dharma. He is peaceful and knows the secrets of the sacred texts. Therefore, let Pandava ask me.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “Yudhishtira has dharma in his soul and is overcome with great shame. Because he is frightened of a curse, he is not approaching you. O lord of the earth! This protector of the worlds has caused carnage of the worlds. Because he is frightened of a curse, he is not approaching you. There were those who should be worshipped. There were those who were devoted. There were preceptors, allies and relatives. They deserved to be honoured. But having slain them with arrows, he is not approaching you.”

‘Bhishma said, “O Krishna! The dharma of brahmanas is donations, studying and austerities. Like that, the dharma of kshatriyas is to give up the body in battle. Fathers, grandfathers, sons, preceptors, allies and relatives advanced against him on a false cause. He followed dharma and killed them in a battle. O Keshava! There may be wicked seniors who are avaricious and abandon agreements. If a kshatriya kills them in a battle, he is following dharma. If kshatriya relatives challenge one to a battle, one must always fight. Manu has said that fighting is dharma. It leads to heaven and the worlds.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Bhishma spoke in this way, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira approached humbly and stood in front, so that he could be seen. He grasped Bhishma’s feet and honoured him. He<sup>518</sup> inhaled the fragrance of his<sup>519</sup> head and asked him to be seated. Gangeya, bull among all archers, said, “O son!<sup>520</sup> Ask me what you wish. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Do not be scared.”’

## Chapter 1384(56)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Yudhishtira bowed down before Hrishikesha and the grandfather. He took the permission of all the seniors and asked, “Those who are learned about dharma say that ruling the kingdom is supreme dharma. O king! I think that it is a great burden. Tell me about this. O grandfather! In particular, tell me about rajadharma.<sup>521</sup> All the beings in the world find a refuge in rajadharma. O Kourava! The three *vargas*<sup>522</sup> are dependent on rajadharma. All the forms of mokshadharma<sup>523</sup> are also clearly based on it. It is like the harness for a horse, or the goad for an elephant. It has been said that the dharma of kings restrains the world in that way. The rajarshis served that dharma earlier. It is becoming confused now, the world will no longer be established and everyone will become anxious. When the sun rises, it dispels the demonic darkness. In that way, rajadharma casts away everything that is inauspicious in this world. O grandfather! O best of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among intelligent ones! Therefore, tell me about the true nature of rajadharma first. O scorcher of enemies! We obtain the truth about all kinds of learning from you. Vasudeva thinks that you are supreme among intelligent ones.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I bow down before the supreme dharma. I bow down before the supreme Krishna. I honour the brahmanas. I will now speak about eternal dharma. O Yudhishtira! Hear from me a complete account of rajadharma. Listen attentively to everything else that you wish to hear. O best of the Kuru lineage! In the beginning, a king who desires pleasure must worship the gods and the brahmanas in the proper way. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Once one has worshipped the gods and the brahmanas, one is freed of the debts of dharma and is revered by the worlds. O son! O Yudhishtira! You must always strive to uplift yourself. Without the exertion, fortune never makes a king’s objectives successful. In general, there are two aspects—destiny and enterprise. But I certainly think it has been said that enterprise is superior to destiny. Even if a task begun does not go well, it is pointless to rue that. O son! If a king is led astray, he must make greater efforts. With the exception of truth, there is nothing that contributes to the success of kings. If a king is devoted to the truth, he finds delight here, and in the hereafter. O Indra among kings! Truth is the supreme wealth for rishis too. Like that, nothing inspires as much confidence in kings as adherence to supreme truth. If one possesses qualities and good conduct, is self-controlled and mild, is devoted to dharma and has conquered the senses, if one is extremely handsome and has a broad objective<sup>524</sup>—then one never deviates from prosperity. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! One must resort to uprightness in all tasks. One must reconsider policy and conceal the three.<sup>525</sup> If a king is mild, everyone always disregards him. But if a king is fierce, everyone is troubled. Therefore, act so that you are both. O supreme among generous ones! Brahmanas must never be punished. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are brahmanas are named as supreme beings in this world. O Indra among kings! The great-souled Manu sung two shlokas about this. O Kouravya! This was about one’s own dharma and you should bear this in your heart. ‘Fire emerged from water. Kshatriyas emerged from brahmanas. Iron emerged from stone. The energy of each of these is pacified by the source.<sup>526</sup> When iron confronts stone, fire faces water and kshatriyas hate brahmanas, then each of these three is destroyed.’ O great king! Knowing this, you must bow down before brahmanas. The best of brahmanas are full of peace and represent the brahman on earth. O tiger among kings! However, you must always use your arms to restrain those who seem to be like that, but actually destroy the edifice of the world.<sup>527</sup> O son! Maharshi Ushanas sang two shlokas in earlier times. O immensely wise one! O king! Listen to them attentively. ‘A lord of men, who is following his own dharma, should consider dharma and raise his weapons to even counter someone who knows the Vedas in battle, if that person attacks him. If dharma is being destroyed, the one who protects it is the one who is following dharma. If one counters anger with anger, the sin of killing a foetus does not result.’<sup>528</sup> O best of men! The brahmanas must be protected in this way. If they commit a crime, they must be exiled to the extremities of the kingdom. O lord of men! But there must be compassion for those who are accused, even those who kill a brah-

mana, violate the preceptor's bed, or kill a foetus. A brahmana who hates the king must be banished outside the kingdom and it is never recommended that there should be corporal punishment. O supreme among men! You must always be affectionate towards men. For a king, there is no treasure as supreme as the store of men.

“O great king! There are six kinds of forts that are indicated in the sacred texts.<sup>529</sup> Among all these, it is held that the one protected by men is the most difficult to breach. Therefore, a learned king must act so as to be compassionate towards the four varnas. If a king has dharma in his soul and speaks the truth, he delights the subjects. O supreme among men! However, you should not be indulgent all the time. A mild king follows adharmā. He is like a forgiving elephant. In the sacred texts of Brihaspati, a shloka was laid down in earlier times. O great king! It has a bearing on this. I am reciting it. Listen attentively. ‘A forgiving king is always subjugated by the inferior, who are like elephant riders who mount the head of an elephant and wound it. Therefore, a king must not be gentle all the time. He must also be harsh. He should be like the sun in the summer, not too cold and not too hot.’ O great king! You must always examine friend and foe through direction, examination, inference, analogies and instructions.<sup>530</sup> O one who donates a lot! You must give up all the vices. Even if one indulges in them, one must give up addiction. In the world, people who indulge in vices are always overcome. If a king does not love his subjects, he generates anxiety. The king must always treat them the way a wife treats her embryo. O great king! Listen to the reasons why this is desirable. For the welfare of the embryo, a pregnant woman ceases to follow everything that brings pleasure to her mind alone. The king must certainly be like that. O best among the Kuru lineage! He must always follow dharma. For the welfare of the world, he must abandon everything that he likes. O Pandava! However, you must never abandon truth and fortitude. The commands of someone who is patient and firm in meting out punishment are not contravened.

“O supreme among eloquent ones! You must always avoid cracking jokes with the servants. O tiger among kings! Listen to the reasons why it is wrong to do that. If one involves the servants in pleasure, they disregard the master. They no longer remain in their appointed places and disobey his words. Sent on a task, they think about it and disclose the secret. They ask what they should not ask for. They eat what they should not eat. They become angry and flare up. They lie down on his bed. They resort to deceit, accept bribes and hamper the undertaking of tasks. They indulge in forgeries and cause the prosperity to decay. They dress like the female guards and consort with them. In his<sup>531</sup> presence, they pass wind and spit. O tiger among men! They become shameless and laugh at his words. When the king is cheerful and mild, they mount the king's beloved horse, tusk and chariot. ‘O king! It will be difficult for you to do this. You should not have attempted this.’ The courtiers, known as well-wishers, speak in this way. They laugh when he is angry. They are not delighted when they are honoured. For various reasons, they always begin to fight with each other. They divulge secrets and cover up their wicked deeds. They treat his commands with mockery and disdain, such as about ornaments, food, bathing and unguents. O tiger among men! They are comfortable with ignoring them, even when they listen to him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They censure their own stations and abandon them. They are not satisfied with their salaries and appropriate what belongs to the king. They toy with him as they will, like with a bird tied to a string. They tell people, ‘The king is devoted to us.’ O Yudhishtira! When the king is mild and cheerful, these and many other sins manifest themselves.”

## Chapter 1385(57)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! The king must always exert himself. Without exertion, a king fades away, like a woman. O lord of the earth! The illustrious Ushanas has a shloka on this. O king! As I recite it, listen attentively to me. ‘Like a snake that swallows animals who live in burrows, there are two things that are swallowed up by the earth—a king who does not oppose and a brahmana who does not leave his home.’<sup>532</sup> O tiger among men! Therefore, you must bear this in your heart. You must ally with those one should have alliances with. You must resist those who should be resisted. The kingdom has seven limbs.<sup>533</sup> Anyone who acts against these must be slain, even if he happens to be a preceptor or a friend. O Indra among kings! King Marutta sang an ancient shloka about governing a kingdom, in conformity with Brihaspati’s ancient views. ‘It is recommended that a preceptor must be abandoned, if he is haughty, cannot distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done, and is inclined to take the wrong path.’ To ensure the welfare of the citizens, the intelligent King Sagara, Bahu’s son, exiled his eldest son Asamanja.<sup>534</sup> O king! Asamanja had earlier drowned the children of the citizens in the Sarayu. His father censured him and exiled him. The great ascetic Shvetaketu was the beloved son of rishi Uddalaka. But because he falsely made brahmanas follow him, he was abandoned.

“The eternal duty of kings is ensuring the pleasure of the subjects, protecting the truth and uprightness in conduct. He must not cause harm to the possessions of others. At the right time, he must give what should be given. A king who is brave, truthful in his speech and forgiving, does not deviate from the path to be trodden. His counsels are secret. He conquers anger. He is firm in determining the purport of the sacred texts. He is always devoted to dharma, artha, kama and moksha. The king must always cover weaknesses in the three.<sup>535</sup> There is nothing as important for kings as the control of the wicked. The lords of the earth must protect the dharma of the four varnas. The eternal dharma of kings is to prevent a mixing of dharma.<sup>536</sup> The king must not trust and must not trust too much. Using his own intelligence, he must always examine the good and the bad in the six aspects.<sup>537</sup> A king who can detect weaknesses in the enemy is always praised. So is one who knows the truth of the three objectives<sup>538</sup> and uses the strategy of employing spies. Like Yama and Vaishravana,<sup>539</sup> he must add to the treasury. He should know about the increase and decrease in the status of the ten.<sup>540</sup> He should support those who have no one to support them. However, he must also have an eye towards those who possess support. A king must have an excellent face and must smile before he speaks. He must revere those who are aged and conquer excessive lassitude. He should consider the conduct of the righteous and set his mind on the conduct of the righteous. He must never take away riches from the hands of the righteous. Instead, he must take it away from those who are wicked and give it to those who are righteous. He is himself the one who gives and takes away. Therefore, his soul must be under control and so must those who serve him. He will be pure in his conduct. At the right time, he will give and enjoy. Men who are born in noble lineages, are without disease and are brave and faithful must be employed as advisers. They must be good in conduct. They must not be disrespectful towards relatives<sup>541</sup> and must not be proud. They must possess learning and be conversant with this world. However, they must also be able to look at the world hereafter. They must be virtuous and devoted to dharma. They must be as immobile as mountains. The king must always reward these aides and they should be his equal in the objects of pleasure that they enjoy. In addition, the king will only possess his umbrella. The king’s behaviour towards them, directly and indirectly, will be the same.<sup>542</sup> If he acts in this way, an Indra among kings will never repent. A king who is suspicious of everything, a king who takes everything away and a king who is addicted to wickedness is quickly restrained by his own subjects. However, a lord of the earth who is pure and is engaged in attracting the hearts of the subjects is not devoured by the enemy when he falls. Even when he falls, he rises again. A king who is without anger, not addicted to vices, a king who wields a mild rod of punishment and has conquered his senses, is trusted by beings, as if he



was the Himalayas. He is wise. He possesses all the qualities and is engaged in detecting the weaknesses of the enemy. He is extremely handsome. He considers the truth about what is good and bad for the four varnas. He is swift to act. He has conquered his anger. He is high-minded and is extremely easy to please. He is naturally free from disease. He acts and does not boast. He endeavours to complete all the tasks that have been begun.

“When such a king is seen, that king is supreme among kings. Men in his kingdom roam around fearlessly, like sons in the house of a father. That king is supreme among kings. Citizens who reside in his kingdom know about good policy and bad and do not need to hide their riches. Such a king is supreme among kings. Men who reside in his kingdom are engaged in their own tasks. They do not quarrel and are generous. They are properly protected. They are docile, obedient and humble. They are not inclined to fight. In a kingdom where men find pleasure in donating, he is indeed a king. There is no fraud and deceit. There is no maya. There is no malice. In the kingdom of such a king, there is eternal dharma. He shows proper respect to learning. He is engaged in good policies that bring benefits to citizens. He follows the dharma of the righteous and is ready to renounce. He is indeed a king in the kingdom. He uses spies. However, his counsels, what he will do, and what he will not do, is never known to enemies. He is indeed a king in the kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is an ancient shloka that the great-souled Bhargava had sung, which was recited to the king when he was told about Rama’s conduct.<sup>543</sup> ‘First, get a king.<sup>544</sup> Get a wife after that. After that, obtain riches. If there is no kingdom in this world, how can there be a wife? How can there be riches?’ O lion among kings! Therefore, this is the eternal dharma of kings and nothing else. One must clearly protect. The world is sustained on that protection. O Indra among kings! Manu, the son of Prachetasa, recited these two shlokas about rajadharma.<sup>545</sup> Listen attentively to this. ‘There are six men who must be avoided, like a broken boat on an ocean—a preceptor who does not speak, an officiating priest who has not studied, a king who does not protect, a wife who does not speak sweetly, a cowherd who wishes to be in a village and a barber who desires to go to the forest.’”<sup>546</sup>

## Chapter 1386(58)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! In rajadharma, this is like freshly churned butter. The illustrious Brihaspati praises this and no other dharma. The large-eyed and illustrious Kavya, the great ascetic,<sup>547</sup> the thousand-eyed and great Indra, Manu, the son of Prachetasa, the illustrious Bharadvaja and the sage Gourashira were devoted to Brahma and learned about the brahman. They composed sacred texts about what kings should do. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! They praised the dharma of protection. O one with eyes like blue lotuses tinged with coppery red! O Yudhishtira! Listen to the means of accomplishing this—spies, the act of spying, donations, lack of jealousy, receiving things properly<sup>548</sup> and not receiving improperly, selecting the virtuous,<sup>549</sup> bravery, skill, truth, the welfare of subjects, using fair and foul means to create discord and enmity within the ranks of the enemy, not abandoning righteous people, supporting those born in noble lineages, storing things that should be stored, serving those who are intelligent, finding delight in strength, always glancing towards the welfare of subjects, lack of lethargy in tasks, extending the treasury, protecting the city, distrust, breaking up quarrels between citizens, paying attention to houses that are decayed or falling down, depending on the context, using both kinds of punishment,<sup>550</sup> paying attention to friends, foes and neutrals, weaning away servants who are inclined to move from one’s side to that of the enemy, distrust of those on one’s own side, assurance towards the enemy, following the policy of dharma, constant readiness for action, not disregarding the enemy and the abandoning of those who are wicked.

“‘There are shlokas where Brihaspati has spoken about the rise of kings and the roots of rajadharma. Listen to these. ‘Amrita was obtained through enterprise. The asuras were slain through enterprise. It is through enterprise that the great Indra obtained superiority in heaven. It is because of enterprise that a courageous person is superior to one who is eloquent. Those who are clever with words gratify and worship the ones who are courageous in enterprise.<sup>551</sup> Even if he has intelligence, if a king lacks enterprise, he is always oppressed by the enemy, like a snake without any poison.’ Even if one is stronger, one must not ignore a weaker enemy. A small fire can also burn. A little bit of poison can kill. If an enemy is inside a fortification and only possesses horses, he is capable of afflicting, here and there, a king with a prosperous kingdom. The secret words of a king, the amassing of troops for victory, the deceit in his heart, tasks that are done for specific purposes and the crooked acts that he undertakes—must be sustained by rectitude.<sup>552</sup> Even for the sake of deceiving the people, he must act in accordance with dharma. Sustaining a kingdom is extremely difficult. A person who has not cleansed his soul cannot bear the burden. One has to sustain grievous assaults and the mild cannot tolerate this. A kingdom is like a piece of meat. It must always be supported by rectitude. O Yudhishtira! You must always support it in a mixed way.<sup>553</sup> Even if one confronts a calamity when protecting the subjects, lords of the earth who act in this way accumulate great dharma. I have told you a little bit about rajadharma. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about the doubts that still remain.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At this, the illustrious Vyasa, Devasthana, Ashma, Vasudeva, Kripa, Satyaki and Sanjaya, uttered words of praise. They were delighted and their faces were like blooming flowers. They honoured Bhishma, tiger among men and supreme among those who uphold dharma. With a distressed mind, the supreme among the Kuru lineage<sup>554</sup> gently touched Bhishma’s feet, his eyes completely overflowing with tears. He said, “O grandfather! I will ask you about my doubts tomorrow. The sun has drunk the juice of the earth and is setting.” Keshava, Kripa, Yudhishtira and the others honoured the brahmanas. Having circumambulated the son of the great river, they happily ascended their chariots. They were good in their vows and bathed in the Dhrishadvati. Having performed ablutions in the water, they observed the auspicious rites. As was appropriate, those scorchers of enemies observed the evening rites. They then entered the city of Gajasahvya.’<sup>555</sup>

## Chapter 1387(59)

Vaishampayana said, ‘At the right time, the Pandavas and the Yadavas arose and performed their morning ablutions. They set out on chariots that looked like cities. They went to Kurukshetra and approached the unblemished Bhishma. They asked if Gangeya, supreme among rathas, had spent the night in happiness. They paid their respects to Vyasa and all the other rishis. Then, in every direction, they seated themselves around Bhishma. The king, the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, joined his hands in salutation. He paid his respects to Bhishma and asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The word raja, raja keeps circulating around. O grandfather! What is its origin? Tell me. A man possesses hands, head and neck that are similar to those of others. His understanding, senses and soul are similar. His sense of unhappiness and happiness are similar. His back, arms and stomach are similar. His semen, bones and marrow are similar. His flesh and blood are similar. His inhalation and exhalation are similar. His breath of life and body are similar. His birth and death are similar. All his human qualities are similar. Among all those with bravery and intelligence, why does a single one stand out as superior? The entire earth is full of brave, valiant and noble people. Why does one alone protect it and why do all the people wish to please him? If a single one is pleased, all the people are pleased. When he is troubled, it is certainly the case that everyone is troubled. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the entire truth about this. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me the exact truth about this. O lord of the earth! It cannot be a trifling reason that the entire world worships a single person like a god.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O best among men! Listen attentively to everything, about how, in the beginning, royalty was created in krita yuga. At that time, there was no sovereignty and no king. There was no punishment and no one to chastise. In accordance with dharma, all the subjects protected each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In accordance with dharma, all the men sustained each other. However, they became extremely exhausted and confusion pervaded them. O bull among men! When people were overcome by confusion, this confusion affected their perception and dharma was destroyed. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! All of them were overcome by avarice. The men then hankered after what was not theirs. O lord! Then the vice named desire took over. When they came under the subjugation of desire, passion touched them. O Yudhishtira! O Indra among kings! Because of that passion, they were no longer aware of what should be done and what should not be done, whom one should have intercourse with and whom not with, what should be said and what should not be said, what should be eaten and what should not be eaten, and what was good and what was bad. They accepted what should be discarded. When this world was in disorder, the brahman was destroyed.<sup>556</sup> O king! When the brahman was destroyed, dharma was also destroyed. When the brahman and dharma were destroyed, the gods were frightened. O tiger among men! In their terror, they sought refuge with Brahma. The gods approached the illustrious grandfather of the worlds. They were afflicted by sorrow, grief and fright. All of them joined their hands in salutation and said, ‘O illustrious one! The eternal brahman that was present in the world of men has been destroyed. There are sentiments like avarice and confusion there. We are overcome by terror. O original lord! With the brahman having been destroyed, dharma has also been destroyed. O lord of the three worlds! We have become the same as mortals. They poured oblations upwards. We showered downwards on earth.<sup>557</sup> Now that those supreme rites have stopped, we are faced with an uncertainty. O grandfather! Determine what will be beneficial for us. Your power results from our power and that is being destroyed.’ Having been thus addressed by all the gods, the illustrious Svayambhu<sup>558</sup> replied, ‘O bulls among the gods! I will think about your welfare. Do not be frightened.’ Using his own intelligence, he composed one hundred thousand chapters that described dharma, artha and kama. Svayambhu designated these categories *trivarga*.<sup>559</sup> The fourth one of moksha was a separate objective and a separate category. Within moksha, three categories of sattva, rajas and tamas were spoken of.<sup>560</sup>

“Preservation, increase and destruction were three categories that were the consequence of chastisement. The self, place, time, means, tasks, aides and causes were said to be the six ingredients of policy.<sup>561</sup> O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this extensive corpus of learning, the three,<sup>562</sup> analysis, livelihood and the policy of punishment are laid down. The means of protecting oneself against aides, protecting oneself against princes, the use of spies and other methods and the use of secret agents are separately indicated.<sup>563</sup> O Pandava! All the techniques of sama, dana, danda, bheda and the fifth one of upeksha are completely laid down.<sup>564</sup> All the secret methods of creating dissension have been described, and also when these secret methods fail. The consequences of success and failure are given. The various kinds of alliances—inferior, middling and superior—based respectively on creating fear, showering honour and offering riches, have been completely described. There is an account of the four kinds of time for departure<sup>565</sup> and a complete description of the three kinds of victory—victory for reasons of dharma, victory for reasons of artha and objectives, and victory that is asura in nature.<sup>566</sup> The three kinds of characteristics associated with the five categories have also been described.<sup>567</sup> Direct and indirect kinds of punishment have been recounted. Indirect punishment is of many different kinds. O Pandava! There are eight that are direct—chariots, elephants, horses, foot soldiers, compulsory service, boats, spies and guides for the road<sup>568</sup> as the eighth. O Kouravya! These are the eight direct manifestations of an army. The use and administration of many types of poison and mixtures in mobile and immobile objects has also been described, such as through objects one touches and objects one uses. Enemies, friends and neutral ones have been recounted. There are qualities of roads, qualities of the ground, the technique of protecting, the technique of providing assurance and keeping a lookout for spies. There are different methods for arranging men, elephants, chariots and horses in diverse vyuhas and many wonderful techniques of fighting. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is also information about portents, accidents, fighting well, retreating well and knowledge about making the weapons drink.<sup>569</sup> O Pandava! How is an army freed from a calamity? How is the army’s delight increased? What are the times for attacking and destroying? When should one take fright? Techniques of laying trenches and other methods have been described. How does one afflict the kingdom of an enemy through the use of thieves, mountain-dwelling bandits and fierce soldiers? How does one use arsonists, poisoners and spies in disguise? How are foremost members of guilds weaned away?<sup>570</sup> How are the plants uprooted? How are his elephants corrupted? How are his subjects terrified? How are those loyal to him dissuaded? How does one control the roads? The waxing and waning of the seven parts of the kingdom<sup>571</sup> are described and the extension of the prosperity of the kingdom through the use of emissaries. The development of enemies, neutrals and allies is completely enumerated. How does one grind down and counter stronger enemies? What are the extremely subtle methods used for uprooting thorns? How does one pacify oneself? What are the methods of exercise? How does one use yoga and accumulate objects? Those who are not servants must be sustained and servants must be taken care of. Riches must be given at the right time and one must be free from vices. There are the qualities of a king and the qualities of a commander. There are reasons and tasks and their good and bad aspects. There are signs to discern if someone is wicked and is ensuring livelihoods for those who are dependents. One must be suspicious of everything and avoid being negligent. One must seek to obtain what one does not possess and extend it. In the proper way, this increase must be given away to deserving people. Wealth must be expended for reasons of dharma, artha and kama. The fourth aspect of avoiding vices has also been described there. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! The ten kinds of vices have been described, the most important arising from anger or from desire. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The preceptors say, following Svayambhu, that hunting, gambling with dice, drinking and women are the ones that are born from desire. Harshness in speech, violence, harshness in punishment, inflicting pain on one’s own self, suicide and the destruction of one’s own riches are mentioned.<sup>572</sup> There is a description of many kinds of machines and their action. How does one counter those of the enemy? How does one shatter his houses? How does one destroy his sanctuaries, trees and boundaries and destroy the tasks he is engaged in? The techniques of spreading out, advancing and stationing have been described. O supreme among warriors! There are the six aspects of cymbals, drums, conch shells, battle drums, the obtaining of supplies and the weak spots of the enemy.

“What has been obtained<sup>573</sup> must be pacified and the virtuous ones honoured. One must become friendly with these learned ones and learn the methods used to offer oblations in the mornings. What are the auspicious signs followed for the body? What are the food habits and what the rites always followed by believers? One must single-

mindedly determine this, using truth and pleasant words. What are the festivals observed by society and what kind of rituals do those residents follow? O tiger among the Bharata lineage! One must always keep an eye on all the rights and livelihoods—direct, as well as indirect. The non-punishment of brahmanas, the use of punishment against the wicked, the protection of the good qualities of followers and relatives, the protection of citizens and the extension of the kingdom has been described. O king! There are thoughts about a circle of twelve kings. Depending on country, race and family, Svayambhu spoke about the seventy-two aspects of dharma.<sup>574</sup> Dharma, artha, kama and moksha were described there. There were many methods to satisfy the desire for riches and the giving away of large quantities of donations. The fundamental tasks and rites and maya and yoga were described. The techniques for poisoning flowing and stagnant waters were described. There were all the methods so that people did not deviate from the noble path. O tiger among kings! All these aspects of policy were laid down in that sacred text.

“Having composed this auspicious text, the illustrious lord cheerfully addressed all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront. ‘This is for the welfare of the worlds and is established in the three objectives.’<sup>575</sup> This is full of intelligence and is like newly churned butter that has emerged from the Sarasvati.<sup>576</sup> With the use of the rod, this will protect the worlds. It will reward and punish and roam around the world. It will be known as *dandaniti*<sup>577</sup> and the three worlds will follow it. Great-souled ones will place it at the forefront, representing the essence of the six qualities.<sup>578</sup> The greatness of punishment will be evident in all aspects of policy.’ O Yudhishtira! Everything has been described here—the extensive corpus of good policy, the learned texts and the Puranas, the origin of the maharshis, the list of tirthas, the list of nakshatras, everything about the four ashramas and the four kinds of oblations,<sup>579</sup> descriptions of the four varnas and the four Vedas, all the descriptions about itihasa, the minor Vedas<sup>580</sup> and good policy, austerities, knowledge, non-violence, the best policy about the true and the false, the serving of seniors, donations, purity, enterprise and compassion towards all beings. All of this has been described here. O Pandava! There is no doubt that everything that exists on earth in the form of speech has been assembled in this sacred text by the grandfather. Everything has been pronounced about dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

“The illustrious Shankara Shiva Sthanu, the many-formed and large-eyed consort of Uma, received this policy first. The illustrious Shiva knew that the lifespan decreases from one yuga to another.<sup>581</sup> He therefore abridged the text, full of great import, prepared by Brahma. The immensely ascetic one then gave this text, known as *Vaishalaksha*<sup>582</sup> to Indra, who was extremely devoted to Brahma. It had ten thousand chapters. O son!<sup>583</sup> The illustrious Indra abridged it to a text with five thousand and this was known as *Bahudantaka*. The intelligent lord Brihaspati abridged it to three thousand and this is known as *Barhaspatya*.<sup>584</sup> The immensely wise and great ascetic Kavya,<sup>585</sup> the preceptor of yoga, reduced it to one thousand and recounted it. O Pandava! Thus, knowing that the lifespan of mortals was becoming reduced, at the request of the worlds, the maharshis abridged the text.

“Once, the gods went to Prajapati Vishnu and said, ‘Tell us about one person who deserves to be superior to other mortals.’ The illustrious lord, god Narayana, thought about this. Through his mental powers, he created an energetic son named Virajas. O immensely fortunate one! O Pandava! However, Virajas did not wish to rule over earth. His mind was on renunciation. He had a son named Kirtiman, but he too was interested in what was beyond the five.<sup>586</sup> He had a son named Kardama, who tormented himself through great austerities. Kardama Prajapati had a son named Ananga. This virtuous one was accomplished in *dandaniti*<sup>587</sup> and protected the subjects. Ananga’s son, Atibala, obtained knowledge of policy. However, having become the king of the earth, he was overcome by addiction to the senses. O king! Through his mental powers, Mrityu<sup>588</sup> had a daughter named Sunitha. She was famous in the three worlds and gave birth to Vena. But he became a prey to passion and hatred and used *adharma* against the subjects. The rishis, knowledgeable about the brahman, purified and invoked blades of kusha grass with mantras and killed him with this. The rishis then used mantras to churn his right thigh.<sup>589</sup> At this, a malformed man was created on the ground and he was a dwarf. His eyes were red. His hair was black and he looked like a post that had been burnt. The rishis, knowledgeable about the brahman, asked him to sit down. That is how the cruel Nishadas were created<sup>590</sup> and they dwelt in mountains and forests. Hundreds and thousands of other *mlecchas* were also created and they made their abode in the Vindhya mountains. The maharshis then churned his right hand. A man was created and his form was like that of Indra himself. He was armoured and his sword was girded. He held a bow and arrows. He was accomplished in the Vedas, the Vedangas and *dhanurveda*. O supreme among

kings! That king possessed the splendour of all of dandaniti. Vainya<sup>591</sup> joined his hands in salutation and spoke to the maharshis. 'An excellent and subtle intelligence that tells me about dharma and artha has arisen in me. What is my task? Tell me the truth about this and instruct me. Tell me about tasks that are full of objectives. Without thinking about it, I will do whatever you ask me to.' The gods and the supreme rishis told him, 'Restrain yourself. Without any doubt, follow dharma. Treat all living beings alike, irrespective of whom you like and whom you don't like. Abandon desire, anger, avarice and pride and cast these off far away. Always have your eye on dharma and use your arms to punish all the men in the world who deviate from dharma. In thoughts, deeds and speech, take this pledge. "I will honour and protect the brahman on earth. I will never resort to my own inclinations. Instead, without any doubt, I will follow the policy of dharma and use dandaniti." O scorcher of enemies! Also take a pledge to never punish brahmanas and protect the entire earth against the creation of hybrid varnas.' Vainya replied to the gods, with the rishis at the forefront. 'O bulls among the gods! If the brahmanas and the gods aid me, I will do this.' Those who knew about the brahman agreed with Vainya's words. Shukra, who was a store of the brahman, became his priest. The Valakhilyas became his advisers and the Sarasvatyas followed him. The illustrious maharshi Garga became the reckoner of time.<sup>592</sup>

"There is a supreme saying among men. 'He is himself the eighth.'<sup>593</sup> Those who chanted praises were created, bards and minstrels<sup>594</sup> being the foremost. He<sup>595</sup> levelled the earth and made it plain. We have heard that earlier, the earth was uneven. Vishnu, the god Shakra, the other gods, the rishis and Brahma consecrated him to rule over the subjects. O Pandava! The earth herself presented him with jewels. So did the ocean, the lord of the rivers, and the supreme mountains, the Himalayas. O Yudhishtira! Shakra gave him inexhaustible riches. The golden mount, the great Meru, himself gave him gold. The illustrious Naravahana,<sup>596</sup> the lord of yakshas and rakshasas, gave him riches so that he would be capable of following dharma, artha and kama. O Pandava! As soon as Vainya thought of them, horses, chariots, elephants and crores of men manifested themselves. There was no old age, famine, hardship or disease. Because of the protection offered by the king, there was no fear from reptiles and thieves. He milked the earth for the seventeen kinds of grain.<sup>597</sup> Yakshas, rakshasas and serpents, each obtained whatever they wished for. Thus did the great-souled one ensure supreme dharma in the world. He pleased all the subjects and everyone came to call him raja.<sup>598</sup> The word kshatriya is used because he saved the brahmanas from injury.<sup>599</sup> Virtuous ones have said that the earth is famous for being strewn with riches.<sup>600</sup> O king! The eternal Vishnu himself established the rule that no one would ever be able to transgress the king. Through his austerities, the illustrious Vishnu penetrated the king. O king! That is the reason the world bowed down to and honoured this god among human gods.<sup>601</sup>

"O lord of men! You must always protect through the use of dandaniti. You must see to it so that it is never afflicted by anyone and use spies for this. The king is equal to everyone else. With the exception that divine qualities exist inside him, there is no reason for everyone in the world to honour him. A golden lotus was generated from Vishnu's forehead. This was the goddess Shri<sup>602</sup> and she became the wife of the intelligent Dharma. O Pandava! Through Shri, Artha was born to Dharma. Therefore, prosperity, dharma and artha are always established in the kingdom. O son!<sup>603</sup> When good deeds are exhausted, a person is dislodged from the world of heaven and is born on earth as a king, to follow dandaniti. Such a man on earth is united with the greatness of Vishnu. He is united with intelligence and attains greatness. No one transgresses what has been established by the gods. That is the reason everyone remains under the subjugation of one man. O Indra among kings! Though he is equal to the others in the world, because his good deeds lead to good consequences, everyone follows his words. Whoever glances at his peaceful face comes under his control. He sees someone who is extremely fortunate, prosperous and handsome. O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! That is the reason the learned pronounce that on earth, gods and human gods are similar. This is the entire account about the greatness of kings. O best among the Bharata lineage! I have said everything. What should we do now?"



## Chapter 1388(60)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Yudhishtira again saluted his grandfather, Gangeya. He joined his hands in salutation, composed himself and asked, “What is dharma for all the varnas? What is it for each of the varnas separately? What are the views on the four ashramas and for rajadharma? Why does a kingdom prosper? Why does a king prosper? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why do citizens and servants prosper? What kind of treasury, punishment, forts, aides, advisers, officiating priests, priests<sup>604</sup> and preceptors should a king avoid? When there is a hardship, whom should a king trust? Whom should a king firmly protect himself against? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I bow down to the great dharma. I bow down to Krishna, the origin. Having bowed down to the brahmanas, I will speak about eternal dharma. There are nine aspects that are applicable to all varnas—lack of anger, truthfulness in speech, sharing properly, forgiveness, procreation on one’s wife, purification, non-injury, rectitude and supporting the servants.

“I will now tell you about the dharma that only applies to brahmanas. O great king! It is said that self-control is the ancient dharma. There are also tasks like studying and teaching that must be completed. All other acts are a consequence of these two acts. If a man is calm and content with wisdom, he should not do anything improper. He should marry, have offspring, practise donations and perform sacrifices. It is said that riches that bring enjoyment must be shared amongst the virtuous. If a brahmana studies, he has accomplished his greatest task. Whether he performs any other task or does not perform any other task, such a brahmana is spoken of as a Maitra.<sup>605</sup>

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of kshatriyas. The king must give and not beg. He must perform sacrifices, but not officiate at the sacrifices of others. He should not teach, but can study. He must protect the subjects. He must always show enterprise in killing bandits. He must act valiantly in a battle. Kings who perform sacrifices, are learned and are victorious in battle conquer supreme worlds. Those who are learned about the ancient accounts do not praise the deeds of a kshatriya who retreats from battle without any wounds on his body. The chief task of a kshatriya has been said to kill. There is no task as important for him as the slaying of bandits. Donations, studying, performing sacrifices, acquisition of goods and their preservation are recommended. However, specifically, a king who desires dharma must fight. The lord of the earth must ensure that all the subjects are established in their own dharma. All their tasks must be properly accomplished, in accordance with dharma. Through protection, the king accomplishes his most important task. Whether he performs other tasks or does not perform other tasks, such a king is spoken of as Aindra.<sup>606</sup>

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of vaishyas—donations, studying, the performance of sacrifices, purity and the accumulation of wealth. Like a father, a vaishya must protect all animals. Any other task that he undertakes will be regarded as a wrong task for him. By protecting in this way, he will obtain great happiness. After creating animals, Prajapati gave them to vaishyas. He gave all the subjects to brahmanas and the king. I will tell you about their<sup>607</sup> means of sustenance and livelihood. Out of six cows, he can take the milk from one. Out of a hundred cattle, he can take a cow and a bull. When a cow is dead, he can have one-seventh of the body and horns as his share and one-sixteenth of the hooves.<sup>608</sup> In all the seeds of grain crops, his share is one-seventh.<sup>609</sup> This is his annual maintenance. A vaishya should never have the desire of not tending to animals. If a vaishya is willing, no one else should ever take care of them.

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of shudras. Prajapati thought of shudras as a varna marked for servitude. Serving is recommended for the shudra varna. Their great happiness results from serving others. Without any hatred, shudras should serve the other three varnas. A person who has been born as a shudra should never amass anything. If such a wicked person accumulates riches, he will make his superiors subordinate to him. However, with a king’s permission, an exception is permitted, or if he<sup>610</sup> wishes to pursue

dharma. I will tell you about his means of sustenance and livelihood. It is said that the other varnas must certainly support the shudra. When umbrellas, headdresses, beds, sandals and fans are worn out, they should be given to shudras who are servants. Garments that are torn should not be worn by the three other varnas. Those are meant for shudras and, under dharma, those are their riches. People who are learned in dharma say that when a shudra wishes to serve and comes to any of the other three varnas, work must be found for him. If such a person is weak and aged and doesn't have any offspring, his master must arrange his funeral cake<sup>611</sup> for him. If there is hardship, the shudra must never abandon the master. If the master's possessions are destroyed, he must support the master with anything extra that he has. For a shudra, nothing belongs to him. His riches are his master's. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The three types of sacrifice<sup>612</sup> have been recommended for the other three varnas. *Svaha* and uttering *namas* are the mantras recommended for shudras.<sup>613</sup> Using these two, the shudra can himself perform rites and observe *pakayajna*. The dakshina for a pakayajna is said to be a *purnapatra*.<sup>614</sup> We have heard of a shudra named Paijavana, who followed the rules laid down by Indra and Agni and gave away one hundred thousand as dakshina.<sup>615</sup>

“Sacrifices with devotion are recommended for all the varnas. Great devotion is divine and purifies all those who sacrifice. Brahmanas worship the supreme divinity, individually and collectively. They have their own desires, but perform eternal sacrifices.<sup>616</sup> The other three varnas were created from brahmanas. They are like the gods of the gods. What they utter is supreme. Therefore, all the sacrifices performed by the varnas have the same end, even if they result from individual desires. A brahmana who knows Rig, Sama and Yajur must be worshipped like a god. One who does not know Rig, Sama and Yajur is a misfortune for Prajapati. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Depending on their wishes, all the varnas sacrifice. The gods do not serve the needs of inferior people who are against sacrifices. Therefore, sacrifices with devotion are recommended for all the varnas. The brahmanas always worship their own gods. But they also performed sacrifices for the other varnas. The other three varnas saw that the brahmanas were created for this and this extremely great dharma should be respected by us. Because of this natural dharma, the varnas remain upright. They were created and matured in this way. The Sama was one. The Yajur was one. The Rig was one. But it is certainly seen that the brahmanas are also but one.<sup>617</sup> O Indra among kings! Those who know about the ancient accounts recount a song that was sung about this at a sacrifice, when the Vaikhanasa sages wished to perform a sacrifice. ‘When the sun has risen, or just before it has risen, one must be full of devotion and conquer one's senses. One must then follow dharma, light a fire and pour oblations into it. Devotion is the greatest cause. What was earlier spilt was subsequently not spilt.<sup>618</sup> There are many different kinds of sacrifices and many different kinds of fruits arise from these deeds. A person who knows about all of these is certainly someone whose knowledge is firm. Such a man, who is a brahmana and is full of devotion, can officiate at a sacrifice. It is said that a thief, a wicked person and one who is supremely wicked among the wicked, becomes virtuous if he wishes to perform a sacrifice and performs it. There is no doubt that the rishis praise him as righteous. Certainly, all the varnas must always perform sacrifices. There is nothing in the three worlds that is equal to a sacrifice.’<sup>619</sup> Therefore, it has been said that a man must perform sacrifices without any malice. He must resort to purification and devotion. He must endeavour to the best of his capacity.”



## Chapter 1389(61)

‘Bhisma said, “O mighty-armed one! O one whose valour is truth! O Yudhishtira! Listen to the four ashramas and the tasks to be performed by the four varnas. It is said that the conduct of brahmanas is vanaprastha, *bhaiksha*,<sup>620</sup> the great ashrama of garhasthya and the fourth ashrama of brahmacharya. A person belonging to the first three varnas<sup>621</sup> will perform the *samskara*<sup>622</sup> of getting one’s hair matted. He will then perform deeds connected with the sacrificial fire<sup>623</sup> and studying the Vedas. He will then control himself and control his senses. Having performed the tasks required of a householder, he will then leave for vanaprastha, with his wife, or without his wife. He will study the sacred texts known as the Aranyakas and will become learned about dharma. Having already had offspring, he will hold up his seed and advance towards the end where his soul becomes one with the brahman. O king! Sages hold up their seed. A learned brahmana may observe these signs and duties right from the beginning.<sup>624</sup> O lord of the earth! After completing brahmacharya, if a brahmana seeks moksha, his rights to resorting to bhaiksha on this earth are praised. When the sun sets, he will sleep wherever he is. He will have no home and no fire in it. He will subsist on whatever is available. He will be a controlled sage who has conquered his senses. He will be without any desires and will look upon everything as equal. He will be without pleasures and will be indifferent towards everything. Such a brahmana, who has reached a state of tranquility, will advance towards the end where his soul becomes one with the brahman.

“He will study the Vedas and do everything that he is supposed to do.<sup>625</sup> He will have offspring and enjoy all the objects that bring happiness. He will control himself and observe the dharma of garhasthya, which is perceived to be more difficult than the dharma of ascetics. He will be satisfied with his own wife and approach her when it is her season. However, he will accept the system of *niyoga*<sup>626</sup> and will not be deceitful or cunning. He will not eat a lot. He will be devoted to the gods and grateful. He will be truthful, gentle, non-violent and forgiving. He will be self-controlled and not be distracted in offering oblations to the gods and the ancestors. He will always give food to the brahmanas. He will not be jealous and will give to everyone, regardless of the marks they bear.<sup>627</sup> The master of the household must always be devoted to performing sacrifices. O son! In this connection, the extremely great maharshis talk about a song that was sung by Narayana. It is full of great purport and full of austerities. I will recount this to you. Listen attentively. ‘It is my view that truthfulness, uprightness, the honouring of guests, dharma, artha and sex with one’s wife are pleasures to be pursued for happiness, in this world and in the next.’ The supreme rishis say that the best ashrama for the virtuous is the maintenance of sons and wives and devotion to the Vedas. If a brahmana is devoted to performing sacrifices and studies properly in the garhasthya stage, he will be completely cleansed of any taint that results from his having been a householder. He will reap pure fruits in heaven. When he casts aside his body, it is said that his desires become endless. They eternally surround him in every direction, with eyes, heads and mouths.<sup>628</sup>

“O Yudhishtira! One should eat alone.<sup>629</sup> One should meditate alone. One should wander around alone. One should have a single preceptor and serve him, even if he is smeared with mud and dirt. One must always follow the rites of a brahmachari. One must always hold that one’s initiation<sup>630</sup> is supreme. One must not question the Vedas and one must always complete one’s tasks. One must always serve one’s preceptor and bow down before him. One must not withdraw from the six tasks.<sup>631</sup> However, in every way, one must not be addicted to them either. One must not take any task to be an entitlement. One must not serve the enemy. O son! This is described to be the ashrama for brahmacharis.”

## Chapter 1390(62)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Tell me about what is auspicious, brings great happiness, is without violence and is revered by the worlds. What can bring dharma and happiness and also lead to happiness for those like me?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord! Those four ashramas have been laid down for brahmanas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The other three varnas also follow them. O king! There are many tasks that have been indicated for kings who wish to attain heaven. But what has been indicated in the sacred texts is not a mere list of examples. It is recommended that all kshatriyas should follow this. A brahmana who follows the conduct of kshatriyas, vaishyas or shudras is regarded as evil in intelligence and censured in this world. He goes to hell in the next world. O Pandava! People give a brahmana who is engaged in wrong tasks names identified with slaves, dogs, wolves and animals. A brahmana who is engaged in the six tasks, follows all the dharmas in the four ashramas, is controlled and has cleansed his soul, is pure and engaged in austerities and is without desire—is spoken of as having obtained the eternal worlds. Whatever tasks a person performs, in whatever form and in whichever place, the qualities that he obtains are exactly proportionate to that. O Indra among kings! You should know that the prosperity associated with studying is reckoned to be greater than that obtained through agriculture, trade and animal husbandry. Destiny is driven by time. Everything is determined by the progress of destiny. Under its subjugation, superior, middling and inferior tasks are performed. Some earlier beneficial deeds come to an end.<sup>632</sup> In every direction in the world, it is the brahman who is always engaged in its work.”

## Chapter 1391(63)

‘Bhisma said, “A brahmana’s supreme tasks are to draw the bowstring, the destruction of enemies, agriculture, trade, animal husbandry and tending to others. But he must never do these for reasons of artha.<sup>633</sup> As long as he is in garhasthya, a brahmana must perform the six tasks. When these tasks have been accomplished, a brahmana’s residence in the forest is applauded. However, he must avoid serving a king, wealth obtained through agriculture, sustaining himself through trade, deceit, intercourse with unchaste women and usury. O king! A wicked brahmana of evil conduct who deviates from dharma becomes a shudra. Becoming the husband of a shudra woman, being slanderous and treacherous, becoming a dancer and becoming a servant in a village are wicked acts. O king! Whether he meditates and studies the Vedas or not, he is equal to a shudra and a slave and should be seated with them at the time of eating. O king! All of them are equal to shudras and should be avoided in all duties that are for the gods. They are like barbarians who are cruel in their conduct and deserve no honour. By abandoning their own dharma, they cause injury to their own selves. O king! Giving them oblations meant for the gods and the ancestors is tantamount to not giving these at all. O king! Dharma has thus been recommended for brahmanas as well as self-control, purity and truthfulness. O king! In earlier times, Brahma decreed that all the ashramas were recommended for brahmanas. One who is self-controlled, drinks soma, is noble in conduct, is compassionate, tolerates everything, is without desires and upright, and is mild, non-violent and forgiving is a brahmana. One who performs wicked deeds is not that. O king! All those in the world who desire dharma resort to shudras, vaishyas and princes. O son of Pandu! Therefore, Vishnu is not affectionate towards those who do not follow the dharma of their jati and varna. In such a world, there will not be the four varnas among all the people, or talk about the Vedas, or all the different sacrifices, or all the rites amongst people and no one will follow the ashramas.

“O Pandava! If the three varnas<sup>634</sup> wish to follow the ashramas and act according to what should be done in those ashramas, listen to the dharma that they must follow. O lord of the earth! A shudra must perform acts of servitude, have offspring and follow the instructions of the king. All the ashramas are recommended for him. However, even if he has a little bit of life left or follows *dashadharmā*, he must not give up desire.<sup>635</sup> O Indra among kings! For one who follows this kind of dharma, subsistence through begging is not talked about. Nor is it for a vaishya or a prince. A vaishya may have completed all the appointed tasks and may have attained an advanced age. He may have laboured hard. In that case, with the permission of the king, he may pass through the circle of ashramas.<sup>636</sup> O unblemished one! O supreme among eloquent ones! O Pandava! O bull among kshatriyas! There may be a kshatriya who has studied the Vedas, ruled in accordance with the policy for kings, produced offspring and performed similar deeds, drunk soma, protected all the subjects in accordance with dharma, performed royal sacrifices, horse sacrifices and other recommended sacrifices, got brahmanas to recite the texts and given them dakshina, obtained victory in battle, whether few or many, and established his son (or someone else from a different lineage who is permitted) in the kingdom, to rule over the subjects, worshipped the ancestors properly in accordance with the sacrifices recommended for ancestors, worshipped the gods with sacrifices and made efforts to honour the rishis with the Vedas. When his death is near, he may wish to enter the next ashrama. O king! Having been passed through the ashramas in due order, he may obtain success. O Indra among kings! Having gone beyond the dharma of a householder, he may become a rajarshi and adopt a life of begging, wandering around as long as he wishes to live. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O tiger among kings! For these three, dwelling in this fourth ashrama is not said to an essential task.<sup>637</sup>

“Among men, the best dharma to be observed is that followed by kshatriyas. All the dharma and the minor bits of dharma for the other three<sup>638</sup> follow from the dharma of kings. I have heard this in the Vedas. O king! Just as all footprints are lost in that of an elephant, it is said that all the tasks dissolve in this.<sup>639</sup> Listen. All the dharmas can

be seen to be based on rajadharma. Men who know about dharma say every other kind of dharma offers little refuge and few fruits. The noble ones say that the dharma of kshatriyas is the great refuge and has many beneficial forms. There is no other. Of all the dharmas, rajadharma is the most important and it protects all the other dharmas. O king! Every kind of renunciation is there in rajadharma and renunciation is said to be ancient and the foremost kind of dharma. If dandaniti is destroyed, the three<sup>640</sup> will be submerged and all the dharmas will be resisted. If kshatriyas abandon the ancient rajadharma, all the dharma of the ashramas will disappear. All kinds of renunciation are seen in rajadharma. All kinds of diksha are said to be in rajadharma. All kinds of yoga are said to be in rajadharma. All the worlds are based on rajadharma. Beings are naturally slaughtered. This causes affliction to those who resort to dharma.<sup>641</sup> In that way, if dharma is delinked from rajadharma, one's own dharma will not be followed in any situation.”

## Chapter 1392(64)

‘Bhishma said, “O Pandava! The dharma of the four ashramas, the dharma of tribes<sup>642</sup> and that of the rulers of the worlds are based on the dharma of kshatriyas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! All the other dharmas are also in that of kshatriyas. In this world of the living, those who have no desires also base themselves on the dharma of kshatriyas. The eternal sacred texts say that the dharma of those who dwell in the different ashramas have many forms and parts. It is as if there are many gates and it is also not obvious. There are people who profess to speak auspicious words, as if they are certain. However, there are others who do not believe in the certainty of dharma and give instances to the contrary. They say that everything that is for the welfare of the worlds is established in the dharma of kshatriyas. It directly leads to repeated happiness and can be directly experienced by a person. O Yudhishthira! The dharma of brahmanas who have withdrawn from the ashramas,<sup>643</sup> and that of the other three varnas, has been recounted in the ancient and sacred texts. In this world, there is no other good conduct that is equal to rajadharma. O Indra among kings! I told you earlier how, in ancient times, many brave kings went to the immensely energetic Vishnu, the god who is the lord of all beings, the lord Narayana. They wanted to know about dandaniti. Before this, in their own respective ashramas, they had performed tasks and thought these to be equal. The kings had followed the words that set out instances as benchmarks and stood around.<sup>644</sup> The gods were the Sadhyas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Rudras, the Vishvas,<sup>645</sup> large numbers of Maruts and the Siddhas. They were the first gods, created in ancient times, and they were established in the dharma of kshatriyas. I will now state what determines dharma and artha. In earlier times, the danavas created dishonour and reduced everything to one.<sup>646</sup> O Indra among kings! At that time, there was a valiant king named Mandhata. In ancient times, that lord of the earth performed a sacrifice. He wished to see the god Narayana, without an origin, without a middle and without an end. O tiger among kings! In that sacrifice, King Mandhata placed the two feet of the great-souled Parameshthi<sup>647</sup> Vishnu on his own head. Vishnu adopted the form of Vasava and showed himself and surrounded by kings, he<sup>648</sup> worshipped that lord. O immensely radiant one! A great conversation then took place between that large mass of kings and the great-souled one,<sup>649</sup> about the nature of Vishnu.

“‘Indra asked, ‘O foremost among those who uphold dharma! Why do you wish to see the one who cannot be measured? Narayana is the ancient and first god. His maya is infinite. His spirit and valour are unlimited. The universe is his form. I am incapable of seeing that god in person. Not even Brahma can. O king! I will grant you whatever other desire exists in your heart. After all, you are a king among mortals. You are based in truth and follow supreme dharma. You have conquered your senses. You are firm in your valour and are engaged in bringing pleasure to the gods. You possess intelligence, devotion and supreme faith. That is the reason I will grant you whatever boon you desire.’

“‘Mandhata replied, ‘I bow my head down before you. But there is no doubt that I wish to see the illustrious one, the first among the gods. Desiring dharma, I will give up all objects of pleasure and go to the forest. I will follow that virtuous path, practised by the worlds. The dharma of kshatriyas is extensive. Established in that, I have obtained immeasurable worlds and my own fame. However, there is a dharma that the first among gods is engaged in. That is foremost in the worlds and I do not know how to follow it.’

“‘Indra said, ‘If you did not possess soldiers, you would have followed supreme adharma. However, if you are not distracted, you will attain the supreme objective. The first god was engaged in the dharma of kshatriyas. It was only later that he resorted to other forms of dharma. The others were created later and have limits. However, the dharma of kshatriyas is special. It is extremely well established and is without limits. All the other dharmas are immersed in this dharma. That is the reason this dharma is said to be the best. In ancient times, Vishnu used the dharma of kshatriyas to crush the enemy<sup>650</sup> and protect all the gods and the infinitely energetic rishis. The illustrious,

immeasurable and prosperous one slew those enemies first. Had he not done that, there would have been no brahmanas, no original creator of the worlds,<sup>651</sup> no virtuous dharma and no original dharma. If, in the past, that foremost among gods had not conquered this entire earth, the four varnas and the dharma of the four ashramas would all have ceased to exist, because the brahman would have been destroyed. The hundreds of flows of eternal dharma were seen to be created from the dharma of kshatriyas. The original dharma flows from one yuga to another yuga. However, the dharma of kshatriyas is said to be the foremost in the worlds. Giving up one's one self,<sup>652</sup> compassion towards all beings, knowledge of the worlds, saving, protecting, rescuing the wretched and the distressed — these are to be found in the dharma of kshatriyas, as practised by kings. Those who do not honour, driven by desire and anger, are frightened of the king and do not perform wicked deeds. There are others who are virtuous and follow all forms of dharma. They are righteous in conduct and follow virtuous dharma.<sup>653</sup> There is no doubt that as all the beings roam around in this world, the king must follow dharma, observe the signs and protect them like sons. The eternal dharma of kshatriyas is supreme among all forms of dharma and is foremost in the worlds. It is the eternal akshara, it extends up to the akshara.<sup>654</sup> It faces every direction.'”

## Chapter 1393(65)

“Indra said, ‘It is energetic in this way and all the dharmas are secured by it. The dharma of kshatriyas is best among all kinds of dharma. In this world, it must be observed by those like you, who are broad and are like lions. Otherwise, the subjects may be destroyed. The king who is engaged in the yoga of samskara<sup>655</sup> must know that the foremost components of royal dharma are improvement of the earth,<sup>656</sup> not living by alms, protecting the subjects, compassion towards all beings and giving up one’s life in battle. The sages say that renunciation is the best and a person who gives up his body is the foremost among all. In rajadharma, everything is always being given up. It is evident how the kings gave it up.<sup>657</sup> It is said that a kshatriya always observes dharma through a lot of learning, serving the seniors, slaying the enemy and brahmacharya. One who desires dharma follows that single ashrama.<sup>658</sup> In conduct towards ordinary people, he must make endeavours to discard his own likes and dislikes.<sup>659</sup> He must establish and protect the four varnas and engage them in their tasks and rituals. It is said that out of all endeavours and ashramas, the dharma of kshatriyas is the best, because all the dharmas result from it. If all the varnas are not engaged in their own dharmas, one cannot say that dharma is being followed. Men who are cruel and are always engaged in the destruction of their prosperity are said to be like animals.<sup>660</sup> Because the dharma of kshatriyas advances from greed for riches to policy, it is said to be the best of ashramas. The three kinds of learning<sup>661</sup> are said to be the objective for brahmanas and this is said to be the ashrama for brahmanas. This is said to be the foremost task for brahmanas. One who acts contrary to this should be killed with a weapon, like a shudra. O king! A brahmana must follow the dharma of the four ashramas and the dharma of the Vedas. Know that there is nothing else for him. If he acts contrary to this, no livelihood has been planned for him. Dharma is evident in one’s tasks and without this, he<sup>662</sup> is like a dog. If a brahmana bases himself in perverse deeds, he does not deserve respect. The learned say that someone who is not engaged in his own tasks is not to be trusted. This is the dharma of all the varnas and it is uplifted through the valour in the dharma of kshatriyas. Therefore, rajadharma is the foremost and no other. I think that this dharma of valiant ones is foremost in its enterprise.’

“Mandhata asked, ‘What dharma should be followed by Yavanas, Kiratas, Gandharas, Chinas, Shabaras, Barbaras, Shakas, Tusharas, Kahvas, Pahlavas, Andhras, Madrakas, Odras, Pulindas, Ramathas, Kachas, all the mlecchas, those who are a mix of brahmanas and kshatriyas, vaishyas and men who are shudras, when they reside within the kingdom? How can those like me establish all those who earn a living by being bandits? O illustrious one! I wish to hear all this. Tell me. O lord of the gods! You are a friend to us kshatriyas.’

“Indra replied, ‘All those who are bandits must serve their mothers and fathers. They must serve their teachers and seniors and all those who live in hermitages. All those who are bandits have a duty to serve the king. Their dharma is said to be the rites of dharma laid down in the Vedas. They must perform sacrifices for the ancestors and, at the right time, must dig wells, create places for drinking water and shelters for sleeping, and donate to brahmanas. Non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger, living off and protecting what has been inherited, sustaining wives and children, purity and lack of enmity are also recommended. Those who desire prosperity must grant dakshina at all the sacrifices. For all those who are bandits, it is a duty to observe extremely expensive pakayajnas. O unblemished one! These and other techniques were laid down in ancient times. O king! These are the tasks and duties for all the people.’

“Mandhata said, ‘In the world of men, it is seen that bandits exist among all the varnas. Though they disguise themselves, they are present in all the four ashramas.’

“Indra replied, ‘O king! When dandaniti is destroyed and rajadharma is neglected, kingship is demeaned and all the beings are confounded. There will be innumerable mendicants of different types. When this krita yuga is over, alternative kinds of ashramas will be thought of. They will pay no heed to the foremost objective and the ancient

dharma. Overcome by desire and anger, they will follow perverse paths. When great-souled ones use dandaniti, wickedness is restrained and the supreme and eternal dharma is established and made to circulate. The king is said to be the supreme preceptor of the world. If a person disrespects him, his donations, oblations and funeral rites never yield any fruits. The eternal king of men originated with the gods. Even the gods exhibit a lot of reverence towards a king who desires dharma. The illustrious Prajapati created everything in the universe. He desired that kshatriyas should follow the dharma of commencement and restraint.<sup>663</sup> I revere and worship the established kshatriya who remembers that objective and uses his intelligence to encourage dharma.”

‘Bhishma said, “Surrounded by large numbers of the Maruts, the illustrious lord spoke in this way. He then went to his own undecaying and supreme state and residence, that of Vishnu.<sup>664</sup> O unblemished one! In this way, dharma was observed and followed well in ancient times. How can anyone who possesses great learning disrespect kshatriyas? There are those who have engaged and those who have withdrawn.<sup>665</sup> Internally, they face destruction, like those without eyes on a road.<sup>666</sup> In the beginning, a wheel was established and in the beginning, they followed it. O tiger among men! O unblemished one! I have told you about that conduct.”



## Chapter 1394(66)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I have heard about the four kinds of ashramas followed by men earlier. O grandfather! I am asking you to explain them in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! O mighty-armed one! Everything about dharma, as revered by the virtuous, is known to you, as it is to me. O Yudhishtira! However, you have asked me about differences in practice. O lord of men! O best among those who uphold dharma! Hear about dharma. O Kounteya! O bull among men! All of these are found in those who are of virtuous conduct and engaged in the duties of the four ashramas. O Yudhishtira! If one follows dandaniti without being attached to desire or anger and regards all beings as equal, he is in the ashrama of a mendicant.<sup>667</sup> He knows about acquisition and giving away, about encouraging and restraining and about the appropriate conduct for valiant ones. He is then established in the ashrama of conferring prosperity.<sup>668</sup> O Yudhishtira! When his kin, allies and friends confront a disaster and he rescues and sustains them, he is established in the ashrama of consecration. O Partha! If he performs rites<sup>669</sup> and sacrifices for beings, ancestors and men, then he is established in the broad ashrama of vanaprastha. If a king protects all beings and protects his own kingdom, he is effectively consecrated in many ways and established in the ashrama of vanaprastha. If he always studies the Vedas, is forgiving, worships his teachers and serves his preceptors, then he is established in the ashrama of brahmacharya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he always follows a path that is upright and without deceit and treats all beings in this way, he is established in the ashrama of brahmacharya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are brahmanas who know about the three kinds of learning and are in vanaprastha. If he gives them large quantities of riches, he is established in the ashrama of vanaprastha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he does not cause injury to any being and practises non-violence, he is established in a state that has all the stages. O Kouravya! O Yudhishtira! If he is compassionate towards all, young or old, he is established in a state that has all the stages. O extender of the Kuru lineage! O Kouravya! If he acts and uses his force to save beings and save those who have sought refuge, he resides in the stage of garhasthya. If he protects all beings and mobile and immobile objects and always worships them in accordance with what they deserve, he resides in the stage of garhasthya. O Partha! If he encourages and restrains elder and younger wives, brothers, sons and grandsons, his austerities are like those of garhasthya. O tiger among men! If he protects and worships virtuous ones who look on all subjects as their own selves, he is established in the ashrama of garhasthya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Yudhishtira! When those in different ashramas are welcomed in his house and offered food, he is in the state of garhasthya. A man who is appropriately established in the dharma promulgated by the Creator obtains the supreme fruits of all the ashramas. O Kounteya! O Yudhishtira! It is said that a man whose qualities are never destroyed is the best of men, whatever be the ashrama he is established in. O Yudhishtira! If he acts so as to make everyone dwell and honours according to age and lineage, he is established in all the ashramas. O Kounteya! O tiger among men! A king who protects the dharma of the country and the dharma of families is established in all the ashramas. O tiger among men! At the right time, if he offers riches and gifts to those who should be honoured, he dwells in the ashrama of the virtuous. O Kounteya! Even if he is in the dharma of the tenth decade,<sup>670</sup> if a king glances towards the dharma of all the people, he is said to dwell in an ashrama. When people who are accomplished in dharma and virtuous ones who act in accordance with dharma are protected within the kingdom, the king receives one-fourth.<sup>671</sup> O tiger among men! When kings do not protect those who take delight in dharma and others who follow dharma, they take away their sins.<sup>672</sup> O Yudhishtira! O unblemished one! Those who aid kings in the task of protection also obtain a share in all the dharma obtained by others. O tiger among men! It has been determined that, among all the ashramas, garhasthya is the blazing one. We regard it as the one that purifies. If a man regards all beings as his own self and conquers anger when wielding the rod of chastisement, he obtains hap-

piness after death. This is like a boat that is raised up through dharma and is full of spirit and valour. Its ropes are the bridge of dharma. It is swift, driven by the wind of renunciation, and it will enable you to cross. When the desire in the heart has withdrawn from every object, one is established in the universal essence and attains the brahman. O lord of men! Use yoga to become extremely content. O tiger among men! When you are engaged in protection, you will obtain dharma. There are brahmanas who are engaged in studying the Vedas and the performance of virtuous deeds. O unblemished one! Make efforts to protect them and all the people. O descendant of the Bharta lineage! Dharma is obtained through the ashrama of vanaprastha. However, through protecting, a king can obtain a hundred times the qualities of that dharma. O foremost among Pandavas! The different kinds of dharma have been recounted and you should follow this eternal path, witnessed in earlier times. O Pandava! O tiger among men! If you single-mindedly engage yourself in protecting, you will obtain the dharma of the four ashramas and the four varnas.”

## Chapter 1395(67)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You have spoken about the four ashramas and also about the four varnas. O grandfather! Tell me about the tasks a kingdom should perform.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The most important task for a kingdom is the consecration of a king. A kingdom without an Indra is weak and is overwhelmed by bandits. There is no dharma in a kingdom that does not have a king. Everyone devours each other. In every way, shame on a state without a king! The learned texts say that Indra is crowned in the form of a king. Those who desire prosperity should revere the king, like Indra. The Vedas say that one should not dwell in a kingdom without a king. In a kingdom without a king, oblations are not carried by the fire. If a more powerful person desires the kingdom and attacks the kingdom without a king, or if the king has been slain, it is good advice to welcome and honour the invader. There is nothing more evil than to be without a king. If a powerful one is enraged, everything will be destroyed. However, if he looks on everything equally, all will be well. A cow that is difficult to milk confronts hardship repeatedly. However, one that is easy to milk never faces a difficulty. If one bends down, one is not scorched and tormented. A tree that bends down on its own is not afflicted. Because of these analogies, those who are patient bow down before stronger ones. Bowing down before a stronger person is like bowing down before Indra. Those who desire prosperity must always get a king. If there is no king, there is nothing to be gained from possessing riches and nothing to be gained from possessing wives. If there is no king, a wicked person cheerfully steals the property of others. However, when others steal what belongs to him, he wishes for a king. Even the wicked can never obtain peace then. Two steal what belongs to one and many others steal what belongs to two. One who is not a slave is made to become a slave. Women are forcibly abducted. It is because of these reasons that the gods arranged for the protection of subjects. Without a king in this world, no one would wield the rod of chastisement on earth. Like fish on a stake, the stronger would oppress the weaker side. We have heard that subjects without a king have been destroyed in the past. They will devour each other, like fish in the water, preying on weaker ones. We have heard that people got together and arrived at an agreement. ‘There are men who are harsh in speech. They wield rods. They abduct the wives of others. They take what belongs to others and act in similar ways. We must discard these.’ In particular, they wished to assure all the varnas and treat all of them equally. But having arrived at this agreement, they did not abide by it. Afflicted by misery, all of them assembled and went to the grandfather then. ‘O illustrious one! Without a lord, we are being destroyed. Appoint a lord for us. He will be one who will protect us and all of us will honour him.’ He appointed Manu, but Manu did not delight them.

“Manu said, ‘I am scared of performing cruel deeds and ruling a kingdom is an exceedingly difficult task. In particular, men are always engaged in false conduct.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The subjects replied, ‘Do not be frightened. Those deeds will go away.’<sup>673</sup> We will give you one-fiftieth of our animals and gold and one-tenth of our grain and thereby increase your treasury. The men who are foremost in wielding weapons and arrows will follow you as their chief, like the gods behind the great Indra. O king! Strength will be engendered in you and you will become unassailable and powerful. You will then happily support all of us, like Kubera did the *nairittas*.’<sup>674</sup> The subjects will be protected well by the king and follow their own dharma. One-fourth of that dharma will belong to you. You will easily obtain power through this great dharma. O king! In every way, we promise this to you, like the gods to Shatakṛatu. Swiftly depart for victory and scorch like the one with the rays.’<sup>675</sup> Dispel the pride of our enemies. Dharma always triumphs.’ Surrounded by a large army, that greatly energetic one advanced. He was born in an extremely great lineage and seemed to blaze in his energy. On beholding his greatness, like the gods before the great Indra, everyone was filled with fright. They made up their minds to stick to their own dharma. He roamed the earth, like Parjanya showering down rain. He

pacified all the wicked ones and employed them in their own tasks. In this way, men on earth who desire prosperity must first arrange for a king. This is for the sake of the welfare of the subjects. They must always bow down before him with devotion, like disciples before a preceptor. In the presence of the king, the subjects must be like the gods before the one with a thousand eyes.<sup>676</sup> When a person is revered by his own people, the enemy also respects him a lot. When a person is disrespected by his own people, the enemy disregards him. When a king is vanquished by the enemy, this brings unhappiness to everyone. That is the reason a king is given umbrellas, conveyances, garments, ornaments, food, drinks, houses, seats, beds and all the required implements. He must protect his own self and become unassailable. He must smile before speaking. When he is addressed by men, he must reply in pleasant tones. He must be grateful and firm in his devotion. He must be prepared to share things. He must conquer his senses. When glanced at, he must be mild, direct and attractive in looking back.”

## Chapter 1396(68)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why do the brahmanas speak of the king as a divinity? O grandfather! He is only the lord of men. Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In connection with this, an ancient account of what Vasumana asked Brihaspati is spoken of. A supreme among intelligent ones was named Vasumana and he was the king of Kosala. He was accomplished in his wisdom and he questioned maharshi Brihaspati. He knew about the requirements of humility and he observed all the humble modes towards Brihaspati. As is decreed, he kept him on the right and bowed down before him.<sup>677</sup> He was engaged in ensuring the welfare of all beings in the kingdom and asked in the proper way. O lord of the earth! Basing himself on dharma, he wished to know about the welfare of subjects. ‘What makes beings prosper and when do they advance towards destruction? O immensely wise one! Whom should they worship, so as to obtain extreme happiness?’ Having been asked by the infinitely energetic one, the great king of Kosala, Brihaspati attentively praised the reverence that should be shown to kings.

““O great king!<sup>678</sup> In this world, the king is seen to be the root of all dharma. It is because they are frightened of the king that subjects do not devour each other. The king pacifies this entire agitated and anxious world. Having pacified it through dharma, he rules it. O king! If the sun and the moon did not rise, all the beings would be blind and submerged in darkness and be unable to see each other. Like fish in the absence of water and birds in the absence of perches, they would repeatedly roam around according to their desires and attack each other. They would crush and intolerantly cross each other. There is no doubt that they would soon confront destruction. In that way, without a king, these subjects will be destroyed. They will be blind and submerged in darkness, like animals without a herdsman. If a king does not protect, the strong will abduct the possessions of the weak and kill them when they resist. If a king does not protect, the wicked will violently seize many kinds of vehicles, garments, ornaments and jewels. If a king does not protect in this world, everyone will say, “This is mine,” and there will be no property. There will be destruction of the universe. If the king does not protect, wicked ones will oppress and kill their own mothers, fathers, elders, teachers, guests and preceptors. If the king does not protect, many kinds of weapons will descend on those who follow dharma, while those who follow adharma will be accepted. If the king does not protect, those with riches will always be killed, bound and oppressed, and there will be no sense of ownership. If the king does not protect, the sky will be the end.<sup>679</sup> This world will be full of bandits and everyone will descend into a terrible hell. If the king does not protect, seed and grain will not grow. There will be no agriculture and no paths for traders. Dharma and the three types of learning will be submerged. If the king does not protect, there will be no sacrifices and no decreed dakshina. There will be no marriage and no society. If the king does not protect, bulls will not work and there will be no churning of milk in pots. The pens of cattle will be destroyed. If the king does not protect, hearts will be anxious and frightened and the senses will be overcome with lamentations. Everything will be destroyed in an instant. If the king does not protect, one will not be able to stand without fear. There won’t be sacrifices throughout the year, with the decreed dakshina being given. If the king does not protect, brahmanas will not engage in asceticism and study the four Vedas. They will not bathe after studying and they will not bathe after austerities. If the king does not protect, all barriers will be demolished and one hand will steal from the other hand. Everyone will run away in fright. If the king does not protect, no one will be touched by dharma. People who are struck will strike back and their own senses will govern them. If the king does not protect, there will be wrong policies and a mixing of varnas. The kingdom will be ravaged by famine. It is because they are protected by the king that men are without fear. They sleep anywhere, as they wish, and leave the doors of their houses open. If men have a king who is devoted to dharma as their protector, no one has to suffer verbal abuse or blows from the hands. If the lord of the earth protects, women, even when unaccompanied by men, can wander fearlessly on the

roads, wearing all their ornaments. If the lord of the earth protects, dharma is followed and there is no violence towards each other. Instead, favours are done to each other. When the lord of the earth protects, the three varnas separately perform great sacrifices and attentively study the sacred texts. When the lord of the earth protects, everything is well and the world is productively supported by the three.<sup>680</sup> When the king bears that excellent burden and bears the subjects with a great deal of strength, the world is pleased. In every direction, all the beings always exist because he exists. Had he not existed, they would not have existed. Who will not honour such a person? A king who bears a burden for the happiness of all the people and is engaged in their pleasure and benefit conquers both worlds.<sup>681</sup> If a man harbours evil thoughts towards such a person in his mind, there is no doubt that he will suffer hardships in this life and will be cast into hell after death. No one should disregard a lord of the earth as a mere man. He is a great divinity established in the form of a man. Depending on the occasion, he always adopts five different forms—Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaishravana and Yama.<sup>682</sup> When the king has been deceived through falsehood and burns wicked ones down with his fierce energy, he is then Pavaka.<sup>683</sup> When the lord of the earth uses spies to look at everyone and then travels after providing safety, he is then Bhaskara.<sup>684</sup> When he is angry and destroys hundreds of impure men, with their sons, grandsons and relatives, he is then Antaka.<sup>685</sup> When he strikes all those who follow adharma with the fierce rod of chastisement and shows favours to those who follow dharma, he is Yama. He gives streams of wealth to those who are his benefactors and takes away jewels and many other objects from those who injure him. O king! In this world, when he gives prosperity to some and takes it away from others, the lord of the earth is Vaishravana. Someone who is skilful and is capable of working incessantly, or desires dharma and is not envious of what has been obtained by his lord, should never speak ill of him.<sup>686</sup> One who acts contrary to the king will never obtain happiness, even if it happens to be a son, a brother, a friend, or someone who is like his own self. A fire trailing black smoke, and with the wind as its charioteer, leaves a residue. But when one is seized by a king, there is nothing that is left. One must keep everything protected by him at a long distance, as if it is death. A man must not steal a king's possessions. One will be destroyed if one touches those, like a deer touching a trap. An intelligent person must protect a king's possessions like his own. Those stupid ones who steal the king's possessions descend for a long time into a great, terrible and fathomless hell. He is praised with words like "Raja, Bhoja, Virat, Samrat, Kshatriya, Bhupati and Nripa".<sup>687</sup> Who will not worship such a person? Therefore, an intelligent and accomplished person who is controlled, who has conquered his soul and restrained his senses, who possesses a good memory and wishes to be prosperous, should seek refuge with a lord of the earth. As a minister, the king must honour someone who is grateful, wise, not inferior, firm in his devotion, restrained in his senses, always devoted to dharma and unwavering from his status. Even a forbidden person may be given refuge if he is firm in his devotion, accomplished in wisdom, knowledgeable about dharma, controlled over his senses, brave and superior in his deeds. A king makes a person confident. A king makes a small man great. Where is happiness for someone the king has seized? The king makes someone who approaches him happy. The king becomes great in the hearts of the subjects. He is their objective, their base and their supreme happiness. When men resort to this Indra among men, they conquer this world and the next properly. The lord of men who has ruled the earth with control, truth and affection and, who has worshipped through great sacrifices, obtains great fame and, because of his good deeds, obtains a place in heaven.'

"The supreme king of Kosala was thus addressed by his preceptor.<sup>688</sup> The brave one made efforts to carefully protect his subjects."

## Chapter 1397(69)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What are the specific duties a king must undertake? How should the countryside be protected? How should he protect against enemies? How should he employ spies? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How does he obtain the confidence of the varnas, the servants, the wives and the sons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! Listen attentively to the complete account of the conduct of kings—the tasks that a king who is naturally a king must first do. The king must always conquer his soul and then he must conquer his enemies. If a lord of men has not conquered his own soul, how can he defeat the enemy? Victory over one’s own self means restraint of the aggregate of the five.<sup>689</sup> Having conquered the senses, a lord of men is then capable of countering the enemy.

“O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O tiger among men! He must place platoons in forts, boundaries, the groves of cities, all the parks of the towns and the cities, in the midst and in the abode of the king. As spies, he must employ men who have been tested and found to be wise, those who can withstand hunger, thirst and heat. They should seem to be dumb, blind and deaf. O great king! Having reflected about it, he must employ spies against all his advisers, the three types of friends,<sup>690</sup> his sons, in cities and in the countryside, and amongst kings who are vassals. The spies should be such that they do not know about each other. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He must know about the spies the enemy has employed in shops, pleasure grounds, assemblies, among beggars, in groves and gardens, amidst assemblies of learned men, brothels, crossroads, assembly halls and dwelling houses. O Pandava! A wise one must counter the spies of the enemy in this way. If one knows everything about the spies, they are as good as destroyed.

“When the king examines himself and knows himself to be weak, he must seek the counsel of his advisers and have a treaty with the one who is stronger. Even if he knows that he is not weak, an intelligent king swiftly concludes a treaty with the enemy, if he desires to obtain some advantage out of this. A king who protects the kingdom in accordance with dharma appoints those who possess qualities, are great in their enthusiasm, knowledgeable about dharma and virtuous. If an immensely wise king realizes that he is being resisted, he must kill all the people who have injured him in the past and, in every way, counter those who are injurious. A lord of the earth should have nothing to do with someone who can neither help nor hurt him, nor with those who are incapable of saving him from hardships. An intelligent person will march out undetected against someone who has no allies and friends, someone who is preoccupied,<sup>691</sup> someone who is negligent and someone who is weak. A brave one will give the instruction for advancing when the army is strong, nourished and happy. However, before the advance, he must make arrangements for the city. Even if the other one is valiant, a king must never accept subjugation. Even if he is weak in strength and valour, he must try to afflict the enemy. He must oppress the kingdom with weapons, fire and poison and overwhelm it. He must try to cause strife amidst his<sup>692</sup> advisers and servants. Even if he desires a kingdom, an intelligent person will always seek to avoid war. Brihaspati has said that there are three means of obtaining prosperity—conciliation, gifts and dissension. A learned lord of men will be satisfied with whatever prosperity can be obtained through these.

“O descendant of the Kuru lineage! For protecting the subjects, an infinitely wise king will take one-sixth of their income as tax. However, even for the sake of protecting the citizens, he must not violently take whatever those in the tenth decade possess, be it a lot or little. There is no doubt that he should look upon the citizens as his sons. In adjudicating disputes, it is his duty not to be partial because of affection. For the task of adjudication, a king must appoint a wise son who can consider all the aspects. A kingdom is always based on proper dispute resolution. The king must appoint his advisers and skilful men who do not cause injury as supervisors over mines, salt, taxes, ferries and elephant corps. A king who always wields the rod of chastisement well will obtain dharma. In the

dharma of kings, the rod is always praised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king must always be learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, wise, a great ascetic and always devoted to donations and the performance of sacrifices. All these qualities must always be collectively established in a king. If a king does not observe the rites, how will he obtain heaven and how will he obtain fame?

“If a king is oppressed by a stronger king, he must resort to the three kinds of allies and friends<sup>693</sup> and determine what must be done. Those in pens must be set on the roads<sup>694</sup> and villages must be removed. All of them must be made to enter the outskirts of the city. The wealthy and the leaders of the army must repeatedly be assured. The lord of men must himself ensure that the grain is brought in.<sup>695</sup> If it cannot be brought in, it must be completely burnt by fire. The grain that is still in the fields can be used to wean away the enemy’s men, or one’s own forces can be used to completely destroy it. The bridges over rivers and the roads must always be demolished. All the stored water must be released. If it cannot be released, it must be poisoned. When such a situation of present and future conflict is at hand, one can ignore policy and decide that it is time to have friendships with anyone who is capable of countering the enemy.<sup>696</sup> The king must cut down the roots of all the small trees that are near forts. However, *chaitya* trees must be spared.<sup>697</sup> The branches of all the old trees must be pruned. However, one must always avoid cutting down the leaves of chaityas. He must erect high walls and casements.<sup>698</sup> The moats must be filled with stakes, crocodiles and fish. There must be doors of straw so that people inside the city can breathe freely. One must act so that these doors are also protected in every way. Machines must be placed atop the heavier gates. He must act so that shataghnis are placed there and are under his control. Timber must be collected and wells must be dug. For the sake of water, wells that have been dug earlier must be purified. Houses thatched with grass must be plastered with mud. Because of the fear of fire, in the month of Chaitra,<sup>699</sup> all straw must be removed from the city. The lord of men must allow food to be cooked only during the night. With the exception of agnihotras, the burning of fires in houses during the day will be avoided. Special care must be taken of fires ignited by artisans and in places where women give birth. It is recommended that fires lit in houses must be covered well. For the sake of the protection of the city, it must be announced that those who light fires during the day will be severely punished. O best of men! Beggars, wagoners, drunkards, lunatics and actors should be driven out. Otherwise, evil may result. The king must act so as to appoint spies from appropriate varnas at crossroads, tirthas, assembly halls and dwelling houses. The lord of men must construct broad royal roads. He must instruct that stores of drinking water and shops are constructed at appropriate places. There must also be stores for riches, stores for weapons and stores for grain everywhere and stables for horses and stables for elephants, with barracks for the soldiers. O Kouravya! O Yudhishtira! There must be moats, highways and narrower roads. No one must be able to detect what is secret. A king who is afflicted by the forces of the enemy must accumulate stores of all kinds of oil, honey, clarified butter and medicines. He must arrange for stores of charcoal, kusha grass, munja grass, red lac, arrows, trees, fodder, kindling and poisoned arrows. The lord of men must arrange for stores of all kinds of weapons — lances, swords, spears and armour. In particular, he must arrange for the collection of all kinds of medicinal herbs, roots and fruits and the four kinds of physicians.<sup>700</sup> Actors, dancers, wrestlers and those skilled in the use of maya should adorn the best of cities and amuse people everywhere. If there is any suspicion attached to servants, ministers, citizens or even kings,<sup>701</sup> he must endeavour to bring them under his control. O Indra among kings! When a task has been accomplished, the doer must be honoured with stores of riches. Honour and various words of appreciation must be appropriate to the person. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When an enemy has been countered or slain, the king pays off the debts that are indicated for him in the sacred texts.

“O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Listen to me. The king must protect seven things—his own person, his advisers, his treasury, his army, his allies, his country and his city. The kingdom consists of these seven and they must be protected carefully. O tiger among men! He who knows about the collection of the six, the first three categories and the further three categories, enjoys the earth. O Yudhishtira! Listen to the collection of six that have been mentioned—being seated after concluding a treaty, ensuring a treaty after marching out, being seated after declaring war, seizing<sup>702</sup> after marching out, creating a division in the enemy and seeking asylum with the enemy. Listen attentively to what is said to be the three categories—decay, maintenance of the status quo and increase. The further three categories are the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama at the appropriate time. It is through dharma that a lord of the earth protects the earth for a long period of time. In this connection, Angiras’s son<sup>703</sup> himself has



sung two shlokas. O son of a Yadavi!<sup>704</sup> O fortunate one! You should listen to them. ‘Having performed all the tasks well, having protected the earth and having protected the citizens in this way, one enjoys happiness in the hereafter. If all the subjects are unprotected and dharma is disregarded, what will austerities do for a king like that? What will his sacrifices achieve?’”

## Chapter 1398(70)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “There is dandaniti and there is the king. O grandfather! Tell me. Are these two equal? And whose success is it going to be?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to me and I will tell you exactly, with words and reasons, about the great fortune that the success of dandaniti brings. Dandaniti binds down the four varnas to their own dharma. When applied by the lord, it ensures that they do not proceed towards adharma. When the four varnas respect their own dharma and there is no mixing, because of the use of dandaniti, there is peace and the subjects are free from fear. In the proper way, the three varnas will make efforts to perform soma rites. Know that the happiness of gods and men is accumulated from these. You should not entertain any doubt about whether the age results in the king, or the king results in the age. The king causes the age. When the king implements all of dandaniti properly, the best of ages, known as krita yuga, ensues. When it is krita yuga, dharma prevails. There never is any adharma. None of the varnas finds any delight in adharma. There is no doubt that subjects obtain what they wish and preserve what they have.<sup>705</sup> The rites of the Vedas are performed, without any reduction in qualities. All the seasons bring happiness and are free from disease. Sounds, colours and thoughts please men. There are no diseases then and men with short lifespans are not seen. There are no widows and cruel people are not born. The earth yields crops without being ploughed and the herbs are also like that. There is vigour in barks, leaves, fruits and roots. There is no adharma there. There is only dharma. O Yudhishtira! Know these to be the qualities of krita yuga.

“When the king abandons one-fourth of dandaniti and follows only three-fourths, treta yuga results. The three-fourths are followed by one-fourth that is inauspicious. The earth yields crops only when ploughed and the herbs are also like that. When the king abandons half of policy and dharma, the age known as dvapara is the result. Half that is inauspicious follows half that is good. The earth yields crops when ploughed, but only a little. When the lord of the earth abandons dandaniti entirely and oppresses his subjects in various ways, then kali enters. Adharma is generally prevalent in kali, but dharma is sometimes seen. The minds of all the varnas turn away from their own dharma. Shudras earn a living through mendicancy and brahmanas through servitude. Yoga and *kshema* are destroyed and there is a mixing of varnas. The rites of the Vedas are without any qualities. All the seasons are devoid of happiness and are full of ill health. Sounds, colour and thoughts of people decay. There are diseases then and one dies before one’s span of life is over. There are widows and cruel people are born. It only rains sometimes and crops also grow sometimes. When the lord of the earth no longer wishes to protect the subjects, using dandaniti properly and well, all the juices head towards destruction. The king is the creator of krita yuga, treta and dvapara. The king is the reason behind the fourth yuga too. For creating krita, the king obtains endless heaven. For creating treta, the king obtains heaven, but it is not endless. For giving rise to dvapara, the king obtains the portion that is his share. However, for giving rise to kali, the king obtains eternal evil. Such an evil-acting person dwells in hell for an eternal period. Having submerged himself in the sins of his subjects, he reaps the sin of bad deeds.

“A kshatriya must always know and place dandaniti at the forefront, so that he can obtain what he desires and protect what he possesses. Dandaniti, when administered well, sets boundaries for people and is like a mother or a father, demarcating honour for the welfare of the world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that beings thrive on this. This is supreme dharma and the king must follow dandaniti. O Kouravya! Therefore, protect the subjects in accordance with dharma and policy. Having acted in this way and having protected the subjects, you will conquer the heaven that is extremely difficult to vanquish.”

## Chapter 1399(71)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O one who knows about conduct! What kind of conduct must a lord of the earth follow? In this life and in the hereafter, how can he easily obtain objects that give rise to happiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are thirty-six qualities, united with another thirty-six qualities. If he possesses qualities and acts according to those qualities, then he will obtain excellence. (1)<sup>706</sup> He must follow dharma without any acerbity. (2) He must shower affection. (3) He must not be a non-believer.<sup>707</sup> (4) He must pursue riches, but without violence. (5) He must pursue kama, but must not be bound down by it. (6) Without any hesitation, he must speak pleasantly. (7) He must be brave, but should not boast about it. (8) He must be generous, but should not give to those who are undeserving. (9) He must be bold, but must not be cruel. (10) He must not have alliances with ignoble people. (11) He must not wage war against his relatives. (12) He must not employ spies who are inappropriate. (13) He must not undertake tasks because he has been forced. (14) Before the wicked, he must not speak about his objectives. (15) He must not speak about his own qualities. (16) He must not take away from those who are virtuous. (17) He must not trust those who are wicked. (18) He must not inflict punishment without examination. (19) He must not disclose his counsel. (20) He must not give to those who are covetous. (21) He must not trust those who have caused injury. (22) He must protect his wife, but without jealousy. (23) The king must be pure, but not compulsively so. (24) He must not be excessively addicted to women. (25) He must not eat sweets that are not healthy. (26) He must humbly honour those who deserve respect. (27) He must be sincere in serving his seniors. (28) Without any pride, he must worship the gods. (29) He must desire prosperity, but not in ways that give rise to censure. (30) He must serve, even if he does not feel affection. (31) He must be accomplished, but must also know the proper time. (32) He must comfort, but not because he wants to use people. (33) He must not show favours and then fling a person away. (34) He must not strike ignorantly. (35) He must slay all the enemies that remain. (36) He must not display sudden anger. (37) He must be mild with those who cause him injury. If you desire welfare, this is the way you should govern the kingdom. The lord of the earth who acts contrary to this confronts supreme hardship. I have stated all the qualities to you. Whoever follows these obtains great fortune in this life and greatness in heaven after death.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing these words of Shantanu’s son, King Yudhishtira, surrounded by the foremost among the Pandavas, honoured the grandfather. The intelligent one acted in accordance with what he had been told.’

## Chapter 1400(72)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! How should the king employ himself in the protection of the subjects so that he does not cause an offence to dharma? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son!<sup>708</sup> I will tell you briefly about what has been determined to be dharma. If I were to describe dharma in detail, I would never reach the end. There will be qualified brahmanas who are learned, devoted to dharma and immersed in the Vedas and rites. Make them dwell in your house and act as officiating priests. When you get up in the morning, greet your priest by clasping his feet. Make him perform all the rites. When the tasks of dharma have been completed and the auspicious pronouncements have been made, make brahmanas pronounce benedictions for prosperity, success and victory. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must possess uprightness, fortitude and intelligence. You must seek to obtain artha, but must give up desire and anger. A foolish king who strives for artha while placing desire and anger at the forefront, obtains neither dharma, nor artha. For matters connected with kama and artha, do not employ those who are avaricious and stupid. In all tasks, those who are intelligent and not greedy should be employed. If a fool is given a position of authority in matters concerning artha, or if an unskilled person is put in charge of a task, or if he is overcome by desire and hatred, he will oppress the subjects with wrong policies.

“The desire for revenue and riches will come through one-sixth of income collected as taxes, monetary penalties levied on wrongdoers and other levies sanctioned by the sacred texts. The tax imposed on the kingdom must always be in accordance with dharma and in accordance with what has been decreed. The king must be attentive in ensuring unlimited yoga and kshema. If he is like a herdsman and is generous, always attentive towards dharma and without desire and hatred, then men will always be devoted to him and find delight in him. Do not desire to obtain an inflow of riches or gain through adharma. If one deviates from the sacred, one’s dharma and artha will both be uncertain. A king who deviates from the sacred texts cannot advance towards accumulation. All that he obtains is destroyed on inappropriate things.<sup>709</sup> If artha alone is the foundation, he harms his own self. In his confusion, he oppresses the subjects by imposing taxes that are not sanctioned by the sacred texts. For the sake of milk, if one slices off the udders of a cow, one does not obtain any milk. In that way, a kingdom oppressed through bad policy does not prosper. A person who is caring towards a milk-yielding cow always obtains milk. In that way, a person who cares for the kingdom enjoys the fruits. O Yudhishtira! If the kingdom is administered and enjoyed while protecting it well, it always leads to an unsurpassed increase in the treasury. When the earth is protected well, it provides grain, gold and offspring to the king, just as a satisfied mother always provides milk to her own and those of others. O king! Be like one who makes garlands. Do not be like one who makes charcoal.<sup>710</sup> If you act in this way and protect, you will be able to enjoy the kingdom for a long time.

“If the riches are exhausted because of invasion by an enemy, in a desire to collect riches, one can use conciliation and take it from non-brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even when you confront extreme distress, do not let your mind be disturbed when you see wealthy brahmanas, not to speak of when you are prosperous. You must give them riches, according to your capacity and according to what they deserve. If you comfort them and protect them, you will obtain the heaven that is extremely difficult to get. In this way, protect the subjects according to the conduct of dharma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You will then obtain eternal and auspicious fame. O Pandava! Protect the subjects through virtuous conduct. O Yudhishtira! Acting in this way, you will not suffer any anxiety. This is the supreme dharma, the protection of subjects by a king. Protecting subjects in their observance of dharma is the supreme form of compassion. Those who are learned about dharma think that this is supreme dharma. A king who is engaged in protecting beings performs an act of compassion. If a king fails to protect the subjects from fear for a single day, then it takes one thousand years for him to get out of that sin. If the

king performs the auspicious task of following dharma and protecting the subjects for a single day, then he enjoys the fruits in heaven for ten thousand years. There are worlds won through sacrifices, studying and great austerities. By protecting the subjects in accordance with dharma, all those are obtained in an instant. O Kounteya! Endeavour to protect dharma in this way. You will obtain auspicious fruits in this world and have no reason for anxiety. O Pandava! You will obtain great prosperity in the world of heaven. In places where there are no kings, it is impossible to obtain this dharma. Therefore, it is the king, and no one else, who can obtain these great fruits. Use dharma to protect this prosperous kingdom that you have obtained. Satisfy Indra through soma and meet the desires of the ones who are your well-wishers.”

## Chapter 1401(73)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! It is the king’s duty to appoint as a royal priest someone who can protect the virtuous and punish the wicked. On this, the ancient account of the conversation between Aila Pururava and Matarishvana is recounted.<sup>711</sup>

“Aila asked, ‘Where have brahmanas been born from and where have the other three varnas come from? Which of the two is superior? Tell me that.’

“Vayu replied, ‘O supreme among kings! The brahmana was created from Brahma’s mouth. It is said that the kshatriya was created from his arms and the vaishya from his thighs. O bull among men! The fourth varna, the shudra, was created later from the feet, for the sake of serving the three varnas. The brahmana was born immediately after the earth was born. For the sake of protecting the store of dharma, he is the lord of all beings. The second varna, the kshatriya, was then made the wielder of the rod for the sake of protecting the earth and protecting beings. The vaishya was created to support the three varnas with wealth and grain and the shudra should serve them. These were Brahma’s instructions.’

“Aila asked, ‘O Vayu! According to dharma, tell me whom the earth belongs to. Is it the brahmana, or is it properly the kshatriya, because of his wealth?’

“Vayu replied, ‘Everything that exists in the universe belongs to the brahmana. Those who are learned say that this is because he is the firstborn and because he is accomplished in dharma. The brahmana enjoys only what is his, wears what is his and gives away what is his. The brahmana is the preceptor of all the varnas. He is the eldest and the best. In the absence of the husband, the woman makes his younger brother her husband. In that way, because he is the immediate next, the earth makes the kshatriya her husband.<sup>712</sup> If you desire to obtain a supreme status in heaven and wish to follow the path of dharma, this is the first rule for you, though there is an exception for times of distress. Whoever conquers the earth should offer it to a brahmana who is learned, of good conduct, knowledgeable about dharma, an ascetic, who is satisfied with his own dharma and not desirous of the riches of others. Conversant with everything, he will intelligently advise the king about policy. A brahmana born in a noble lineage, accomplished in wisdom, humble in speech and wonderful in his choice of words, will tell the king about the best policy. If a king observes the dharma indicated by the brahmana, listens and is not egoistic and adheres to the dharma and vows of kshatriyas, he will be firm in his wisdom and will be established in fame for a long period. The royal priest has a share in all this dharma. As long as all the subjects seek refuge with the king and follow their own dharma properly, they have nothing to fear. When a king protects virtuously, out of all the dharma that is practised within the kingdom, the king enjoys a fourth share of that dharma. Gods, humans, ancestors, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas survive on what is offered in sacrifices. However, when there is no king, there is nothing. In this way, gods and ancestors survive on what is given to them. And the yoga and kshema of dharma is established in kingship. When it is hot, one seeks happiness in shade, water or breeze. When it is cold, one seeks happiness in fire, the sun or inside a house. The mind is delighted with sound, touch, taste, form and smell. But in all these objects of pleasure, happiness is obtained by a person who is not frightened. One who

grants freedom from fear obtains great fruits. In the three worlds, there is no gift that is equal to granting life. The king is Indra. The king is Yama. The king is Dharma. The king has different forms. The king upholds everything.””

## Chapter 1402(74)

‘Bhishma said, “The king must consider both dharma and artha and their differences, which are often unfathomable, and then appoint a priest who is extremely learned in the sacred texts. When the king has a royal priest who has dharma in his soul and is learned in dharma, and the king also possesses similar qualities, everything is well. Those two make subjects, the earlier and the later gods and the ancestors prosper. They should be similarly established in dharma, devoted and extremely austere. They should have fraternal feelings towards each other, revere each other and be similar in temperament. When the brahmana and the kshatriya revere each other, the subjects obtain happiness. When they show each other disrespect, the subjects are destroyed. It is said that the brahmana and the kshatriya are the root of all dharma. On this, an ancient history is recited. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this conversation between Aila and Kashyapa.

“Aila asked, ‘When the brahmana abandons the kshatriya and the kshatriya abandons the brahmana, which among the two should be revered? In such a situation, who should not be revered?’

“Kashyapa replied, ‘In the kingdom of a kshatriya where the brahmana and the kshatriya fight with each other, there is no one to revere and bandits are worshipped. Virtuous ones think that there is no one in control there. Bulls do not thrive, nor do cows. There is no churning in the pots and no sacrifices. When the brahmanas abandon the kshatriyas, the sons do not study the Vedas. The bulls that are born in those houses do not prosper. The subjects do not study, nor do they sacrifice. When the brahmanas abandon the kshatriyas, they<sup>713</sup> degenerate and become like bandits. The two are always connected and support each other. The kshatriya was born from the brahmana’s womb. The brahmana was born from the kshatriya’s womb. Both of them always depend on each other. Supporting each other, they obtain great prosperity. If that ancient alliance is destroyed, everything becomes confounded. It is like someone who no longer has a boat trying to reach the other shore. Or like a boat tossed around on the giant ocean. The four varnas are then confounded and all the subjects confront a state of destruction. When the tree that represents brahmanas is protected, honey and gold shower down. When it is always unprotected, tears and sin shower down. When a brahmana is not a brahmachari, deviates from studying, but nonetheless seeks protection in Brahma,<sup>714</sup> the gods shower down in strange ways. Terrible misery penetrates there. A person may commit the sin of killing a woman or a brahmana, but is not reprimanded in assembly halls there and is not frightened to approach the king. Then, there is fear for the kshatriya. Extremely wicked persons pile up sin on sin and the god Rudra arises then. The piling up of sin on sin leads to the birth of Rudra. He then kills everyone, the virtuous and the wicked alike.’

“Aila asked, ‘Where does Rudra come from? What is Rudra’s form? It is beings who are seen to kill other beings. O Kashyapa! Tell me all this. Where is the god Rudra born from?’

“Kashyapa replied, ‘The soul of Rudra is in the hearts of men. He kills his own body and also the bodies of others. It is said that Rudra is like the stormy wind. His form is like a forest conflagration or the cloud.’

“Aila said, ‘No one can control the wind. Nor do clouds shower down and forest conflagrations are not seen within people.’<sup>715</sup> Men are set free and also slain because of desire and hatred.’

“Kashyapa replied, ‘The fire may be lit in one house. But it swiftly burns down an entire village. In that way, the god causes confusion and touches everything, the good and the wicked.’

“Aila asked, ‘If chastisement touches everyone, the good and the wicked, especially because of the sins committed by the wicked, what is the reason to perform good deeds? What is the reason not to perform wicked deeds?’

“Kashyapa replied, ‘Similar chastisement touches those who have not performed wicked deeds, because their sentiments are mixed. They have not abandoned those who perform wicked deeds. Because of mixed sentiments, wet wood is burnt along with the dry. There should never be any mingling with the performers of wicked deeds.’



“Aila said, ‘The earth supports both the virtuous and the wicked. The sun heats both the virtuous and the wicked. The wind blows on both the virtuous and the wicked. The water bears along both the virtuous and the wicked.’

“Kashyapa replied, ‘That is the way of the world. O prince! But it is not like that there.’<sup>716</sup> After death, there is a specific difference between those who perform good deeds and those who are wicked. The world of virtuous ones is full of honey and radiant with golden rays into which clarified butter has been poured. It is the navel of immortality. After death, the brahmachari finds delight there. There is no death there. Nor is there old age or unhappiness. The world of the wicked is hell, without any light. There is eternal unhappiness and a lot of sorrow. There, the self sorrows over one’s wicked deeds. He descends for many years and cannot find a place to rest. When there is dissension between brahmanas and kshatriyas, the subjects are submerged in intolerable grief. Knowing this, it is the king’s duty to make a learned person, one who is not knowledgeable about just one subject, the priest. He is the one who should be consecrated. That is what dharma decrees. According to dharma, the brahmana is said to be the foremost among everyone. Those who are learned about dharma say that brahmanas were created first. Because he is honoured as the first, everything that came later belongs to him. Therefore, the brahmana must be revered and worshipped and he enjoys the best of everything. According to dharma, everything that is best and distinguished must be offered to him. This is a mandatory duty for a king, even if he is powerful. The brahmana makes the kshatriya prosper. The kshatriya makes the brahmana prosper.’”

## Chapter 1403(75)

‘Bhishma said, “The yoga and kshema of a kingdom is said to depend on the king. The yoga and kshema of the king depend on the priest. When the invisible fears of the subjects are pacified by the brahmana and the visible ones by the arms of the king, there is indeed happiness in the kingdom. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. That was a conversation between King Muchukunda and Vaishravana.<sup>717</sup> Having conquered this earth, King Muchukunda wished to test the strength of his own army and attacked the lord of Alaka.<sup>718</sup> King Vaishravana created and released rakshasas on him and that army of nairittas crushed and drove away his forces. When King Muchukunda, the scorcher of enemies, saw that his own soldiers were being slaughtered, he censured his learned priest. Vasishta, supreme in knowledge about the brahman, performed terrible austerities and drove the rakshasas there away, thereby creating a path. At this, King Vaishravana showed himself before Muchukunda. On the soldiers being slaughtered, he spoke these words. ‘Earlier, there were kings who were more powerful than you and they also had priests. However, none of them acted the way you are acting. It is not as if those lords of the earth were limited in strength or in their accomplishment with weapons. They approached and worshipped me, as the lord of happiness and unhappiness. If you possess strength in your arms, you should exhibit it. Why are you depending to such a great degree on the strength of a brahmana?’ At this, Muchukunda became angry and replied to the lord of riches. Though he was initially enraged, he reverentially spoke these justified words. ‘Svayambhu<sup>719</sup> created the brahmana and the kshatriya from the same womb. Separate powers have been ordained for them and they protect the world. The brahmana is always established in the strength of austerities and mantras. The kshatriya is always established in the strength of weapons and his arms. Together, their task is to protect the subjects. O lord of Alaka! Though you have reprimanded me, this is the way I have acted.’ Vaishravana then spoke to the king and his priest. ‘Unless it has been ordained, I do not bestow a kingdom on anyone. O king! Know that unless it has been ordained, I do not take it away either. O brave one! I have given you this entire earth. Rule it.’ Muchukunda replied, ‘O king! I do not wish to enjoy a kingdom that has been given to me by you. I wish to enjoy the prosperity of a kingdom that has been won by my arms and valour.’ King Vaishravana was overcome by supreme wonder. On seeing that Muchukunda was established in the dharma of kshatriyas, he honoured this. King Muchukunda followed the dharma and vows of kshatriyas well and ruled over the earth that he had conquered through the valour of his arms. Like that, if a king knows the brahman well and gives precedence to brahmanas, he conquers what has not been conquered earlier and obtains great fame. The brahmana must always have water<sup>720</sup> and the kshatriya must always have weapons. Everything that is there in the universe is under their control.”’

## Chapter 1404(76)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “To ensure the prosperity of men, what kind of a conduct should a lord of the earth follow? How does he conquer the auspicious worlds? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king must donate and must perform sacrifices. He must fast, perform austerities and be engaged in protecting the subjects. Following dharma, the king must always protect all the subjects. Without being distracted, he must arise and worship all those who follow dharma. When the king honours dharma, everyone also honours it in every way. When the king acts in this way, the subjects are delighted. He must always hold his rod aloft and must be like death to his enemies. He must slay all the bandits and must not wilfully ignore anyone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a king protects the subjects extremely well, out of whatever dharma is observed by them, one-fourth of that dharma is the king’s share. If he protects the subjects in accordance with dharma, the king enjoys one-fourth of their studying, sacrifices, donations and worship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the king does not protect the subjects in any way and if there is something wrong with the kingdom, one-fourth of that sin is enjoyed by the king. It has been said that he gets all of it. Some have determined that he gets half. However, there may be a lord of the earth who is cruel in his deeds and false in his speech. Listen to how that king can be freed from his kingdom and his own treasury. If he cannot restore all of it, he should restore whatever he can, keeping just enough for his own subsistence. All the varnas must protect brahmanas and the property of brahmanas. One who causes injury to brahmanas should not be allowed to remain in the kingdom. If the property of brahmanas is protected, everything is protected. If their favours are ensured, then the king will have accomplished his objective. Beings depend on Parjanya and birds on a large tree. Like that, men depend on the king for accomplishing all their objectives. If a king has desire in his soul, is always fraudulent in his mind, or is violent and extremely avaricious, he will be incapable of protecting the subjects.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “I have not sought pleasure in the kingdom. Even for an instant, I have not desired the kingdom. I agreed to the kingdom for the sake of dharma, but there does not seem to be any dharma in it. Since there is no dharma in it, I have had enough of the kingdom. Therefore, for the sake of dharma, I will go to the forest. I will conquer my senses and cast aside my rod. I will worship dharma in the sacred forest and, like a hermit, live on roots and fruits.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I know your mind and about your qualities of non-violence. However, only through non-violence, you will not be able to accomplish anything great. You are mild, self-controlled, extremely noble and greatly devoted to dharma. However, people do not show you great regard, taking you to be an eunuch, driven by compassion over dharma. Look towards rajadharma, which was appropriate for your father and grandfathers. What you wish to resort to is not the conduct of kings. You have established yourself in non-violence and have thereby created the impotence you should not follow. There are fruits of dharma that can be obtained from protecting the subjects. O son!<sup>721</sup> What you wish to follow, through your wisdom and your intelligence, is not the blessing that Pandu and Kunti desired for you. Your father always spoke about valour, strength and spirit for you. Kunti desired greatness, strength and generosity for you. In the worlds of men and gods, ancestors and gods always want offerings of svaha and svadha from their sons.<sup>722</sup> You have been born to practise donations, study, perform sacrifices and protect the subjects and can either follow dharma or adharma. O Kounteya! Destiny has imposed a burden and a heavier load has been imposed on that. Even if you are fatigued, your fame will not be destroyed. If a person controls himself in every way and bears it without losing his footing, he is without any taint in his deeds, words and success, because of his deeds alone. If someone knows about dharma and stumbles, that is a calamity, regardless of whether he is a householder, a king or a brahmachari. It is better to do a small, generous and virtuous act

than to do nothing at all. There is nothing more wicked than not doing. O king! When a person born in a noble lineage knows about dharma and obtains great prosperity, yoga and kshema exist and welfare can be thought of. When a person who knows about dharma obtains a kingdom, he should seize it in every direction—winning over some through donations, others through force, and still others with extremely pleasant words. There are learned ones born in noble lineages, who are afflicted by fear because they may not have a means of sustenance. When they obtain that<sup>723</sup> and are satisfied about their states, what can be a greater dharma than that?”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What is greater than heaven? What is greater happiness than that? What is supreme prosperity? If there is anything that you can think of, tell me about it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If complete kshema can be obtained from someone being established,<sup>724</sup> then among all of us, he is the one who has obtained the best of heavens in an instant. I am telling you this truthfully. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! You are the delight of all the Kurus. Be the king. Conquer heaven. Protect the righteous and slay the wicked. O son! Let your well-wishers and the virtuous live and follow you. Be like Parjanya to beings and like a succulent tree to birds. Be dignified, brave, capable of striking, non-violent, victorious over your senses, affectionate and ready to share. Let people live and follow you.”’

## Chapter 1405(77)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Some brahmanas are engaged in their own tasks, while others are engaged in tasks they should not do. Tell me the difference between them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are those who have the signs of learning. In considering anything, they look to the sacred texts. O king! These brahmanas are celebrated as being equal to the brahman. There are those who are accomplished as officiating priests and preceptors and are engaged in their own tasks. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equals of the gods. There are those who are officiating priests, priests, ministers, ambassadors and supervisors of the treasury. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equivalent of kshatriyas. There are those who ride horses, ride elephants or chariots, and are also foot soldiers. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equivalent of vaishyas. There are also reprehensible ones who are brahmanas only in name. They have abandoned the deeds they should have undertaken by virtue of birth. O king! These brahmanas are said to be the equals of shudras. There are brahmanas who have not studied the sacred texts. Nor have they consecrated the sacred fire. All of these do not follow dharma. The king should make them pay taxes and force them to undertake manual labour. There are those who are employed as ordinary messengers, work as priests in temples, study the nakshatras, work as officiating priests for ordinary people and fifthly, undertake great journeys.<sup>725</sup> These brahmanas are chandalas. If the treasury suffers from a shortage, the lord of the earth should exact taxes from these,<sup>726</sup> with the exception of those who are equals of the brahman and the equals of the gods. The Vedas say that the king is the lord of the riches of those who are not brahmanas and also of brahmanas who perform wrong deeds. The king must never ignore wrong deeds. If he wishes to follow dharma, he must control and divide them.<sup>727</sup> If a brahmana becomes a thief in a king’s kingdom, learned people

think that this is the king's crime. O king! If a brahmana who knows the Vedas and is a snataka is forced to become a thief because of lack of means of sustenance, those who are learned about dharma say that it is the king's duty to support him. O scorcher of enemies! If he does not change himself after he has obtained a means of subsistence, then, with his relatives, he should be exiled from the country.”

## Chapter 1406(78)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! What kind of a conduct should the king follow, so as to ensure power and prosperity? Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The Vedas say that the king is the lord of the riches of those who are not brahmanas and also of those brahmanas who do the wrong kind of work. The king must never ignore brahmanas who do the wrong kind of work. The virtuous ones say that this was the ancient practice followed by kings. O king! If a brahmana is a thief in the kingdom of a king, that king is regarded as the criminal. Since they hold themselves to be responsible for the deed, all rajarshis have protected brahmanas. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. The king of Kekaya sung this when he was abducted by a rakshasa. O king! When the king of Kekaya was studying in the forest, rigid in his vows, a terrible rakshasa seized him.

“The king said, ‘There is no thief in my country. Nor is there a wicked person or a drunkard. There is no one who has not consecrated the sacred fire. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my dominion, there is no brahmana who is not learned, without vows. Nor is there one who does not drink soma. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my kingdom, there is no one who performs sacrifices without offering dakshina to the officiating priests. There is no one who studies without following the vows. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They<sup>728</sup> are established in six tasks—studying, teaching, performing sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices, donating and receiving. They are honoured with their proper shares. They are mild and truthful in speech. In my dominion, the brahmanas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They<sup>729</sup> do not beg. They give. They are accomplished in true dharma. They study, but do not teach. They perform sacrifices, but do not work as officiating priests. They protect brahmanas and do not run away from battle. The kshatriyas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They<sup>730</sup> earn a living from agriculture, protecting cattle and trade and do not resort to deception. They are not distracted and perform their tasks. They are good in their vows and truthful in speech. They are ready to share, self-controlled, pure and fraternal in their dealings. My vaishyas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? My shudras are engaged in their own tasks. Without any resentment, they serve the three varnas. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? All the women who are in distress, without protectors, weak and afflicted are given their shares. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I have not destroyed the dharma of specific families or regions. All these have been followed in the proper way. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my kingdom, ascetics have been honoured and protected. They have been received well and given their proper share. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I do not consume anything without sharing. I do not have intercourse with the wives of others. I never sport when I am alone. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? There is no brahmachari who is not a beggar. There is no beggar who is not a brahmachari. No oblations are offered without an officiating priest. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I have not shown disrespect to the aged, the learned and ascetics. When the kingdom sleeps, I am awake. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? My priest is skilled in studying the Vedas. He is an ascetic and knows about all forms of dharma. He is prosperous and is the lord of the entire kingdom. I desire the celestial worlds through donations, truthfulness, protecting the brahmanas and serving the seniors. I should not have any fear from rakshasas. There are no widows in my kingdom, nor those who are brahmanas in name alone. There are no brahmanas who are miserable or thieves. There is no one who has intercourse with someone else’s wife. There is no one who is evil in deeds. I should not have any fear from rakshasas. There is no part of my body, not even the space of two fingers, which has not been mangled by weapons, when I have fought for the sake of dharma. Why have you then been able to penetrate me?

The people in my kingdom have always sought benedictions for me in the form of cattle, brahmanas and sacrifices. Why have you then been able to penetrate me?’

“The rakshasa replied, ‘Whatever be the circumstance, you always look towards dharma. O Kekaya! Therefore, return to your home in safety. I am leaving. O Kekaya! He who protects cattle and brahmanas and protects his subjects has no reason to fear rakshasas, not to speak of men. Those who have brahmanas at their head, those who are fortified by the strength of the brahman and those who love their guests and wives, are men who have conquered heaven.’

‘Bhishma said, “You must therefore protect brahmanas. Protected by you, they will protect you. The desire of kings should be that the kingdom should prosper well. Therefore, in particular, brahmanas who perform perverse tasks must be restrained. For the welfare of the subjects, they must be treated separately. The king who acts in this way towards residents of the city and the countryside experiences fortune and obtains the world of Indra.”’



## Chapter 1407(79)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It has been said that in times of distress, brahmanas may live by adopting the dharma of kshatriyas. Can they also live by adopting the dharma of vaishyas?”

‘Bhishma replied, “When he is incapable of following the dharma of kshatriyas, he can follow the dharma of vaishyas. When the means of subsistence is destroyed because of some hardship, agriculture and tending to cattle is permissible.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! When a brahmana follows the dharma of vaishyas, what commodities can he sell, without being deprived of the world of heaven?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Under every circumstance, a brahmana must always avoid liquor, salt, sesamum seeds, animals with manes, bulls, honey, meat and cooked food. O son! If a brahmana sells these, he goes to hell. A goat is Agni. A sheep is Varuna. A horse is Surya. The earth is large.<sup>731</sup> A cow is a soma sacrifice. These must never be sold. The virtuous do not praise the exchange of uncooked food for cooked food. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, for the sake of eating, cooked food can be obtained in exchange for uncooked food. ‘We will eat this when it has been cooked. Please cook this for us.’ If one considers uncooked food with this objective in mind, there is no adharma. On this, there is the ancient conduct of dharma, followed by those who adhered to custom. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this. ‘I will give you this. You must give me that in return.’ This voluntary agreement is dharma, because there is no force involved. Ancient transactions occurred in this way, accepted by rishis and others. There is no doubt that this is virtuous.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O father!<sup>732</sup> When all the subjects abandon their own dharma and take up weapons, the strength of the kshatriya dwindles. How will the king then become the protector and refuge of the worlds? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! Tell me this in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “As the foremost among the varnas, brahmanas should seek the comfort of their own selves through donations, austerities, performance of sacrifices, lack of injury and self-control. Those among them who possess the strength of the Vedas must arise in every way and increase the king’s strength, like the gods do to the great Indra. When the king is weak, it is said that the arms of the brahmanas become his refuge. Therefore, if he knows, he should seek to uplift himself through the strength of brahmanas. When the king is victorious and ensures welfare in the kingdom, all the varnas are immersed in their own dharma and perform their own tasks. O Yudhishtira! However, when bandits are engaged in causing confusion, there is mixing<sup>733</sup> and all the varnas must take up weapons and there is no sin in this.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “If all the kshatriyas act injuriously towards the brahmanas, who will then save the brahmanas? What will be the supreme dharma then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In particular, the aged brahmanas must restrain and pacify the kshatriyas through austerities, brahmacharya, weapons, physical strength, deceit and lack of deceit. Brahmanas can do the restraining, because kshatriyas were created from brahmanas. Fire was created from water, kshatriyas from brahmanas and iron from stone. Therefore, the energy of each category is pacified by its own womb. When iron encounters stone, fire comes in contact with water and kshatriyas are injurious towards brahmanas, all three are pacified. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, kshatriyas are pacified by brahmanas, even if they are great and irresistible in energy and strength. When the vigour of brahmanas is mild and the vigour of kshatriyas is extremely weak, all the varnas always act in a wicked way towards the brahmanas. Those who fight then, ready to give up their lives for the sake of protecting brahmanas, are those who have dharma in their souls. All those spirited ones who are enraged and wish to take up weapons for the sake of brahmanas obtain sacred worlds. Those worlds are beyond those meant for the extremely virtuous ones who study, and the ascetics. Those brave ones go to supreme worlds that are beyond those meant for

those who fast and destroy their lives in the fire. For learned ones, there is no other dharma than giving up their lives in the cause.<sup>734</sup> One should bow down before those fortunate ones who offer their lives. May we obtain the worlds obtained by those who seek to restrain the enemies of brahmanas. Manu has said that those brave ones conquer heaven and Brahma's world. People are purified when they bathe after a horse sacrifice. That is what happens to the evil and good deeds of those who are killed by weapons in a battle. Because of the time and the place, adharmā can become dharma and dharma can become adharmā. That is the nature of time and place. Friends can perform cruel deeds and conquer supreme heaven. The virtuous can perform wicked deeds and attain the supreme objective. There are three occasions when the taking up of weapons by a brahmana is not reprehensible—to save himself, to prevent the mixing of the varnas and to restrain the unassailable.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O supreme among kings! When the strength of bandits increases, for the sake of preventing injury, when the varnas are mixed and the varnas are confused, should someone else who is stronger, a brahmana, a vaishya or a shudra, take up the task?<sup>735</sup> Should he protect the subjects against bandits by wielding the rod of dharma? Should he perform that task or is he restrained from doing that? I think that weapons should not be wielded by anyone who is not born a kshatriya.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If he is a means of crossing over to a shore when none exists, if he is a boat when no boats exist, whether he is a shudra or someone else, he must always be revered. O king! When people are afflicted by bandits, he protects those who have no protectors. Men seek refuge with him and he conveys them to a state of happiness. Therefore, he must be affectionately worshipped, as if he is a relative. O Kouravya! He deserves honour and should be looked upon as a performer of great deeds. What use is a bull that does not bear a load? What use is a cow that does not yield milk? What use is a barren wife? What use is a king who does not protect? What use is an elephant made of wood? What use is a deer made of leather? What use is a cart without a drive and a path? What use is a degraded field? A brahmana who does not study and a king who does not protect are always useless in this way, like a cloud that does not rain. The one who always protects the virtuous and chastises the wicked performs the duties of a king and should always be upheld and instated in this way.”

## Chapter 1408(80)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! What should be the conduct of those who are officiating priests and how should they endeavour? O Indra among kings! O supreme among eloquent ones! What kind of people should they be?”

‘Bhishma replied, “From ancient times, the tasks and conduct of officiating priests have been laid down. They must first be knowledgeable about sacred hymns<sup>736</sup> and the learning of brahmanas. They must always be patient and firm in this one task.<sup>737</sup> They must not be unpleasant in speech. They must be affectionate towards each other.<sup>738</sup> They must be revered and must look on everyone equally. They must possess attributes of non-injury, truthfulness, non-violence, austerities, uprightness, lack of hatred, lack of ego, modesty, forbearance, self-control and tranquility. A person who is modest, truthful, patient, self-controlled, non-injurious towards beings, without desire and hatered, possessing the three sparkling qualities,<sup>739</sup> non-violent and content with knowledge alone—is said to be worthy of Brahma’s seat. O son! These are great officiating priests and all of these must be honoured in the proper way.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “The words of the Vedas stipulate the giving of dakshina. They say that it must be given. But nothing is said about when that giving is enough. Nor do the sacred texts say enough about riches, for example, what is in accordance with the sacred texts in times of distress.<sup>740</sup> The commands of the sacred texts are terrible, because they do not look towards the capacity of the giver.<sup>741</sup> The ordinances of the Vedas only say that one must faithfully perform sacrifices. However, what will devotion achieve when the sacrifice is performed falsely?”<sup>742</sup>

‘Bhishma replied, “One cannot obtain greatness by disrespecting the Vedas, deceit or fraud. You should not think in this way. O son! Dakshina is a part of sacrifice and extend the Vedas. Devoid of dakshina, mantras can never render salvation. However, the capacity to give one full vessel should also be honoured. O son! Therefore, all the three varnas must perform sacrifices in the proper way. The ordinances of the Vedas say that for brahmanas, the king is like soma. One should not try to sell it, since such a means of earning a living is fruitless.<sup>743</sup> If the sacrifice is performed in this way, it will be as if dharma has been sold. The rishis who are learned about dharma have spoken about dharma in this way. The person, the sacrifice and soma must be in accordance with what is proper. A man who has improper conduct is of no use to himself or to others. We have heard it in the sacred texts that the body constitutes the vessels of the sacrifice. For that reason, conducted properly, only great-souled brahmanas must be engaged. The supreme among the learned texts decrees that austerities are superior to sacrifices. O learned one! Therefore, I will tell you about austerities. Listen to me. Non-violence, truthfulness, lack of injury, self-control and compassion—the learned and the patient know that these are austerities, not the drying up of the body. Not accepting the proof of the Vedas, transgressing the sacred texts and chaos everywhere—these destroy the soul. O Partha! Listen to what has been said about oblations in sacrifices that last for ten days. Consciousness is the ladle. Thoughts are clarified butter. Supreme knowledge is the *pavitra*.<sup>744</sup> All kinds of deceit represent death. All kinds of uprightness represent the objective of the brahman. All this is actually in the realm of the unknown. What purpose will words accomplish?”

## Chapter 1409(81)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! For a man who is alone and unaided, even the slightest task is extremely difficult to accomplish, not to speak of running a kingdom. For the sake of prosperity, what should be the conduct of a king’s adviser? How should he behave? Whom should the king trust and whom should he not trust?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! The king has four kinds of friends—those who have the same objective, those who are devoted, those who are natural and those who are artificial.<sup>745</sup> There is a fifth kind of friend, one with dharma in his soul, who serves a single person and not two. He is on the side that has dharma, though he may also be neutral. Wishing to conquer, a king uses both dharma and adharma. However, to such a person, one should never disclose objectives that would not please him.<sup>746</sup> Out of the four, the two in the middle are the best.<sup>747</sup> The others should always be suspected. However, if a king has to undertake a task himself, all of these should be suspected. It is the king’s duty to be never careless in protecting his friends. A king who is careless is overwhelmed by people. A wicked person can become virtuous, a virtuous person can become terrible, an enemy can become a friend and a friend can cause injury. Since a man’s mind is uncertain, how can he be trusted? Therefore, the king must ensure that the important tasks are undertaken in his presence. Blind trust can completely destroy dharma and artha. However, not trusting anyone is also worse than death. Trusting amounts to premature death. Trust leads to catastrophe. If one trusts someone, life depends on the person one has trusted. Therefore, the king must trust some people and mistrust others. O son! This is the eternal policy for prosperity. There may be someone who brings riches as soon as one thinks about it. The learned ones say that such a person is an enemy and must always be distrusted. When water flows from one person’s field into another person’s field, as long as the first one wants the water to flow, he doesn’t demolish all the embankments. But when he is worried about too much of water flowing down, he wishes to demolish the embankments. One can discern this through signs and the signs must be used to determine the enemy. When someone is not satisfied with the king’s prosperity and is distressed at his decay, it is said that this is the sign of a best friend. If there is someone about whom one can think, ‘My destruction is the same as his death,’ that person can be trusted, as if he was one’s own father. You should try to increase such a person’s prosperity in every way and always prevent injury to him, since he is engaged in tasks of dharma. If someone is scared of injury to the king, know that this is a sign that he is the best friend. Those who wish to cause him injury are said to be enemies. There may be someone who is always frightened of injury to the king and satisfied with the king’s prosperity.<sup>748</sup> A friend who is like this is said to be one’s equal. A person who is close to you must be handsome, with a good complexion and good voice. He must be patient and without malice. He must be born in a noble lineage and possess good conduct. Intelligence, a good memory, skill, natural compassion and a capacity to never malign, irrespective of whether one is honoured or dishonoured—these are the attributes of an officiating priest, a preceptor and a friend. Such people must dwell in your house and must be supremely honoured. He can know about secret counsel and also about the objectives of dharma and artha. One can trust such a person, the way one would trust a father. Each task should always be given to one person. Otherwise, there will be dissension. A person for whom duties and fame are the most important, who always sticks to a pledge he has made, who does not hate capable people, who enables others, who does not abandon dharma for the sake of desire, fear, avarice or anger, one who is accomplished and competent in speech—such a person must always be next to you. Brave, noble, learned, powerful, accomplished, born in good lineages, possessing good conduct, patient, without malice—it is your duty to appoint these as advisers and employ them in all the tasks. They must be honoured, given their shares, given good aides and established in their own tasks. Completely immersed in great and important tasks, they ensure great prosperity. They always seek to rival each other and perform these tasks. They consult each other and accomplish the objectives. You must always be frightened of your kin, as if they are death. A kin is like a minor king and can never tol-

erate the king's prosperity. O mighty-armed one! It is only a kin who is delighted at the destruction of someone who is upright, mild, generous, modest and truthful in speech. However, there is no happiness in not having kin. There is nothing that is worse than that. A man without kin is overwhelmed by the enemy. If a man has been treated badly by others, kin offer refuge. Kin never tolerate the prospect of kin being maltreated by others. Even if that injury is caused by friends, it is regarded as one to one's own self. There are good qualities in them,<sup>749</sup> but the absence of qualities can also be discerned. He who is not kin, does not do any favours. But he who is not kin, does not use poisoned arrows. In the world of kin, both can be seen—virtuous and wicked. One must always honour them in words and deeds. He must act towards them in a pleasant way and never act in unpleasant ways. He must always act as if he trusts them, even if he actually mistrusts them. It is seen that good and bad qualities are both mixed in them. When a man conducts himself in this way and is not distracted, his enemies are disarmed and become his friends. This is the way he prospers in the circle of kin and relatives. For a very long period of time, he obtains fame and mastery over his friends and enemies.”

## Chapter 1410(82)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “If the circle of kin and relatives cannot be dealt with in this way, friends may become enemies. What should be one’s sentiments then?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Vasudeva and Narada, the celestial rishi.

“‘Vasudeva said, ‘O Narada! A person who is not a well-wisher should not get to know the supremely secret counsel, nor should a well-wisher who is not learned, or a learned person who is not in control of his soul. O Narada! Because you have affectionate feelings towards me, I will tell you something. O one who can go to heaven! Having considered my entire intelligence, I will also ask you something. I do not act so as to become a slave to my kin, by talking to them about their riches. I enjoy half the objects of pleasure<sup>750</sup> and forgive harsh words spoken to me, which crush my heart, like two kindling sticks rubbed together in a desire for fire. O rishi of the gods! The words that are spoken harshly always torment me. Samkarshana<sup>751</sup> always possesses strength and Gada<sup>752</sup> is again delicate. O Narada! Pradyumna<sup>753</sup> surpasses me in beauty, but I have no aides. O Narada! The others of the Andhaka and Vrishni lineages are extremely fortunate. They are powerful and difficult to assail. They are always full of enterprise. Whether they are on your side, or whether they are not on your side, there is hardship. What can be a greater misery than to have Akrura and Ahuka on the same side?<sup>754</sup> Both of them have always solicited me, but I have not opted for either of them. However, what can be a greater misery than not to have those two on your side? O great sage! I am like the mother of two<sup>755</sup> who are engaged in a gambling match. If I wish for the victory of one, it is like defeat for the other. O Narada! These two always afflict me in this way. You should tell me what is beneficial for my kin and for my own self.’

“‘Narada replied, ‘O Krishna! Disasters are of two kinds—the external and the internal. O Varshneya! They result from one’s own deeds, or those of others. This difficulty is internal and is because of your own deeds. Because of Akrura’s power, for the sake of riches, because of desire or because they are frightened by words or deeds, the Bhojas are on his side. You obtained the prosperity for yourself, but gave it away to another.<sup>756</sup> You provided the foundation and he<sup>757</sup> is now applauded in words and possesses aides. Like food that has been vomited out, you are incapable of taking it back. O Krishna! You can never take the kingdom back from Babhru<sup>758</sup> and Ugrasena, especially because that will lead to conflict within the clan. That will only be possible after trying hard and performing an extremely difficult task. There will be a great slaughter and perhaps complete destruction. Therefore, use a weapon that is not made of steel, one that is mild, but is capable of piercing hearts. Sharpen that blade and use it to remove their tongues.’

“‘Vasudeva asked, ‘O sage! How will I know what is the weapon that is not made of steel and is mild? What will I sharpen and use to remove their tongues?’

“‘Narada replied, ‘Always give as much of food as you are capable of. Be patient, self-controlled and upright. Honour those who must be revered. This is the weapon that is not made of steel. Use words to pacify the hearts, the speech and the minds of the relatives who desire to speak bitter and slighting words. Someone who is not a great man, someone who has not cleansed his soul and someone who is without aides cannot bear a great burden.<sup>759</sup> Raise it aloft on your shoulders. Every one is capable of bearing a great burden on level terrain. Only an excellent bull can bear a load that is extremely heavy over uneven terrain. An aggregation is destroyed if there is conflict within its ranks. O Keshava! You are the foremost of the aggregation. When it has obtained you, act so that the aggregation is not destroyed. Nothing other than prosperity, renunciation and generosity are established in a person who is wise. Ensuring the prosperity of one’s own side is fortunate and glorious and ensures a long life. O Krishna! Act so that there is no destruction of your relatives. O lord! Whether it is about the six aspects<sup>760</sup> of poli-

cy or marching out on an expedition, you are in control of everything and everything is known to you. O mighty-armed one! The Madhavas, the Kukuras, the Bhojas, the Andhakas and the Vrishnis are dependent on you, just as the worlds and the lords of the worlds are. O Madhava! Even the rishis worship your intelligence. You are the preceptor of all beings. You know what has gone and what will come. O foremost among the Yadu lineage! Resorting to you, your relatives enjoy happiness.’”

## Chapter 1411(83)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the first element of conduct. Listen to the second. The king must always protect the man who extends prosperity. O Yudhishtira! Whether a person is paid or is not paid, if he comes and tells you that the royal treasury is being destroyed and depleted by a minister, you must hear him in secret and protect him from ministers. Ministers tend to kill such informants. All those who destroy the treasury work collectively against the one who protects the treasury and unless protected, he will be destroyed. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about what the sage Kalakavrikshiya told the lord of Kosala. We have heard that the sage Kalakavrikshiya went to Kshemadarshina after he had become the lord of Kosala. Wishing to ascertain what was happening in Kshemadarshina’s kingdom, he repeatedly travelled around, with a crow tied in a cage. ‘I study the knowledge of crows. Crows tell me what has happened, what will happen, and what is going on right now.’ Saying this, with a large number of men, he began to observe the wicked deeds of all those employed by the king, throughout the kingdom. He knew about everything that was going on in the kingdom. He knew everything about the wicked deeds of those employed by the king, here and there. With the crow, the one who was rigid in his vows went to see the king and said, ‘I know everything.’ He went up to an ornamented adviser of the king of Kosala and, on the basis of what the crow said, told him these words. ‘I know what you did on such-and-such an occasion. I know that you stole from the royal treasury. This is what the crow has told me. Swiftly admit or contradict it.’ In this way, he spoke to others who had also stolen from the royal treasury. No one heard him speak of anything that was not actually true. O extender of the Kuru lineage! When he was sleeping in the night, all those accused royal employees killed the crow in the night.

“Next morning, on seeing the crow pierced with an arrow inside the cage, the brahmana went to Kshemadarshina and spoke these words. ‘O king! O lord! You are the lord of lives and riches and I seek sanctuary with you. With your permission, I will tell you something that is for the welfare of your city. I have come to you with wholehearted devotion, tormented on account of a friend.<sup>761</sup> Because of the injury caused, I have spoken about your riches being robbed. Like a charioteer with a well-trained horse, I am trying to awake a friend. Because I am intent on ensuring your welfare, I am overcome by great rage. A person who knows and wishes to ensure his own prosperity should always tolerate such advances on the part of a well-wisher.’ The king replied to him and said, ‘I always desire my own prosperity. Therefore, why will I not forgive what you tell me? O brahmana! If you so wish, tell me what you know. O brahmana! I will act in accordance with the words you tell me.’

“The sage said, ‘I have come to you out of my devotion, to report to you what I know about your policies, your dangers and the threats you are facing from your servants. Learned ones who were preceptors and served kings declared this a long time ago. Only those who have no other means of sustenance should serve the king. Association with kings is like virulent poison. Kings have many friends and also have many enemies. It has been said that those who serve kings face dangers from all of these. O king! Therefore, all the time, they have to be scared of all these. One is incapable of not being single-minded and being distracted when serving a lord of the earth. One who desires prosperity should never be careless. Such carelessness can lead to a king stumbling and if there is such a stumbling, there is no prospect of remaining alive. A learned person must approach the king as if he is a blazing fire. He is the lord of lives and riches and if he is angry, that lord is like virulent poison. While always making the best of efforts, the man must think, “I am already dead.” He must be scared of having said something wrong, having done something wrong, having stood in the wrong way, having sat in the wrong way and having walked in the wrong way. He must watch out for such signs and indications. If the king is pleased, like a god, he can grant every object of desire. However, if he is wrathful, like the fire, he can burn down, from the roots. O king! This is what Maya<sup>762</sup> had said and that is the way it is. I will now repeatedly act so as to extend your prosperity. At times of



hardship, an aide like me helps with his intelligence. O king! My crow has been slain, but I am not reprimanding you on account of this. They<sup>763</sup> wish you injury. You should use your intelligence to test for those who wish you well and those who wish you injury. Do not reveal your thoughts. There are those who dwell in your own residence, they do not wish the prosperity of the subjects. It is the likes of those who are hostile towards me. After you have been destroyed, they desire your kingdom. O king! However, they will only succeed if they ally with those who are close to you, not otherwise. O king! Because of fear from them, I will depart and go to a hermitage. O lord! It is they who allied and brought my crow down with an arrow. They sent my crow to Yama's abode as a signal to me. O king! I have seen this through sight gained by a long period of austerities. I used the crow as a hook and crossed this river that is infested with many crocodiles, fish, alligators and a large number of whales.<sup>764</sup> Your kingdom was full of stumps of trees, rocks and thorny scrubs, and infested by tigers, lions and elephants. It was difficult to access and difficult to penetrate, like a cave in the Himalayas. The learned say that a fire should be used to cross a place that is difficult to cross because it is dark, a boat should be used to cross the water. However, the learned also say that there is no means to cross the difficult terrain a king faces. Your kingdom is impenetrable and is enveloped in darkness. Even you are incapable of finding comfort here. How can I? This is not an auspicious place to live in, since the virtuous and the wicked are equal here. There is no doubt that one will be killed here, whether one is good or wicked. One is slain for performing good deeds and one who performs wicked deeds is not slain. One should not remain here for a long time. The learned should depart swiftly. O king! There is a river named Sita, where even boats sink. I think that this trap, which kills everyone, is like that. You are like the fall that confronts those who collect honey, or like a meal laced with poison. Your sentiments are like those of the wicked and you do not follow the conduct of the virtuous. O king! You are like a well that is surrounded by poisonous snakes. You are like a passage to a large river that has sweet water to drink. However, the banks are covered with *kariras*<sup>765</sup> and reeds and it is difficult to reach. O king! You are like that. O king! You are like a swan amidst dogs, vultures and jackals. A creeper attaches itself to a giant tree and, winding around the trunk, increases its abundant growth. It envelopes and surpasses the tree's growth. When there is a terrible conflagration, it burns down both the tree and the creeper. O king! Your advisers fit that image. Cleanse them. O king! You are the one who has nurtured and protected them. Ignoring you, they are seeking to kill someone who loves you. I have dwelt here in fear and have been protected only because they have been careless. It was like living in a house with a snake inside it, or dwelling in a house with a hero's wife.<sup>766</sup> I wished to test the conduct of the king, who was like a fellow resident. Has the king controlled his senses? Has he conquered his inner impulses? Do the subjects love the king and does the king love them? O supreme among kings! Asking these questions, I came to you. O king! I find delight in you, like a hungry person before food. I do not like your ministers. They are like water before someone who is not thirsty. Because I wish to ensure your prosperity, they have found fault with me. There is no doubt that there is no other reason. I do not harbour any enmity towards them. I only wish to point out their faults. However, like a snake that has only wounded its back, one must always be careful about a wicked enemy.'

“The king replied, ‘I will honour you with a lot of expensive objects. I will show you a lot of reverence. O foremost among brahmanas! I will worship you a lot. Reside in my house for a long time. O brahmana! Those who do not like you will no longer reside in my house. But you should tell me about what should be done next. Ensure that the rod is wielded against those who are wicked and the ones who are virtuous are treated well. O illustrious one! Look towards that and guide me about what is beneficial.’

“The sage said, ‘Ignore this sin<sup>767</sup> and weaken them, one by one. Ascertaining their motives, slay one man after another man. When many are guilty of the same crime, they can unite and blunt a thorn. O king! I am telling you this, because of my fear that your secret counsel might be disclosed. We are brahmanas. Our punishments are mild and we are prone to compassion. I desire your welfare, that of your enemies and of my own self. O king! Because I desire your welfare, I am declaring myself to be like your relative. I am the sage Kalakavrikshiya. I am devoted to the truth. Know from the signs that your father revered me as his friend. O king! The kingdom that you obtained from your father confronts a hardship now. At that time, I gave up all objects of desire and tormented myself through austerities. I am telling you this out of affection, so that you do not remain confused any longer. O king! Having obtained the kingdom, depending on your wishes, you can glance both towards its happiness and its misery. O king! How can you be so careless as to have such advisers in the kingdom?’”

‘Bhishma said, “At this, great delight was again generated in the royal lineage. The bull among the brahmana lineage was consecrated as the royal priest. The illustrious lord of Kosala brought the earth under a single umbrella.<sup>768</sup> The sage Kalakavrikshiya offered oblations at the best of sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard his beneficial words, the king of Kosala governed the kingdom in accordance with those auspicious words.”’

## Chapter 1412(84)

‘Bhishma said, “There are virtuous ones who are constrained by a sense of shame. They are full of truthfulness and uprightness. They are capable of saying what is proper. Such people should be members of the assembly.<sup>769</sup> O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For all tasks, choose as aides those who are extremely wealthy, extremely brave, extremely learned brahmanas, those who are extremely satisfied with you and capable of great enterprise. In every difficulty, you should try for people like these. Those who are born in noble lineages and are honoured will never hide their capabilities. Such a person will never abandon you, whether you are happy or troubled, whether you are afflicted or well, and you must sustain such an individual. Your retinue must consist of those born in noble lineages, born within the kingdom, wise, handsome, extremely learned and those who are bold, but are devoted to you. O son! Those born in inferior lineages, avaricious, violent and shameless will serve you as long as their hands are wet.<sup>770</sup> There are those who are loved and share in your prosperity, who are rewarded with superior and inferior objects, those who seek your prosperity and participate in your happiness, those who are learned and whose conduct does not vary, those who are virtuous and follow vows, those who always wish that you are wealthy, are not inferior and speak the truth. Engage them. However, there are ignoble and evil-minded ones who do not know about agreements. Knowing that they deviate from pledges, you must be careful about them. When there are many to choose from, one should not choose one, ignoring the many. However, if one is superior to the many, the many can be ignored, depending on one’s inclination. These are the signs one sees in the superior person — valour, emphasis on deeds, adherence to agreements, honour shown to capable people, no attempts to rival those who are not rivals, lack of deviation from dharma on account of desire, fear, anger and avarice, lack of arrogance, capability to speak the truth, control over the self and respect for the worthy. Having been examined in every way, such a person should be the adviser in any counsel. He should be born in a noble family, truthful, patient, accomplished, in control over the soul, brave, grateful and upright. O Partha! These are the marks of an excellent person. When these are present, one gets to know such a man. His enemies are disarmed and become his friends. A king who controls his soul, is accomplished in wisdom and desires his own prosperity, should examine the good and bad qualities of his senior ministers and combine men who are wise, born in noble families and born within the country, who are faithful and incapable of being corrupted, and who have been extremely well tested in every possible way. There should be warriors, those who are learned, those whose ancestors have served and others who are not that superior. These men must be adorned with a sense of duty and a desire for prosperity. They must possess morality, natural intelligence, energy, patience, forgiveness, purity, loyalty, firmness and fortitude. After testing their qualities, a king who desires his prosperity must appoint senior advisers who are capable of bearing a heavy load. They must have passed the five tests.<sup>771</sup> He must appoint those who are adequate in speech, brave, skilled in raising resources, born in noble lineages, truthful, knowledgeable about the interpretation of signs and free from cruelty. They must know about the requirements of time and place and seek to ensure the tasks of the master. For the sake of prosperity, these are the kinds of ministers the king must always have.

“One who is weak in energy and enterprise will never be decisive. He will certainly generate uncertainty in all tasks. A minister who is not learned, even if he is born in a good family and knows about dharma, artha and kama, is not capable of examining a policy. In that way, one who is not born in a good family, even if he is as learned as one desires, is like a blind man without a leader and is confused in all tasks requiring intelligence. Even if a man is intelligent and knows about the means of implementation, if his resolution wavers, he cannot persevere with the task for a long time. A man who is evil in his intelligence and lacks learning may again simply be engaged in carrying out a task, but is incapable of any special kind of reflection. One should never trust a minister who is not devoted. One should never reveal one’s counsel to someone who is not devoted. A fraudulent one will conspire with

other ministers and cause hardship to the king, like a fire penetrates a tree through holes created by the battering of the wind. The lord may sometimes be enraged and dislodge someone from his position. He may fling words of anger towards him and later reinstate him. No one except a person who is devoted is capable of tolerating this. Ministers can also be enraged, like lightning mixed with thunder. Wishing for the welfare of the lord, if a person restrains this, considering happiness and unhappiness equally, that is the man who should be sought for the sake of prosperity. If a man is not upright, even if he is devoted, wise and possesses all the superior qualities, he should not learn about the king's plans. When a person allies with enemies and pays no regard to the many citizens, that kind of well-wisher should not learn about the king's plans. If a person is not learned, is impure, stubborn and boastful, serves the enemy and is angry and avaricious, that kind of well-wisher should not learn about the king's plans. If a person is a stranger, even if he is devoted and is as learned as one wants, even if he is honoured and given a share, that person should not learn about the king's plans. If a person has been accused of even a small crime, even if he is honoured well and is appointed again because of his good qualities, that person should not hear about the king's plans.

“A person who is accomplished in wisdom, intelligent, learned, born within the country, pure and upright in all his deeds, that person deserves to hear the plans. If a person possesses external and internal knowledge<sup>772</sup> and knows his own nature and the souls of others, he is like the king's well-wisher and deserves to hear the plans. If a person is truthful in speech, possesses good conduct, is grave, modest and mild, if he is a father and a grandfather, he deserves to hear the plans. If a person is content, revered, truthful and liberal, if he hates evildoers, if he is brave and understands what needs to be done at different time, he deserves to hear the plans. If a person is capable of looking at all the people equally and can bring them under subjugation through conciliation, then a king who wields the rod should tell him about his plans. A warrior who is learned in policy, whom the citizens and the residents of the countryside trust because he follows dharma, deserves to hear the plans. Therefore, those who possess all the qualities should be honoured well. There should be at least three ministers who know about nature and who aspire for greatness. They should be employed in detecting one's natural weaknesses and that of the enemy. When the foundation is the advice of these ministers, the king and the kingdom prosper. The enemy should not be able to detect one's weaknesses, but one should discern the weaknesses of the enemy. Like a turtle draws in its limbs, one must protect one's own weaknesses. Learned ministers provide policy for the kingdom. The king implements the policy. Other people are like the limbs of that policy. It is said that the essence and root of a kingdom's policy is based on spying.

“Ministers seek a living on this earth and follow their lord. Having controlled restraints, arrogance, anger, pride and jealousy, the king must always consult ministers who have passed the five kinds of tests. The king must focus his mind and understand the different kinds of advice those three<sup>773</sup> have. After the period of consultation is over, he must tell them his own views and the ultimate decision. If there is a serious matter, he must ask a supreme brahmana who knows about the purport of dharma, artha and kama. He must approach him with devotion and affectionately follow the path indicated by him. Those who know about the process of consultation have always determined and said that this is the process that should be followed in seeking advice. Therefore, counsel should always be implemented in this way and this is capable of ensuring the support of the subjects. There must not be dwarves, hunchbacks, weak people, lame ones, blind people, idiots, women and eunuchs there.<sup>774</sup> No one should move there, in front, at the rear, above, below and diagonally.<sup>775</sup> One should climb up onto a deserted balcony, where the ground can be clearly seen and there is no grass or reeds nearby. Avoiding all the errors associated with speech and gestures, the consultations must be held with the ministers at the right time.”

## Chapter 1413(85)

‘Bhishma said, ‘O Yudhishthira! In this connection an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Brihaspati and Shakra.

“‘Shakra asked, ‘O brahmana! What single step can a man take well, so that he becomes pre-eminent among all beings and obtains great glory?’

“‘Brihaspati replied, ‘O Shakra! Pleasant speech is the single good step through which a man becomes pre-eminent among all beings and obtains great glory. O Shakra! This is the single step that brings happiness to all beings and by observing this one always becomes the beloved of all beings. If a person never speaks, if he always has a frown on his face and if his speech is not pleasant, he becomes an object of hatred for all beings. A person who glances first, a person who speaks first, a person who smiles before speaking, he is the person whom people favour. Everywhere, even if gifts are given, but without pleasant speech, that is like food without seasoning and does not please people. O Shakra! Even if a person does not give anything, but speaks to people in sweet words, he is capable of bringing all the people under his subjugation. Therefore, it is the duty of anyone who wields the rod to be pleasant in speech. That generates results and people do not hate him. Pleasant speech that is soft and sweet and is delivered well is like a good deed and there is nothing that equals it.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the priest,<sup>776</sup> Shakra acted entirely in this way. O Kounteya! You should also properly follow this.’”

## Chapter 1414(86)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O Indra among kings! How does a king succeed in ruling over the subjects, with a specific eye towards dharma, so that he obtains eternal fame?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He must be pure in his conduct. He must devote himself to protecting the subjects. He must be cleansed. He will then attain dharma and fame in both the worlds.”<sup>777</sup>

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What kind of conduct should a king follow and whom should he use? O immensely wise one! I am asking you this and you should tell me. You have earlier spoken about the qualities in a man. But it is my view that all of those cannot be found in a single man.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely wise one! O intelligent one! It is exactly as you have stated. The man who possesses all these different qualities is extremely rare. But in brief, if one makes the effort, it is not difficult to find good conduct. I will now tell you about appropriate advisers and act according to this. There must be four brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and are bold, virtuous and pure. There must be three humble shudras who have been pure in their earlier work.<sup>778</sup> There must be a fifty-year-old suta<sup>779</sup> who is bold and without malice. He will recount the ancient stories and must possess the eight qualities. He must have understanding about the smriti texts and must be humble and impartial. When there is a dispute because of greed for riches, he must be capable of knowing what must be done.<sup>780</sup> When decisions have to be taken about a crime, the king must consult in the midst of those eight<sup>781</sup> ministers and they must be devoid of the seven extremely terrible vices.<sup>782</sup> For the sake of the kingdom, the outcome must be publicized in the kingdom. Through such conduct, one must always look towards the subjects. One must not keep the proceedings a secret, because secrecy runs counter to the task. If the proceeding suffers, that adharma will also afflict you. The kingdom will then be scattered, like birds before a hawk. It will always remain adrift, like a shattered boat on an ocean. When the lord of the earth does not protect his subjects well and uses adharma, fear is generated in his heart and heaven is closed to him. O bull among men! This is also true of a king’s adviser or a king’s son who follows adharma, because a person who has been appointed to a seat of dharma<sup>783</sup> is the foundation of dharma. When appointed to tasks, if the followers of the king do not act properly, they themselves head downwards first,<sup>784</sup> taking the kings with them. The king must always be the protector of the men who have no protectors. If distressed ones are forcefully oppressed by the powerful, there will be a lot of resentment. When there is a dispute between two parties, it is best to decide on the basis of the strength of witnesses. There must be special scrutiny for those who have no witnesses and are without protectors. The punishment that descends on the wicked must be proportionate to the crime. There must be monetary fines for the wealthy and death and imprisonment for the poor. The king must use decency and blows to control those who are wicked in conduct. The virtuous must be protected through pleasant words and gifts. If a person desires to kill the king, he must be executed through colourful means.<sup>785</sup> This is also recommended for those who make a living out of thievery and those who cause a mingling of the varnas.<sup>786</sup> O lord of the earth! When a lord of the earth applies the rod of punishment well, there is no adharma in this. Instead, this represents eternal dharma. However, if a king uses punishment in an inexperienced way and uses it according to his whims, he does not obtain fame in this world. After death, he goes to hell. He should not impose punishment on another, merely on the basis of hearsay from others. Following the injunctions of the sacred texts, a person should be imprisoned or set free. Even if there is an emergency, the king must never slay a messenger. If he kills a messenger, together with his advisers, he goes to hell. A messenger merely states what he has been asked to. If a king who follows the dharma of kshatriyas kills such a person, this is tantamount to his ancestors being tainted with sin of killing a foetus. It is said that a messenger must possess seven qualities—he must be born in a good family, he must be good in his conduct, he must be eloquent, he must be skilled, he must be pleasant in speech, he must say what he has been asked to and he must

have a good memory. The person who protects the gate must have similar qualities and the one who protects his head<sup>787</sup> must also have such qualities. The adviser who is knowledgeable about dharma, artha and the sacred texts, who knows about peace and war, who is intelligent, patient, wise and capable of keeping a secret, who is born in a noble family and is truthful and capable—such a person is praised. The commander must also have such qualities. He must know about battle formations, implements of war and warriors and possess valour. He must be capable of tolerating rain, cold, heat and wind and know about the weaknesses of the enemy. He should be able to engineer trust in the enemy, but must never trust anyone. O Indra among kings! It is not recommended that he should even trust his own son. O unblemished one! I have now recounted to you the truth and the purport of the secret texts. I have also told you about the supreme secret—the lords of men should never trust anyone.”

## Chapter 1415(87)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What should be the kind of city within which the king should himself dwell? Is it one that already exists, or should he get one constructed? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The place where he will reside with his sons, brothers and relatives must be properly checked, to ensure that it is protected and there is a means of sustenance. In particular, I will tell you about what must be done about fortifications. Having heard about this, you must make efforts to follow the injunctions. The cities must be constructed with the six kinds of forts in mind, so that there is sufficient prosperity and an abundance of every required object. The six forts are—those in the desert, those on the ground, those in mountains, those with men, those in the water and those in forests.<sup>788</sup> The city must have forts and must be stocked with grain and weapons. There must be firm walls and moats and it must be full of elephants, horses and chariots. There must be learned artisans there and there must be stores of every kind of requirement. It must be populated by excellent and accomplished people who follow dharma. There must be energetic men, elephants and horses and it must be adorned with crossroads and shops. There must be established rules of conduct, so that people are peaceful and without fear. It must be radiant, with the sound of activity.<sup>789</sup> There must be extremely spacious houses. It must be full of brave and wealthy people and must resound with chants of the brahman. There must be congregations and festivals at which the gods are always worshipped. With his faithful advisers and soldiers, the king must himself reside within that city, conducting himself so that his treasury, forces and friends increase. He must restrain all the sins in the city and the countryside. He must make efforts to increase his stores of goods and his stores of weapons. He must increase all the collections of stores, machines, clubs, medicines, firewood, iron, grain chaff,<sup>790</sup> charcoal, timber, horn, bones, bamboo, marrow, oil, fat, honey, medicines, flax, resins from the shala tree, grain, weapons, arrows, leather, sinews, cane, munja grass, *balbaja* grass<sup>791</sup> and bows. The king must always control access to tanks and wells that contain a great deal of excellent water and also to giant trees that are full of juice.<sup>792</sup> He must make efforts to treat preceptors, officiating priests and priests with a great deal of honour. There must be similar treatment for great archers, architects and astrologers. Those who are wise, intelligent, self-controlled, accomplished, brave, extremely learned, born in good lineages and full of enterprise must be appointed for all the tasks. The king must revere those who follow dharma and restrain those who follow adharma. He must make efforts to engage all the varnas in their own tasks. Spies must be engaged within and outside. Having thus got to know, he must employ the people of the city and the countryside in different tasks. In particular, the king must himself attend to spies, the treasury and policy, because everything is established on this. Using spies as his eyes, he must know everything that the people in the city and the countryside wish to do, whether they are neutrals, enemies or friends. He must thus arrange everything, without being careless about anything. He must always honour those who are devoted and punish those who seek to cause injury. He must always perform rites and sacrifices and donate without any hesitation. It is his task to protect the subjects and not undertaking this task is to be censured. He must always think of a means of sustenance and arrange yoga and kshema for those who are miserable, those who have no protectors, those who are aged and those women who are widows. At the right time, the king must honour those who are in hermitages and treat them well with garments, vessels and food. He must always make efforts to stand before an ascetic and tell him about himself, all his tasks and his kingdom. When he sees a person who has given up everything, has been born in a noble lineage and is extremely learned, he must honour him with beds, seats and food. The king can trust him, even in an emergency. Even bandits trust an ascetic. The king will offer his possessions to him and obtain wisdom in return. However, he must not serve them all the time, or honour them excessively.<sup>793</sup> He must seek out one<sup>794</sup> from within his own kingdom, another from the kingdom of the enemy, another who resides in the forests and another who lives in the cities of the



vassals. These must be honoured well and a means of sustenance arranged for them, irrespective of whether they reside in the kingdom of the enemy, in the forest, or within one's own dominion. The ascetics are rigid in their vows. And if the king should ever desire to seek refuge with them in a time of hardship, they will offer this refuge. I have now briefly recounted to you the characteristics of the region and the city the king must himself reside in.”

## Chapter 1416(88)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O king! How can a kingdom be protected? How can a kingdom be won over? O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to understand this well. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will tell you everything about how a kingdom should be protected and about how a kingdom can be won over. Listen with single-minded attention. One must appoint a headman for every village, then one for ten villages, one for twenty, one for one hundred and one for one thousand. The headman protects the village, ascertains any problems the village faces and reports everything about the villagers to the supervisor of ten, who reports to the supervisor of twenty. The supervisor of twenty reports everything about the conduct of the people who live in the countryside to the supervisor of one hundred villages. The village headman will sustain himself on whatever food is produced within the village and this will also be used to sustain the supervisor of ten and twenty. O best of the Bharata lineage! The supervisor of one hundred villages deserves to be honoured well and will be sustained by giving him a large village that is prosperous and well-populated village. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king possesses many such. The supervisor of one thousand has the right to choose the best suburb.<sup>795</sup> He is entitled to enjoy the grain and gold that the countryside produces.<sup>796</sup> Whatever needs to be done in a village must be undertaken by the villagers themselves. However, an adviser who knows about dharma must attentively supervise this. In every town, there must be a supervisor who thinks about its welfare from every aspect. He must have the terrible form of a planet located above the nakshatras and himself circulate everywhere. He<sup>797</sup> must check the sales, purchases, expenses, shops and routes of traders, impose taxes and act so that their yoga and kshema are ensured. He must glance towards the production and expenses of artisans, to ensure that they have a good living and the craft flourishes. The taxes must be commensurate.

“O Yudhishtira! Earlier, kings levied high taxes and low ones. The lord of the earth must act so that there is no deprivation anywhere. He must glance towards the outcome of a task and then determine taxes. It should never be such that there is no incentive for the work and the outcome.<sup>798</sup> The king must always glance towards this and impose taxes so that both the king and the producer have a share in the outcome of the work. Because of his greed, he should not destroy his own foundation and that of others. The king must be benevolent and restrict his inclination to be avaricious. A king who consumes excessively is known for being hated. If one is hated, how can there be any benefit? One who is loved obtains happiness. An intelligent king will milk the kingdom like a calf that sucks milk. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the calf is nurtured, it becomes strong and can sustain hardships. O Yudhishtira! If a calf has drunk too much of milk, it<sup>799</sup> cannot work. A kingdom that has been milked too much is incapable of achieving anything great. A king who tends to the kingdom himself and receives only that which can sustain him obtains great fruits.

“In this world, kings then accumulate enough for times of hardship. The kingdom becomes the treasury and the treasury becomes his residence.<sup>800</sup> As long as he can, he should show compassion to all those who are close to him and the residents of the city and the countryside who are dependent on him and seek refuge with him. He must first crush the external ones and then enjoy happiness from those who are in between.<sup>801</sup> Thus, people have a share in the happiness and the unhappiness and are not enraged. He must announce the taxes in advance and then repeatedly show himself throughout the kingdom, instilling fear. ‘This is the adversity that confronts us. This is the great fear from the circle of enemies. Like a bamboo that has yielded fruit,<sup>802</sup> one cannot contemplate that the danger will disappear. The enemy has arisen and there are many bandits with him. They wish to invade the kingdom and seize me. We are faced with this terrible and fearful danger. I need your riches to save ourselves from this. When the danger is over, I will return all of this to you. However, the enemy will not return anything that it has seized by force. You may have desired this store of riches for the sake of your sons and wives. But they will kill your wives

and your own selves. I am delighted at your prosperity, but am appealing to you, like to my own sons. Without afflicting the kingdom, I will show you as much of favour as I can. This is a time of disaster and like good bulls, you must bear the burden. In this time of hardship, you should not act so as to be so enamoured of riches.' A king who knows about the appropriate time should use such sweet, gentle and civil words. He should grasp the reins himself.

“For those who live on animal husbandry, he must ascertain the size of their pastures, the expenses of their servants, the dangers they face and their yoga and kshema. For those who live on animal husbandry, taxes must be imposed after that. If they are ignored, those who live on animal husbandry will be destroyed and begin to dwell in the forests.<sup>803</sup> Therefore, having thought about this in advance, one must behave mildly towards them. O Partha! After glancing towards their requirements, it is a duty to show conciliation, protection, benevolence, stability, a share in prosperity and good behaviour towards those who live on animal husbandry. There are many fruits that are always yielded by those who live on animal husbandry. They make the kingdom, trade and agriculture prosper. Therefore, one who is perceptive will make efforts to act pleasantly towards those who live on animal husbandry. One should be compassionate and careful and impose taxes that are mild. O son! For those who live on animal husbandry, the generation of wealth is always extremely easy. O Yudhishtira! There is no other wealth that is its equal.”

## Chapter 1417(89)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O immensely wise one! O grandfather! If a king is capable and wishes to extend his treasury, how should he behave? Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A king who desires dharma should rule so that he is engaged in the welfare of his subjects and consider the time, the place and the strength. Since he thinks of welfare for them and for his own self, the king should ensure that dharma prevails in the kingdom in every way. He must milk the kingdom like a bee sucks honey and flies away.<sup>804</sup> He must milk the cow bearing the calf in mind, without causing damage to the udders. The lord of men must drink mildly from the kingdom, like a leech. He must treat it the way a tigress carries her cub, not letting it fall, but not biting it. As the kingdom prospers, the taxes can progressively become less and less. Or, if he so desires, he can make them increase progressively. The burden on a young bull is gradually increased. The initial efforts are mild and the halter comes later. If the halter is imposed after good treatment, it does not become intractable. If one makes efforts with care, one is then able to enjoy. It is extremely difficult to behave in the same way towards all men. Having comforted the ones who are the foremost, one can then make the inferior one subservient. Dissension must be engineered among those who are likely to support each other. Having comforted them, he can cheerfully make efforts to use them. Taxes must not be imposed on them at the wrong place, or at the wrong time. Having comforted them in advance, these must be at the right time and follow the proper norms. I have told you about legitimate means. I don’t wish to talk about techniques of deceit.

“‘Drinking houses, prostitutes, pimps, actors, gamblers and others who are like them must all be controlled.<sup>805</sup> They can cause injury to the kingdom. If they are situated within the kingdom, they hamper gentle subjects. Unless there is a disaster, no one should ever beg. Manu had earlier laid down this dictum for all beings. If no one did any work, nothing would be able to survive. There is no doubt that the three worlds would then be destroyed. The lord and king who does not restrain these people<sup>806</sup> reaps one-fourth of their sins. That is what the sacred texts say. He also obtains one-fourth of all dharma they observe. If one frequents these places,<sup>807</sup> one’s prosperity is destroyed. A man who is addicted to desire is incapable of giving up undesirable acts. However, if there is a disaster, one can beg from others. Compassionate people who wish to show pity can then follow dharma and give. But in general, there should not be beggars in the kingdom. Nor should there be bandits. They seize what is good and do not think of anyone’s prosperity. Those who favour beings and encourage the prosperity of the subjects, those are the ones who should remain in the kingdom, not those who do not think about prosperity. O great king! Those who take excessive riches must be punished. Those who charge usurious rates must be forced to repay, through fines and taxes. Men must be employed, with many workers, to take care of agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and everything else that is like that. If a man who is engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry or trade suffers even the slightest bit of hardship, the king is to blame. The wealthy must always be honoured with vehicles, garments and food and be told, ‘Accept these honours and also accept me.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The wealthy are referred to as a great limb of the kingdom. There is no doubt that those who are wealthy are foremost among all people. The intelligent person<sup>808</sup> must protect the wise, the brave, the rich, the powerful, those who follow dharma, the ascetics and the truthful. O king! Therefore, be pleasant towards everyone. Protect them through truth, rectitude, lack of anger and non-violence. You will then obtain the army, the treasury, the friends and the earth. Truth and uprightness are supreme. O king! You will then obtain friends and a treasury.”’

## Chapter 1418(90)

‘Bhishma said, “In your kingdom, trees that bear edible fruit should not be cut down. The learned ones have said that according to dharma, roots and fruits belong to brahmanas. If something is left over by brahmanas, other people can consume that. Causing injury to a brahmana, no one must ever take anything away. If a brahmana prepares to leave, saying that he is afflicted and cannot find a means of sustenance, the lord of men must think of a means of sustenance for him and his wife. If he does not refrain, he should be addressed in an assembly of brahmanas in these words. ‘Which person will now be able to set limits for him?’<sup>809</sup> There is no doubt that he will then desist. O Kounteya! If he does not, he should be told, ‘It is your duty to forget what has happened in the past. This is my command.’ Though I do not hold that view, there are those who hold that a brahmana should only be entitled to a means of sustenance. If he does not accept the invitation for only a means of sustenance, one should give him other objects of pleasure. In this world, agriculture, animal husbandry and trade provide a means of living for people. Above this, the three kinds of learning<sup>810</sup> ensure prosperity. Those who act contrary to these efforts are bandits. Brahma created kshatriyas so that they could be slain. O king! Slay the enemies. Protect the subjects. Perform rites and sacrifices. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Be brave and fight in battles. A king who protects those who should be protected is supreme among kings. Those who do not protect them, never obtain any success. O Yudhishtira! The king must always know about all the people. It is for this reason that a man uses other men.<sup>811</sup> Protect those inside from those outside and those outside from those inside. Protect those outside from those outside and those inside from those inside.<sup>812</sup> Always protect everyone. The king must always protect himself and protect the earth. Those who are learned say that one’s own self is the foundation for everything. ‘What is my weakness? Who are my associates?’<sup>813</sup> What hardships can bring me down? What are my sins?’ He must always think along these lines. He must appoint secret spies to travel throughout the earth. ‘Let them find out if my policy is sound and whether my conduct is praised. Do they like me in the countryside and what is my reputation in the kingdom?’ Be knowledgeable about dharma, possess fortitude, do not run away in a battle, live for the kingdom, and live for those who follow the king, for all the advisers and all those who are neutral and also those who praise and censure you. O Yudhishtira! Ensure that all action is implemented well. O son! It is not possible that everyone should only be delighted with you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among all the people, there will be friends and enemies, and those who are neutral. There are those who are equal in the strength of arms and also in the qualities that they possess. How is it that some are superior and succeed in ruling other men? They do this because those who are mobile devour those who are immobile, those with teeth devour those without teeth and angry and poisonous snakes devour other snakes. O Yudhishtira! You must always make efforts to be careful and act like them. If you are careless, they will descend on you like a *bharunda* bird.<sup>814</sup> I hope the merchants in your kingdom are not afflicted by taxes and that those who tirelessly make efforts in desolate regions are able to buy a lot after spending a little. I hope that those who live on agriculture in the kingdom are not going away because they are oppressed. Those who bear burdens for the king also sustain others. What is given in this world sustains gods and the large number of ancestors and also men, serpents, rakshasas, birds and animals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is how the kingdom sustains itself and this is how it should be protected. O Pandava! I will again tell you about what this prosperity is based on.”’

## Chapter 1419(91)

‘Bhishma said, “Utathya, the son of Angiras, was supreme among those who knew about the brahman.<sup>815</sup> He affectionately told Mandhata, the son of Yuvanashva, about the dharma of kshatriyas. O Yudhishtira! I will tell you completely and in entirety about what Utathya, supreme among those who knew about the brahman, instructed.

“‘Utathya said, ‘The king exists for the sake of dharma, not for the sake of engaging in kama. O Mandhata! Know that the king is the protector of the world. If the king acts in accordance with dharma, he advances towards a state of divinity.<sup>816</sup> If he follows adharma, he goes to hell. Beings are based on dharma. Dharma is based on the king. A king who administers this properly is a king who is the lord of the earth. It is said that a king who has supreme dharma in his soul and is also prosperous, but happens to be wicked, leads to the gods being despised. It is said that there is no dharma then. When those who follow adharma are seen to be successful in their pursuit of artha, all the people think that this is auspicious and begin to follow them. When the wicked are not restrained, dharma is uprooted, great adharma is followed and it is said that there is fear both during the day and the night. The brahmanas do not follow the Vedas and the vows. When the wicked are not restrained, the brahmanas do not perform sacrifices. O great king! When the wicked are not restrained in this world, the minds of all men are confused, like those who are about to be slain. Having looked at both the worlds,<sup>817</sup> the rishis themselves created the king as an extremely great being, so that there should be dharma.<sup>818</sup> One in whom dharma shines is known as a king.<sup>819</sup> If dharma disappears in someone, the gods know that person to be a *vrishala*. O illustrious one! Dharma is a bull and the gods know one who does away with it as vrishala.<sup>820</sup> Therefore, dharma should not be destroyed. When dharma prospers, all the beings always prosper and when it decays, they decay. Therefore, make dharma prosper. There is no doubt that dharma flows from the acquisition and preservation of wealth. O Indra among men! It has been said that one should lay down the boundaries of what should not be done. Svayambhu<sup>821</sup> created dharma for the power of beings. Therefore, to show favours to subjects, propagate dharma. O tiger among kings! That is the reason the sacred texts have said that dharma is the best. The bull among men who rules his subjects virtuously is a king. One should abandon desire and anger and follow dharma. O supreme among the Bharata lineage!<sup>822</sup> Dharma is the best task to be followed by a king. The brahmanas are dharma’s womb and must always be revered. O Mandhata! Without any resentment, their desires must always be fulfilled. If one does not act so as to satisfy their wishes, the king confronts fear. The friends do not increase and become his enemies. Bali, Vi-rochana’s son, exhibited resentment towards brahmanas.<sup>823</sup> Because of this, Shri<sup>824</sup> was enraged with him and no longer dwelt with him, going instead to the chastiser of Paka.<sup>825</sup> O lord! He<sup>826</sup> was tormented when he saw Shri with Purandara, but this was the consequence of his resentment and insolence. O Mandhata! Therefore, know that you should not enrage prosperity. The sacred texts say that adharma leads to the birth of Shri’s son named Darpa.<sup>827</sup> O king! It has led to the subjugation of the gods and the asuras many times. O king! Many rajarshis did not understand this either. Having conquered it, one becomes a king. One who is defeated becomes a slave. Do not serve insolence and adharma. O Mandhata! If you wish to be established for a long time, follow this. In particular, do not associate with those who are intoxicated,<sup>828</sup> careless, infantile and mad. Do not indulge in conduct that is harmful. In particular, always take efforts to be careful of advisers who have been punished, women, mountains, uneven terrain, forts, elephants, horses and reptiles. Do not wander around in the night. Abandon excessive pride, insolence and anger. The king should not indulge in intercourse with unknown women, eunuchs, promiscuous women, the wives of others and girls.<sup>829</sup> If there is a mixing of varnas, wicked rakshasas are born in the family—eunuchs, those without limbs, those with thick tongues and idiots. When the king is careless, these and others are born. Therefore, for the sake of the welfare of the subjects, the king must take special care. When a kshatriya is careless, great sins result. Adharma is followed and this leads to a mixing of the subjects.<sup>830</sup> It is cold during the

summer and it is not cold during the winter. There is no rain, or there is too much of rain. The subjects are penetrated by disease. Terrible nakshatras and planets are seen to rise. Many omens are seen, signifying the king's destruction. When the king does not protect his subjects, he is himself not protected. The subjects decay and he is also destroyed. Two seize the possessions of one and many others seize the possessions of two. Virgins are corrupted. These are said to be the sins of the king. Not a single man can say, "This belongs to me." This is what happens when the king is careless and abandons dharma.'"

## Chapter 1420(92)

“Utathya said, ‘When the king follows dharma, Parjanya showers down at the right time. There is prosperity and the subjects rejoice in happiness. He<sup>831</sup> is like a washerman who does not know how to wash dirty clothes, or washes away the dye in the process. It is the same with brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who are no longer established in the various tasks of the four varnas. Labour is for shudras, agriculture for vaishyas and dandaniti for kings. Brahmacharya, austerities, mantras and truth are for brahmanas. The kshatriya who knows good conduct and about how to restrain bad conduct is like a father and a lord of beings. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Krita, treta, dvapara and kali are all dependent on the conduct of kings. It is said that the king makes the yuga. When the king is careless, the four varnas and the four Vedas and ashramas are all confused. The king is the one who makes beings. The king is their destroyer. The one with dharma in his soul is a maker. The one with adharma in his soul is a destroyer. When the king is careless, the king’s wives, sons, relatives and well-wishers all sorrow together. O king! When the king follows adharma, all the elephants, horses, cattle, camels, mules and asses suffer. O Mandhata! It is said that the creator created strength for the sake of the weak.<sup>832</sup> The foundation of everything is immensely weak. O king! When the king bases himself on adharma, the beings who depend on the king and others who depend on those beings, all suffer. I think that the glances of one who is weak, that of a sage and that of a virulent snake cannot be tolerated. Therefore, do not oppress the weak. O son!<sup>833</sup> Know that the weak should never be thought of as those who should be disregarded. Otherwise, the glances of the weak will burn you down, together with your relatives. If a family is burnt down by the weak, it is burnt down to the roots and nothing grows there. Therefore, do not oppress the weak. Weakness is superior to strength, since greater strength is superior to strength. When the strong is burnt down by the weak, there is nothing left. If a humiliated and struck person cries out for succour and fails to find a man to help him, the consequent punishment slays the king. O son! When you base yourself on strength, do not oppress the weak. Otherwise, the glances of the weak will burn you down, like a fire that consumes its foundation. The tears shed by those who weep because they have been falsely accused slay the sons and animals of those who have made those false accusations. If not on one’s own self, it descends on the son. If not on the son, it descends on the son’s son or the daughter’s son. Like a cow, the fruits of an evil deed are not immediately reaped.<sup>834</sup> When a weak person is slain and cannot find a protector, the gods have arranged that a great and terrible punishment should descend.<sup>835</sup> Though they should not beg, when the residents of the countryside are forced to beg like brahmanas, that sin of begging slays the king. When the many royal officers employed by the king in the countryside are engaged in wrong deeds, a great sin devolves on the king. When those employed for good policy are overcome by reasons of desire and greed from riches and extract from those who are distressed and pleading, that is a great sin on the part of the king.

““A large tree sprouts and then grows. It offers refuge to beings. When it is severed or burnt down, those who have sought refuge in it are also rendered homeless.<sup>836</sup> When those in the kingdom practise the foremost kinds of dharma and follow good conduct, the qualities of the king are spoken about. When they practise adharma and are confused about dharma, his good deeds swiftly turn to bad deeds. When the wicked are known to roam around among the virtuous, the king suffers from kali<sup>837</sup> there. O lord of the earth! When the king punishes those who should not be punished, the kingdom does not prosper. When advisers are honoured in accordance with what they deserve and are engaged by the king for policy and war, the kingdom of that king prospers. He enjoys the entire earth for a long period of time. The king who looks towards good deeds and honours them with pleasant words obtains supreme dharma. When the king enjoys his own share and does not disregard others and slays those who are strong and insolent, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king saves everyone in speech, body and deeds and does not pardon his own son, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king protects those who seek



refuge, like his own sons, and does not deviate from any agreements, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king performs rites and sacrifices and faithfully gives away dakshina, disregarding his own desire and hatred, that king is said to follow dharma. When he wipes away the tears of the distressed, those without protectors and the weak, and generates delight among men, that king is said to follow dharma. When his friends prosper and his enemies are brought down, when he honours the virtuous, that king is said to follow dharma. When he protects the truth and always gives away land, honouring guests and servants, that king is said to follow dharma. When favours and chastisement are both established in him, that king obtains fruits in this world and in the next. O Mandhata! The king is Yama. He is the supreme lord of those who follow dharma. When he restrains himself, he supports life. When he does not restrain himself, he is wicked. When he receives officiating priests, priests and preceptors well, honouring them and not insulting them, that king is said to follow dharma. Yama controls all beings, without differentiating between them. It is the king's task to duly control the subjects in this way. O bull among men! In every way, the king is like the thousand-eyed one.<sup>838</sup> What he sees as dharma is dharma. You must be careful, learned, forgiving, intelligent, patient and wise, always questioning the spirit of people and separating the good from the evil. You must assuage all the people through gifts and pleasant words. You must protect the residents of the city and the countryside as if they are your own sons. O son! A king who is not accomplished is incapable of protecting the subjects. O son! What is known as the kingdom is an extremely great and difficult burden to bear. Wielding the rod, only a wise and brave one is capable of protecting it. One who is a eunuch and devoid of intelligence cannot wield the rod.

““There must be handsome ones born in noble lineages.<sup>839</sup> They must be accomplished, faithful and extremely learned. You must examine the intelligence of all of these and also that of ascetics who live in hermitages. In this way, you will know the supreme dharma of all beings and your dharma will not be destroyed, in your country, or in the lands of others. Among dharma, artha and kama, dharma is the best. The one who knows dharma enjoys happiness in this world and in the next. When men are honoured well, they abandon their chief wives. People should be cultivated through gifts and pleasant words. O son! Great purity follows from care and purity. O Mandhata! Always pay attention to these. The king must be careful and look for weaknesses in his own self and that of the enemy. The enemy should not be able to see his weaknesses. But he must strike at the weak spots of the enemy. This was the conduct followed by Vasava, Yama, Varuna and all the rajarshis. Follow that. O great king! Act in accordance with this conduct, followed by the rajarshis. O bull among the Bharata lineage!<sup>840</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Follow this divine path. In this world and the next, the devarshis, ancestors and gandharvas praise the conduct of infinitely energetic kings who act in accordance with dharma.”

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Mandhata was thus addressed by Utathya. Without any hesitation, he acted accordingly and obtained the earth for his own. You should also act well, like King Mandhata. Observe dharma, protect the earth and obtain a place in heaven.”’

## Chapter 1421(93)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How should a king who is devoted to dharma, and who wishes to establish himself in dharma, behave? O best among the Kuru lineage! O grandfather! I am asking you. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. The intelligent Vamadeva saw the exact truth about this and sang it. There was a king named Vasumana from Kosala. He was powerful and pure. He asked the illustrious maharishi Vamadeva. ‘O illustrious one! Instruct me with words that are full of dharma and artha, so that I conduct myself in accordance with them, I remain established and do not deviate from my own dharma.’ The supreme among those who meditated, the ascetic Vamadeva, replied to him, as he<sup>841</sup> was seated there, golden in complexion, like Yayati, the son of Nahusha. ‘Follow dharma alone. There is nothing that is superior to dharma. Basing themselves on dharma, kings conquered the entire earth. The king who thinks that dharma is superior to success in the matter of artha, and who makes his intelligence truthful, is radiant with dharma. If a king looks towards adharma and acts on the basis of force alone, he is swiftly dislodged from both the first and the second.’<sup>842</sup> Because his advisers are wicked and evil, he is a slayer of dharma and deserves to be killed by the people, together with his relatives. He will swiftly perish. If he does not seek artha and is addicted to kama, and if he is boastful, even if he obtains the entire earth, he will swiftly perish. However, if a king concentrates on what is beneficial, is devoid of malice, conquers his senses and is intelligent, he flourishes, like an ocean into which rivers flow. For dharma, artha and kama, he must always think that he is not yet full.’<sup>843</sup> The progress of the worlds is based on all these. If he listens to this, he will obtain fame, glory, prosperity and subjects. A person who is proud about dharma, who thinks about dharma and artha, who undertakes action only after thinking about artha, is certain to obtain

greatness. If the king is not generous, is not extremely affectionate, if he always wields the rod over his subjects and if he is naturally violent, he will swiftly perish. The stupid one does not use his intelligence to see that he has committed a wicked deed. He is covered in ill fame and, after death, attains hell. If he shows honour, is generous, pure and discriminating about good taste, men seek to destroy any hardships that he confronts, as if those are their own. If he does not have a preceptor to tell him about dharma, if he does not ask others, if he only concentrates on happiness and obtaining riches, his greatness does not last long. If he shows importance to his preceptor in matters connected with dharma, if he himself glances towards the objectives, if he places dharma at the forefront when dealing with people, his greatness lasts for a long time.’’’

## Chapter 1422(94)

“Vamadeva said, ‘When someone who is strong imposes adharma on those who are weak, those who earn a living from him<sup>844</sup> also follow that kind of conduct. They follow the king, who implemented the wicked practices. With those insolent men, that kingdom is swiftly destroyed. When men naturally earn a living from such evil conduct, when he<sup>845</sup> faces a difficulty, even his relatives are prepared to tolerate this.<sup>846</sup> When the king is naturally violent, when he acts without any basis, when he does not follow the indications of the sacred texts, he is swiftly destroyed. The kshatriya who does not follow the conduct that has been followed for a long time, meant both for those who win and those who lose, deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. A king who is successful in his attempt to seize an enemy in battle, and who does not then show respect to the enemy, deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. The king must be gracious. If he can, he must show compassion at a time of distress. He will then be loved by the people and not be dislodged from his prosperity. If someone has done an injury, he should repay with something that is more pleasant. If he acts in this pleasant way, a person who is not liked will soon be loved. He must avoid false words. He must do what is pleasant, even if he has not been asked. For the sake of desire, anger or hatred, he should not abandon dharma. He should not avoid answering questions, nor should he be careless in speaking words. He should not be hasty or malicious. That is how enemies are overcome. He should not be unduly delighted at an act of kindness, nor should he suffer at something disagreeable. Remembering the welfare of subjects, he should not be confused if he encounters a difficulty in the pursuit of artha. The lord of the earth who possesses qualities to always do what is pleasant obtains success in his deeds and prosperity does not desert him. The king must always favour those who have stopped acting against him and are now favourably disposed, as he must those who are devoted. That is the conduct of the virtuous.

““There are those who are not careless, but attentive. They are wise, extremely devoted and pure. They are capable and faithful. Such people must be employed for important tasks. There are those who may possess good qualities, but do not find delight in the lord of the earth. They are resentful of the master’s prosperity. Such people should not be employed for tasks. There are those who are stupid and addicted to their senses. They are greedy, ignoble in their conduct and fraudulent. They have failed the tests and are cruel. They are evil in intelligence and do not possess a great deal of learning. They have squandered away their possessions in drinking, gambling, women and hunting. If the king employs these in great tasks, prosperity does not stay with him. If the king protects himself and protects those whom he is supposed to protect, the subjects prosper and it is certain that he attains greatness. One must use well-wishers who are not recognized to keep an eye on the acts of all the other kings. By this means, the king is not harmed. When one has injured a strong person, one should not be comforted because that person lives a long distance away. Following the conduct of hawks, such people swoop down when one is careless. If one is firm in one’s foundation, if one is not evil in one’s soul and if one knows about one’s strengths, one can attack a weaker person, but not one who is stronger. Having conquered the earth through valour, having protected the subjects through dharma, having been devoted to dharma, a king can be killed in battle. Everything ends in death. There is nothing without disease. Therefore, the king must be established in dharma and must protect the subjects in accordance with dharma. In the course of time, the earth prospers with five things—arrangements for protection, battle, ruling according to dharma, thinking about counsel and happiness. The king who protects these is supreme among kings. If a king is always engaged in these, he enjoys the earth. No single person is capable of paying attention to all of these together. That is the reason the king must engage these<sup>847</sup> and enjoy the earth for a long period of time. When a person is generous, ready to share, mild, upright and pure, and does not abandon people, people do good things to him. When one knows what is best and acts in accordance with that knowledge, when he gives up his own views, people follow him. When he does not tolerate words about artha and kama because they are

contrary, when he is distracted and listens to contrary views only for a limited period of time, when he does not comprehend the intelligence of foremost ones who are in front of him, regardless of whether they have been defeated or not been defeated, he deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. If he abandons his foremost advisers and makes inferior ones his beloved, he confronts disaster. When he is distressed, he doesn't find succour. When he disrespects relatives with good qualities because of his hatred, when his soul is not firm, when his anger is firm, his prosperity doesn't remain close to him and give him delight. When he acts pleasantly so as to bring those with good qualities under his control, even though they are not close to his heart, his fame is established for a long time. He must not try to accomplish his objectives at the wrong time. The unpleasant must not trouble him. He should not be greatly delighted at something pleasant. He must be engaged in tasks that are healthy. "Which men are devoted to the king? Which seek refuge because of fear? Who among them has the taint of actually being neutral?" Always think of these things. If one is strong, one should never trust those who are weak. If one is careless, they will descend like bharunda birds. If someone is wicked in his soul, he will censure a master who has all the qualities and is pleasant in speech. Therefore, one should be scared of such people. Yayati, the son of Nahusha, declared this teaching for kings. "If one is engaged in conquering men, one can slay a supreme enemy."""

## Chapter 1423(95)

“Vamadeva said, ‘The lord of the earth should prosper through victories without battle. O lord of men! It is said that victory through a war is the worst. If his foundations are not firm, he should not desire to obtain something. If the foundations are weak, a king’s pursuit of gains is not recommended. If the countryside is prosperous and wealthy, if the king is loved, if the advisers are satisfied and well nourished, then the king’s foundations are firm. When the warriors are well satisfied, content and well entrenched, then the lord of the earth can conquer the earth with the slightest exertion of force. If the residents of the city and the countryside are devoted to him, if they are honoured well, if they possess riches and grain, then the king has a firm foundation. When he thinks that at that time his own power is superior, that is the time when an intelligent one desires the land and the riches of another. When he ignores objects of pleasure, when he is compassionate towards beings, when he protects his kingdom and his own self, he swiftly prospers. When those on his side act well, but he behaves falsely towards them, he then injures his own self, like a forest severed with an axe. If a king is always engaged in killing, there is no end to those who hate him. But if he knows how to control his anger, those who hate him cannot be seen. The knowledgeable person does not engage in tasks that noble people hate. He engages himself in tasks that are beneficial. Then, even if a king indulges in acts of happiness though tasks are incomplete, his own self is not tormented and others do not think ill of him. A lord of the earth who acts in this way towards men conquers both the worlds and is established in victory.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been addressed in this way by Vamadeva, the king followed everything in his deeds. If you act in this way, there is no

doubt that you will conquer both the worlds.””

## Chapter 1424(96)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “If a kshatriya wishes to defeat another kshatriya in battle, in that victory, how can one follow dharma? I am asking you this. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When a lord of the earth has arrived in a kingdom, whether he is with aides or without aides, he must say, ‘I am your king. I will always protect you. Following dharma, pay me the taxes. Do you accept my power?’ If they accept the one who has come, all will be well. There may be virtuous ones who oppose him, though they are not kshatriyas. O lord of men! They are committing a perverse act<sup>848</sup> and must be restrained in every way possible. There may be others who take up weapons because they think that the kshatriyas are incapable.<sup>849</sup> Or they may be extremely proud and think that he<sup>850</sup> is incapable of saving himself.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How should a kshatriya king conduct himself against another kshatriya who advances against him in battle? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In a battle, one must not fight against a kshatriya who is not armoured and not clad in mail. A single one must speak to another single one, ‘Release. I am hurling mine.’<sup>851</sup> If the one who advances is armoured, one must armour oneself. If the one who advances possesses soldiers, one must collect soldiers. If the one who is fighting uses deceit, one must fight back using deceit. If he fights with adharma, one must counter him with adharma. Horses must not be used against chariots. Chariots must advance against chariots. If the adversary is distressed, whether it is to frighten him or for the sake of victory, he must not be struck. There must not be smeared<sup>852</sup> or barbed arrows. These are the weapons of wicked people. One must fight for the sake of victory, not because of anger, or a desire to kill. When two virtuous people are fighting with each other, one of them may face a hardship. One who is wounded or one without offspring must never be struck. His weapons may be shattered. His forces may face a difficulty. His bowstring may have been severed. His mounts may have been slain. A wounded person must be treated in your territory, or he may be sent back to his own home. One who is not wounded must be released. That is the eternal dharma. Svayambhuva Manu said that one must fight in accordance with dharma. Against the virtuous, the virtuous always resort to dharma and this is never destroyed. The kshatriya, who wishes his prosperity and wins through the use of adharma, himself kills his own self. He is wicked and leads an inferior life. It is a duty that the virtuous should defeat the wicked through the use of virtuous means. It is better to use dharma and be killed than to triumph through evil deeds. O king! If one follows adharma, like a cow,<sup>853</sup> the fruits are not immediate. But it follows you and burns down the roots and the branches. If one obtains prosperity through wicked deeds, one becomes addicted to evil. Such a person thinks that there is no dharma and laughs at purity. He is without devotion and advances towards destruction. Though he thinks he is immortal, he is bound by Varuna’s noose. Like a large and inflated leather bag, his own deeds make him expand. However, he is then destroyed from the roots, like a tree on the banks of a river. He is shattered, like a clay pot on stone, and there is rejoicing at this. Therefore, a lord of the earth should desire to earn victory through the use of dharma.”



## Chapter 1425(97)

‘Bhishma said, “A lord of the earth should not desire to conquer the earth through the use of adharma. Even if a lord of the earth has obtained victory through the use of adharma, who will endorse this? A victory that is full of adharma is not permanent and it does not lead to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It weakens the king and the earth. There may be an adversary whose armour has been shattered. He speaks and says, ‘I am yours.’ He joins his hands in supplication. He casts aside his weapons. Such a person should be seized, but not injured. If a person has been conquered through the use of force, a lord of the earth should not fight against him. He should be affectionately made to stay for a year<sup>854</sup> and it will be as if he has been born again. A maiden who has been abducted through the use of valour should not be touched for a year. This is also true of all the riches that have been violently seized. However, the riches should not be sterile. The brahmanas should drink the milk of the cows and everything should be pardoned and restored to what it was.<sup>855</sup> A king must fight with a king. That is what dharma decrees. One who is not a king should never fight against a king. If a brahmana wishes to ensure peace and advances between the two armies that have engaged, one should then refrain from fighting. One should not contravene an eternal agreement that one should not injure a brahmana. If someone who calls himself a kshatriya breaks this agreement, he is not praised. Thereafter, he is not received in assemblies. A lord of the earth who desires victory should not follow a conduct that leads to the destruction of dharma and the violation of an agreement. There is no gain greater than a victory that has been obtained through the use of dharma.

““When the people have been forced to bow down,<sup>856</sup> they must be quickly placated. They must be comforted through gifts of objects of pleasure. This is the supreme policy for the king. If they are forced to bend down and confront oppression in their own country, they will serve the enemies and wait for a calamity to descend.<sup>857</sup> When there is a calamity, they will quickly resort to the enemy. O king! They will be ill-disposed in every way and will desire that the king should face a disaster. One should not abuse the enemy, or struck severely in any way. If struck severely, the man’s life may be over.<sup>858</sup> If one possesses only a little, one should be satisfied that a great crime has not been committed. Thus one repeatedly thinks that life alone is left.<sup>859</sup>

““When the countryside is prosperous and wealthy, when the king is loved, when the servants and advisers are satisfied, the king has a firm foundation. When the officiating priests, priests, preceptors and those with learning are honoured, when those who deserve worship are worshipped, he is said to be a conqueror of the worlds. Having followed this kind of conduct, the supreme among the gods obtained the earth. Following Indra’s triumph, other kings desired victory. In ancient times, King Pratardana<sup>860</sup> defeated the king in a battle and conquered the city, leaving the countryside alone. He took away their immortal herbs and grain. However, Divodasa seized the agni-hotra sacrifices, the remnants of the fire, the oblations and the vessels and suffered.<sup>861</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nabhaga gave away the kingdoms and the kings as dakshina, with the exception of what belonged to learned brahmanas and ascetics. O Yudhishtira! They knew about dharma, but behaved both in superior and inferior ways. I find delight in the ancient accounts of all those kings. The lord of the earth who wishes for his own prosperity should seek to obtain victory by acting in accordance with every kind of learning and not use deceit or fraud.””

## Chapter 1426(98)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is no dharma that is more evil than the dharma of kshatriyas. The king mounts a campaign, wages a battle and kills a large number of people. What are the deeds through which a lord of the earth can conquer the worlds? O learned one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am asking you. Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “By chastising the wicked, by cherishing the virtuous, by performing sacrifices and by giving gifts, kings are purified and cleansed. When kings pursue victory, they cause impediments to people. However, having obtained victory, they make the subjects prosper again. They counter their sins through donations, sacrifices and the strength of austerities. By showing favours to people, they increase their good deeds. One who cuts the crops in a field seems to destroy the dry grass and grain at the same time, but he doesn’t actually destroy the grain. In that way, kings release their weapons and seem to slay everyone at the same time. However, they are saved from all sins because they make beings flourish again. He protects the wealth of people and protects them from slaughter and hardship at the hand of bandits. He is the granter of life, riches and happiness and is Virat. The king performs all the sacrifices and gives fearlessness as a dakshina. Having experienced fortune, he attains Indra’s world. When he advances to fight for the cause of brahmanas, he offers his own self as the sacrificial post and his sacrifice has an infinite amount of dakshina. He is fearless and scatters the enemy, receiving their arrows. That is the reason the thirty gods do not see anyone superior to him on earth. As long as his limbs continue to be mangled by weapons in battle, he continues to enjoy all the eternal worlds that yield every object of desire. As he moves around,<sup>862</sup> blood flows from his body and that blood cleanses him of all his sins. The pain that he has to bear from those wounds is superior to austerities. This is what is said by those who are learned about dharma. Those who are frightened and display their backs in a battle are the worst of men. They wish to seek refuge with the brave one, like one seeks Parjanya for life. If a brave person comforts them and protects them from fear, people should create his image. However, it doesn’t happen like that. If they always honour him, recognizing him for what he has done, that would be proper. But they do not act in accordance with that. People are seen to be the same, but there are great differences between them. When there is a battle, there are those who advance into the tumult of army formations. Brave ones advance against enemy soldiers, but cowards run away, abandoning their companions, and this is not an act that leads to heaven. O son! Do not give birth to those who are like these worst of men, those who abandon their companions in a battle and go to the comfort of their own homes. The gods, with Indra at the forefront, cause discomfort for those who abandon their comrades and wish to save their own lives. They kill them with sticks and stones and burn them up in mats of straw.<sup>863</sup> Kshatriyas who behave in this way are slain like animals. It is adharmā for a kshatriya to die when he is lying down on his bed, releasing bile and phlegm and lamenting piteously. Those who are learned about ancient accounts do not praise the deed of a kshatriya who heads towards his destruction without any injuries on his body. O son! A kshatriya’s death at home is not praised. It is adharmā for those who are haughty to be distressed, like those who are not proud. ‘Alas, this is misery! This is unhappiness! This is wicked. This is a sin.’ With an emaciated face and with a putrid body, he laments a lot.<sup>864</sup> He envies those who are healthy and desires an instant death. Surrounded by his kin, he should create carnage in a battle. He should be severely wounded by sharp weapons. That is the kind of death a kshatriya deserves. A brave one is based on truth and is intolerant. He penetrates the devastation of a battle. When his body is mangled by the enemy, he does not notice it. Having been killed in a battle, he is praised and honoured by the people. He obtains greatness through his own dharma and goes to Shakra’s world. Ready to give up their lives, all warriors perform this supreme act of renunciation. A brave one does not show his back and will be with Indra in his world.”’

## Chapter 1427(99)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! There are brave ones who fight and do not retreat. When they die, what worlds do they obtain? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. O Yudhishtira! This was a conversation between Ambarisha and Indra. Ambarisha, the son of Nabhaga, went to heaven, which is extremely difficult to obtain. In the world of the gods, he saw one of his advisers with Shakra. The lord was his own commander, situated on a supreme and divine *vimana* that was full of energy everywhere and was progressively advancing upwards. He saw that his own commander Sudeva, was progressively ascending upwards in great prosperity. Astounded, he asked Vasava, ‘In accordance with what is ordained, I have ruled the entire earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. Desiring dharma, I have engaged the four varnas in what the sacred texts prescribe. I have observed terrible brahmacharya and served the family of my preceptor. Following dharma, I have studied the Vedas and all the sacred texts meant for kings. I have served food and drink to guests and offered oblations to the ancestors. I have studied under the rishis and have been initiated. I have served the gods through supreme sacrifices. Following the sacred texts and the recommended principles, I have established myself in the dharma of kshatriyas. O Vasava! I have glanced at armies and have been victorious in battle. O king of the gods! In earlier times, Sudeva used to be my commander. He was a warrior with a calm soul. But how has he surpassed me? He has not performed the best of sacrifices. Nor has he served the brahmanas. He has not satisfied them in accordance with the prescribed rites. O Shakra! How has he surpassed me?’

“‘Indra said, ‘O son!’<sup>865</sup> This Sudeva performed the extremely great sacrifice of a battle and so do other men who fight. All armoured warriors who are at the front of an army are consecrated. They thus have the right to observe the sacrifice of a battle. This has been determined.’

“‘Ambarisha asked, ‘What are the oblations in that sacrifice? What is the clarified butter and what is the dakshina? Who are the officiating priests? O Shatakratu! Tell me this.’

“‘Indra said, ‘The elephants are the *ritvijās*. The horses are the *adhvaryus*.<sup>866</sup> The flesh of the enemy constitutes the oblations. The blood is the clarified butter. Jackals, vultures and crows are the *sadasyas* at the sacrifice. They drink the remnants of the clarified butter and eat the remnants of the oblations. Large numbers of spears, javelins, swords, spikes and battleaxes, flaming, extremely sharp and yellow, are the ladles at the sacrifice. There are straight, extremely sharp and yellow arrows, keenly released with force from bows, terrible when they penetrate the bodies of the enemy. These are the larger ladles. There are swords sheathed in scabbards made out of tiger skin. The handles are made out of ivory and, in the battle, they are wielded by arms that are like the trunks of elephants. These are the wooden sticks used to stir. There are blazing, sharp and yellow javelins, spears and battleaxes. They are sharp and made out of steel and the blows from these are the riches. In the battle, blood flows down on the ground. This is the complete oblation. This is a great and prosperous sacrifice and all the desires are satisfied. “Slice. Pierce.” These are the sounds that are heard at the vanguard of the army. These are like sama hymns sung by reciters of the sama in Yama’s abode. The vanguard of the enemy’s forces is said to be the vessel for storing oblations. The large number of armoured elephants and horses are decreed to be the *shyenachit*<sup>867</sup> fire for the sacrifice. Among the thousands who have been slain, the headless torso of a brave one stands up. This is said to be the octagonal khadira<sup>868</sup> post used in the sacrifice. When the elephants are goaded by hooks and shriek, those are the sounds made when *ida* oblations<sup>869</sup> are offered. O lord of the earth! When palms are slapped against palms, this is the sound of vashatkara.<sup>870</sup> In the battle, the sound of the large drum is said to be the three samas chanted by the udgatar. In a battle, if someone is prepared to cast aside his beloved body because a brahmana’s possessions are being robbed, his own self is like a sacrificial post and this is a sacrifice with an infinite amount of dakshina. For

the sake of his master, if a brave person exhibits valour in the front of the army and does not retreat because of fear, a world like mine is meant for him. There are blue swords that are shaped like the crescent moon. They are wielded by arms that are like clubs. A person who strews the sacrificial altar with these obtains a world that is like mine. If a person is focused on obtaining victory and does not glance to see if he has aides or not, immersing himself in the midst of the army, he obtains a world that is like mine. In the heap of javelins, the drums are like frogs and tortoises.<sup>871</sup> The bones of the brave ones are stones. It is impenetrable because of the mire of flesh and blood. The swords and shields are like boats on the river. The hair is the moss and weed. The shattered horses, elephants and chariots are passages. The banners and flags are the reed on the banks.<sup>872</sup> The blood from the slain mounts and armies are the overflowing torrents in the river and it is impossible even for accomplished men to cross. In this inauspicious river, the slain elephants are the giant crocodiles that are borne along to the world of the dead. The swords, cutlasses and flags are like ornaments. The vultures, herons and wild crows are like rafts. It is frequented by those who live on human flesh and it causes terror to cowards. This river is said to be the bath a warrior takes at the end of a great sacrifice. If a person strews the sacrificial altar with the heads of his enemies and heaps of horses and heaps of elephants, his world will be like that of mine. The learned say that if a person regards the vanguard of the enemy's army as his wife's chamber, his own army as the store of oblations, the soldiers to the south as sadasyas, the soldiers to the north as the priest who kindle the fire and the soldiers of the enemy as his wife, he obtains all the worlds. When there are two vyuhas and a space between them, that is always said to be the altar for the sacrifice and the three Vedas are like fires. When a warrior retreats in fear and is slain by the enemy, there is no doubt that he goes to a fathomless hell. If he covers himself with blood from the force of that river, which is full of hair, flesh and bones, he goes to the supreme objective. If someone slays a commander and climbs onto his chariot, he treads with the valour of Vishnu and performs a sacrifice like Brihaspati. He who captures alive a leader<sup>873</sup> or someone who is regarded as his equal, he obtains a world that is like mine. One should never sorrow over a brave one who has been killed in battle. One should not sorrow over a brave one who has been slain, because he obtains greatness in the world of heaven. One should not wish to offer oblations to such a slain one, or bathe, or perform an act of purification.<sup>874</sup> Listen to the worlds obtained by him. If a brave warrior is slain in a battle, thousands of supreme apsaras quickly rush towards him and say, "Be my husband." This sacred austerity is eternal dharma and like the four ashramas for a person who does not run away from the field of battle. One should not kill the aged, children,<sup>875</sup> women, brahmanas, someone with a blade of grass in his mouth<sup>876</sup> and a person who says, "I am yours."<sup>877</sup> I became the lord of the gods after killing in battle Vritra, Bala, Paka, Virochana, with his one hundred kinds of maya, Namuchi, who was difficult to counter, Shambara, who had many different kinds of maya, the daitya Viprachitti, all of Danu's sons<sup>878</sup> and Prahrada."

'Bhishma said, "On hearing Shakra's words, Ambarisha accepted them and himself obtained success as a warrior."

## Chapter 1428(100)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about when Pratardana<sup>879</sup> and the king of Mithila fought a battle. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this. Janaka of Mithila was invested with the sacred thread of performing a sacrifice through a battle and delighted his warriors. King Janaka of Mithila was great in his soul and knew the truth about everything. He portrayed both heaven and hell before his warriors. ‘Behold those radiant worlds, meant for people who are not frightened. They are eternal, full of gandharva maidens, and yield every object of desire. Hell presents itself to those who run away. They immediately descend there and obtain eternal ill fame. Having seen those, having made up your minds to give yourselves up, be victorious. Do not be subjugated in a hell that has no foundation. For brave people, giving themselves up is the foundation for the supreme gate of heaven.’ O conqueror of enemy cities! This is what the king told his warriors. They defeated the enemy in the battle and brought delight to that lord of men. Therefore, he<sup>880</sup> must always establish himself in the forefront of the battle. Chariots must be in the middle of the elephants. Horse riders must be to the rear of the chariots. Armoured foot soldiers must be beyond the horse riders. The king who arranges a vyuha in this way is always victorious over the enemy. O Yudhishtira! It has been decreed that it must always be this way. All those who wish to act well and desire to fight well must agitate the army, like makaras in an ocean. They must stand next to each other, delighting those who are distressed. He<sup>881</sup> must protect the land that has been won and not unduly pursue those who have been routed. O king! Those who have given up hope of remaining alive and return to fight again represent a force that is not easy to counter. Therefore, one should not pursue too much. Nor should brave ones wish to strike those who are afraid and are running away. Because they are running away, one should not pursue them. The immobile are devoured by the mobile. Those without teeth are devoured by the ones with teeth. Those without hands are devoured by those with hands. Cowards are devoured by the brave. Though their backs, stomachs, hands and feet are equal, cowards follow the brave. Those who are distressed and scared repeatedly seek refuge with the ones who are brave, joining their hands in supplication. This world hangs from the hands of brave ones, like a young son. That is the reason a brave person deserves respect in every possible situation. There is nothing in the three worlds that is superior to bravery. The brave person protects everything. Everything is established in the brave person.”’

## Chapter 1429(101)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! If one desires victory, how should the soldiers be led, even if one violates dharma a bit? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Some dharma is based on truth, some more on reason. Some is based on virtuous conduct, some more on implementation.<sup>882</sup> I will tell you about the different techniques of dharma, so that the objectives of obtaining dharma and artha become successful. Bandits, who show no respect, stand in the way of everything. For the sake of countering them, I will tell you what is laid down in the sacred texts. Listen to the different tasks that can be undertaken, so that one is successful in one’s objectives. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must know about two kinds of wisdom—the straight and the crooked. Knowing about crooked ways, one should not use these, except to counter a danger that has arisen, such as when enemies use dissension to strike at a king. Knowing about crooked means, the king can then use these to counter the enemy.

“Leather from the flanks of elephants, bulls and boa constrictors, stakes, thorns and iron—these are recommended for body armour. Sharp and yellow weapons, red and yellow mail, flags and banners of many dyes and hues, cutlasses, spears, swords, sharp battleaxes and leather for shields—these must be planned for in abundance. The weapons must be ready and the warriors must have practised with them. It is recommended that the soldiers should march in the months of Chaitra and Margashirsha.<sup>883</sup> The crops on the ground ripen then and there is no lack of water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, it is neither too cold, nor too hot. Therefore, one should engage then. However, if the enemy is facing a hardship, for the sake of restraining the enemy, the employment of soldiers is recommended then. An advance along an even road that has water and grass is recommended. Spies who are accomplished in roaming around in the woods must be employed to check these out. Like a herd of deer, the army should not be made to march through newly cleared ways in the forest. Kings who desire victory employ all their soldiers in this way. Camps and fortifications that have plenty of water are recommended. These must be clear and there must be obstacles to an enemy creeping up. A clearing near a forest is thought to be the best in qualities. People who are skilled in warfare think that it possesses many qualities. Foot soldiers who have retreated can regroup, there are hiding places, one can strike at the enemy and there are refuges for times of distress. The army should be like a mountain and fight with the constellation *saptarshi* at the rear.<sup>884</sup> O king! Through this means, one can conquer those who are difficult to defeat. Where there is the wind, where there is the sun, where there is Shukra<sup>885</sup>—victory is there. O Yudhishtira! The wind is superior to the sun, the sun is superior to Shukra, but a conjunction is the best.<sup>886</sup> People who are skilled in warfare praise an even terrain without mud, water and stones for horses. A clear and level terrain without water is recommended for chariots. A terrain with small trees, large bushes and water is recommended for those who fight on elephants. Ground with many fortifications, large trees, clumps of bamboo and cane and hills and woods is recommended for foot soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An army with a large number of foot soldiers is solid. When the day is fine, an army with a large number of chariots is praised. During the monsoon, large numbers of foot soldiers and elephants are praised. One must engage after considering all these qualities that have been mentioned and the time and the place. If one employs the soldiers well and advances after thinking about this, honouring the *tithi* and the *nakshatra*, one always obtains victory.<sup>887</sup>

“Those who are asleep, thirsty and exhausted and those who have been routed must not be struck, nor those who are striving for moksha,<sup>888</sup> running away, trembling or drinking and eating. Those who have been severely wounded, those who have been somewhat wounded, those who have been routed, those who are emaciated, those who are completely at ease,<sup>889</sup> those who are engaged in some other task, those who have withdrawn, those who have gone out,<sup>890</sup> those who have withdrawn, though they may have pledged to return, those who are camp follow-

ers, those who follow tradition and guard the gates,<sup>891</sup> those who are followers,<sup>892</sup> those who supervise the gatekeepers and those who are shaking must not be struck.

“The soldiers who cause a breach<sup>893</sup> and those who stem a breach<sup>894</sup> should have the same food and drink as you and it is a duty to pay them double the wages. For these, it is a duty to make the leaders of ten the leaders of one hundred. The brave one who is always attentive should be made the leader of one thousand. Having collected the foremost among them together, one should say, ‘Let us take a pledge for the sake of victory in battle. We will not abandon each other. If there is anyone who is frightened, let him retreat right now. Otherwise, after the tumultuous engagement has begun, they will slay and rout us. If one runs away in the battle, one slays one’s own self and one’s own side. If one runs away, there is destruction of wealth, death, ill fame and a bad reputation. A man who runs away hears harsh and unpleasant words. His lips tremble. His teeth chatter. He throws aside all his weapons. When the lives of his companions are in danger, he abandons them and runs away. His intelligence favours the enemy. Let the enemy face such a state. A person who is reluctant to fight is the worst among men. They can only propagate their own species. But they have nothing in this world, or after death.’<sup>895</sup> The enemy will be delighted in his mind and welcome one who runs away. O son! He will greet him with honour and auspicious sounds, as if he is a victorious well-wisher. O king! When the enemy is delighted at your hardship, I think that this is a more severe sorrow than death. Know that Shri is the foundation for dharma and all happiness. She advances towards the enemies of cowards, but goes to those who are brave. ‘We desire heaven and are ready to give up our lives in the battle.’<sup>896</sup> Whether we are victorious or whether we are slain, we deserve to obtain the end of virtuous men.’ Having taken this oath and ready to give up their lives, the brave ones are not frightened and immerse themselves in the army of the enemy.

“One should have men armed with swords and shields at the front. The array of carts should be at the rear and the wives should be in the middle. For the sake of countering the enemy, the foot soldiers must be hidden. Those who are at the front must be eager to strike the enemy. Those who are in the front must be reputed, courageous and spirited. They should advance in the front and other people should follow them. One should make efforts to inspire those who are cowards. They should be made to stand close, so that the numbers are seen to be larger. As one desires, a few warriors may be made to fight together, or many may be spread out. When a small number fights with many, the array is called *suchimukha*.<sup>897</sup> When the engagement has started, he<sup>898</sup> should seize the men by the arms and shout, regardless of whether it is true or false, ‘The enemy has been routed. The army of our friends has arrived. Strike them without any fear.’ Men should create a terrible noise and roar and rush after him. They should slap their arms, create a tumult and sound conch shells, *krakachas*<sup>899</sup> and horns. Kettledrums, drums, cymbals and other musical instruments must be sounded and elephants made to trumpet.”



## Chapter 1430(102)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When men advance into a battle, what should be their conduct? How should they uplift themselves? What should be their form? How should they armour themselves? What should be their weapons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is recommended that weapons and vehicles should be those they are used to. A man’s conduct should be in conformity with practice. Gandharas, Sindhus and Souviras fight with nails and javelins. The Abhiras are extremely strong and their army is skilled in every way. The Ushinaras are spirited and are accomplished in the use of all weapons. Those from the eastern regions are skilled in fighting with elephants and are warriors who fight with deceit. The Yavanas, the Kambojas and those who live around Mathura are accomplished in fighting with bare arms. The southerners use swords and shields. Brave ones who are extremely spirited and extremely strong are born everywhere. I have told you about general indications. Listen to the specifics. Their voices and eyes are like lions and tigers. Their gait is like that of lions and tigers. The eyes of all the brave ones who are strikers are like those of pigeons and sparrows. There are others with voices like deer, glances like leopards and eyes like bulls. Some utter cries that are extremely terrible. When enraged, others have voices like *kinnaris*. With wrathful faces, some thunder like clouds. Some have sounds like young elephants.<sup>900</sup> Some possess crooked noses and legs, but they can travel far and strike from a long distance. Some have bodies that are curved like a cat. Some are thin. Others are fair in hair and complexion. These brave ones are restless and difficult to assail. Some have eyes like lizards. Others are mild in nature. Some accomplished men possess the gait and sounds of horses. Some possess robust frames, others are old. Some possess broad chests and symmetrical frames. They are delighted and dance when there is a fight and musical instruments are sounded. Some possess grave eyes. Others have bulging and tawny eyes. They have frowns on their faces. Some have eyes like mongooses. However, all of them are brave ones who are ready to give up their lives. Some have crooked eyes and broad foreheads. Others possess very little flesh. Some have crooked arms and fingers. Some are thin and seem to be made out of veins alone. When the enemy presents itself, they advance with great force. They are difficult to withstand and are like crazy elephants. For some, the tips of the hair seem to blaze in radiance. Others possess stout flanks, jaws and faces. Some have peaked noses, thick necks, fearful forms and thick calves. Others possess excellent necks that can be raised up or lowered, like those of birds. Some possess round heads and faces like snakes. Others have faces like those of cats. When they are wrathful, some make terrible sounds. They roar and rush into battle. They are insolent and terrible and know nothing about dharma. They exhibit how horrible they are. All of them are ready to give up their lives. They dwell in the frontier regions and do not retreat. They place themselves ahead of the soldiers and kill or are killed. They do not follow dharma and have different codes of conduct. They regard virtue as defeat. They act in this wrathful way towards their king too.”



## Chapter 1431(103)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among men! What are the acclaimed signs that signify the army’s victory? I wish to know about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among men! I will tell you everything about the acclaimed signs that signify the army’s victory. Destiny determines this in advance and men are goaded by time. Those who are far-sighted because of their wisdom can see and understand this. Those who are learned about the means of atonement perform meditation and offer oblations. They observe auspicious acts to pacify the ill portents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the warriors and mounts are uplifted in their spirits, it is said that it is certain that the army will obtain victory. Winds blow from the rear and there are rainbows. Clouds shower from the rear and so do the sun’s rays. All the jackals, wild crows and vultures become favourably disposed towards it. When they act towards the army in this way, it obtains supreme success. The flames of the fire<sup>901</sup> are clear and the rays rise straight up. There is no smoke and the flames bend towards the south. The oblations emit an auspicious scent. It is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When conch shells and drums make a loud noise that is deep in tone and those who wish to fight are inspired, it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When animals are to the rear or the left of those who are marching or are about to march, that is auspicious. When they are about to kill, if they are to the right, that is said to signify success. However, if they are in front, that is an obstruction. When birds call out in auspicious tones, swans, curlews, woodpeckers and blue jays, the warriors become cheerful and spirited and it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When the weapons, shafts, armour and flags are extremely radiant, and so is the sheen and complexion on the faces of the warriors, they become impossible to look at and the army will overcome the enemy. When the warriors are obedient and not insolent, bearing fraternal feelings towards each other, and are always based on purity, it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When sounds, touch and the scent that wafts around brings pleasure to the mind and the warriors are full of fortitude, this is the face of victory. For someone who has already penetrated, the left side is auspicious. However, for someone who is about to penetrate, it is the right. Things at the rear facilitate success and those in front constrain it.

“O Yudhishtira! After collecting a large army with the four limbs,<sup>902</sup> you must first try for conciliation. You should endeavour to fight only after that. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A victory that is obtained through war is to be abhorred. If one thinks about it, victory in a battle depends on the wishes of destiny. Like a great flood of water or a herd of deer that has been terrified, if a large army has been routed, it is extremely difficult to reverse the flight. They begin to flee and even the learned do not know the reason for this.<sup>903</sup> Even if the hearts are firm, a large army is like a mass of *ruru* deer. If they depend on each other, if they are cheerful and ready to give up their lives and if they are extremely firm in their determination, even fifty brave ones can drive away the enemy’s army. Or even five, six and seven noble and revered ones, fighting together, and firm in their determination, can completely defeat the enemy. You should never advance towards a clash, if it can be prevented. It is said that war should be adopted only after conciliation, dissension and gifts have been tried out. Those who are cowards are scared of soldiers<sup>904</sup> creeping up to attack, looking on it like a bolt of lightning and unsure about where it will descend next. When a body of soldiers gets to know about the intended attack and advances, the bodies of the warriors tremble, and so does the kingdom. O king! The entire kingdom, with its mobile and immobile objects, trembles. Tormented by the heat of the weapons, the marrow in the bodies begins to melt. Therefore, together with severity, conciliation must repeatedly be tried. If the enemy is oppressed too much, it will always attack. One should employ spies to seed internal dissension within the enemy. If the enemy king is superior, a truce is recommended. This is because one will not be able to combine with his foes and act so as to counter him from every

side. Forgiveness is the maya of the virtuous. Those who are virtuous are always forgiving. O Partha! Depending on the need, know how to use forgiveness and also when not to forgive. If a king conquers through forgiveness, his fame increases. Even enemies who have committed great crimes begin to trust him. Shambara said, 'Once one has subjugated, one should think about forgiving. However, a piece of wood that has not been completely burnt returns again to its natural state.' But preceptors do not praise this as a virtuous practice. Control must be effortless and without destruction, the way one treats one's own sons. O Yudhishtira! A king who is fierce is hated by the people. However, they also disregard him if he is mild. Therefore, both must be practised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if one has to strike, one should speak pleasant words before striking. After striking, one should show compassion and sorrow and weep a little. In front of them, one should say, 'I am not pleased that he<sup>905</sup> has been killed. I repeatedly told him that he had not acted in accordance with my words. Alas! I wished that he had remained alive. He did not deserve to be slain in this way. Such excellent men who do not run away from the field of battle are extremely difficult to get. Whoever has killed him in the battle has performed a task that is not agreeable to me.' Having spoken words like this before the ones who survive on the side of the one who has been slain and seizing their hands so as to bring them over to his own side, he must secretly honour the ones who have committed the crime.<sup>906</sup> In this way, in every situation, he must act in accordance with conciliation. An intrepid king who acts in this way knows about dharma and is loved by the people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He obtains the trust of all the people. With that trust, as desire presents itself, he will be capable of enjoyment. Therefore, the king must obtain the trust of all people, without resorting to deceit. He who wishes to enjoy the earth should protect it in every way.'"

## Chapter 1432(104)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How should a king behave towards an enemy who is mild, one who is fierce and one who has a large army? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the conversation between Brihaspati and Indra. The lord of the gods joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Brihaspati. Vasava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, approached and asked him, ‘O brahmana! How should I be attentive and act towards those who injure me? How can I use techniques to control them, without destroying them? In general, victory is obtained through a clash between armies. But what can I do so that the powerful and blazing Shri does not abandon me?’ The radiant one<sup>907</sup> was accomplished about dharma, artha and kama and knew about the precepts of rajadharma. He replied to Purandara, ‘When seeking to control those who cause injury, one should not use conflict. That is for those who are intolerant and cannot forgive, it is practised by children. If one desires to kill an enemy, one should not disclose this. Rage, power and intolerance should be controlled and kept within one’s own self. Even if there is distrust, one must serve the enemy, as if one trusts him. One must always speak pleasantly. One must never act in an unpleasant way. One should refrain from pointless hostility and abandon any voicing of it. A fowler wanting to catch birds imitates the tones of the birds. A king wishing to subjugate should act in that way. O Purandara! One brings the enemies under one’s subjugation and then kills them. O Vasava! Having conquered the enemy, one should never sleep happily. Like a crackling fire, the evil-souled one can arise again. But in general, a clash is not the recommended task for victory. O lord! Having conquered an enemy by winning his trust, one should let him be. However, having consulted with his advisers and great-souled and learned ministers, an enemy may not be defeated in his heart. He may ignore it,<sup>908</sup> or choose to strike back. He may wait for a time to strike, when one is distracted in one’s state. He may use trusted men to corrupt the army.<sup>909</sup> He<sup>910</sup> must consider the beginning, the middle and the end and everything that is hidden.<sup>911</sup> Obtaining knowledge and proof, one must corrupt the forces.<sup>912</sup> One should use dissension, blandishments and herbs.<sup>913</sup> However, one should never mix one’s clothes with that of the enemy.<sup>914</sup> After having waited for a long time, one can then slay the enemy. One should spend the time in waiting, looking for an opportunity. Large numbers of the enemy should not be immediately killed. If one waits, the victory will be without anxiety. One should not impale a stake that creates a fresh wound. When the right time has come for striking, that is when one should attack again. O Indra of the gods! This is what is indicated for a man who wishes to kill the enemy. However, a man who is waiting for the right time should not let that moment pass. This is the dharma of time. For one who desires this, it is extremely rare for that moment to come back again. Those who are virtuous honour the technique of defeating the enemy’s energy. Time always brings success. If something has not been obtained, one should not press. O Purandara! Give up desire, anger and ego. Engage yourself in detecting the weaknesses of those who seek to injure. O supreme among the gods! O Shakra! Mildness, chastisement,<sup>915</sup> laziness and carelessness and different kinds of deceit can destroy the success of those who are not discriminating. These four must be destroyed and deceit countered. Without any hesitation, one will then be able to strike at the enemy. If this is capable of being secretly undertaken with just one person, this is what should be done. Many advisers can divulge secrets and falsely pass on the responsibility to each other. If it is impossible to do this,<sup>916</sup> one can then have consultations with others. The four limbs should be used against those who are seen and *brahmadanda* against those who are not seen.<sup>917</sup> Dissension should first be used and silence<sup>918</sup> and force thereafter. Depending on the right time, the king must employ these. At a time when the enemy is stronger, one must bow down. However, one must be attentive in seeking for a weakness when he is careless, so that one can kill him. One must bow down, use gifts and speak pleasant words. One must serve the enemy, so that he has no grounds for suspicion. One must carefully avoid all the postures that give rise to suspicion. One should

not trust those who have been defeated. Those who have been injured are always awake. O supreme among the gods! O lord of the immortals! There is no task that is as supremely difficult as ensuring prosperity for those who have varied means of subsistence. That is the reason he<sup>919</sup> is spoken of as the generator of different kinds of conduct. One must be engaged in this, restraining both friends and foes. People disrespect one who is mild and hate one who is fierce. Do not be mild. Do not be fierce. Be both mild and fierce. A raging torrent overcomes the river-bank and floods everything with water. If one is careless, the embankments of the kingdom break down in that way. One should not engage against many enemies at the same time. O Purandara! Use sama, dana, bheda and danda. One should use these one at a time. Even if one is skilled, one does not act against all the wicked at the same time. A king who is intelligent knows he is not capable of countering everyone at the same time. When there is a large army of horses, elephants and chariots and there are foot soldiers and many implements of war and that six-fold army<sup>920</sup> is devoted, when one uses one's intelligence to deduce that one is superior in many ways, then, without any hesitation, one can directly strike against bandits. The sacred texts do not recommend conciliation, but punishment.<sup>921</sup> Instead of mildness, one must always advance against the enemy. However, one must avoid the destruction of crops, acts of mixing<sup>922</sup> and excessive destruction of nature. One can use deceit to infuse dissension among people and allow wicked and reprehensible deeds by trusted men, employed against the cities in the kingdom. The lord of the earth will pursue him<sup>923</sup> into the city and conquer all the objects of pleasure inside the city. O destroyer of Bala and Vritra! He must implement the recommended policy for the cities, as is necessary. He will secretly give them<sup>924</sup> riches, while taking away their own possessions. He will cite the sins of those wicked ones and employ them in the cities and the kingdom. There are others who are learned about the texts of love<sup>925</sup> and are adorned with the foresight of knowing the ordinances of the sacred texts. There are extremely skilled ones, accomplished in recounting tales. For bringing down the enemy, these should be considered.'

“Indra asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! What are the signs of wicked people? How does one know evil ones? I am asking you. Tell me.’

“Brihaspati replied, ‘He dislikes your good qualities and proclaims your bad qualities behind your back. When others praise you, he is silent and reluctant. Even if there is no obvious reason, one can discern from this silence. Though he seems trustworthy, he bites his lips and shakes his head. He is gracious in public and ungracious in private. When someone is absent, he acts against him. But when that person is present, he says nothing. He eats alone and says, “Today, it is not as it should be.”<sup>926</sup> In particular, these signs can be seen in his sitting, sleeping and walking around. If someone sorrows when you are unhappy, that is the sign of a friend. The opposite of this is the sign of an enemy. From anything that is contrary, one can determine the characteristics of an enemy. O lord of the thirty gods! Know from these and the others that I have spoken about, to detect wicked men, since nature is always superior. O supreme among the gods! I have described the knowledge of evil ones. O lord of the immortals! Know the truth of what has been stated in the sacred texts.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing the words spoken then by Brihaspati, Purandara, engaged in the destruction of the enemy, acted in accordance with this. At the right time, the slayer of enemies became victorious and brought the enemy under his subjugation.”’

## Chapter 1433(105)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “A king may be devoted to dharma, but may be obstructed by his advisers. If he desires happiness, how should he act when he doesn’t possess riches and has been deprived of his treasury and his army?”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, the history of Kshemadarshi is sung. O Yudhishtira! I will tell you this. Listen to it. Kshemadarshi was the son of a king and in ancient times, his strength had decayed. We have heard that he went to the sage Kalakavrikshiya and asked him, ‘My prosperity has disappeared and I am immersed in this hardship. I am a man who should have his share of riches and I have tried repeatedly. However, I have been unable to obtain the kingdom. O brahmana! What should I do? O supreme one! There is nothing other than death, theft, seeking refuge or other inferior forms of conduct. Tell me. You are accomplished in your wisdom. Someone afflicted with disease, mental or otherwise, should seek refuge with someone who is as extremely learned as you are. A man who has broken free and has controlled his desires obtains bliss. He abandons joy and sorrow and obtains wealth that has nothing to do with happiness. I sorrow for those who seek happiness in riches. My large quantity of riches has been destroyed, as if they had appeared in a dream. It is an extremely great and difficult task to abandon riches, even for virtuous ones. We are incapable of giving up what no longer exists.<sup>927</sup> I have been dislodged from my prosperity and have attained this state, where I am miserable and distressed. O brahmana! Instruct me about the other kind of bliss that exists.’

“‘Having been addressed by the intelligent prince of Kosala, the immensely radiant sage Kalakavrikshiya replied, ‘You already know, because that intelligence has presented itself before you. Act accordingly. Know that everything, I and what is mine, is temporary. Everything that you think of as existing, know that it is non-existent. That is the reason a wise person is not distressed, even when he faces a difficulty and a hardship. Know that whatever had happened and whatever has happened are certainly things that have no existence.<sup>928</sup> Knowing what should be known, you will be able to free yourself from adharma. There was an accumulation of things earlier and there are those that came after that. All of those no longer exist. Knowing this, who will be anxious? Having existed, something no longer exists. Having not existed, something exists. One should not have the capacity to grieve. Why should a man sorrow? O king! Where is your father now? Where is your grandfather now? You cannot see them now, nor can they see you. Beholding your own self to be impermanent, why do you sorrow over them? Use your intelligence to comprehend this. It is certain that you will not exist. O king! I, you, your enemies and your well-wishers will cease to be. Everything will cease to exist. Whether they are twenty years old or whether they are thirty years old, all the men who are here will die before one hundred years have passed. If a man is freed from his great prosperity, if he wishes to ensure his own welfare, he should think that it wasn’t his. He should not regard what will come as his either. What has passed should also not be regarded as his. Those who think that destiny is superior are learned and it is said that those are the virtuous ones. It is possible to survive without riches and rule the kingdom. People who are your equal or superior in intelligence and manliness have done that. They have not sorrowed like you. Therefore, you should also not grieve. Why are you not their equal, or superior, in intelligence and manliness?’

“‘The prince replied, ‘I think that my obtaining the kingdom was also destiny. O brahmana! Everything that was there has been taken away by the greatness of time. O one who is rich in austerities! It has been taken away, as if by a flow of water. I can see the fruits. I must live on whatever I can obtain.’

“‘The sage said, ‘O one from Kosala! You have arrived at the right conclusion about what will come and what is past. That is the reason you are not sorrowing. Behave in that way about everything. Never desire objectives that cannot be attained, only those that can be attained. Experience what has presented itself and do not sorrow over what has not come. O one from Kosala! You will then find delight in the objectives that have been attained. Now

that your sentiments have been cleansed, perhaps you will not grieve over Shri having left. When an evil-minded person confronts misfortune and is deprived of what he possessed earlier, he always censures the creator and is not satisfied with what he now possesses. He thinks that people who are prosperous do not deserve it. That is the reason he is repeatedly immersed in grief. O king! Such a man is proud and is overcome by excessive jealousy. O lord of Kosala! O wise one! In that way, you should not suffer from envy. Though you do not possess prosperity, tolerate that of others. Accomplished people enjoy Lakshmi, even if she is with someone else. Shri goes to the virtuous and abandons those who hate. Brave men who follow dharma and know about dharma give up Shri and their sons and grandsons. They even give up their own selves. They see that even when they have satisfied their desires, there is a lot that crumbles away. There are others who renounce, thinking that the objectives are extremely difficult to obtain.<sup>929</sup> But though you are wise by nature, you are tormented in your misery. You desire things that should not be desired, noticing that those riches are with others. Use your intelligence to question and abandon the pursuit. Something that is not desirable presents itself in the form of artha. Something that is not artha presents itself in the form of something that is desirable. For some, the destruction of riches is desirable. There are those who look towards prosperity and think that it will bring infinite happiness. There are those who find pleasure in prosperity, disregarding what is superior. In his pursuit of prosperity, all his enterprise is destroyed. O one from Kosala! When something desired has been obtained with a great deal of difficulty and then disappears, the man who was pursuing riches is completely shattered. Men who know about welfare desire dharma alone. They desire happiness beyond death and are indifferent towards what happens in this world. In their greed for wealth, some men are ready to give up their lives. When they are unable to obtain riches, such men think that there is no point in remaining alive. Behold their misery. Behold their stupidity. Because of their confusion, they thirst for riches and live for what is temporary. All these stores are destroyed. Life ends in death. Why should one turn one's mind towards acquiring something that will be separated? O king! Wealth abandons a man, or a man abandons wealth. Knowing that this is certainly inevitable, why should one be anxious over it? The well-wishers and riches of others are also destroyed. O king! Use your intelligence to judge the calamities that you, and other men, face. Restrain, control and focus your senses, mind and words. There are injurious ends, extremely difficult to obtain, that may not be available. These are despicable by nature, or perhaps it is impossible to obtain them. Be content in your wisdom. Be valiant and know. Do not sorrow. Desire a little. Do not be fickle. Be mild, generous and controlled. If you resort to brahmacharya, someone like you will not be confounded. Someone like you should not resort to the contemptible means of begging for subsistence.<sup>930</sup> That is cruel, wicked and unhappy conduct, meant for cowards. You can subsist on roots and fruits and enjoy yourself in the great forest. Control your soul by being restrained in speech. Show compassion towards all beings. One who finds pleasure in dwelling alone in the forest, is satisfied with a little and enjoys companionship with aged tuskers is like a learned person. The atman will be like a large lake that was once agitated, but is now tranquil. If someone treads this path, I can only see happiness for him. O king! When prosperity is impossible, when one is devoid of advisers, by seeking recourse with destiny, can you think of anything that will be superior?"

## Chapter 1434(106)

“The sage said, ‘O kshatriya! If instead, you see that there is some manliness left in you, I will tell you about a policy whereby you can get your kingdom back. If you can undertake this, you will perform an everlasting deed. I will tell you everything. Listen to it in detail. If you act in accordance with this, you will obtain great prosperity, the kingdom, control over the kingdom and get the greatness of Shri back again. O king! If this appeals to you, tell me. I will tell you what must be done.’

“The king replied, ‘O illustrious one! O lord! I have sought refuge with you. Tell me about the policy. Now that I have met you, this meeting cannot but be successful.’

“The sage said, ‘Renounce arrogance, pride, anger, joy and fear. Join your hands in salutation, bow down before the enemy and serve him.’<sup>931</sup> The lord of Videha is devoted to the truth. Because of your supreme purity, deeds and appeasement, he is certain to grant you a means of subsistence. You will obtain his favours and become pre-eminent among all the people. You will also obtain aides who are enterprising, without vices and pure. If a person is engaged in his own tasks, restrains his soul and conquers his senses, he uplifts himself and pleases people. He is intelligent and prosperous and will honour you. Having obtained great favours from him, you will become preeminent among all people. You will obtain well-wishers and ministers who will give you good advice. Then create internal dissension, like smashing a *bilva* fruit<sup>932</sup> with another bilva fruit. Conclude agreements with his enemies and destroy his forces. Make his mind turn to objects that are not easily attainable—women, garments, beds, seats, vehicles, extremely expensive houses, birds, different kinds of animals, juices, perfumes and fruit. Becoming addicted to these, he will then ruin himself. If you are countered, you should not ignore that. However, if you wish to control the enemy, you should not do anything openly. The wise ones say that one should dwell with one’s supreme enemy in his kingdom and by getting him addicted to unusual objects, ensuring the enemy’s hardship. One must get him to work on tasks that are great and extremely difficult, such as constructing dams on rivers. Ensure that powerful ones counter him. Let the treasury be frittered away on extremely expensive gardens, beds, seats and other objects of pleasure and happiness. Praise sacrifices and gifts and describe these in the presence of brahmanas, so that they are kind towards you and pursue him like wolves. “There is no doubt that one who is pure in his conduct attains the supreme objective. Such a king obtains the most sacred of spots in heaven.”<sup>933</sup> O one from Kosala! When his treasury is destroyed, he will come under the subjugation of the enemy. Whether he is addicted to dharma or adharma,<sup>934</sup> his enemies will take delight in whatever severs the root of his strength and riches. When a man confronts disaster, he blames destiny. When he is swiftly destroyed, there is no doubt that he will think that destiny is supreme. Make him perform the *vishvajita* sacrifice,<sup>935</sup> so that he is deprived of all his possessions. When his objectives are not accomplished and when he is afflicted, he will want to go to an eminent person. Suggest someone from an inferior varna, someone with a shaved head, knowledgeable in the dharma of renunciation. Desiring his own welfare, perhaps he will then resort to renunciation. Employ drugs that are known to have efficacy and are capable of destroying all enemies. Use these vile concoctions to destroy his elephants, horses and men. There are these and many other techniques of deceit that have been determined. O son of a king! If one is not a eunuch, one is capable of using these to conquer.””



## Chapter 1435(107)

“The prince said, ‘O brahmana! I do not wish to live through fraud and deceit. I do not desire great riches, if they are not obtained through the use of dharma. O illustrious one! I said at the beginning that these should be avoided. I do not want anyone to doubt me and I desire my complete welfare. In this world, I desire to live through a dharma that does not cause injury. I am incapable of doing all this. It is not appropriate for me.’

“The sage replied, ‘O kshatriya! What you have spoken is deserving of you. O one who is wonderful in outlook! You are naturally intelligent. I will endeavour so that both of you attain your objectives. I will bring about an eternal alliance between the two of you. You have been born in a lineage like his. You are non-violent and extremely learned. You are accomplished in ensuring the welfare of a kingdom. Who will not make someone like you an adviser? You have confronted a supreme hardship and have abandoned your kingdom. O kshatriya! However, you wish to live through non-violent conduct. O son!<sup>936</sup> The king of Videha is devoted to the truth and will come to my house. There is no doubt that he will do what I ask him to.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The sage summoned the king of Videha and spoke these words to him. ‘This one has been born in a lineage of kings and I know what is inside his mind. His soul is as pure as a mirror or the autumn moon. I have tested him in every way and do not see anything crooked in him. You should have an alliance with him. Trust him the way you trust me. O slayer of enemies! Without an adviser, you are incapable of ruling the kingdom. The adviser must be brave and full of intelligence. Both of these<sup>937</sup> cause fear for a king. Look towards the ruling of the kingdom. In this world, a person with dharma in his soul is rare and there is no one like him. This prince is accomplished in his soul. He is established in the path of the virtuous. With dharma at the forefront, you will do well to have him on your side. He will serve you and seize large numbers of the enemy. If he wishes to fight back against you, he will resort to his own dharma of being a kshatriya and try to win back the kingdom of his father and grandfathers in a battle. If you are engaged in your vow of conquest, you will fight back against him. O lord of Videha! However, if you do not fight, he will follow my instructions and remain under your control. Glance towards dharma and cast aside the inappropriate adharma. For the sake of desire or hatred, you should not abandon your own dharma. O son!<sup>938</sup> Victory is not permanent. Nor is defeat permanent. One must give food and objects of pleasure to an enemy who has been defeated. Think yourself to be like him, confronting victory and defeat. O son! Those who seek to exterminate all danger end up exterminating their own selves.’ He was thus addressed by that bull among brahmanas and replied in the following words, after having honoured and treated him well and taking the permission of the one who deserved worship. ‘O immensely wise one! It is exactly as you have said. O immensely learned one! It is exactly as you have said. As you have said, people desire what brings the most benefit. What you have said is the best for both of us. I will follow your words and act exactly in accordance with them. This is supremely beneficial. I do not need to reflect about this.’ The king of Videha summoned the one from Kosala and spoke these words to him. ‘I have defeated you through the use of dharma, policy and strength. O supreme among kings! However, you have conquered me through your qualities. Though you have been defeated, do not have a low opinion of yourself. I do not disrespect your intelligence. I do not disrespect your manliness. Though you have been defeated, do not think of yourself as having been defeated. O king! Come to my house. You will be honoured and then go to your own house.’ Having honoured the brahmana, the two of them trustingly went to the house. The lord of Videha made the lord of Kosala enter his house and honoured him with water for washing the feet, a gift and a mixture of honey.<sup>939</sup> He was honoured back in return and gave him his own daughter, with many kinds of gems. This is the supreme dharma for kings. Both victory and defeat must be endured.’”



## Chapter 1436(108)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O scorcher of enemies! You have described the dharma, the conduct, the subsistence, the means of subsistence and the fruits for brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, the conduct of kings, the treasury, the means of making the treasury great, the means of increasing the qualities of the advisers, the prosperity of ordinary people, the six qualities<sup>940</sup> one must think of, the policy concerning the army, the means of knowing the wicked, the characteristics of the virtuous, the signs of those who are equal, inferior and superior, the means to satisfy neutral ones so that prosperity can be enhanced, the recommended means for sustaining those who have limited resources and about the method indicated in the texts against countries that are weaker. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have also described the conduct of someone who desires victory. O supreme among intelligent ones! I now wish to hear about the conduct towards ganas.<sup>941</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How do ganas prosper? How can they be prevented from breaking up? How do they conquer the enemy and obtain well-wishers? What is the cause of dissension in ganas and how do they confront destruction? It is my view that their sorrow results from the fact that there are many and it is difficult to keep counsel a secret. O scorcher of enemies! I wish to hear everything about this in entirety. O king! Tell me everything about how they can be prevented from breaking up.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O lord of men! Greed and intolerance ignite enmity within ganas, families and royal lineages. Avarice begins to consume and intolerance comes after that. These two unite and reinforce each other, until everything is destroyed. They<sup>942</sup> use spies, secret counsel, force, seizure, conciliation, gifts and dissension and other techniques of decay, destruction and fear to weaken each other. Large numbers of ganas that work together are broken apart through gifts. Having been broken, all of them are distressed in their minds and, because of their fear, are quickly subjugated. The ganas are destroyed because of their divisions and, having been shattered, have to bow down before the enemy. Therefore, the ganas must always try to work together. If they are united, their strength and manliness increases and so does their prosperity. When they act together in this way, outsiders seek their friendship. Those who are learned and aged praise a situation where they serve each other. Having not retreated from that object of unity, they obtain happiness in every way. The best of the ganas follow dharma in conduct, establish themselves in their sacred texts and, following these, become prosperous. They are always engaged in good policy and do not hesitate to punish sons and brothers. The best among ganas prosper because they accept those who are humble. O mighty-armed one! In every way, these ganas are always engaged in ensuring prosperity through spies, secret plans, following ordinances and enhancing the treasury. O king! The ganas are prosperous when they always revere the wise, the brave, those who are great archers and those who base themselves on manliness in all their tasks. When ganas face difficulties and are confused—those who are wealthy, those who are brave, those who are knowledgeable about weapons and those who are accomplished in the sacred texts save them. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Anger, dissension, fear, punishment, affliction, imprisonment and death immediately lead to ganas becoming subjugated. O king! That is the reason the foremost members of the gana must be given importance. The progress of other people depends mostly on them. O afflicter of enemies! Secret counsels and information about spies must be restricted to the foremost members. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The entire gana should not get to hear about secret plans. The foremost members of the gana must work together for the welfare of the gana. When members of a gana act separately, have differing views or are divided in some other way, its prosperity suffers and it faces a disaster. When they have broken away from each other and base themselves on individual strengths alone, it is the task of the learned and foremost ones to swiftly restrain them. O king! If there is a conflict within the family and the aged ones in the family ignore this, this ensures that the gotras<sup>943</sup> break away from the gana. One must protect against internal dangers. External dangers are easier

to handle. If an internal danger is generated, it severs the roots. If there are sentiments of sudden rage, avarice and natural confusion, and they do not speak to each other, this is a sign of defeat. They<sup>944</sup> are similar in birth. All of them are equally noble in lineage. But they are not equal in valour, intelligence, beauty and prosperity. If ganas suffer from the confusion of being disunited, they bow down before the enemy. That is the reason it is said that unity is the great refuge of ganas.”

## Chapter 1437(109)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Great policy and the path of dharma have many branches. Is it your view that one element of dharma must be pursued the most? In your view, which is the task of dharma that is the most important, so that a man can obtain dharma in this world and after death?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is my view that worship of the mother, the father and the preceptor is the most important. If a man is engaged in this, he obtains great fame and the worlds. O son! O Yudhishtira! If they recognize any task, irrespective of whether it is for dharma or against dharma, it is your duty to honour and implement it. Without their permission, one must not think of something else as dharma. It has been prescribed that their suggestions amount to dharma. They are the three worlds. They are the three ashramas.<sup>945</sup> They are the three Vedas. They are the three fires. The father is said to be the *garhapatyā* fire and the mother is the *dakshina* fire. The preceptor is the *ahavaniya* fire.<sup>946</sup> These three fires are the most important. If you pay attention to these three, you will conquer the three worlds. By always serving the father one can cross this world, by serving the mother, the world beyond this, and by serving the preceptor, Brahma’s world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! If you conduct yourself well in the three worlds, you will obtain fame and dharma with extremely great fruits. One should not cross their policies. One should not eat before them. One should not censure them. One should always serve them. That is the supreme good deed. O lord of men! Through this, you will earn fame, merits, glory and the worlds. One who honours them is honoured in the three worlds. However, one who dishonours them is dishonoured and all his tasks become fruitless. O scorcher of enemies! A person who always disrespects these three seniors obtains neither this world nor the one hereafter. His fame is not radiant in the world hereafter. After that, nor does he obtain any great benefit. If I give everything away to them, it comes back to me, one hundred times and one thousand times more. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, the three worlds blaze before me. It is said that one good *acharya*<sup>947</sup> is superior to ten learned brahmanas, one *upadhyaya* is superior to ten acharyas and the father is superior to ten upadhyayas. However, a mother is superior to ten fathers and even to the entire earth. In her importance, there is no preceptor who is equal to a mother. However, it is my view that a preceptor is superior to a father and a mother.<sup>948</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both the mother and the father unite to give birth, but the father and the mother create the body alone. The birth that is instructed by the *acharya* is divine. It is without old age and without death. Even if they have caused an injury, the mother and the father must never be killed.<sup>949</sup> If you act in this way, you will not be censured. Nor will they reprimand you. The gods and the rishis know about those who try to follow dharma. One who imparts comprehension, one who speaks about the truth in one’s ears and one who grants immortality<sup>950</sup> should be thought of as a father and a mother. Knowing this, one should not act injuriously towards him. When a person has heard about knowledge from a preceptor but does not honour him in thought and deeds even when he is present, he must be corrected by other preceptors and those preceptors also deserve to be respected. Therefore, one who desires for the ancient dharma must make efforts to worship and honour all these seniors, giving them their shares. A person who pleases his father also pleases his grandfather. If he is affectionate towards his mother, he reveres the entire earth. If he is affectionate towards his upadhyaya, he worships Brahma. Therefore, if he worships his mother, his father and his preceptor, he pleases the rishis and the gods, together with the ancestors. In one’s conduct, one should never disrespect the preceptor, nor the mother and the father, because they are like the preceptor. They should not be censured and they will not reprimand you. The gods, together with the rishis, know that preceptors must be treated well. In thoughts and in deeds, one should not injure the upadhyaya, the father and the mother. A wicked person who does that commits a sin that is worse than killing a foetus. There is no one in the world as wicked as he. We have not heard of any salvation for four—one who harms a friend, one who is an ingrate, one who kills a woman and one who is slanderous. For the acts of men in this world,

all this has been created as great instruction. This is most beneficial and there is nothing that is superior to this. Following all kinds of dharma, I have told you this.”

## Chapter 1438(110)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a man wishes to base himself on dharma, how should he conduct himself? O learned one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to know. Tell me. Both truth and falsehood pervade the world. O king! Therefore, if a man is determined to follow dharma, how should he act vis-à-vis these two? What is truth? What is falsehood? What is eternal dharma? When should one speak the truth? When should one utter a lie?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Truthful speech is virtuous. There is nothing superior to truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this world, this is an extremely difficult thing to understand and I will tell you the truth about this. When falsehood is truth and when truth is falsehood, one should not speak the truth and one should utter a lie. A juvenile person is confused about truth that is injurious. One who can discriminate between truth and falsehood knows about dharma. There may be an extremely terrible man who is ignoble and unaccomplished in his wisdom. However, even he can obtain extremely great merits, such as Balaka did when he killed a blind being.<sup>951</sup> What is extraordinary in this? But there can be a person who desires dharma, but acts like one who does not know dharma. On the banks of the Ganga, Koushika perpetrated a great sin. What you have asked me is complicated when it becomes extremely difficult to state what dharma is. It is extremely difficult to enumerate it, even if one resorts to reasoning. The words of dharma were created for the prosperity of beings. It is certain that anything that does not cause injury is dharma. It is said that dharma is anything that holds up.<sup>952</sup> Beings are held up through dharma. It is certain that anything that serves to hold up is dharma. There are some who say that dharma is that which is laid down in the *shruti* texts, but there are other people who do not agree. I cannot find fault with this, since everything is not laid down there. If someone asks, desiring the riches of others, one should not answer.<sup>953</sup> It is certain that not telling them would have been dharma. If one can escape without speaking, one should not speak. However, if not speaking gives rise to suspicion, one must certainly speak. Having thought about it, in that situation, when one consorts with wicked people, uttering a lie is superior to speaking the truth, even if one has taken an oath. If it is possible, one must never give riches to the likes of those. If riches are given to wicked people, this makes the giver suffer. Even if this involves an injury to one’s body, it is better not to give them what they wish. However, there may be witnesses who have to speak to ascertain the nature of the truth. If they do not speak what must be spoken, they are liars.<sup>954</sup> If life is at stake and at the time of a marriage, one should lie. So should one for the sake of preserving riches or for the sake of ensuring dharma for others. However, if he does this out of a desire to share in the dharma of others, he is begging for dharma and is inferior. If someone has promised to pay and later deviates from his duty, he must be compelled by force. If a person deviates from a pledge that has been taken in accordance with dharma, then he establishes himself in adharma. A deceitful person may deviate from his own dharma, but still pretend to live in accordance with it. He is evil and fraudulent in his life and must be restrained in every possible way. All the wicked people in the world are certain to strive for riches. If one tolerates them or if one eats with them, one is wicked in conduct and is certain to fall down. Such a person will be dislodged from gods and men and it will be as if he is dead already. He will be miserable because his riches will be taken away and his remaining alive becomes pointless. One must make efforts to tell him, ‘This is the dharma that you should find agreeable.’ It is certain that there is no dharma for those who are wicked. If one kills a person who has reached such a state, one does not suffer from any sin. That person has already been slain because of his deeds and is only killing someone who has already been slain. Anyone who concludes an agreement with such a person, whose intelligence has been destroyed and whose life is wicked, behaves like a crow or a vulture.<sup>955</sup> When they are freed from their bodies and rise upwards, they are reborn in those wombs. Whichever is the way in which a man behaves towards one’s own

self, that is the conduct one should show towards him and this is dharma. Deceit should be used against those who are deceitful. Those who are virtuous must be repaid with virtuous conduct.”

## Chapter 1439(111)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Here and there, beings can be tormented by different kinds of sentiments. How can they tide over difficulties? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The cited ashramas for brahmanas have already been recounted. If they follow these with controlled souls, they will be able to tide over difficulties. Those who are without deceit, those who meditate, those who remain within the confines of prescribed conduct and those who restrain material desires are able to tide over difficulties. Those who always offer their dwellings to guests, those who are always without malice and those who are always engaged in studying are able to tide over difficulties. Those who follow the conduct of their mother and father, those who know about dharma and those who do not sleep during the day are able to tide over difficulties. Those who have intercourse with their own virtuous wives, at the right season and not outside the season, and those righteous ones who observe agnihotra are able to tide over all difficulties. Kings who give up excessive desire for riches, who are full of the rajas quality and who protect the kingdom are able to tide over all difficulties. Brave ones who give up the fear of death in battles and desire to triumph in accordance with dharma are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who do not commit sins in deeds, thought and speech and impose the rod of chastisement on beings are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who speak the truth, even if life is at stake, and those who set an example to all beings are able to tide over all difficulties. Brahmanas who do not study what should not be studied and are always engaged in asceticism and good austerities are able to tide over all difficulties. Those whose acts do not have fraudulent objectives, those whose words are extremely truthful and those who obtain riches through virtuous means are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who torment themselves through austerities, those who observe brahmacharya in their youth and those who have cleansed through their learning of the Vedas and vows are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who have controlled rajas, those who have controlled tamas and those great-souled ones who are based on truth are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who cause no fear, those who are never frightened and those who look on all people as their own selves are able to tide over all difficulties. Those bulls among men who are not tormented by the prosperity of others and those who refrain from common norms of behaviour are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who worship all the gods, those who listen to all kinds of dharma and those who are faithful and controlled are able to tide over all the difficulties. Those who do not desire respect but respect others instead, and those who pay no attention to any honours they obtain, are able to tide over all difficulties. Desiring offspring, those who perform shraddha ceremonies from one tithi to another and those who are extremely pure in their minds are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who are not enraged, those who pacify the anger of others and those who are not enraged at the servants are able to tide over all difficulties. Those men who have always avoided, since birth, *madhu*, flesh and liquor are able to tide over all difficulties.<sup>956</sup> Those who only eat to remain alive, those who have intercourse only for the sake of having children and those who speak only to state the truth are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who are devoted to Narayana, the lord of all beings, the creator and the destroyer of the universe, are able to tide over all difficulties. His eyes are like red lotuses. He is attired in yellow garments. He is mighty-armed. He is Achyuta. He is

your well-wisher, brother, friend and ally.<sup>957</sup> Like a strip of leather, all these worlds are wrapped around his person. He is the lord of riches. His soul cannot be thought of. He is Govinda Purushottama. O bull among men! He is engaged in ensuring Jishnu's<sup>958</sup> welfare. O king! You cannot withstand him. He is Vaikuntha<sup>959</sup> Purushottama. A person who faithfully seeks refuge with Narayana Hari is able to tide over difficulties. There is no need for me to even think about this. A person who reads or hears about this account of tiding over difficulties and a person who has it read out to brahmanas is able to tide over difficulties. O unblemished one! I have instructed you about what must be done, so that a man can tide over difficulties, in this world and in the next.”



## Chapter 1440(112)

‘Yudhishtira said, “There are those who are not tranquil, but seem tranquil in form. There are those who are tranquil, but have an appearance that is not tranquil. O father! How can we differentiate between such men?”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a tiger and a jackal. O Yudhishtira! Listen to it. In ancient times, there was a city named Purika. It was prosperous and the king was Pourika. He was cruel and the worst among men, with an inclination to cause injury to others. When his lifespan was over, he obtained an end that is not desired. Because of his wicked earlier deeds, he became a jackal. However, he remembered his earlier life and developed a supreme indifference. He did not eat flesh, even when it had been brought to him by others. He was non-violent towards all beings. He was truthful in speech and firm in his vows. He acted according to his wishes and his food became fruit that had fallen down. The jackal lived in a cremation ground and he liked this. He liked it because he had been born there and no other dwelling place appealed to him. All the others of his species could not tolerate his purity. Though they addressed him respectfully, they tried to make him budge from his intentions. ‘You dwell in this terrible grove of our ancestors, yet you desire to be pure. Since you are a flesh-eater, this is a perversity. Be like us. All of us will give you food. This is your food. Therefore, enjoy it and give up this purity.’ Having heard their words, he controlled himself. He used gentle and respectful words that were not harsh, but were full of reason, to reply. ‘Birth is not important for me. Lineage is created by conduct. I desire for those deeds that will extend my fame. Even though I dwell in a cremation ground, I am seeking to make myself tranquil through meditation. The atman leads to deeds. The ashrama is not an indicator of dharma. While dwelling in a hermitage, one can kill a brahmana. Someone who does not dwell in a hermitage can donate a cow. Is the first not a sin and is the act of donation going to be fruitless? Because of greed, all of you are always engaged in eating. You do not see that you are confused and that you are bound down by these sins. I do not believe in this conduct. This is wicked and reprehensible and takes a person away from the objective. It leads to evil in this world and the next. Therefore, I do not like this conduct.’

“‘There was a tiger that was famous for its valour. He formed the view that he<sup>960</sup> was pure and learned. He showed him honour like the ones he himself received and thought that he would appoint him as his own adviser. ‘O tranquil one! I know the kind of person you are. Come and spend your life with me. Enjoy the objects of pleasure you desire and do not touch the ones you dislike. We are famous as being fierce. If it is known that you are with us, we will be known as gentle killers and that will be a desirable objective.’

“‘He was honoured by the great-souled lord of the deer in these words. Exhibiting a little humility, the jackal replied in these modest words. ‘O king of the animals! The words that you have spoken to me are worthy of you. You are searching for advisers who are pure and are accomplished in dharma and artha. O brave one! You are incapable of ruling this great dominion without an adviser, with a wicked adviser, or with one who seeks to physically injure you. You should get advisers who are devoted to you, those who are not attached to anything else, those who do not shout at each other, those who desire victory, those who are not covetous, those who are beyond deceit, those who are wise, those who are engaged in ensuring welfare and those who are spirited. You should worship these immensely fortunate ones like your preceptors and ancestors. O lord of animals! There is nothing that pleases me more than my present satisfaction. I do not desire happiness, objects of pleasure, prosperity and your refuge. My conduct will not gel with your earlier servants. They will find unhappiness in my conduct and cause dissension between you and me. You are a refuge that is praiseworthy and I respect your radiance. You have cleansed your soul and are extremely fortunate. You are not cruel even towards the wicked. You are far-sighted and great in endeavour. You are broad in your objectives and immensely strong. You are accomplished and all your acts are successful. Your thoughts serve to adorn you. However, someone like me is extremely content and serving another

will mean misery. I am inexperienced in serving another and roam around in the woods as I please. For all those who dwell in a refuge with the king, their faults face his rage. A person who lives in the forest is alone. He is without fear and without any ties. If one is summoned by a king, there can be fear in the heart. But for someone who is satisfied in the forest, subsisting on roots and fruit, there is nothing like that. Food and drink are easily procured. On the other side, there is fear. Looking at these, I certainly think that happiness comes from withdrawal. Some servants are punished by kings because of their crimes. But many more virtuous servants are harmed because of false accusations and head towards destruction. Therefore, if the king of the animals thinks that I should perform this task, I wish for an agreement about how I am going to be treated. You must honour what I say and you must listen to my beneficial words. You must remain firmly established in the conduct that you have thought of for me. I will never think of having consultations with any of your other advisers. Those others are politically wise and, wishing to protect themselves, will speak false words about me. I will meet you alone and will privately tell you what is good for you. For any tasks that concern your kin, you will not ask me what is good or bad. Having consulted me, you will not subsequently exhibit any violence towards your advisers. If you are enraged with my kin, you will not bring them down by exercising the rod of punishment.’ Thus addressed, the king of animals agreed and honoured him. The jackal became an adviser in the tiger’s abode.

““On seeing that he was so well honoured and engaged in his tasks, the former servants hated him and repeatedly conspired together. They placated the jackal through signs of friendship and made him enter.<sup>961</sup> They were evil in their intelligence and desired to make him a part of the wicked group. They had earlier got used to abducting the property of others. However, now that they were controlled by the jackal, they were incapable of obtaining any of these possessions. They wished to tempt him with accounts of upliftment. They sought to seduce his intelligence with great riches. However, that immensely wise one did not deviate from his patience. Those others decided to bring about his destruction and agreed on a plan. The king of animals desired meat that had been prepared well. They stole it themselves and placed it in his<sup>962</sup> house. He<sup>963</sup> knew everything about who had stolen it, the nature of the plan and the reasons behind it. However, he remained tolerant because of the agreement he had made at the time of agreeing to become an adviser. ‘O king! If you desire my friendship, you will not pay heed to a false accusation.’ At the time of the meal, the stolen meat could not be seen. The king of animals instructed that the thief should be found. The deceitful ones described this to the king of the animals. ‘Your adviser is learned and prides himself on his wisdom. He has stolen the meat.’ When he heard about the jackal’s fickleness, the tiger was enraged. The intolerant king desired to have him killed. On detecting the opportunity, the former ministers said, ‘He is trying to shatter the means of subsistence for all of us. However, these deeds of his are protected because he has your affection. O lord! But he is not the kind of person that you were told he was. His words suggest that he follows dharma. However, he is naturally cruel. This wicked one wears the deceit of dharma, but is actually false in his conduct. For the sake of furthering his objectives and for the sake of his food, he has deceitfully followed these vows.’ On learning that the meat had been stolen and on hearing their words, the tiger instructed that the jackal should be killed.

““On hearing the tiger’s words, the tiger’s mother arrived there. She wished to speak some beneficial words and make the king of animals understand. ‘O son! You should not accept this. It seems to be full of fraud and deceit. An honest person is being falsely accused by those who are dishonest. Those wicked ones have suffered from the friction caused by his work. Those desiring to cause injury cannot tolerate any beneficial act. They seek to impute taints to a pure person and bring him down. The greedy hate the pure and the weak hate the spirited. Stupid people hate learned ones and poor people hate those who are extremely wealthy. Those who follow adharmā hate those who follow dharma and those who are ugly hate those who are handsome. Many learned people are greedy and all of them earn a living through deceit. Wicked ones accuse an innocent person, even if he possesses Brihaspati’s intelligence. When the meat was stolen, your house was empty. That virtuous one did not wish to touch it even when it was given to him. Falsehood has the appearance of truth. Truth can seem to be like falsehood. Many kinds of things can be seen, but they need to be examined. The sky seems to be flat. The firefly looks like a spark of fire. But the sky is not flat, nor does the firefly have any fire. Therefore, unless there is a direct witness, everything must be examined. If one does not determine the truth through examination, one is tormented subsequently. O son! This is not a difficult thing to do, for a lord to get someone else killed. In this world, forgiveness is praised and brings

prosperity. O son! He was appointed by you and has become famous among the ministers. A capable person is obtained with difficulty and a well-wisher should be supported. If a person is otherwise pure, and is tainted because one accepts the accusations of others, one taints oneself, as well as the minister, and is swiftly destroyed.’ At this, a person from the mass of the jackal’s enemies presented himself. He had dharma in his soul and told him about the deceit that had been committed.

“Once his character was known, he<sup>964</sup> was honoured well and freed. The king of animals repeatedly embraced him affectionately. The jackal was extremely learned about the sacred texts. He was tormented because of the intolerance and, taking the permission of the king of the animals, wished to fast himself to death.<sup>965</sup> However, with tears of affection flowing down from his eyes, the tiger restrained the jackal, who was devoted to dharma. He honoured him and was honoured back in return. The jackal looked at the tiger, who was overcome with affection. In a voice that was choking with tears, he bowed down and spoke these respectful words. ‘I was first honoured by you and then later subjected to humiliation. You made an enemy out of me and I should not reside with you any longer. All these only serve to further the cause of the enemy—those who are themselves dissatisfied, those who have been dislodged from their positions, those who have been deprived of their honours, those servants who have themselves brought about their downfall, those who have been brought down by others, those who are weak, those who are greedy, those who are cruel, those who have been flung into prison, those who are proud and have lost their possessions, those who are extremely spirited, but have lost the means, those who are tormented, those who have decayed because of a flood of vices, those who are in hiding and those whose possessions have been seized. You have humiliated me and subsequently wish to instate me. How can you trust me? How can I trust you again? You took me to be capable. You instated me after examining me. You broke the pledge we had made and humiliated me. In the assembly, you spoke about me as a person with virtuous conduct. Had you protected the pledge, you would not have spoken about my bad qualities. Since I have been disrespected, how can you have confidence in me? I will also suffer from anxiety about you and not trust you. You will suspect me. I will be frightened and the enemy will see this as a weakness. Those who are not content are very difficult to satisfy. This task will provide a lot of scope for deceit. Those who have come together suffer when they are separated.<sup>966</sup> Those who have come together can also be separated with difficulty. When those who are separated are brought together, there is neither love, nor affection. Sometimes, they are seen to be frightened of each other. While thoughts may focus on the work, gentleness is extremely rare. It is extremely difficult to know about the minds of men, since they are both stable and unstable. Among one hundred, one can find only one who is capable and strong. Suddenly, there is something that makes a man rise to an eminent position. He acts with greatness, intelligence and dexterity, regardless of whether the situation is good or bad.’ In this way, the jackal addressed the king with many words that were full of dharma and artha, comforting and delighting him. The intelligent jackal then took his leave of the king of animals. He seated himself in praya, gave up his body and went to heaven.”

## Chapter 1441(113)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What must a king do? What acts bring him happiness? O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me everything about this in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will certainly tell you this. Listen to what has been determined about tasks. These are the duties of a king and having performed these, he will be happy. However, we have heard an extremely great account about a camel and he should not act in that way. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this. In the age of Prajapati, there was a great camel who could recall his earlier existences. He engaged in great austerities in a forest and was rigid in his vows. At the end of those austerities, the lord was delighted and the grandfather<sup>967</sup> delighted him by granting him a boon.

“‘The camel said, ‘O illustrious one! Through your favours, let my neck become extremely long. O lord! Let me be able to graze one hundred yojanas in front of me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, the great-souled one, the granter of boons, agreed. Having obtained that supreme boon, the camel went to his own forest. Since he had obtained the boon, the evil-minded one became lazy. Confounded by destiny, the evil-souled one no longer wished to go out to graze. There was an occasion when he had stretched out his neck one hundred yojanas to graze, without any exhaustion in his mind. A great storm arrived. The one with the soul of an animal placed his head and neck inside a cave, where they got stuck. Monsoon arrived and a great flood submerged the world. There was a hungry jackal who was shivering from the cold. Afflicted by the water, he and his wife quickly entered the cave. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The flesh-eater was suffering greatly from hunger. On seeing the camel’s neck, he began to eat it. The animal<sup>968</sup> realized that he was being eaten. Extremely miserable, he tried to contract himself. The animal flung his neck around, upwards and downwards. However, the jackal and his wife continued to eat him. The jackal killed and ate the camel. When the rains were over, he emerged through the mouth of the cave. Thus, the evil-minded camel was led to his destruction. Behold the great sin that progressively comes about because of laziness. You must abandon such conduct. Resort to yoga and control your senses. Manu has said that the foundation of victory is intelligence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Tasks performed with intelligence are the best, those performed with arms are middling and those performed with thighs are the worst, because they are meant to bear loads. O unblemished one! If a person is accomplished and controls his senses, if he listens to secret counsel and if he has excellent aides, then his kingdom lasts. O Yudhishtira! Those who examine the objectives are established in this world. With the help of their aides, they are capable of ruling over the entire earth. Virtuous ones, who know about the ordinances, have spoken about this earlier. You are like the great Indra in your influence. I have also spoken to you about the foresight of the sacred texts. O king! Conduct yourself in accordance with that.”

## Chapter 1442(114)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained a kingdom, how can a weak king, without any resources, station himself against a stronger one?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between the ocean and the rivers. The eternal ocean, the lord of the rivers and the residence of the enemies of the gods,<sup>969</sup> himself had a doubt about this and asked all the rivers. ‘I see trees lying down, with their roots and their branches. When you overflow, you bring these down. Though I see others<sup>970</sup> there, I never see any reeds. The reeds that grow along your banks are thin in body and slight of essence. Do you ignore them? Are you incapable? Or have they done you a good turn? I desire to hear all your views on this. When you overflow the banks, why are they not shattered? Why do they not come under your control?’ At this, the river Ganga replied in supreme words that were full of meaning. She told the reason to the ocean, the lord of the rivers. ‘A tree remains in a single spot. It does not move from that place. Because it foolishly tries to resist us, it is forced to give up that spot. However, when it sees the flood approaching, a reed bends down. The flood passes over it and it remains rooted to its spot. It knows the time and the place and bows down. A tree does not. Because a reed is pliable and does not try to resist, it is not carried away. Herbs, trees and creepers that do not bow down before the force of the wind and the water are overcome.’ If a person does not tolerate the powerful onslaught of an enemy who is stronger, he is swiftly destroyed. One who knows the superiority and inferiority in the strength of one’s own self and that of the enemy is wise and knows how to conduct himself. He is not overcome. In this way, when a learned one thinks that the

enemy is extremely strong, he resorts to the conduct of reeds. That is a sign of wisdom.””

## Chapter 1443(115)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O scorcher of enemies! How should a learned and mild man behave, when he is abused in an assembly by someone who is stupid, voluble and harsh?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O protector of the earth! Listen to what has been sung about this objective. An intelligent person must always tolerate a stupid man with limited intelligence. If he is not angered, he obtains the good deeds of the person who is wrathful.<sup>971</sup> If he is not angered, he passes on his own evil deeds to the intolerant and wrathful one. That other one is afflicted and is quaking like a *tittibha*.<sup>972</sup> He should be ignored. He will be hated by people and will be unsuccessful. A person who is wicked in his deeds will always boast and say, ‘In an assembly of people, I have said this about a revered person. He is ashamed and withered. He is standing there, as if he is dead.’ A shameless person will thus boast about a task that should not be boasted about. A person who is controlled should ignore such a person, who is worst among men. If someone with limited intelligence says something, it must always be tolerated. Whether that inferior person is praising or censuring, what can he possibly do? He will be as unsuccessful as a foolish crow cawing in the forest. If evil-acting people could achieve something through the use of eloquent words, there would be some purpose in those words. However, those who seek to injure achieve nothing. Those who are engaged in such conduct only establish that they are born from perverse ejaculation.<sup>973</sup> He is like a peacock, exhibiting its genitals while it is dancing. One should never converse with a person who acts in this way. He is impure and finds good conduct difficult. One should not speak to him. A man who speaks of a person’s good qualities in his presence and criticizes him behind his back is like a dog in this world and loses all the worlds hereafter. Whatever he gives to one hundred people and whatever oblations he offers are destroyed in an instant, if he criticizes someone behind his back. Therefore, a wise person avoids such an evil-minded one, like a virtuous person avoids the flesh of a dog. When an evil-souled person abuses a good-souled person, he exhibits all his own faults, like a snake extending its hood. If a person is engaged in his own tasks and a second person acts against him in those tasks, that second person’s intelligence is like that of an ass that has got submerged in a pile of ashes and dust. You must stay away from men who are like angry wolves, always engaged in abusing people, or those who are like crazy and trumpeting elephants, or those who are like extremely fierce dogs. Such a man treads along the path of the fickle, lacking in control and humility and full of wickedness. Behaving like an enemy, he always wishes to injure you. Shame on such an evil-minded man! If such a person answers you back, do not assume a pained expression. Be at peace. Those who are firm in their intelligence do not approve of the superior consorting with the inferior. If he is enraged, he may slap you with his palm.<sup>974</sup> Or he may fling dust and chaff at you. He may frighten you by

baring his teeth. It has been proven that stupid people are violent when they are enraged. Avoid extremely evil-souled and wicked men and tolerate them in assemblies. If a person always reads this illustration, he never suffers from any unpleasantness that is the result of speech.”



## Chapter 1444(116)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! I have a great doubt about policy. You must dispel it. You are one who has advanced our lineage. O father! You have spoken and educated me about evil-souled ones of wicked conduct and the words that they speak. What is beneficial for royal policy? What brings happiness to the family? Now, and in the future, what ensures acquisition and preservation? What is good for the sons and grandsons and what brings prosperity to the kingdom? In terms of food and drink, what is good for the body? Tell me that. When a king is instated in the kingdom and is surrounded by friends, how does he delight the subjects? What happens if he encounters ill-wishers? The forces of love and affection may lead to his being seized by the wicked. Though he should adorn the righteous, he may become subject to his senses. Even if all of his servants have been born in good lineages, they may exhibit bad qualities. The king may not realize the fruits from the appointment of good servants. These are the kinds of doubts I have about the extremely difficult end of rajadharma. You are like Brihaspati in your intelligence and you should instruct me. O tiger among men! You are engaged in the welfare of the lineage. Instruct us. Kshatta<sup>975</sup> is accomplished and wise and instructs us about these things all the time. I will hear beneficial words about the welfare of the family and the welfare of the kingdom. This is like undecaying amrita. Having heard this, I will sleep happily. What kind of servants should one have? What are their attributes and qualities? What are the recommendations about the families of those one entrusts with tasks? Without servants, the king cannot carry out the task of protection alone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All those born in good lineages blame the kingdom and one is incapable of ruling the kingdom alone. O father! Without aides, no objectives can be attained. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained them, one must always protect them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If all the servants are learned about jnana and vijnana, if they seek welfare, if they are born in good lineages and if they are gentle, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If the ministers are born in good lineages, cannot be corrupted and dwell with him, if they are learned about the science of relationships, if they offer advice to the king, if they know about what will happen in the future and can act accordingly, if they are skilled in their knowledge of time and if they do not sorrow over what is already past, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If the aides are truthful in deeds, looking upon happiness and unhappiness equally and if they are devoted to thinking about prosperity, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If citizens of the country are never afflicted and never suffer, if they are superior and devote themselves to righteous paths, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If people in charge of maintaining accounts are always learned and satisfied, if they are engaged in extending the

treasury, then that king is a supreme one. If the stores are maintained by learned aides who are engaged in accumulation, if these officers are not avaricious and are protected because of their qualities, if the judicial proceedings in the city give rise to good fruits, if the practices of Shankha and Likhita<sup>976</sup> are observed, then a share in the fruits of dharma is obtained. A king who knows about rajadharma will collect such men and ensure the six aspects of policy. He obtains a share in the fruits of dharma.”

## Chapter 1445(117)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. Among people, this has always been cited as an instance of good conduct and this illustrates the point. I heard it in the hermitage of Rama, Jamadagni’s son, when it was recounted by that supreme among rishis. There was a great forest, inhabited by no other men. There was only a self-controlled rishi who had restrained his senses and subsisted on roots and fruit. He had initiated himself into the task of supreme control. He was tranquil, pure and devoted to great studies. He had cleansed himself through fasting and was always established in the path of the virtuous. The intelligent and righteous one was seated there, looking upon all beings as equal. All the residents of the forest approached him—lions, tigers, *sharabhas*, large and crazy elephants, leopards, rhinos, bears and others that were terrible to behold. All these predatory beasts would ask him about his welfare. They were like the rishi’s disciples and did what was agreeable to him. All of them would ask about his welfare and then depart.

“But there was a village animal that would never leave the great sage and this was a dog. It was faithfully devoted to him and was weak and thin because of the constant fasting. It ate fruits and roots, was calm and acted in virtuous ways. When the rishi was seated, it would be near the great sage’s feet. It was severely bound to him by ties of affection and its behaviour was like that of a human. Once, an immensely valorous and carnivorous leopard arrived there. It was cruel, like Death, and the wicked one came there for the sake of the dog. It was thirsty and licked its lips. It lashed its tail around. Since it was hungry, it was in search of some flesh and its mouth gaped. O lord of men! O immensely intelligent one! Listen. On seeing that cruel one advance, to save its life, the dog went to the sage and said, ‘O illustrious one! A leopard, the enemy of dogs, wishes to kill me. O great sage! Through your favours, ensure that I face no fear from it.’ The sage replied, ‘O son! Do not be frightened. You will never face death from a leopard. You will give up your form of a dog and become a leopard.’ The dog became a leopard and its complexion became golden. Its limbs were spotted and its teeth were large. It dwelt fearlessly in the forest. However, an extremely terrible tiger arrived there. It was hungry and its mouth gaped open. It desired some blood and approached the leopard, licking the corners of its mouth. On seeing the hungry tiger with a gaping mouth arrive in the forest, the leopard wished to save its life and sought refuge with the rishi. Since they used to live together, the rishi acted affectionately towards it, as he had always done. He changed the leopard into a tiger that was stronger than its enemy. O lord of the earth! On seeing this, the tiger no longer attacked it. Having become a strong tiger that lived on flesh, the dog no longer had any desire to touch and enjoy roots and fruit. A lord of deer always desires residents of the forest. O great king! This tiger also acted in this way. Once, having killed a deer and satisfied itself on this, the tiger was asleep at the foot of a tree. A crazy elephant, which looked like a newly arisen cloud, arrived there. It was huge and its temples were shattered. It was excellent<sup>977</sup> and possessed a broad head. It had superb tusks and was gigantic in form. Its roar was like the rumbling of the thunder. On seeing that mad elephant advance, insolent and crazy, the tiger was terrified of the elephant and sought refuge with the rishi. The supreme among rishis turned the tiger into an elephant. On seeing its form, which was like that of a giant cloud, the other elephant was frightened. It<sup>978</sup> was delighted and roamed around amidst clusters of lotuses and frankincense thickets, adorning its body with pollen from lotuses. The handsome elephant roamed around near the rishi’s cottage and time passed. After several nights, a maned lion arrived at that spot and its mane was tawny. The lion was terrible and hailed from mountainous regions, having slain families of elephants. On seeing the lion advance, the elephant was terrified on account of the lion. It was afflicted and, trembling out of fear, sought refuge with the rishi. The sage then turned that king of elephants into a lion and the wild lion ignored the elephant, taking it to belong to the same species. On seeing a more powerful one, the wild lion was terrified and disappeared. The lion dwelt happily in that forest hermitage. However, the other smaller animals that dwelt in the hermitage were terri-

fied to be seen there and were always frightened for their lives. But it so happened with the progress of time that a sharabha arrived in the sage's residence, desiring to kill the lion. It was powerful, carnivorous and sought to kill all beings. All beings found it to be fearful. It dwelt in the forest and it possessed eight legs that extended upwards. O scorcher of enemies! The sage turned it<sup>979</sup> into an extremely strong sharabha. The wild sharabha saw the sage's sharabha in front of him and on seeing that it was strong and fierce, quickly fled out of fear.

“Once the sage had reduced it to the state of a sharabha, the sharabha was full of happiness and always dwelt by the side of the sage. The large numbers of animals in the forest were all terrified of the sharabha. O king! Desiring to save their lives, they fled in all the directions. Always engaged in the killing of animals, the sharabha was extremely satisfied. It was a flesh-eater and no longer desired to be peaceful and subsist on fruits and roots. Desiring blood, the powerful sharabha, born in the womb of a dog, was ungrateful and wished to kill the sage. Through the strength of his austerities and the sight of knowledge, the immensely wise sage divined this and spoke to the dog. ‘You became a leopard from a dog and from a leopard you became a tiger. From a tiger you became an elephant with musth and from an elephant you became a lion. From an immensely strong lion you again became a sharabha. Because I was overcome with affection, I had forgotten about your lineage. O wicked one! You desire to act violently towards me, though I have caused you no harm. Therefore, you will go back to your own species. Become a dog.’ The stupid one, evil in his soul, became a dog because it hated the sage and people. Because of the rishi's curse, the sharabha again assumed the form of a dog.”

## Chapter 1446(118)

‘Bhishma said, “Having assumed the nature of a dog, it was overcome by supreme misery. The rishi said ‘hum’<sup>980</sup> and expelled the wicked one from the hermitage. In this way, an intelligent king must know about goodness of conduct and purity and about uprightness, nature, spiritedness, lineage, conduct, learning, self-control, compassion, strength, valour, sentiments, tranquility and forgiveness. It is only then that extremely well-trained and skilled servants must be appointed. Without examination, the lord of the earth must not appoint servants. A king who is surrounded by those who have been born in inferior lineages will not obtain happiness. If a person who has naturally been born in a good lineage is reprimanded by the king through no fault of his own, because of the nobility of the lineage, his intelligence will not turn towards wicked deeds. Because of a shortage of virtuous people, if a person born in an inferior lineage is appointed, even if he thereby obtains extremely rare prosperity, once he is censured, he will turn towards enmity. O king! Born in a noble lineage, learned, wise, accomplished in jnana and vijnana, knowledgeable about the purport of all the sacred texts, tolerant, born within the country, grateful, strong, forgiving, self-controlled, with control over the senses, not avaricious, satisfied with one’s lot, friendly towards the master and friends, an adviser who knows about the time and the place and is engaged in drawing people to him, one who shows honour, firm in his mind, a constant seeker of welfare, with good conduct in his own areas, knowledgeable about peace and war, knowledgeable about the three objectives,<sup>981</sup> loved by the residents of the city and the countryside, knowledgeable about vyuhas for defence and attack, knowledgeable about how one can cheer the forces, knowledgeable about signs and expressions, skilled about marching and vehicles, learned about the

training of elephants, devoid of ego, eloquent, courteous, self-controlled, powerful, reasonable in objectives, upright, one who associates with upright people, well dressed, good-looking, a leader, skilled about policy, possessing the six qualities, flexible, modest, capable, mild in speech, patient, gentle, extremely wealthy, capable of taking measures according to the time and the place—such people should not be ignored and should be made advisers. The kingdom will then extend, like moonlight from the lord of the planets.<sup>982</sup>

“The king must also possess these qualities and must be skilled in the sacred texts. His desire must be supreme dharma and he must be devoted to ruling the subjects. He must be patient, tolerant, pure, swift, exhibiting manliness at the appropriate time, ready to serve, learned, ready to listen, accomplished in reasoning, intelligent, firm in his mind, ready to implement what is fair, self-controlled, always pleasant in speech, forgiving when there is a catastrophe, ceaseless in generosity, ready to act on his own, possessing excellent gates,<sup>983</sup> pleasant to behold, ready to extend a hand to those who are distressed, always engaged in policy indicated by the learned, without ego, without opposite sentiments, without a tendency to act on everything, unwavering in pursuing a task that has been undertaken, a master who is loved by the servants, ready to bring people together, not rigid, always possessing a pleasant demeanour, generous, attentive towards the servants, without anger, extremely broad-minded, ready to use the rod of chastisement, not failing to use the rod of chastisement, a ruler who ensures acts of dharma, one who uses spies as his eyes, attentive towards enemies and always accomplished in dharma and artha. Such a king will possess a hundred qualities and you should be like that. O Indra among men! In sustaining the kingdom, you must search for warriors and excellent men as aides, those who possess all the qualities. The king who desires prosperity should not disrespect them. The warriors must be insolent in battle, grateful and accomplished in the use of weapons. They must know about the sacred texts of dharma and must possess foot soldiers. If they are accomplished in the use of chariots and skilled in the use of arrows and weapons, the king will extend his prosperity and win the earth. The king who is always engaged in

attracting people to himself, who is engaged in enterprise and who is firm in friendship is supreme among kings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one can collect one thousand men who are valiant horse riders, one is capable of conquering the entire earth.”

## Chapter 1447(119)

‘Bhishma said, “If a king acts so as to engage and employ servants who are unlike the dog, then he obtains the fruits of the kingdom. When the dog transgressed its own state and measure, it was no longer treated well. The dog should have remained in its own place. It transgressed it and became something else. It is a duty for a learned person to appoint servants appropriate to their families and lineages, so that they are engaged in their appropriate tasks. Inappropriate positions are condemned. If servants are engaged in the appropriate tasks, then because of the qualities of those servants, the king obtains fruits. A sharabha should be in a sharabha’s place, a lion in a lion’s. A tiger should be in a tiger’s place, a leopard in a leopard’s. As is proper, appoint servants in the appropriate tasks. If one desires the fruits of one’s actions, servants should not be appointed in perverse positions. A king who transgresses the norms and appoints servants in perverse positions is foolish and does not delight the subjects. If the king desires his welfare, he should not have stupid, inferior and men born from bad lineages by his side, those who are unable to control their senses. Those who are at the side must be men who are virtuous, accomplished, brave, learned, without malice, without meanness, pure and skilled. Those who are appointed outside<sup>984</sup> by the king must be engaged in the welfare of beings, forgiving, accomplished, naturally pure and satisfied with their own states. A person who is like a lion should always be by the side of a lion. If a person who is not a lion is with a lion, the lion does not obtain any fruits. If a lion is engaged in obtaining the fruits of its deeds, but that lion is surrounded by dogs, because that lion is attended by dogs, it is incapable of enjoying any of the fruits. O Indra among men! In this way, with brave, wise and extremely learned people, who are born in noble lineages, one is capable of conquering the entire earth. O supreme among those who employ servants! A lord of the earth must not collect servants who are without learning, without uprightness, without knowledge and without great riches by his side. The king must be attentive towards the servants he has ap-



pointed and assure them. These people will then be engaged in the tasks of their master and advance like arrows that have been released. Kings must always endeavour to protect their treasuries. The treasury is the foundation for kings. Ensure the foundation of the treasury. The stores must always be full and stocked with grain. Good people must be employed to take care of them. Have stores of riches and grain. Always engage servants who are skilled in fighting. Skill in the use of horses is also desired. Look towards kin and relatives. Be surrounded by friends and allies. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Be engaged in tasks that ensure the welfare of the city. I have spoken to you about the desired intelligence and wisdom. O son! The dog is an example before you. What else do you wish to hear?””

## Chapter 1448(120)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have said many things about the conduct of kings, about what has been indicated in the past by those who knew about rajadharma. You have recounted in detail the views of those virtuous ones who thought about these earlier. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am requesting you to again tell me about rajadharma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The protection of all beings is the supreme objective for kshatriyas. O lord of the earth! Listen to how this protection can be brought about. A peacock, the devourer of snakes, exhibits colourful plumage. Like that, a king who follows dharma and desires happiness should adopt many kinds of forms—fierceness, deceit, incapability of being controlled, truthfulness and uprightness. He should spiritedly stand amidst all of these. Whatever ensures welfare for a certain objective, that is the colour and form he should adopt. When a king can assume many different forms, even the subtlest of his objectives does not suffer. He must always hide his counsel and be dumb, like a peacock during the autumn. He must speak gently and his body must be smooth and handsome. He should be skilled in the sacred texts. He must make endeavours to guard the gates through which dangers penetrate, like waterfalls, and also be a refuge for brahmanas and virtuous people, when there is a shower of hail and rain.<sup>985</sup> Desiring prosperity, like the crest of a peacock, the king must hold aloft the flag of dharma. He must always wield the rod of chastisement and act attentively, paying attention to the income and expenditure of people, flying from one tree to another.<sup>986</sup> He must fling away insects from the flock with the feet.<sup>987</sup> When his own wings have grown, he should flutter them and cleanse himself. He must identify his enemy’s faults and cause agitation to his<sup>988</sup> wings. He must behave the way a peacock acts towards flowers in the forest.<sup>989</sup> He must seek refuge with lofty and prosperous kings who are like mountains, seeking shade and refuge in secret, while one is undetected.<sup>990</sup> Like a peacock submerging itself during the monsoon, undetected and alone in the night, he must go to his wives, following the qualities of the peacock. He must not take off his body armour and must always protect himself. He must not advance into snares and must avoid the nooses. Having destroyed the ground,<sup>991</sup> he must penetrate the dense forest again. Just as the peacock angrily kills the others who are poisonous<sup>992</sup> and does not allow them to reside with him, he<sup>993</sup> must kill the powerful<sup>994</sup> and deceitful ones who seek to injure him.

However, unlike the peacock, he must not always be addicted to desire. He must always collect wise people around him, like insects in the deep forest.<sup>995</sup> In this way, like a peacock, the king must protect his own kingdom. If he is skilled, he will adopt a policy that will enhance his own prosperity. He will use his intelligence to control himself and counter the enemy’s intelligence. The sacred texts give illustrations to indicate that one’s qualities are developed through intelligence. Considering one’s own strength, the enemy must be assured through conciliation. The intelligence must be used to reflect, since the intelligence provides counsel to one’s own self. One must be calm, devoted to yoga, intelligent and wise, thinking about what must be done and what must not be done. A learned one will keep his counsel hidden and speak only what should be spoken. If he is wise and as intelligent as Brihaspati, he will avoid inferior speech. His nature will be like molten steel, when it has been immersed in water.<sup>996</sup> The lord of the earth will follow the injunctions of the sacred texts to ensure that he himself, and everyone else, is engaged in the appropriate tasks. The inferior, the cruel, the wise, the brave, those who are skilled with money and others who are good with words must all be engaged in their respective tasks. Others who cannot be seen<sup>997</sup> must also be similarly appointed in tasks. They must all be made to follow their appropriate tasks, like notes on the taut strings of a musical instrument. One who acts in an affectionate way towards all beings, without acting against dharma, is as immobile as a mountain and everyone thinks of him as, ‘He is my king.’ He must look towards dharma and treat everything, pleasant or unpleasant, as equal, like the sun casting its rays and thus dispense judgement. He must appoint those who know about dharma, are middle-aged, without taints, in control of

their senses and mild in speech, bearing in mind their lineage, nature and country of origin. They must not be avaricious and must be learned. They must be controlled and devoted to dharma.

A king who wishes to protect dharma and artha must appoint these for all the tasks. In this way, he acts so as to become the refuge of those who have no refuge. In this way, he is impartially established and having used spies, is content. He must himself consider and act so that his anger and delight are not in vain. If he is firm in his own convictions, his treasury and the earth become full of riches. When the reasons behind his favours and his punishment are transparent, when he is protected and when his kingdom is protected, then that king is a king who knows about dharma. Like the sun rises over cows,<sup>998</sup> he must always look towards the kingdom. He must use his intelligence to know about mobile and immobile objects and will not suffer from any anxiety. The king's accumulation of riches must be appropriate to the time. When he milks the earth every day, he will be like an intelligent person who milks a cow without killing it. A six-legged one<sup>999</sup> gradually collects honey from flowers. In that fashion, the king must collect objects to build up his treasury. Anything that is in excess of the required store should be spent on dharma and kama. A king who knows about dharma must accumulate and also spend. He must never think that any wealth is a trifle. He must never disregard an enemy. He must use his intelligence to know himself and he must not trust those who are limited in intelligence. Perseverance, skill, self-control, great intelligence, patience, valour, knowledge about time and place and attentiveness, whether these are a little or a lot, are the eight kindling logs that lead to an increase in prosperity. When a fire is small but is sprinkled with clarified butter, it becomes larger. A single seed can become many thousand. Even if he hears that his income and expenditure are great, a learned one will not think that anything is too little. Whether the enemy is a child or an adult, or even if he is extremely old, he is capable of slaying a careless man. In the course of time, he can sever the root. Therefore, someone who knows about time is the best among kings. Whether the enemy is weak or strong, if he is driven by malice, he can take away deeds, become an obstruction in the path of dharma and, for a long period of time, take away one's valour.

Therefore, a self-controlled person does not ignore the enemy. The enemy must be weakened and one's own stores must be protected. Together with these objectives, dharma, artha and kama exist. An intelligent person does things that are beyond these. Thus, a king resorts to a person who is intelligent. Blazing intelligence destroys the powerful and protected by intelligence, strength increases.<sup>1000</sup> Through intelligence, a prosperous enemy can be made to decline. When one uses one's intelligence and then undertakes a task, this is praised. One who pursues all one's objects of desire is wise. If one possesses only a little bit of enterprise, one is weak in the body. Since he desires prosperity for his own self, he must fill the vessel, even if only a little is available. Therefore, a king who has been seized by the enemy must seek to obtain the foundation of prosperity from everywhere. Even if he has been afflicted for a long period of time, like a momentary flash of lightning, he will obtain honour. Learning, austerities, a great deal of riches—all of these are capable of being obtained with enterprise. The brahman dwells in the bodies of those who are enterprising. Thus, one should know that enterprise is the most important. The intelligent and spirited Shakra, Vishnu and Sarasvati always reside in all beings and, therefore, one must never disregard the body. An avaricious person must be slain with generosity. An avaricious person is always dissatisfied with the prosperity of others. All those who are avaricious may enjoy the qualities of deeds,<sup>1001</sup> but because they abandon dharma and kama, they eventually lose artha too. All those who are avaricious desire the riches, objects of pleasure, sons, wives and prosperity of others. All the sins exist in avaricious people. Therefore, the king must not accept avaricious people.<sup>1002</sup> A person born in an inferior lineage, if he is virtuous and wise, can be used to ascertain the undertakings and all the objectives of those who wish to cause injury. O Pandava! A minister must be known to follow dharma and must be capable of keeping a secret. O king! He must be learned, born in a noble lineage and capable of extending the kingdom. O god among men! I have recounted the ordinances of dharma. Use your intelligence to know and follow them. The king who uses his intelligence to follow these is a king who is capable of protecting the earth. Wrong policy that is against the ordinances, or many kinds of deceitful policy, can be seen to produce happiness. But that kind of king has no ultimate end. Nor is there supreme happiness in the kingdom. A king who allies with the virtuous is seen to soon slay enemies who are superior in wealth, intelligence, conduct, honour, endowments of good qualities, evident valour in battle and visible qualities.<sup>1003</sup> One must think of different ways of treading along the path of action and not turn one's mind to obstructions. A man who only looks at the sins<sup>1004</sup> does not obtain prosperity, superiority, great fame and riches. There may be two well-wishers who have been

drawn together by bonds of affection, but have later drifted apart. A wise person must know that the two have drifted apart and treat with great gentleness the friend who bears the greater load.<sup>1005</sup> I have recounted rajadharma to you. Using this and your intelligence, protect men. You will obtain auspicious fruits and happiness. Everything in the world is based on the supreme foundation of dharma.”

## Chapter 1449(121)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have recounted this eternal rajadharma. This is the lord’s<sup>1006</sup> great rod of chastisement and everything is established on this rod of chastisement—in particular, the gods, the rishis, the great-souled ancestors, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the pishachas and the mortals. In a fierce way, it resides in all the beings in this world. O lord! It pervades everything, is extremely energetic and is the best. You have said that everything that is seen in the worlds—gods, asuras and men, mobile and immobile objects—is touched by the rod of chastisement. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, I wish to know the entire truth about this. What is this rod? What is the rod like? What is its form? What is its nature? What is its soul like? How was it created? What is its image? How did it become a rod? When does the rod of chastisement, which causes injury to beings, awake? To protect, how does it remain awake, before and after?<sup>1007</sup> How was it known earlier? What are the signs of the rod later? Where is the rod based? What is its trajectory?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kouravya! Hear about the rod of chastisement and about why it amounts to judgement. In this earth, the rod is the only object through which everything is controlled. O great king! That is the reason judgement is also known by the name of dharma. If it is destroyed, how will beings, who wish to cause injury, be destroyed? That is the reason judgement is known as *vyavahara*.<sup>1008</sup> O king! In ancient times, right at the beginning, this was stated by Manu. ‘If the rod is applied well, treating the loved and the disliked equally, then he who protects the subjects in this way is alone like dharma himself.’ These words were spoken by Manu in ancient times.

“But even before that, at the time of creation, there were Brahma’s great words, mentioned by Vasishtha. These words were spoken before those other words were uttered, so the learned say that these were the earliest words.<sup>1009</sup> ‘In this world, judgement is spoken of as *vyavahara*. If the rod is applied well, the three objectives<sup>1010</sup> always flow from it.’ The supreme rod is divine in form, with trails like fire. He is as dark as the petals of a blue lotus. He has four teeth, four arms, eight feet and many eyes. The ears are conical and the hair stands upright. He is matted and possesses two tongues. His eyes are coppery and he is clad in the skin of the king of animals.<sup>1011</sup> The rod always sports this fierce and frightful appearance and is impossible to withstand. The sword, the club, the bow, the spear, the trident, the bludgeon, the arrow, the mallet, the battleaxe, the chakra, the spike, the staff, the cutlass, the javelin and whatever weapons exist in this world—the rod roams around and assumes their forms. The rod roams around, slaying and striking, piercing, severing, smashing, slicing, mangling and uprooting. O Yudhishtira! These names of the rod are recounted—Asi,<sup>1012</sup> Vishasana,<sup>1013</sup> Dharma, Tikshnavartma,<sup>1014</sup> Durasada,<sup>1015</sup> Shrigarbha,<sup>1016</sup> Vijaya,<sup>1017</sup> Shasta,<sup>1018</sup> Vyavahara, Prajagara,<sup>1019</sup> Shastra,<sup>1020</sup> Brahmana, Mantra, Shasta,<sup>1021</sup> Pragyavachana-gata,<sup>1022</sup> Dharmapala,<sup>1023</sup> Akshaya,<sup>1024</sup> Deva,<sup>1025</sup> Satyaga,<sup>1026</sup> Nityaga,<sup>1027</sup> Graha,<sup>1028</sup> Asanga,<sup>1029</sup> Rudratanaaya,<sup>1030</sup> Manujyeshtha<sup>1031</sup> and Shivamkara.<sup>1032</sup> The lord is the illustrious Vishnu and his sacrifice, the lord Narayana, whose great form is eternal and who is known as the great being. It is said to be Brahma’s daughters—Lakshmi, Niti<sup>1033</sup> and Sarasvati. Dandaniti is Jagaddhatri.<sup>1034</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The rod has many different kinds of forms—good and bad, happy and unhappy, dharma and adharma, strong and weak, good fortune and ill fortune, auspicious and inauspicious, with qualities and without qualities, with desire and without desire, season, month, night, day, moment, without favours and with favours, delight, anger, pacification, self-control, destiny, human endeavour, with salvation and without salvation, with fear and without fear, with violence and without violence, austerities, sacrifices, self-restraint, with poison and without poison, the end, the beginning, the middle, evil sorcery, deceit, intoxication, carelessness, pride, insolence, patience, good policy and bad policy, lack of strength and strength, respect and disrespect, change and status quo, humility, renunciation, the right time and the wrong time. O Kouravya! The rod has many different forms in the world—falsehood, knowing and not knowing, truth, faith and lack of faith, impotence, conduct, gain and loss, victory and defeat, sharpness and mildness, death, getting and

not getting, disagreement and agreement, tasks that should be done and tasks that should not be done, strength and weakness, malice and lack of malice, dharma and adharma, shame and lack of shame, success and failure, energy, deeds, learning, strength of speech and intelligence.

“Had the rod not existed, people would have crushed each other. O Yudhishtira! It is out of fear of the rod that they do not kill each other. O king! It is through the rod that the subjects are constantly protected. Therefore, a king who resorts to the rod obtains prosperity. O lord of men! It swiftly establishes good conduct in the world. Dharma, which is based on the truth, finds a foundation in brahmanas. Brahmanas are full of dharma and the best among them base themselves on the Vedas. Sacrifices result from the Vedas and sacrifices please the gods. If the gods are pleased, they always give it to Indra.<sup>1035</sup> If Shakra is pleased with the subjects, he gives them food. The lives of all beings always find a basis in food. Thus, subjects obtain a foundation and the rod watches over them. Because of these reasons, the rod manifests itself in kshatriyas. It remains awake and, always and eternally, protects subjects well. It is spoken of in eight names—Ishvara, Purusha, Prana, Sattva,<sup>1036</sup> Vitta,<sup>1037</sup> Prajapati, Bhutatma<sup>1038</sup> and Jiva.<sup>1039</sup> This rod certainly gives him<sup>1040</sup> prosperity. When strength is united with policy, five ingredients result—lineage, strength, wealth, advisers and wisdom. These are said to be the strengths. O Yudhishtira! There is another kind of strength that can be obtained from eight objects—elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, boats, workers, guides and spies. These are said to be the eight kinds of strength. When that eight-limbed army advances, it is united with elephants, elephant riders, horse riders, foot soldiers, ministers, physicians, mendicants, principal investigators, astrologers, readers of omens, treasuries, allies, foodgrains and all kinds of implements. The learned say that it is a body with seven ingredients and eight limbs.<sup>1041</sup> The rod is a limb of the kingdom and the rod provides the power. The lord made efforts so that kshatriyas could bear it. The rod is applied equally to everyone and the rod is the eternal soul. It shows the way towards dharma and there is nothing that kings should revere more. For the protection of the worlds and to establish people in their own dharma, the creator<sup>1042</sup> engendered this.

“Judgement comes after this and is seen to be united with it. It is also a characteristic that has been engendered by the creator. Judgement is said to be the soul of the Vedas and obtains its sanction from the Vedas. O tiger among men! While this is the foundation, there is another kind that originates with the ordinances of the sacred texts.<sup>1043</sup> The rod is said to exhibit the characteristics of the lord’s<sup>1044</sup> custom. It is known to be based on the customs through which the lord of men exercises the rod. What is seen to be the custom behind the exercise of the rod is said to be the soul of judgement. What is said to be judgement is also the soul of the subject matter of the Vedas. Whatever flows from the soul of the Vedas is said to exhibit the qualities of dharma. When something results from the dharma of customary practice, those with cleansed souls also regard that as dharma. O Yudhishtira! On Brahma’s instructions, judgement protects the subjects. It has truth as its soul, it upholds the three worlds and it extends prosperity. Where the rod cannot be seen, eternal judgement doesn’t exist either. We have heard that whatever is seen in the judicial process is dharma. Where the Vedas are, dharma exists there. Where dharma exists, the path of virtue is there. Brahma Prajapati was the first. He was the grandfather of all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras and the rakshasas, and with men and the serpents. He is the creator of everything that came into existence. Thus, this judgement flows from the characteristics of custom followed by the lord. That is how we have spoken about this example of the judicial process. If they are not established in their own dharma, the mother, the father, the brother, the wife and the preceptor are not beyond the exercise of the king’s rod.”

## Chapter 1450(122)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. There was a radiant king from Anga and he was famous by the name of Vasuhoma. The king was always engaged in virtuous acts of dharma and great austerities, together with his wife. He went to Munjaprishta, revered by large numbers of devarshis. The peak of Meru was in the golden mountains of the Himalayas. At Munjavata, Rama had instructed that the matted locks should be seized.<sup>1045</sup> Since then, the rishis, rigid in their vows, have referred to the region as Munjaprishta and it is frequented by Rudra. He dwelt there, always with much learning and qualities, and was respected by the brahmanas. He became like a devarshi.

“King Mandhata was an afflicter of enemies and Shakra’s esteemed friend. In a cheerful frame of mind, he once arrived there. As Mandhata approached King Vasuhoma, he saw that having performed excellent austerities, the latter stood humbly before him. Vasuhoma gave the king a cow and arghya and asked him if everything was well in his eight-limbed kingdom. Vasuhoma asked the king, who followed the codes of good conduct that had been laid down from ancient times, ‘What can I do for you?’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Mandhata, supreme among kings, was greatly delighted. Having taken a seat, he spoke to the immensely wise Vasuhoma. ‘O king! You have studied all of Brihaspati’s doctrines. O lord of men! The sacred texts of Ushanas are also known to you. I wish to hear from you about how the rod of chastisement was created. How did it first arise? Why is it said to be supreme? How did the rod come to be firmly established amidst kshatriyas? O immensely wise one! Tell me and I will give you the fees that should be given to a preceptor.’

“Vasuhoma replied, ‘O king! Listen to how the rod was created for the protection of the world and for maintaining and protecting subjects. It is the eternal essence of dharma. We have heard that the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, wished to perform a sacrifice and could not find an officiating priest who was his equal. The god then conceived a foetus and carried it within his head for many long years. After it had been borne for a full one thousand years, when he sneezed, the foetus fell out. O scorcher of enemies! Thus the Prajapati named Kshupa was created. O king! That great-souled one became the officiating priest at the sacrifice. O bull among kings! Thus Brahma’s sacrifice started. However, because of the cheerful form he had to adopt, the rod disappeared.<sup>1046</sup> When it vanished, the subjects were mixed up. There was no difference between what should be done and what should not be done and between what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. There was no difference between what should be drunk and what should not be drunk. How could there be success? They injured each other. There was no distinction between whom one should go to and whom one should not go to.<sup>1047</sup> One’s own property and that of others became the same. They snatched from each other, like dogs after meat. The weak were killed by the strong and no one exhibited any respect. At this, the grandfather worshipped the illustrious and eternal Vishnu, the god who grants boons, and spoke to the great god. “You must certainly show compassion towards these virtuous ones. Arrange it so that there is no mixing up here.” At this, the illustrious one meditated for a long time, holding a trident and wearing matted hair. From his own self, that supreme among gods created the rod. And from that was created the policy for observing dharma, the goddess Sarasvati. She was created and is famous in the three worlds as dandaniti. The illustrious one again meditated for a long time, with the trident, supreme among weapons. He made one person a lord over his respective dominion. The god with the thousand eyes became the lord of the gods. Vaivasvata Yama was made the lord of the ancestors. Kubera became the lord of riches and the rakshasas. Meru became the lord of mountains and the great ocean that of rivers. He decreed that Varuna should be the lord over the divine kingdom of the waters.<sup>1048</sup> Death became the lord of living beings and the fire of energy. The lord announced that Ishana<sup>1049</sup> would be the protector of the Rudras. Vasishta became the lord of brahmanas, the fire<sup>1050</sup> of the Vasus, the sun of energy,<sup>1051</sup> the moon of nakshatras and Amshuman<sup>1052</sup> of herbs.

The supreme lord instructed that Skanda Kumara, the one with twelve arms, would be the king of the spirits.<sup>1053</sup> Time became the one who pacifies, destroys and humbles everything and the lord of the four divisions of death<sup>1054</sup> and happiness and unhappiness. The lord of riches, the king of the yakshas, became the lord of all beings. It has been heard that the one with the trident in his hand<sup>1055</sup> became the lord of all the Rudras. There was that single son named Kshupa, who had been born from Brahma's mental powers. He was given the supreme lordship over all subjects and made the upholder of all kinds of dharma. When the sacrifice started, according to the proper rites, Mahadeva<sup>1056</sup> honoured Vishnu and gave the rod, the protector of dharma, to him. Vishnu gave it to Angiras. Angiras, supreme among sages, gave it to Indra and Marichi. Marichi gave it to Bhrigu. Bhrigu gave that rod, full of dharma, to the rishis. The rishis gave it to the guardians of the worlds and the guardians of the worlds gave it to Kshupa. Ksupa gave it to Manu, the son of the sun god. For the sake of preserving the subtleties of dharma and artha and to protect his own self, Manu, the son of the sun and the god of funeral ceremonies, gave it to his sons. It should be one's duty to apply the rod differentially, according to dharma, and not wilfully, using harsh words of censure, imprisonment, extracting bonds, fines of gold and expulsion. However, physical dismemberment and execution should not be used for trifling reasons, nor should physical punishment, corporal punishment and exile. Right from the beginning, the rod has been awake and has protected subjects. The illustrious Indra remains awake and after him it is Agni, the fire god.<sup>1057</sup> After Agni has remained awake, it is Varuna. After Varuna, it is Prajapati. After Prajapati, Dharma, who humbles souls, remains awake. After Dharma, it is eternal Vyavasaya,<sup>1058</sup> Brahma's son. After Vyavasaya, Tejas<sup>1059</sup> remains awake, for the cause of protection. The medicinal plants and herbs come after Tejas and the mountains after the plants and herbs. After the mountains, the juices and the qualities of the juices remain awake. After that, the goddess Nirriti<sup>1060</sup> remains awake and after Nirriti, it is the stellar bodies. The Vedas are established in the stellar bodies. After that, it is the lord Hayashira.<sup>1061</sup> After him, the undecaying Brahma, the grandfather, remains awake. After the grandfather, the illustrious Mahadeva Shiva remains awake. The Vishvadevas come after Shiva and the rishis after the Vishvadevas. The illustrious Soma<sup>1062</sup> comes after the rishis and the eternal gods after Soma. In this world, the brahmanas remain awake and take it up after the gods. After the brahmanas, kings follow dharma and protect the worlds. After the kshatriyas, it is the eternal mobile and immobile objects. The subjects remain awake in this world and the rod remains awake among them. The rod is the one who destroys everything and is a lord who is the grandfather's equal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the beginning, in the middle and at the end, time remains awake. Mahadeva Prajapati is the lord of all the worlds. The lord Shiva Sharva is the god of the gods and always remains awake. He is Kapardi, Shankara, Rudra, Bhava, Sthanu and Umapati. Thus, the beginning, the middle and the end of the rod have been recounted. A lord of the earth who knows about dharma must follow the proper conduct and policy.”

‘Bhishma said, “The man who listens to these views of Vasuhoma and having heard, acts properly in accordance with it, is a king who obtains all his desires. O bull among men! You have been told everything about the rod. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It controls all the people who transgress dharma.”’



## Chapter 1451(123)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I wish to hear what has been determined about dharma, artha and kama. All the advancements in the world are based on these three. What are the foundations of dharma, artha and kama and what is their power? They are sometimes connected with each other and sometimes, they exist separately.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When people are cheerful in their minds, having determined to pursue their objectives, these three originate in time and are united with each other. The foundation of the body is dharma, and artha is based on dharma. Kama is said to be the fruit of artha. Resolution is the foundation of everything and resolution is based on material objects. All the material objects find success in their being procured. These form the basis for the three objectives.<sup>1063</sup> Withdrawal is said to be moksha. Dharma protects the body and artha is desired for the sake of dharma. Kama leads to sexual pleasure. But all of these are nothing but dust.<sup>1064</sup> One should pursue whichever of these is nearby and not discard them in one’s mind. These begin with dharma and end with kama<sup>1065</sup> and one should renounce them only when one has freed oneself from the tamas quality. A man who is superior in his intelligence can obtain as much of these three objectives in an instant as a person of inferior intelligence can in an entire day. Dharma is stained by jealousy. Artha is stained by secrecy. Kama is stained by excessive addiction. Each quality can be excessively pursued. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Kamanda and Angarishtha. King Angarishtha greeted the rishi Kamanda when he was seated. Having observed the prescribed norms, Angarishtha asked him, ‘A king may be confounded by the force of kama and act sinfully. O rishi! When he repents those, how can the sins be destroyed? In ignorance, one may follow adharma, taking it to be dharma. How can a king restrain that which is practised among men?’

“Kamanda said, ‘A man who disregards dharma and artha and follows kama destroys his own wisdom, because he has abandoned dharma and artha. The confusion that destroys wisdom also destroys dharma and artha. From this is created bad conduct and the trait of not believing.<sup>1066</sup> When the king does not restrain wicked people of bad conduct, people think that this is as if a snake has entered the house.<sup>1067</sup> The subjects do not follow him. Nor do brahmanas and virtuous people. He confronts danger and may even be killed. When one is disrespected, even if one remains alive, the misery is like being dead. Remaining alive with dishonour is pure death. On this, the preceptors have talked about means of destroying sin. He must serve the three forms of knowledge<sup>1068</sup> and treat brahmanas well. He must be great-minded and follow dharma. He must marry into a great lineage. He must serve brahmanas who are spirited and forgiving. Having performed ablutions with water, he must meditate. He must be cheerful and not act in a contrary way. He must seek the companionship of those who follow dharma and avoid association with those who perform wicked deeds. He must placate them<sup>1069</sup> with sweet words and deeds and tell them, “I belong to you.” He must recount the good qualities of others. If his conduct is devoid of sin, he will quickly obtain great respect. There is no doubt that he will be able to negate all the wicked deeds that he has committed. What is stated by the seniors is supreme dharma. Act as they say. If you obtain the favours of the seniors, you will obtain the best and supreme objective.’”

## Chapter 1452(124)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O best of men! These people on earth always praise the good conduct that flows from dharma. However, I have a great doubt about this. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! If I am capable of understanding this, I wish to hear everything about this, exactly as it is comprehended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How can good conduct be ensured? I wish to hear this. What are its signs? O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O one who grants honours! O great king! In earlier times, Duryodhana was tormented at the sight of your prosperity, when he went to Indraprastha with his brothers. He was laughed at in the assembly hall.<sup>1070</sup> He told Dhritarashtra about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the account. Having witnessed your supreme prosperity in the assembly hall, Duryodhana seated himself and told his father everything. On hearing Duryodhana’s words, Dhritarashtra spoke these words to Duryodhana, who was with Karna. ‘O son! Why are you tormented? I wish to hear the truth about this. O destroyer of enemy cities! On hearing this, if it is proper, I will instruct you, so that you can also obtain great prosperity, with your servants, your brothers, all your friends and your kin. You cover yourself in excellent garments. You eat food mixed with meat. You are borne on good horses. O son! Why are you grieving?’

“Duryodhana said, ‘In Yudhishtira’s abode, ten thousand great-souled snatakas ate from golden vessels. His divine assembly hall is full of celestial flowers and fruit. There are speckled horses of the *tittira* breed. There are many kinds of gems. I saw all that. I saw the dazzling prosperity of the Pandaveyas, my enemies, and it was like that of Indra. O one who grants honours! On seeing this, I am grieving greatly.’

“Dhritarashtra replied, ‘O son! O tiger among men! If you desire prosperity that is like Yudhishtira’s, or superior to it, you must follow good conduct. O son! There is no doubt that the three worlds can be conquered through good conduct. For people who possess good conduct, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. Mandhata obtained the earth in a single night, Janamejaya in three days and Nabhaga in seven nights. All these kings possessed good conduct and self-control. Bought by their good qualities, the earth presented herself of her own accord. On this, an ancient history is recounted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, Narada spoke about good conduct. Prahara robbed the great-souled Indra’s kingdom. By resorting to good conduct, the daitya subjugated the three worlds. Shakra joined his hands in salutation and presented himself before Brihaspati. He said, “O immensely wise one! I wish to know about what is beneficial.” At this, Brihaspati gave him the knowledge that is best and supreme. O extender of the Kuru lineage! The illustrious one spoke about this to Indra of the gods. Brihaspati told him about what was best. However, Indra again asked him about what was superior to that.

“Brihaspati said, “O son!<sup>1071</sup> There is something that is greater than this. O fortunate one! O Purandara! Go to the great-souled Bhargava<sup>1072</sup> and he will tell you.”

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘The immensely famous one found out from Bhargava what was best for him. He was delighted at having obtained this knowledge and regained his supreme radiance. Having taken the permission of the great-souled Bhargava, Shatakratu again repeatedly asked Shukra about whether there was anything better. Bhargava, knowledgeable about dharma, told him that the great-souled Prahara possessed that superior knowledge. Delighted at this, the chastiser of Paka<sup>1073</sup> assumed the form of a brahmana and went to Prahara. The intelligent one said, “I wish to hear what is best for me.” Prahara told the brahmana, “O bull among brahmanas! I do not have the time. I am engaged in ruling the three worlds and cannot instruct you.” The brahmana spoke these words. “When will there be time? When there is a break in your work, I wish to be instructed.” At this, King Prahara, knowledgeable about the brahman, was delighted and agreed. At an auspicious time, he gave him that true knowledge. As is proper, the brahmana observed the supreme conduct towards the preceptor. In every kind of way, he did

all that he<sup>1074</sup> desired in his mind. He often asked him, “O scorcher of enemies! How did you obtain all these things? O one who knows about dharma! How did you obtain the kingdom of the three worlds? Tell me the reason.” Pahrada replied, “O best among brahmanas! I never show any malice. I never say that I am the king. O son!<sup>1075</sup> I control myself and implement what Kavya<sup>1076</sup> says. Anything said by the tranquil ones is always implemented by me. Without any malice, I am devoted to serving at Kavya’s feet. I possess dharma in my soul. I have conquered anger. I have controlled myself and have restrained my senses. I have collected the teachings of those who know about the sacred texts, like bees collecting *kshoudra* honey.<sup>1077</sup> I have licked the juices that have oozed out from the tongues of those eloquent ones. I have established myself amidst my species, like the moon amidst nakshatras. What has been stated by Kavya, when it flows from the mouths of brahmanas, is supreme sight and is like amrita on this earth. I have implemented what I have heard.” Pahrada told the one who was knowledgeable about the brahman that this was the best. Having been pleased with the servitude, the Indra among daityas spoke these words. “O supreme among brahmanas! I am pleased with your conduct towards your preceptor. O fortunate one! Ask for a boon. There is no doubt that I will give it to you.” The brahmana told the Indra among the daityas that he had already obtained one.<sup>1078</sup> Pahrada was delighted at this and asked him to take another boon. The brahmana replied, “O king! If you are pleased with me and wish to ensure my welfare, I wish to have the good conduct that you possess. Let me obtain this boon.” Though the Indra among the daityas was pleased at this, he also suffered from great fear. Since this was the boon the brahmana had asked for, he couldn’t be one with insignificant energy. Though Pahrada was astounded at this, he agreed to grant what had been asked for.

““When the boon had been granted and the brahmana had left, he was miserable. With the boon having been granted and with the brahmana having departed, he began to think a lot. O great king! However, he could not arrive at any conclusion. O son! While he was thinking in this way, an immensely radiant light emerged from his body. This shadow assumed a form made out of energy and left the body. Pahrada asked the immensely gigantic form, “Who are you?” It replied, “I am your good conduct. Since you have abandoned me, I will leave you. O king! I will go to that supreme among brahmanas, the unblemished one who was here as your disciple and was always devoted.” O lord! Having said this, it disappeared and penetrated Shakra. After that energy had gone, another image emerged from his body. “Who are you?” he asked. It replied, “O Pahrada! Know me to be dharma. I will go to that supreme among brahmanas. O Indra among daityas! Since good conduct has already gone there, so will I.” O great king! After this, more blazing energy emerged from the great-souled Pahrada’s body. “Who are you?” he asked. The immensely radiant one replied, “O Indra of the asuras! I am truth and I will follow dharma.” After this being had followed dharma, another being emerged. When this was questioned by the great-souled one, it replied, “O Pahrada! Know me to be behaviour. I will be where truth exists.” When it had gone, a giant and white form emerged from his body. Asked, it said, “Know me to be strength. I will be where behaviour exists.” O lord of men! Having said this, it went where behaviour had gone. A radiant goddess then emerged from the body. Asked by the Indra among the daityas, she replied, “I am Shri. O brave one! Because of your truth and valour, I dwelt happily with you. But I have been abandoned by you now and will go where strength is.” At this, the great-souled Pahrada was terrified. He asked her again, “O one who resides in a lotus! Where are you going? You are a goddess who is always devoted to the truth. You are the supreme goddess of the worlds. Who was that best among brahmanas? I wish to know the truth.” Shri replied, “That was Shakra, in the form of a brahmachari. He is the one who has been instructed by you. O lord! He has now robbed you of the prosperity of the three worlds. O one who knows about dharma! You conquered all the worlds through your good conduct. O lord! Knowing this, the great Indra has robbed you of your good conduct. O immensely wise one! Dharma, truth, behaviour, strength and I myself—there is no doubt that all of us find our foundations in good conduct.” O Yudhishtira! Having said this, Shri and all the others departed. Duryodhana again spoke to his father and uttered these words. “O descendant of the Kourava lineage! I wish to know the true nature of good conduct. Tell me the means whereby I can acquire good conduct.”

““Dhritarashtra said, ‘The means have earlier been instructed by the great-souled Pahrada. O lord of men! Listen briefly to how good conduct can be obtained. There must be non-violence towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and words. Compassion and generosity are praised as elements of good conduct. For one’s own sake, one must not commit a harsh act that causes injury to another. Nor should one ever do something that one is ashamed of. One should undertake those tasks that warrant praise in assemblies. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This is

said to be the accumulation of good conduct. Even if a king who does not have good conduct possesses Shri, he will not enjoy her for a long time. The roots will fall down. O son! Know this to be the true nature of good conduct. O son! If you desire prosperity that is superior to that of Yudhishthira, this is what you should do.”

‘Bhishma said, “O lord of men! This is what Dhritarashtra told his son. O Kounteya! If you act in this way, you will obtain the fruits.”’

## Chapter 1453(125)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have said that good conduct is the most important thing for a man. How does hope arise and what is its nature? Tell me this. O grandfather! This great doubt has arisen in me. O destroyer of enemy cities! There is no one other than you who knows the truth and can dispel this. O grandfather! I had a great deal of hope about Suyodhana. O lord! When war was near, I thought that he would act as he had been asked to. A great hope is generated in a man and it becomes everything. When that is destroyed, there is no doubt that he suffers a misery that is like death. The evil-minded and evil-souled son of Dhritarashtra destroyed all my hopes. O Indra among kings! I think that I have been foolish. I think that hope is greater than a mountain with all its trees. O king! Or perhaps it is as immeasurable as the sky. O best among the Kuru lineage! It is extremely difficult to understand it<sup>1079</sup> and it is extremely difficult to obtain. I can see that it is extremely difficult to obtain. Is there anything that is more difficult to obtain than that?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, listen to what happened. This is the history of what transpired between Sumitra and Rishabha. Among the Haihayas, there was a rajarshi named Sumitra and he went out on a hunt. Having pursued a deer, he pierced it with an arrow with drooping tufts. The deer was infinite in its valour. Despite being struck by the arrow, it continued to flee and the powerful king swiftly dashed after the deer. O Indra among kings! The deer quickly fled through a hollow and in an instant, began to run through flat terrain again. The king was young, enterprising and strong. With arrows, a bow and a sword, he pursued it, like a swan. He plunged through male and female rivers, lakes and woods. Having crossed through places that were difficult to cross, he chased it into a forest. As it desired, the deer sometimes showed itself to the king and sometimes hid itself from the king. It would then speed on, acquiring greater speed. He struck the resident of the forest with many arrows. O Indra among kings! But it seemed to be playing with him and would again approach near. The leader of a herd of deer would then again speed up, resorting to a greater speed. O Indra among kings! It would forge ahead and then again appear nearby. Sumitra, the destroyer of enemies, affixed a foremost and fierce arrow that was capable of penetrating the inner organs and released it from his bow. However, the leader of a herd of deer advanced far ahead, by a distance that was more than one *govyuti*,<sup>1080</sup> beyond the reach of the arrow. It then stood there, seeming to laugh at the king. The blazing arrow fell down on the ground.

“The deer entered a great forest and the king pursued it there. Having entered the great forest, the king approached a hermitage of ascetics. He was tired and seated himself. The assembled rishis saw him there, with the bow in his hand, exhausted, afflicted and hungry. Following the prescribed rites, they honoured him. The rishis asked that tiger among kings what he wanted. ‘O fortunate one! What is the reason behind your coming to this hermitage? O lord of men! Though you are on foot, you have girded your sword and have a bow and arrows. O one who grants honours! We wish to know why you have come here. What lineage have you been born in? Tell us what your name is.’ O bull among men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, the king told the brahmanas everything and also about the pursuit. ‘I have been born in the lineage of the Haihayas. I am Sumitra, the son of Mitra. I was roaming around, slaying herds of deer with thousands of arrows. I am protected by a large army and the advisers and women are with me. I pierced a deer with my arrow. But though pierced by my arrow, it ran away. While running after it as I desired, I arrived in this forest and near you. My prosperity has been destroyed. My hopes have been destroyed. My enterprise has also been destroyed. O ones who are rich in austerities! Having to abandon the signs of the kingship or giving up the city does not cause me as fierce a misery as the dashing of my hopes. The Himalayas, giant among mountains, the ocean, the great store of water are regarded as vast and so is the space between heaven and earth. O ones who are best in austerities! But I cannot see any boundaries to hope. O ones rich in austerities! Everything is known to you. You know everything. O immensely fortunate ones! I am

therefore presenting you with the doubt I have. Which seems to be greater in this world, the hope of a man, or the sky? I wish to hear the truth about this. Which is more difficult to obtain? O ones who are always engaged in austerities! If this is not a secret, tell me, without any delay. O bulls among brahmanas! If you do not regard this to be a secret, I wish to hear. However, if this causes a distraction in your austerities, I will desist. I do not wish my question to lead to a long discussion. These are the reasons I wish to hear the truth about this, in detail. You are always engaged in austerities and are extremely controlled. You should tell me.'”

## Chapter 1454(126)

‘Bhishma said, “Then, among those assembled rishis, a brahmana rishi named Rishabha, supreme among rishis, smiled and spoke. ‘O tiger among kings! O lord! In earlier times, I visited all the tirthas and arrived at the divine hermitage of Nara and Narayana. There is the *badari*<sup>1081</sup> tree there and the beautiful lake in the sky.<sup>1082</sup> O king! Ashvashira<sup>1083</sup> recites the eternal Vedas there. In those ancient times, I first rendered the recommended offerings to the ancestors and the gods in that lake. I next went to the hermitage. The rishis Nara and Narayana always find delight there. To find an abode, I went a little distance away from the hermitage. There, I saw an extremely emaciated rishi come towards me. He was dressed in rags and hides and he was extremely tall. He was a store of austerities and his name was Tanu. O mighty-armed one! O rajarshi! Many other men have the eight qualities his form possessed.<sup>1084</sup> But I have never seen anyone as lean as him. O Indra among kings! His body was as thin as a little finger. His neck, arms, feet and hair were extraordinary to see. His head was as large as his body and so were his ears and his eyes. O supreme among kings! His speech and movement were feeble. On seeing this extremely emaciated brahmana, I was scared and very distressed. I touched his feet and joining my hands in salutation, stood before him. O bull among men! I told him my name, my gotra and my father’s name. Then I slowly sat down on the seat he showed me. O great king! In the midst of those rishis, that supreme upholder of dharma recounted stories that were full of dharma and artha. While he was talking, a king arrived on swift horses, with his army and his women. His eyes were like blue lotuses and he was extremely distressed, thinking about his son, who had got lost in the forest. He was the father of Bhuridyumna<sup>1085</sup> and he was intelligent and immensely illustrious, born in Raghu’s lineage. The king said, “I will see my son here. It is here that I will see him.” In those ancient times, the king was roaming around, driven thus by hope. However, he also said, “It is also extremely unlikely that I will ever see the one who is supreme in dharma.<sup>1086</sup> I only have one son and he has perished in the forest. It is extremely unlikely that I will see him, but hopes run high. There is no doubt that I will die and cast aside my body.” Hearing these words, the illustrious Tanu, supreme among sages, lowered his head. For some time, he immersed himself in meditation. On seeing him meditating, the king was greatly distressed. Cheerless in his mind, he gently spoke these words. “O brahmana rishi! What is difficult to get and rarer than hope? O illustrious one! If it is not a secret, please tell me this.” In the past, because of his misfortune and stupid intelligence, the illustrious maharshi had been insulted.<sup>1087</sup> O king! The brahmana rishi had asked for some riches, a golden pot and some bark for clothing, but his hopes were belied and he was distressed. O supreme among men! Having spoken to the rishi, revered in the worlds, the one with dharma in his soul<sup>1088</sup> worshipped him. But he felt exhausted and sat down. The great rishi offered him arghya, water for washing the feet and showed the king all the due honours, as is recommended for someone dwelling in the forest.

““All the sages surrounded that bull among men.<sup>1089</sup> They honoured him and sat down, like the saptarshis around Dhruva.<sup>1090</sup> They asked the unvanquished king about the entire reasons behind his coming to the hermitage. The king said, “I am a king famous in all the directions by the name of Viradyumna. I have come to the forest to look for my son Bhuridyumna, who has got lost. O foremost among brahmanas! O unblemished ones! He is my only son. I have not seen him in the forest and am roaming around here.” Having been thus addressed by the king, the sage<sup>1091</sup> remained with his head lowered. He was silent and did not reply to the king. O Indra among kings! In the past, insolent because of his prosperity, the king had insulted the brahmana. With his hopes belied, he<sup>1092</sup> had engaged in austerities for a long time. He had resolved, “I will never accept anything from a king, or from any of the other varnas.” He had taken this pledge and had abided by it. “Hope agitates men who are foolish. I will fling it away.” The king said, “Can hope be made to wear thin? Is there anything else on earth that is more difficult to get? O illustrious one! You have seen the nature of dharma and artha. Please tell me.” Remembering

everything, the illustrious Tanu, emaciated in his body, reminded the king of the incident and said, “O king! There is nothing that is as emaciated as hope. O king! I have asked many kings and have found that nothing is as difficult to obtain.” The king said, “O brahmana! I have understood the purport of your words, about it being emaciated and also not emaciated<sup>1093</sup> and also about the difficulty of obtaining. O brahmana! Your words are the words of the Vedas. O immensely wise one! However, a doubt has arisen in my heart. O supreme one! I am asking you and you should tell me the truth about this. O illustrious one! Tell me, if it is not a secret, is there anyone more emaciated than you? O brahmana! In this world, is there anything that is more difficult to get?”<sup>1094</sup> Krishatanu<sup>1095</sup> replied, “It is rarer to find a petitioner who is satisfied with what he has got.<sup>1096</sup> O son!<sup>1097</sup> It is rarer to find a person who does not disrespect a petitioner. There are those who promise to help, but later, do not do so, to the best of their capacities, or do not help those who should be aided. However, even then, the hope that still remains in beings is thinner than I am. There may be a father with a single son who is lost, or absent from home. When one doesn’t know what has happened to him, the hope that still remains is thinner than I am. There are aged women who give birth. They, and rich people too, desire sons. O Indra among men! The hope that is in them is thinner than I am.” O king! Having heard this, the king and his women prostrated themselves and touched the feet of that bull among brahmanas. The king said, “O illustrious one! Through your favours, I desire to meet my son. O brahmana! If you so wish, follow the rites and please grant me this boon.” The king, with eyes like blue lotuses, spoke these words. “O brahmana! What you have said is true. There is nothing false in those words.” The illustrious Tanu, supreme among the upholders of dharma, laughed. Through his austerities and his learning, he instantly brought the son there. Having brought the son there, he reprimanded the king.<sup>1098</sup> He was supreme among the upholders of dharma and showed himself to be none other than Dharma. He exhibited his own self and it was divine and marvellous to behold. He was devoid of sin and devoid of anger and left for the nearby forest. O king! I saw this and I heard those words. Quickly drive away your hope, which is thinner than what he was.”

‘Bhishma said, “O great king! Thus addressed by the great-souled Rishabha, Sumitra swiftly flung away his hope, which was extremely thin. O Kounteya! You have also heard these words from me. O king! Be as firm as the Himalayas, supreme among mountains. You will see and hear those who are distressed because they pursue objectives. O great king! Listen to me. You should not be tormented.”’



## Chapter 1455(127)

‘Yudhishthira said, “As you have spoken, I have not obtained enough of this amrita. O grandfather! Therefore, speak to me again about dharma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Goutama and the great-souled Yama. Goutama’s great hermitage was on Mount Pariyatra and Goutama dwelt there for some time. Listen to this. Goutama tormented himself through austerities for sixty thousand years. The cleansed and ascetic sage performed severe austerities. O tiger among men! Yama, the guardian of the world, went to him there. As sage Goutama performed those excellent austerities, he looked at the rishi. Because of his energy, the brahmana rishi realized that Yama had arrived. The one who was rich in austerities joined his hands in salutation and advanced towards him. Dharmaraja<sup>1099</sup> looked towards that bull among men and bowed down before him. Dharma asked him, ‘What can I do for you?’ Goutama asked, ‘How can one free oneself of the debts due to the mother and the father? How can a man quickly obtain the auspicious worlds, which are so difficult to obtain?’ Yama replied, ‘Austerities, purity, constant devotion to truth and dharma, constant worship of the mother and the father are the tasks one should be attached to. One must perform many horse sacrifices, with dakshina for the officiating priests. A man will then obtain worlds that are extraordinary to behold.’”

## Chapter 1456(128)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There may be a king whose friends have abandoned him and who has many enemies. His treasury may have become depleted and his army may have been weakened. What happens to him? His advisers and aides may be wicked. All his secret counsel may have been divulged. His kingdom may gradually be weaned away and he cannot see any course of action. He is weak and may be attacked by a circle of stronger enemies. His kingdom may be in disarray. He may be ignorant about the time and the place. He is unable to use conciliation. And because he is afflicted, he cannot use dissension either. His life may seem to be without purpose. What is a good course of action then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have asked me about secret kinds of dharma.<sup>1100</sup> I did not wish to speak about this kind of dharma until I had been asked. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharma is more subtle than words and intelligence. If one has served those who have good conduct, and learnt from them, one can perhaps become virtuous. Using one’s intelligence to reflect on a task before undertaking it, one may, or may not, become prosperous. In that way, with respect to what you have asked, use your own intelligence to decide what must be done. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Using the instruments of dharma, there are many ways to advance towards the objective. Listen. If one considers dharma, I do not consider these kinds of action to be dharma.<sup>1101</sup> Prosperous people may bring hardships on themselves and subsequently, it may be held that this was inappropriate.<sup>1102</sup> One can be certain about the outcome of a course of action only after everything has been completed. Whenever a man always looks towards the sacred texts and obtains learning from them, that learning pleases him. If a man is not learned, a course of action may seem wrong. But it seems wrong because of lack of knowledge and that course of action can lead to prosperity. Without any doubt in your mind, listen to the words that I will speak. If the king’s treasury is exhausted, his army will decline. The king must try to build the treasury, like a person conserves water in a place where there is no water. This is dharma then, and when it is time, he can show compassion.<sup>1103</sup> These are the instruments of dharma that were followed by people in earlier times. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is one kind of dharma for those who are capable and another for those in distress. It is said that a treasury ensures dharma and intelligence is superior to dharma.<sup>1104</sup> One who is weak cannot find a means of sustenance by following dharma alone. However, since the acquisition of wealth does not occur in isolation,<sup>1105</sup> it has been heard that, in times of hardship, adharma may acquire the characteristics of dharma. But those who are learned and wise say that adharma results and subsequently,<sup>1106</sup> a kshatriya must act to heal this. Dharma must not be made to decline, but nor should one come under the subjugation of the enemy. Nor, because of the action undertaken, should one allow one’s own self to be destroyed. If one is destroyed, one can perform no act of dharma, either for one’s own sake, or for the sake of someone else. It is certain that one must use every means possible to preserve oneself. O son! This has been determined by those who are knowledgeable about dharma and skilled about the means of dharma. The sacred texts say that because of the valour in their arms, enterprise is the life of a kshatriya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a kshatriya’s means of sustenance have gone, why should he not take from everyone, with the exception of ascetics and brahmanas? It is like a brahmana in hardship officiating at the sacrifice of someone who should not be performing a sacrifice. There is no doubt that in such situations, food that should not be eaten can also be eaten. If someone is distressed, why should gates and paths be barred? If someone is distressed, he can escape through something that is not a door. However, even for a person whose treasury and army have been destroyed and who has been defeated by the entire world, a life of begging is not recommended, nor the livelihood of a vaishya or a shudra. One should first try for one’s own dharma, before adopting the livelihood of someone else. At first, one should think of that kind of livelihood to sustain life. However, if there is a disaster, one can then resort to the dharma and livelihood of others. When their means of livelihood

have been destroyed, even brahmanas are seen to do this. Why should there be any doubt about a kshatriya? This has already been decided. He should take from whoever possesses more and never allow himself to be destroyed. The kshatriya is known to be the slayer and protector of subjects. Therefore, to protect him, it is the duty of the relatives of the kshatriya to appropriate. O king! There is no livelihood that exists without violence. Even a solitary sage, active and roaming in the forest, cannot manage to do that. Nor can one remain alive by following the conduct of Shankha and Likhita. O best among the Kurus! If one desires to protect the subjects, this is especially the case. In times of distress, the king and the kingdom must protect each other. This must always be done and this is eternal dharma. In times of distress, the king protects the kingdom by flooding it with material objects. In a time of distress, the kingdom must also protect the king. When the kingdom suffers from hunger, the king must not hide his treasury, his army, his rod, his friends and anything else that he may have stored. Those who are learned about dharma say that seeds must be saved from one's own food.

“Shambara, who was great in his knowledge of maya, spoke about this. ‘When a kingdom goes into a decline, the life of that king is one of shame. If he knows about the words of Shibi,<sup>1107</sup> why should people be without a means of sustenance?’ A king’s foundations are his treasury and his army. The treasury is again the foundation of the army. It is the foundation of all dharma and dharma is again the foundation of the subjects. There cannot be a treasury without oppression and without it, how is it possible to have an army? Therefore, one does not deserve to be tainted because of oppression. If a task is undertaken for the sake of a sacrifice, or if rites are followed in the course of a sacrifice, then, because of these reasons, the king does not deserve to be tainted. There are acts pursued for the sake of artha and there are contrary acts pursued for the sake of what is not artha. Those which are for the sake of artha and those which are not for the sake of artha may all seem to have the signs of artha. An intelligent person will use his intelligence to consider all this and then determine the course of action. Some objects are of use in a sacrifice, others are of no direct use in the sacrifice and still others may be of use in obtaining the purpose of the sacrifice. But all these are ingredients in conducting the sacrifice. I will tell you about examples, to illuminate the true nature of dharma. A sacrificial post must be severed for the sake of the sacrifice and there are some other trees that stand in the way and obstruct it. It is certain that these must also be cut down. When these fall down, they bring down other trees too. O scorcher of enemies! In that way, there are men who stand in the way of building up a large treasury and without killing them, I see no means of success. Both the worlds can be conquered with riches, this one and the next. What is said about dharma is true—it does not exist where there are no riches. To meet the requirements of sacrifices, every method of obtaining riches must be used. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sins from doing the right thing and not doing the right thing are not equal.<sup>1108</sup> O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How can one follow neither of these two? I do not see people who extend their riches in the forest.<sup>1109</sup> A man desires whatever riches he can see in this world and hopes that it might belong to him. O scorcher of enemies! There is no dharma that is equal to the ruling of a kingdom. There is another kind of dharma that is recommended for kings who confront a hardship. Some acquire stores of riches through gifts and deeds, others are ascetics and do this through austerities, and still others choose intelligence and skills. It is said that one without riches is weak and one with riches is strong. One with riches can obtain everything. One with a treasury can overcome everything. The treasury provides dharma and kama, and this world and the next.”



## Section Eighty-five

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APAD DHARMA PARVA

*This parva has 1,560 shlokas and thirty-nine chapters.*

*Chapter 1457(129): 14 shlokas  
Chapter 1458(130): 21 shlokas  
Chapter 1459(131): 18 shlokas  
Chapter 1460(132): 15 shlokas  
Chapter 1461(133): 26 shlokas  
Chapter 1462(134): 10 shlokas  
Chapter 1463(135): 23 shlokas  
Chapter 1464(136): 211 shlokas  
Chapter 1465(137): 109 shlokas  
Chapter 1466(138): 70 shlokas  
Chapter 1467(139): 94 shlokas  
Chapter 1468(140): 37 shlokas  
Chapter 1469(141): 27 shlokas  
Chapter 1470(142): 44 shlokas  
Chapter 1471(143): 10 shlokas  
Chapter 1472(144): 12 shlokas  
Chapter 1473(145): 18 shlokas  
Chapter 1474(146): 18 shlokas  
Chapter 1475(147): 22 shlokas  
Chapter 1476(148): 35 shlokas  
Chapter 1477(149): 117 shlokas  
Chapter 1478(150): 36 shlokas  
Chapter 1479(151): 34 shlokas  
Chapter 1480(152): 32 shlokas  
Chapter 1481(153): 14 shlokas  
Chapter 1482(154): 38 shlokas  
Chapter 1483(155): 13 shlokas  
Chapter 1484(156): 26 shlokas  
Chapter 1485(157): 18 shlokas  
Chapter 1486(158): 13 shlokas  
Chapter 1487(159): 72 shlokas  
Chapter 1488(160): 87 shlokas  
Chapter 1489(161): 48 shlokas  
Chapter 1490(162): 49 shlokas  
Chapter 1491(163): 23 shlokas  
Chapter 1492(164): 26 shlokas  
Chapter 1493(165): 31 shlokas  
Chapter 1494(166): 25 shlokas  
Chapter 1495(167): 24 shlokas*

*Apad means a misfortune or a calamity. In such situations, the nature of dharma to be followed is different and Bhishma instructs Yudhishtira about this.*

## Chapter 1457(129)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He<sup>1</sup> may be weak. He may be a procrastinator. He may be excessively affectionate towards his relatives. The citizens of the city and the countryside may be disenchanted. He may be without supplies of stores. He may suspect the foremost people.<sup>2</sup> His secret counsel may be divulged. He may be assailed by the enemy. All his advisers may be divided. Despite being weak, he may have to advance against a stronger enemy. When his senses are agitated, tell me what else he can do.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The external one who seeks to conquer him may be pure and may be accomplished in dharma and artha. He should swiftly conclude an agreement and try to free those parts that have already been conquered. Even if the other person wishes to conquer through adharma, is more powerful and is wicked in his intentions, there should be an attempt to conclude a pact, even if this leads to restrictions on himself.<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, he can abandon the capital and use other means to avoid the calamity. Though that situation<sup>4</sup> continues, as long as he is alive, he can accumulate objects again. There are some calamities that can only be handled by giving up everything. However, no one who knows about artha and dharma should give up the more expensive possession of one’s own life.<sup>5</sup> One must protect oneself against being taken captive. How can one find compassion amidst the enemy’s riches? If it is possible, one must never give oneself up.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “Those inside may be enraged and those outside may cause oppression. The treasury may be exhausted. The secret counsel may be divulged. What remains to be done then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “One should be swift in concluding a pact, or one must be swift in exhibiting one’s fierce valour. Or one can swiftly retreat and protect oneself. O lord of the earth! A king can conquer the entire earth with a few soldiers, if they are devoted, nourished and cheerful. If he is slain, he will ascend to heaven. If he is victorious, he will gain the earth. If he gives up his life in the battle, he will obtain Shakra’s world. When he has conquered all the people, he must tread gently. If he cannot inspire trust in them through his humility, he should use his shoes.<sup>6</sup> He should retreat only when he wishes to. Should he desire to use conciliation, he should remove all signs from his own self and advance with a friend.””<sup>7</sup>



## Chapter 1458(130)

‘Yudhishtira said, “The supreme forms of dharma may not be available and people of diverse kinds may transgress it. Every means of sustenance on earth may have been taken over by bandits. O grandfather! When that worst of times arrives, how will a brahmana survive, assuming that out of affection, he does not abandon his sons and grandsons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “When such a time arrives, he should survive through the strength of his ability to differentiate.<sup>8</sup> Everything is for the virtuous. There is nothing for the wicked. If someone takes from the wicked and gives it to those who are virtuous, he is knowledgeable about all forms of dharma and ensures a passage for himself. O king! He can seize things that have not been given, thinking, ‘These riches are mine and I will give them away,’ as long as he does not do this wrathfully and does not cause outrage in the kingdom. If a person uses *vijnana* to purify his strength, even if he should be censured, he will not be censured, because he is patient and his conduct is based on *vijnana*. Those whose conduct depends on the exercise of strength find no other means appealing. O Yudhishtira! Their strength is enhanced through the use of energy. Medium people serve the dictates of the ordinary sacred texts, without any discrimination.<sup>9</sup> However, those who are intelligent adopt something that is beyond this. Officiating priests, priests, preceptors and brahmanas must always be treated well and worshipped. Acting contrary to this is a sin.<sup>10</sup> These are the norms of the world and the eternal foresight. This is the standard in which one must be submerged to determine if one is virtuous or wicked. Many who live in villages will angrily say things about each other. A king should not pay attention to these words and act on that basis.<sup>11</sup> Slander must never be spoken, nor heard. The ears must be covered, or one should go somewhere else. The conduct of virtuous people does not encompass slander and calumny. O Yudhishtira! Those who are virtuous only speak about the qualities of righteous people. Two well-trained draught animals, tamed and both capable of bearing an equal load, are good at bearing a burden. The king should be like that. He is the one who really bears the burden, aides come after that. Some think that conduct is the most important indication of dharma. Others do not like this and prefer *Shankha* and *Likhita* instead.<sup>12</sup> They do not speak such words out of malice or greed. There are *rishis* who have held that the perpetrators of wrong deeds must be exiled.<sup>13</sup> However, if someone is like a *rishi*, there are no norms for this. Perhaps the gods should punish these worst among men, who perpetrate perverse acts. If something is obtained through deceit, dharma suffers. Those who are virtuous must be honoured in every way, because they are the reason for prosperity. This must be accepted in one’s heart and it establishes dharma. He who knows about the four qualities that establish dharma is one who truly knows about dharma.<sup>14</sup> Like following a snake, it is extremely difficult to determine the path of dharma. When a deer is pierced, a hunter of deer follows in its footsteps by tracking drops of blood in the grass. That is the way one must follow the path of dharma. O one without decay! O Yudhishtira! You must follow the path of the virtuous with humility. Follow the conduct observed by the *rajarshis*.”



## Chapter 1459(131)

‘Bhishma said, “The king must generate his treasury from his own kingdom or the kingdoms of others. O Kounteya! Dharma results from the treasury and establishes the foundation of the kingdom. Therefore, the treasury must be generated and once it has been accumulated, it must be protected. Having protected, he must show compassion. This is the eternal dharma. The treasury cannot be generated through virtue and purity only, or through violence alone. To accumulate a treasury, one must follow a middle path. How can there be a treasury for someone who has no army? How can there be an army for someone who has no treasury? How can there be a kingdom for someone who has no army? How can there be Shri for someone who has no kingdom? For someone of superior conduct, the destruction of Shri is like death. Therefore, the king must increase the treasury, the army and friends. Men disrespect a king whose treasury has been destroyed. They are dissatisfied with little and are not interested in the work.<sup>15</sup> It is because of Shri that a king receives the greatest regard. It hides his sins, like garments hide the private parts of women. Men he has earlier injured follow him because of his wealth. They are like dogs,<sup>16</sup> finding delight in an opportunity to kill him. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! How can a king like this be happy?<sup>17</sup> The king must always show enterprise and not be languid. There is manliness in exertion. He must break at the joints, rather than bow down before anyone. He can resort to the forest and roam around with large numbers of bandits. However, he must not roam around with bandits who are against all restraints. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among the bandits, one can easily obtain soldiers who are fierce in their deeds. Everyone certainly trembles before a person who does not follow any restraints. Even bandits, who are without compassion, tremble before such a person. He must establish restraints and gladden the minds of people. Even a little bit of restraint is respected by the people. There are some people who have decided that this world and the world hereafter do not exist. One should not trust such a nastika. He is driven by doubt and fear. Bandits regard non-violence the same way as righteous people regard taking from others.<sup>18</sup> However, even among bandits, people find delight in agreements. The slaying of someone who is not a combatant, the ravishing of wives,<sup>19</sup> ingratitude, the seizure of the possessions of brahmanas, the complete destruction of everything and the abduction and confining of women—these are censured even among bandits. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since they avoid these, if one has a pact with them, one should not exterminate them completely. That has been determined. Instead of completely exterminating them, they should be brought under one’s subjugation. Because one is stronger, one should act violently towards them. O son! Those who exterminate them see their own extermination in every direction. Those who exterminate always have to suffer a fear because of that act of extermination.”’<sup>20</sup>

## Chapter 1460(132)

‘Bhishma said, “On this kind of deed, those who are knowledgeable about ancient accounts recite definitive words. For a kshatriya who knows, dharma and artha are immediately evident and one cannot separate them. But some working of dharma is indirect. ‘This is adharma.’ ‘That is dharma.’ Such statements are like the footprints of a wolf.<sup>21</sup> The fruits of dharma and adharma can never be seen. A strong person can use his strength to bring everything under his subjugation and prosper. A strong person obtains Shri, an army and advisers. One without wealth falls and is like a little bit of left-over food. However, even for a strong person, there are many inauspicious things and these ensure that he is not saved from fear. It is only those two<sup>22</sup> true foundations that save him from great fear. I think that strength is superior to dharma. Dharma results from strength. Dharma is established on strength, like mobile objects on the surface of the earth. Just as smoke is controlled by the wind, dharma follows strength. Just as a creeper depends on a tree, dharma provides strength to a weak person. Dharma is under the control of those who are strong, just as happiness is enjoyed by those who possess objects of pleasure. There is nothing that a strong person is not successful at. For the strong, everything is pure.<sup>23</sup> If a wicked person is weak in strength, his stature is reduced. Therefore, everyone is alarmed at him, as if he is a wolf. He is censured and dishonoured and lives a life of unhappiness. A life of humiliation is just like death. When people say that he has been cast aside because of his wicked character, he is severely tormented and is wounded by words that are like stakes. On this, preceptors have spoken about ways of freeing oneself from sins. He must serve the three kinds of learning<sup>24</sup> and tend to brahmanas. He must seek their favours through sweet words and deeds. He must be great-minded and marry into a noble family. He must recount the good qualities of others and say that he will be like them. He must meditate, perform the water-rites, be gentle and not talk a lot. Having performed many extremely difficult deeds, he should penetrate the ranks of brahmana and kshatriyas.<sup>25</sup> Even if many people reprimand him because of this, he should not pay any attention to it. If he does not commit wicked acts, through such conduct he will quickly become greatly respected. He will enjoy happiness and riches and must protect himself through his conduct. He will obtain worship in this world and great fruits in the hereafter.”’

## Chapter 1461(133)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. A bandit who followed restraints was not destroyed after his death. There was a ruler of the nishadas by the name of Kapavya. He was brave, intelligent and a striker. He was learned and was not violent. He protected dharma against any decline and worshipped brahmanas and seniors. His father was a kshatriya and his mother was a nishada. He protected the dharma of kshatriyas. Though he was a bandit, he obtained success. In the morning and in the evening, he would agitate herds of animals in the forest. He knew about different kinds of animals and about where they came to drink. He knew about all the different groves and regions and roamed around Mount Pariyatra. He knew about the dharma for all beings. His weapons were firm and he never missed his aim. He could single-handedly defeat hundreds of soldiers. In that great forest, he worshipped his aged and blind parents. He honoured them well and gave them food in the form of honey, meat, roots, fruit and grain that was superior and inferior. He tended to them. He protected the brahmanas who resided in the forest and passed through it. In that great forest, he brought them animals that he had killed. There were some who had doubts about receiving food from a bandit. For these, at the right time, he would leave it outside their houses and leave. There were thousands of dishonourable bandits who were pitiless. They desired to make him their leader.

“‘The bandits said, ‘You are wise and know about the time and the place. You have good conduct and wield firm weapons. You are respected by all of us. Be our leader and our chief. We will do whatever you ask us to. According to proper policy, protect us, like a mother and a father.’ Kapavya replied, ‘Do not kill women, those who are frightened, those who are children and those who are ascetics. Do not slay those who are not fighting. Do not forcibly abduct women. Under no circumstances should a spirited warrior slay a woman. Cattle and women should not be harmed and war must not be waged on their account. Grain must not be destroyed and one should not pointlessly create obstructions in ploughing, or in the worship of gods, ancestors and guests. Among all the beings, brahmanas deserve to be freed.<sup>26</sup> One must compensate them, even if one has to give up all of one’s property. If they are extremely enraged and chant their mantras, there is no one in the three worlds who will be saved and will not be defeated. A person who speaks ill of brahmanas or wishes for their destruction will be destroyed. This is as certain as the rising of the sun. Dwell here and receive the fruits. Those who do not give according to their capacity will be attacked by our soldiers. The rod has been intended for the sake of ensuring virtue. It is certain that it is not meant to inflict death. However, it has been said that if a person obstructs virtuous people, it is dharma to kill him. There are some who obtain a living by causing injury to the kingdom. They are compared to worms inside a carcass. However, even if someone is a bandit, if he conducts himself in accordance with the sacred texts of dharma, despite being a bandit, he will swiftly obtain success.’ All of them honoured Kapavya’s instructions. All of them obtained a livelihood and abandoned their wicked ways. Because of his deeds, Kapavya obtained great success. He acted so as to ensure safety for the virtuous and restrained the bandits from wicked deeds. If someone regularly recounts this conduct of Kapavya, he will never be afflicted by any fear from residents of the forest, or from beings. There will never be any fear from mortals or immortals, from the virtuous or the wicked. O king! He will be like a leader in the forest.”’

## Chapter 1462(134)

‘Bhishma said, “Those who are learned about the ancient accounts chant a verse that was sung by Brahma himself. This is a path through which a king can generate his treasury. ‘The wealth of those who perform sacrifices, have good conduct and are noble should not be taken, as it belongs to the gods.<sup>27</sup> A kshatriya should take from bandits and from those who do not perform rites.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These subjects are for kshatriyas, who must protect them and also receive from them. The wealth belongs to kshatriyas and not to anyone else. The wealth must be used for the sake of the army, or for the purpose of performing sacrifices. Herbs that are inedible are severed and used to cook stuff that is edible.<sup>28</sup> People who are learned in the Vedas say that wealth that is not used as offerings for the gods, the ancestors and mortals comes to no useful end. O king! A lord of the earth who follows dharma should take these riches away. O king! When it is like that,<sup>29</sup> it does not please the worlds and is not treasure. It must be taken away from the wicked and given to the virtuous. If someone makes himself into a bridge between the two, I think that person knows dharma. Some people say that here and there, herbs and animals may originate from injurious sources, but can nevertheless be used for sacrifices. Those who do not perform the rites of sacrifices are like flies that bite and like aggressive ants. That is what dharma pronounces. Dust and *ulapa* grass<sup>30</sup> can rise from the ground. Dharma is like that, subtle and subtler.”’

## Chapter 1463(135)

‘Bhishma said, “On this, listen to this supreme and foremost account. This is about procrastination in deciding what should be done and what should not be done. In a pond that wasn’t very deep, there were three *shakula* fishes who were friends. O Kounteya! Among the many other fishes that were there, these became companions. Out of these three that dwelt in the water, one knew when the right time had come, the second one was far-sighted and the third was a procrastinator. On one occasion, fishermen assembled around the pond. Using various outlets, they started to drain out the water to lower spots. On discerning that the water level was declining, the far-sighted fish told his two friends that a danger had arrived. ‘There is a disaster for all of us who dwell in the water. Let us quickly go somewhere else, before the path is destroyed. Those who follow good policy counter a danger before it has arrived. There is no doubt about this. We should decide to quickly go.’ The procrastinator replied, ‘What you have said is true. But it is my certain view that there is no need for us to hurry.’ The one with the right understanding spoke to the far-sighted one, ‘When it is the right time, I will not avoid doing anything that needs to be done.’ Having been thus addressed, the far-sighted and immensely intelligent one emerged through the single stream that still remained and went into a deeper body of water. When they saw that the water had been drained out from the pond, the fishermen, who earned a living off fish, used different methods to catch the fish. They fluttered around in the pond, which was without any water. Together with the others, the fish that was a procrastinator was captured. When he saw that the fish were being strung together on a rope, the one with the right understanding penetrated into the midst of the ones that had already been strung and seized the rope in its mouth, as if it had already been captured. They<sup>31</sup> thought that all the fish had been captured. They took the fish to a clean bit of water to clean them. The one with the right understanding let go of the rope and swiftly escaped. The procrastinator, evil-souled and inferior in intelligence and consciousness was stupid. It died because it was insensible.

“In that way, if someone is confused in intelligence and does not realize when the right time has come, he is swiftly destroyed, like the procrastinating fish. If a man thinks himself to be accomplished and does not do at the beginning what is beneficial, he faces a danger, like the fish with the right understanding. If a man acts so as to pacify a danger that has not yet come, he attains the best objective, like the far-sighted fish. The earth is said to be the place. *Kala, kashtha, muhurta, dina, nadya, kshana, lava, paksha, masa, ritus* that are equal, *vatsara*<sup>32</sup>—despite these, time cannot be seen. To obtain success, it is true that there must be good policy too.<sup>33</sup> This is what the rishis have taught in the sacred texts of dharma and artha and the sacred texts of moksha. They also determine the rules for the practice of kama among men. One must exam-

ine these properly before embarking on action. If one also considers the time and the place, one obtains the fruits from them.””

## Chapter 1464(136)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have talked about the best kind of intelligence, understanding what has happened and what will happen, and about the destruction that procrastination brings. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about supreme intelligence for a king, who is confounded because he is surrounded by enemies. You are accomplished in dharma and artha. You are wise. You are skilled in all the sacred texts. O best among the Kuru lineage! I am asking you this. You should explain it to me. What should a king who is encompassed by many enemies do? In accordance with the rules, I wish to hear everything about this. When a king confronts a disaster in the midst of an enemy, there will be many who will range against one and seek to injure him, because of what they have suffered earlier. There will be immensely strong ones acting against him and he will be alone, without allies. How will he be able to take a stand? O bull among the Bharata lineage! How will he know the difference between a friend and an enemy? How will he act against those who are neither friend, nor foe? How will he use his wisdom to discern signs that an enemy has become a friend? How will such a man act and how will he obtain happiness? Who should he fight with? With whom should he try for a pact? What should be the conduct of a weak person who is in the midst of the enemy? O scorcher of enemies! This is supreme among all the tasks that must be undertaken. Rare is the person who can speak about such things, with the exception of Shantanu’s son, Bhishma, who has conquered his senses and does not waver from the truth. A listener is also extremely difficult to get. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, you should tell me everything about all this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! This question is worthy of someone who possesses your qualities. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen completely to the secrets about a time of adversity. By employing the capabilities of different people in different tasks, an enemy can become a friend and a friend may find himself to be censured. There is always a change in objectives. One must know about the time and the place, determine what should be done and what should not be done, and then decide whom to trust and whom to fight. A wise person always seeks to have peace with those who wish him well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But, for the sake of protecting one’s life, there can be an alliance with the enemy. A man who is always against alliances is not learned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He does not obtain the objectives, or the fruits. If a person uses his reasoning to look towards the objectives and has an alliance with an enemy or counters a friend, he obtains extremely great fruits. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between a cat and a rat in a banyan tree.

“In a great forest, there was an extremely large banyan tree. It was covered with nets of creepers and was frequented by large numbers of diverse birds. Its trunks were like clouds and it offered cool and pleasant shade. Many predatory animals lived there, with enmity towards each other. There was a hole with one hundred mouths at the root of the tree and an immensely wise rat named Palita lived there. Earlier, a cat named Lomasha had happily dwelt in the branches, destroying the lives of the birds. Every day, when the sun had gone down, a *chandala* arrived there, having turned his mind towards enmity. He would spread out nets made of sinews there. Having done this, he would return cheerfully to his home and sleep, waiting for night to be over and for it to be morning. Every night, a large number of animals were always killed there. On one occasion, the cat was careless and got trapped there. At that time, the immensely wise Palita got to know that the enemy, who was always trying to kill it, had got trapped. It wandered around, without any fear at all. As it roamed around in that forest, assured in its roaming, it looked for some food and saw the meat.<sup>34</sup> It climbed up there and began to devour the meat. It laughed mentally, as it stood above the enemy who had got trapped. While it was engaged with the meat, it happened to look up and saw that another enemy had arrived, terrible in appearance. It used to lie down in a giant hole and was like Shraprasuna.<sup>35</sup> This was an agile mongoose named Harika and its eyes were coppery red. Having smelt the rat, it had swiftly arrived there. It stood on the ground and raised its face upwards, licking its lips at the prospect of a meal.

It<sup>36</sup> saw another enemy on a branch, one that lived in a hole in the trunk. This was an owl named Chandraka. Its beak was sharp and it roamed around during the night. It was within the reach of both the mongoose and the owl.

“In that situation, confronted with that great danger, it began to think. ‘Death has presented itself and this is a catastrophe and a great difficulty. There is danger from every side. What should I do to ensure my welfare? I am obstructed in every direction and every direction seems to be the same. Tormented by this fear, I will obtain the ultimate end. There are many difficulties and there is one chance in one hundred of my remaining alive. There is no doubt that disaster confronts me from every direction. If I descend on the ground, the mongoose will violently seize me. If I remain here, the owl will get me, or the cat, after it has severed the noose. However, a person who is wise should not be confused. As long as I breathe, I must try to remain alive. Those who are intelligent and wise and are accomplished in the sacred texts of good policy, are not scared when they face a danger or a great destruction of prosperity. At the moment, I do not see any means of attaining the objective other than the cat. That animal confronts a disaster and I can do him great service. How else can I remain alive now? There are three enemies who are after me. Therefore, I must resort to my enemy, the cat. I will use the knowledge of kshatriyas<sup>37</sup> and try to ensure its welfare. I have already made up my mind about how I am going to deceive these enemies. The worst of my enemies now faces this worst of hardships. If it is possible, perhaps this fool can be made to understand where his best interests lie. Given this difficulty, perhaps it may be made to have an alliance with me. If one is beset by enemies and if one wishes to save one’s life in the midst of a hardship, the preceptors have said that one must have an alliance with a stronger person. A learned enemy is superior to a stupid friend. The prospect of my remaining alive is based on my enemy, the cat. Let me explain to it the means whereby it can save itself. Perhaps this enemy of mine is intelligent.’ The rat knew about the time for fighting and the time for an alliance. It knew about artha and objectives.

“It spoke these conciliatory words to the cat. ‘O cat! Are you still alive? I am speaking these fraternal words to you. I wish that you should remain alive. That is best for both of us. O amiable one! You will remain alive, as you used to do earlier. I will save you and even give up my life for your sake. A way to save ourselves completely has presented itself before me. Through that, I am capable of saving you and also ensuring the best for me. Use your intelligence to reflect about the means I will suggest. This is good for you, good for me, and best for both of us. The mongoose and the owl are wicked in their intelligence. O cat! As long as they do not attack me, I am fine. But the shrieking one<sup>38</sup> and the owl with the darting eyes are both glancing towards me. As I am clinging to the branch of this tree, I am becoming extremely anxious. If one treads seven steps together, virtuous people become friends. You are learned. We have lived together. I will act so that you have no fear from death. O cat! Without me, you are incapable of severing this noose. If you do not injure me, I will sever this noose. You live at the top of the tree and I dwell at the root. Both of us have lived in this tree for a long time. All this is known to you. Someone who does not trust anyone and someone who trusts a person who should not be trusted—the learned say that these two are always anxious in their minds and should not be praised. Let the friendship between us increase and let this be an agreement between two virtuous ones. The learned do not praise something that is done after the time for it is over. Know that this is full of purpose and reason and this is the right time for it. I desire that you should remain alive. You desire that I should remain alive. If someone wishes to cross a deep and great river with a piece of wood, the wood takes him across, and he takes the wood across too. If we act together in this way, our safety will be certain. I will save you and you will save me.’ Palita spoke these words, which were full of purpose and beneficial for both of them. Having said this, it was impatient because time was being lost and looked on, hoping that the reasoning would be accepted. Having heard these excellent words, the cat, the learned enemy, replied in words that were full of reasoning and purpose and deserved to be accepted. It was intelligent and could speak well. Looking towards its own situation, it honoured the rat back in conciliatory words and applauded its speech. Its teeth and claws were sharp and its eyes were like lapis lazuli. Lomasha, the cat, gently looked towards the rat and said, ‘O amiable one! O fortunate one! I am delighted that you desire I should remain alive. If you know what is desirable, do it without any reflection. I am gravely afflicted, but you are in a situation that is direr still. Since both of us face difficulties, let us have an alliance. There is no need to think. The time has come. Let us act so that we can ensure our success. If you free me from this difficulty, I will not forget what you have done. I have cast aside my pride and have become devoted to you. I am like a disciple and will work for your welfare. I will follow your instructions. I have



sought refuge with you.’ When the cat said this and offered to be controlled, Palita again spoke some words that were beneficial and provided arguments and counter-arguments about policy. ‘The generous words that you have spoken are not unusual for someone in your situation. You know my ways. Listen to my words, which are for your benefit. The mongoose is giving me great fear and I will crouch under your body. Save me and do not kill me. I am capable of saving you. Also save me from the owl. That inferior one is also seeking to get at me. O friend! I will sever your noose. I am swearing this truthfully.’ As Palita came close, Lomasha heard these words, which were full of reason and purpose, and glancing towards it, cheerfully welcomed it with honour.

“‘Having thus honoured Palita, the cat, tied to it by a bond of friendship, thought about it patiently. Happily and quickly, it said, ‘O fortunate one! Come swiftly. You are a friend whom I love like my own life. O wise one! Through your favours, I will quickly get my life back. I will do whatever I can for you. Make it known to me. I will do whatever you order me to. O friend! We must have an alliance. Once I have been freed from this danger, with my large number of friends and relatives, I will do all the deeds that are for your benefit and bring you pleasure. O amiable one! Once I have been freed from this hardship, I will become yours. I will do whatever brings you pleasure. I am capable of paying you back.’ Having persuaded the cat that this was in its own interests, the rat was reassured that the objective could indeed be achieved and entered. Having been reassured by the intelligent cat, the rat fearlessly crouched under the cat’s chest, as if it was in the lap of a father or a mother. The rat was curled up under the cat’s body. On seeing this, the mongoose and the owl lost all hope and returned to their homes. Palita, knowledgeable about time and place, was curled up there.

“‘O king! Waiting for the right time, it slowly began to gnaw through the noose. Afflicted because it was tied up in those bonds, the cat glanced towards the rat. It asked it to sever the noose faster and faster. Palita was severing the noose slowly. The cat continued to urge the rat on. ‘O amiable one! Why are you not doing it faster? Do you not wish to accomplish the objective? O destroyer of enemies! Sever the noose before the *shvapacha*<sup>39</sup> arrives here.’ Having been thus urged to speed up, the intelligent Palita, accomplished in wisdom, spoke these beneficial words to the cat which was under its control. ‘O amiable one! Be quiet. There is no need to speed up for you, or to be frightened. We know about time and one should not laugh at time. If a task is started, or completed, at the wrong time, it does not accomplish the objective. If a task is started at the right time, it accomplishes great objectives. If you are freed at the wrong time, you will become a great danger to me. O friend! Therefore, we must wait for the right time. Why do you wish to rush? When I see the chandala coming, with a weapon in his hand, I will sever the noose then, since both of us will suffer from fear. At that time, you will be freed and will climb up the tree. There will be nothing except a desire to save your life then. O Lomasha! When you are trying to save yourself and are frightened and terrified, climbing up to your branch, I will enter my hole.’ Desiring its own welfare, the rat spoke these words to the cat. However, Lomasha was immensely eloquent and knew about the use of words. It desired its own life. Having itself acted swiftly and well, it spoke these words to the rat, which was not hurrying up. ‘This is not the way virtuous and affectionate people accomplish the tasks of their friends. When you faced a hardship, you were quickly freed by me. In that way, you should also swiftly do the task that ensures my welfare. O immensely wise one! Make efforts so that both of us are safe. Is it the case that you are remembering my earlier period of enmity towards you? Behold. That has indeed been a wicked act on my part. It is evident that it has led to a reduction in my lifespan. Earlier, in my ignorance, I may have acted in unpleasant ways towards you. You should not harbour that in your mind. I seek your forgiveness. Show me your favours.’ The rat was wise and was honoured because it was knowledgeable about the sacred texts. It spoke these excellent words to the cat. ‘O cat! I have heard the words that you have spoken to protect your own interests. You should also know about the preservation of my interests. If there is a friendship that results from fear, or if there is a friendship that is full of fear, then one must make great efforts to preserve it. It is like placing one’s hand near a snake’s mouth. If a person has an agreement with a stronger person and does not protect himself, he will find it causes him injury, like eating something that is unwholesome. There is no one who is truly an enemy. There is no one who is truly a well-wisher. Interests are bound to interests, like an elephant to a wild elephant.<sup>40</sup> When a task has been completed, no one looks to see who did it. That is the reason all tasks should be left with a little bit still undone. At that time,<sup>41</sup> your task will be determined by fear. You will be focused on running away and won’t be able to seize me. Most of the strands have

been severed. There is only one that is still left. O Lomasha! Restrain yourself. I will swiftly sever this.’ They conversed in this way, both overcome by fear.

“‘When the night was over, Lomasha was overcome by terror. It became morning and the chandala named Parigha could be seen, with a weapon in his hand. He was malformed and dark brown. His hips were broad. His head was shaven. He was rough and was surrounded by a circle of dogs. His ears were pointed and his mouth was large. He was aged and terrible in appearance. On seeing him, who looked like one of Yama’s messengers, the cat was terrified out of its wits. Frightened, it addressed Palita. ‘What will you do now?’ On seeing that terrible person, the mongoose and the owl were instantly scared and were filled with hopelessness. The two intelligent and strong ones had contracted an agreement and because of that good policy, could no longer be struck with force.<sup>42</sup> They saw that the cat and the rat had concluded an agreement for the sake of accomplishing their objectives. Therefore, the owl and the mongoose swiftly returned to their own homes. The rat severed the cat’s strand. As soon as it had been freed, the cat rushed up the tree. Not only was its terrible enemy freed, Palita was also freed from its fear and entered its hole. Lomasha went up the tree. The chandala looked in every direction and gathered up his snare. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His hopes having been destroyed, in a short instant, the chandala left the spot and returned to his own home.

“‘Lomasha was freed from the fear and obtained life, something that is very difficult to obtain. From the top of the tree, it spoke to Palita, in the hole. ‘Without having had a conversation with me, you suddenly ran away. I am grateful because you did something good for me. I hope you do not suspect me. You inspired trust in me and you gave me my life. When it is time to enjoy yourself with a friend, why are you avoiding me? If an evil-minded person has an agreement with a friend and does not follow it up later, then, when he faces difficulties, he will not find a friend. O friend! You made me a friend because of my capacity. Having made me a friend, you should now enjoy that friendship. All my friends and all my relatives will show you honour, like a disciple towards a beloved preceptor. I will also worship you, with my large number of friends and relatives. Why will a grateful person not honour someone who has given him life? You are the lord of my body and my home. All the riches that I possess are at your command. O wise one! Be my adviser. Instruct me, like a father. I swear on my life that you need have no fear of me. We may possess strength, but you are like Ushanas<sup>43</sup> himself in your intelligence. If your counsel is united with that strength, victory will be assured.’

“‘Having been addressed in these conciliatory words by the cat, the rat, who knew about supreme objectives, wished to ensure its own welfare and spoke these gentle words. ‘O Lomasha! I have heard everything that you have said. Now listen to the way I see it. Friends must be examined. Enemies must also be examined. In this world, this is seen in extremely subtle ways and is revered as wisdom. There are well-wishers in the form of enemies. There are enemies in the form of friends. Those who have been won through conciliation do not comprehend this, because they are subservient to affection and greed. No one is born as an enemy. No one is born as a friend. Because of their different capacities, they become friends and enemies. If it is seen that there is a selfish objective of someone being alive because another person is alive, then that other person is a friend, but only as long as there is no other catastrophe. There is no friendship that is permanent. There is no enmity that is permanent. Friendship and enmity result from a specific objective. In the course of time, a friend may become an enemy. An enemy may also become a friend. Self-interest is the most important. If a person does not know about the objective and trusts friends and never trusts enemies, his life becomes unstable. If a person does not know about the objective and turns his mind towards good conduct, regardless of whether it is a friend or an enemy, his intelligence is unstable. One should not trust someone who should not be trusted. One should not even trust someone who should be trusted. The dangers that arise from trust sever the roots. Relationships like father, mother, son, maternal uncle, nephew, matrimonial allies, relatives—all these are based on a purpose. A mother and a father abandon a beloved son who has fallen.<sup>44</sup> People protect their own selves. Behold the essence of selfishness. I think that you are deceitful in your wisdom. Immediately after being freed, you seek to ensure the happiness and safety of someone you should hunt. You descended from the banyan tree to this spot. Earlier, because of your fickleness, you did not realize that there was a snare here. Someone who is fickle cannot do something for his own self, forget others. There is no doubt that a fickle person destroys all tasks. You have spoken pleasant words and have said that I am loved by you. All of that is false. Listen in detail to the reasons. One becomes a beloved because of some reason. Enmity is also

because of a reason. In this world of the living, everything is for a purpose. There is no one who is always loved by another. Friendship between two brothers born from the same womb, the affection of a husband and wife towards each other—I know of no affection in this world that is without a reason. If a brother or a wife is enraged, after the immediate reason is over, they naturally become affectionate again.<sup>45</sup> However, other people do not turn affectionate in this way. Some become beloved because of gifts. Others become beloved because of words, and still others because of mantras and offerings. People are loved to accomplish some task. Affection results from a reason. When the reason is absent, it is no longer there. When the reason ceases to exist, the affection also withdraws itself. What reason can I think of, so that I might be your beloved? We should know that there is no connection beyond my being your food. Time changes the reason and self-interest is followed. I am wise. I know about self-interest and accept that people follow it. You should not speak such words to someone who is learned and knows about self-interest. This is the wrong time. There is no longer a catastrophe. You must therefore have reasons of self-interest. I am driven by self-interest and know that war and peace are both fickle. From one moment to another, they change their forms, like clouds. You were my enemy. Later, you became my friend. You have again become my enemy. Behold the fickleness of objective. As long as there was a reason, there was friendship. The reason has now gone and we have gone back to earlier times. With the progress of time, the reason has also gone. You are my ultimate enemy and circumstances made you my friend. With that task having been accomplished, we have returned to our natural enmity. I know the truth about what the sacred texts have laid down. How can I then enter the snare that you have set for me? I have been freed through your valour and you have been freed through my valour. We have favoured each other through our conducts and there is no further association between us. O amiable one! You have accomplished your objective. My purpose has also been met. You have no other purpose with me, other than eating me. I am the food and you are the feeder. I am weak and you are strong. When we are unequal in strength, there can be no alliance between us. I honour your wisdom. Immediately after being freed, you wish to assure me of happiness and safety and wish to hunt and devour me. You were caught because you were in search of food. Having been freed, you have ventured out for food. I know about the sacred texts. You are seeking an alliance with me because you certainly wish to eat me. I know that you are hungry and that it is the time for you to eat. You are seeking an alliance with me, because you wish to hunt and eat me. O friend! You have sons and wives and are looking towards me. You say that you wish to act so as to serve me. But I don't find that appealing. If your beloved wife and sons see me with you, will they be cheerful at this affection? Will they not eat me up? I will not associate with you. The reason for our association is over. If you remember the good deed I did for you, think of what will be auspicious for me now. Will a wise person venture out of his territory when a natural enemy is afflicted and hungry and is hunting for food? May you be safe. I will go far away from you. O Lomasha! Retreat. I will not associate with you. Proximity with someone who is powerful is never praised. O wise one! I must always be terrified of stronger ones, even if they are peaceful. If there is anything else that I can do for you, tell me what I should do for you. I will give everything that you desire, but I will never give up my own self. To protect one's own self, offspring, a kingdom, jewels and prosperity can be given up. For the sake of protecting one's own self, everything should be given up. We have heard that it has been seen that prosperity, wealth and gems, even if they are presently with enemies, return if one acts so as to remain alive. It is said that riches and jewels can be given up, but not one's own self. The self must always be protected, even at the cost of wives and riches. If men act so as to protect the foundations of their lives, having examined the reasons properly, they do not confront any catastrophes that result from their own sins. If the weak know the stronger enemy well and have made up their minds to protect themselves, they cannot be dislodged from that resolution.' Thus did Palita speak these words of censure.

“The cat was ashamed and spoke these words to the rat. ‘I honour your wisdom and the fact that you are devoted to my welfare. You have spoken words that are full of reason, though my views have been different. O virtuous one! But you should not take me to be other than what I am. You have truly granted me my life and my affection results from that. I know about dharma. I know about the qualities. In particular, I am grateful. I am affectionate towards my friends, especially those who are like you. O virtuous one! Given these reasons, you should not avoid me. If you avoid me, I, and all my relatives, will give up our lives. I am spirited and the wise have said that words of censure are enough to instruct people like me. You know about the nature of dharma. You should not suspect that I might be the cause of your death.’ Having been thus praised by the cat, the rat thought and spoke these grave

and purposeful words to the cat. ‘You are virtuous and I have heard the words of reason you have spoken to me. Though I am pleased, I do not trust you. By praising me, or by offering me riches, you won’t be able to get me to associate with you. O friend! The wise do not subjugate themselves to the enemy. On this, there was a verse sung by Ushanas. Listen to it. “If one has had an agreement with a more powerful enemy to achieve a common end, one must act in a controlled way. Once the task has been accomplished, one should not trust. In every situation, one must protect one’s own life. All one’s possessions and offspring exist only as long as one is alive. In brief, the supreme view of all the texts about policy is that one should not trust. Therefore, if one desires the welfare of one’s own self, one must completely distrust men.<sup>46</sup> Those who are weak, but do not trust, are not killed by their enemies. But if they trust, even the relatively strong are quickly slain by the weak.” O cat! Thus, I must always protect my own self from someone like you. You must also protect yourself from the chandala, whose anger has been generated.’ As it was speaking in this way, terror arose in the cat and it swiftly entered its hole. Palita knew about the true purport of the sacred texts and was full of intelligence and capacity. It was wise. Having said all this, it went to another hole. Palita was wise and intelligent, though weak. Because of this, though alone, it was able to overcome many other immensely strong enemies. A learned person must have an alliance with a capable enemy, just as the rat and the cat resorted to each other and escaped.

“I have instructed you about the path to be followed in the dharma of kshatriyas. O lord of the earth! I have recounted it in detail. Listen to it briefly again. Those two were firm in their enmity towards each other, but acted with supreme affection. They then turned their minds towards subjugating each other. However, by resorting to the strength of its intelligence, the wiser one subjugated the other one. But if care is not exercised, a wiser person can be subjugated, even by someone who is not learned. A person who is scared must act as if he is not scared. Even if he does not trust, he must act as if he trusts. One must be careful and not be fickle. If one is fickle, one is destroyed. There is a time for allying with enemies. There is a time for fighting with friends. O Yudhishtira! Those who know about the truth have said that one must always act in this way. O great king! Having thought about this, having understood the purport of the sacred texts and having engaged oneself with care, one must act fearfully, before the cause for fright presents itself. One must determine one’s action as if one is frightened and decide on counters. Intelligence results from fear, provided that one engages oneself with care. O king! There is no fear for a person who is frightened of fear that hasn’t materialized. However, a great fear is generated for a person who is not frightened, but is careless. One must never offer the counsel, ‘Do not be scared.’ That leads to ignorance. If one knows, one can go to those who know about a means to get out of the hardship. A person who is scared must therefore act as if he is not scared. Even if he does not trust, he must act as if he trusts. Having comprehended the gravity of the task, he must not indulge in any falsehood. O Yudhishtira! In this way, I have recounted the history to you. O son! Having heard in the midst of these well-wishers, act accordingly. Use your intelligence to first know the difference between an enemy and a friend, the time for war and peace and means of escaping from a difficulty. For a common objective, one must have an alliance with a stronger enemy. One must associate and act in accordance with the agreement. However, having accomplished the objective, one must not trust. O Yudhishtira! This policy is not against the three objectives.<sup>47</sup> Having been instructed and heard, delight the subjects again. O Pandava! Along your path, advance with the brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas bring the greatest benefit, in this world and in heaven. O lord! They know about dharma and are always grateful. O lord of men! They are auspicious in their deeds and if revered first, ensure victory. O king! The kingdom is the supreme goal. After that, as is proper, in due course, you will obtain fame, deeds and offspring in the lineage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a king knows about these excellent words about war and peace, full of specific intelligence, he should always look towards them and practise them, when that king is encircled by enemies.”

## Chapter 1465(137)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O mighty-armed one! You have counselled to the effect that the enemy must never be trusted. But if he trusts nobody, how will the king conduct himself? O king! If he trusts, there is a great danger to the king. O king! But if he does not trust, how will a king triumph over his enemies? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! Dispel this confusion in my mind, which has arisen after you have told me the account about distrust.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kounteya! O king! Listen to the account of the conversation that took place in Brahmadata’s abode between Brahmadata and Pujani. In the inner quarters of Brahmadata’s palace in Kampilya, a bird named Pujani dwelt for a long time. Like the *jivajivaka* bird, she knew about the cries of all beings.<sup>48</sup> She knew everything. Even though she had been born in an inferior species, she knew about all forms of dharma. There, she gave birth to an immensely radiant son. At the same time, through the queen, the king had a son. Every day, she<sup>49</sup> would go to the shores of the ocean and bring back two fruits to nourish her son and the prince. She would give one fruit to her son and the other to the prince. The fruits tasted like amrita and increased strength and energy. Having eaten the fruit, the prince grew very fast. Once, he got away from the hands of the nurse and began to play with the bird. O Indra among kings! Having taken the bird,<sup>50</sup> which had been born at the same time, to a deserted place, he killed it and returned to his nurse’s arms. After having returned from collecting fruit, the bird saw her dead son lying down on the ground, killed by the child. She was distressed on seeing her slain son and her face became full of tears. Pujani was tormented by grief and spoke these words. ‘There is no affection or friendship in association with kshatriyas. They serve you for a purpose. Having accomplished the objective, they abandon you. Kshatriyas should never be trusted. They injure everyone. Having caused the injury, they always seek to pointlessly placate. I will now act in the same way and exact vengeance. He is ungrateful. He is violent. He has destroyed my trust. He has committed a triple sin by killing someone who was born and reared with him, someone who ate with him and someone who sought refuge with him.’ Having said this, she used her talons to tear out the eyes of the king’s son. Once she had torn these out, Pujani was comforted and again spoke these words. ‘If a sin is perpetrated voluntarily, it immediately devolves on the doer. However, if a deed is done in reaction to another deed, it doesn’t destroy good or bad merit. Even if such a wicked deed is perpetrated, it doesn’t descend on the doer. Instead, it descends on the sons, the sons’ sons and the daughters’ sons.’

“‘Brahmadatta said, ‘We committed an injury against you and you have taken a counteraction. Both of us are now equal. O Pujani! Stay with me and do not go.’

“‘Pujani replied, ‘When one has injured someone else, the learned do not praise remaining there. It is better to withdraw from there. O king! Even if there are words of conciliation, one cannot trust someone with whom there has been an act of enmity. A foolish person will soon comprehend that enmity is never pacified. Once there is enmity towards each other, sons and grandsons are dragged into it. Once the sons and grandsons are destroyed, it carries over to the world after death. Under every circumstance, distrust of those towards whom there is enmity brings happiness. One must never act so as to trust such a person. Otherwise, trust itself will be destroyed. One should not trust someone who should not be trusted. One should not even trust someone who should be trusted. If you so desire, you can make others trust you. But you must not trust others. The mother and the father are the best among relatives. The wife is wear and tear<sup>51</sup> and the son is nothing but a seed. The brother is an enemy and the friend possesses a moist hand.<sup>52</sup> One’s atman alone knows happiness and unhappiness. If there has been enmity towards each other, an alliance is not possible. The purpose behind my staying here has been transgressed. If a person who was earlier terrified by strength has committed an injury, and is now worshipped with riches and honour, he will always be distrustful. A spirited person who was earlier respected and is now dishonoured should no longer dwell in a



place where he was first respected and subsequently dishonoured. For a long time, I dwelt in your abode without suffering any injury. But an enmity has arisen now. May you be happy. I will go elsewhere.'

"Brahmadatta said, 'If one acts as a reaction to an act that has been committed, that is not reckoned as a crime. You have freed yourself of a debt. O Pujani! Stay with me and do not go.'

"Pujani replied, 'An alliance can never again be forged between someone who has been injured and someone who has caused the injury. The hearts of the one who has been injured and the one who has done the injury know this.'

"Brahmadatta said, 'There can again be friendship between someone who has been injured and someone who has caused the injury. It has been seen that the enmity has been pacified and there has been no further wicked act.'

"Pujani replied, 'Enmity can never be overcome. One must not be assured because there has been conciliation. It is childish to believe in trust. Therefore, it is better that I should not be seen. There are those who cannot quickly be seized through extremely sharp weapons, but are captured through conciliation, like elephants with other elephants.'

"Brahmadatta said, 'Dwelling together leads to affection, even towards someone who may cause one's death. They trust each other, like the shvapacha and the dog. Even among those who have been enemies, dwelling together leads to gentleness. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, that enmity does not linger.'

"Pujani replied, 'The learned ones know that enmity arises from five causes—resulting from women, resulting from dwelling places, resulting from words, resulting from rivalries and resulting from injuries. In particular, the kshatriya must kill a person who causes any of these. Considering the place, the strength and other such things, he does this covertly or overtly. Therefore, one must never trust someone against whom an injury has been committed, even if he used to be a well-wisher. The enmity will remain concealed, like fire hidden inside wood. O king! Like Ourva's fire in the ocean,<sup>53</sup> the fire of an enmity is never pacified, be it through riches, punishment, conciliation or teaching. O king! Once the fire of enmity has been ignited and there has been an act of injury, it is not pacified without burning down one of the two parties. If a person has earlier committed an injurious act, even if he is worshipped with riches and honour, he will not find peace or trust. His act gives force to his fear. I have never committed an injurious act towards you, nor you towards me. The trust was earlier unblemished. I no longer have that trust.'

"Brahmadatta said, 'Every act is done by time and so are all the different kinds of action. Since everything is undertaken by time, who has injured whom? Birth and death occur in the same way. All deeds are undertaken by time and the one who is alive is only an instrument. Some are killed at the same time, others one after another. Time consumes beings, like a fire that has received kindling. O beautiful one! In what we do towards each other, I, nor you, are the principal agents. Time always determines the happiness and unhappiness of living beings. Following time, dwell here with affection. You will not be injured. O Pujani! I have forgiven what you have done. Pardon me.'

"Pujani replied, 'If time is the principal agent, then there would never have been any enmity. When a relative has been killed, why do other relatives seek vengeance? In earlier times, why did the gods and the asuras strike each other? If time determines happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence, then, when someone is ill, why do physicians use medicines? If time does the healing, what is the need for medication? If one is senseless with great sorrow, why does one lament? If time is the principal agent, why does dharma accrue to a doer? Your son slew my son and was injured by me. O lord of the earth! After that, I deserve to be captured by you. Because of sorrow over my son, I committed a sin towards your son. Listen to the truth from me. I deserve to be struck by you. Men seek out birds to kill or to sport. There is no third association, other than killing and capture. Because of fear of being slain or being captured, there are those who try to escape. Those who are learned about dharma say that there is unhappiness in death and calamity. Everyone loves his life. Everyone loves his sons. Everyone wishes to avoid misery and calamity. Everyone desires happiness. O Brahmadatta! Old age is misery. The destruction of riches is misery. Misery is dwelling with someone who is injurious. Misery is separation from something one wants. There is misery in enmity and captivity, or in violence and acts caused by women. People are always whirled around between unhappiness and happiness. Some foolish people say that there is no misery in another person's sorrow. But there will be such speculation only among gentlemen who have experienced no grief. How

can someone who has sorrowed and has been afflicted with grief speak in this way? A person who knows about the essence of all misery knows that one's own self is no different from another person. O king! O scorcher of enemies! What I have done towards you and what you have done towards me are incapable of being expiated over one hundred years. Because of what we have done towards each other, there cannot be an alliance. Whenever you repeatedly remember your son, there will be a new enmity. Having performed an injurious act, if someone wishes to act affectionately, there can be no alliance with him. It is like an earthen pot that has been shattered. Those who know the purport of the sacred texts have determined that distrust leads to the rise of happiness. In earlier times, Ushanas chanted two verses to Prahrada. "He who trusts the words, true or false, of an enemy, is slain, like those who believe in honey are snared by dry grass."<sup>54</sup> The enmity in a family is not pacified for ten yugas. Even if one man remains in the family, this is spoken about." Kings may hide their enmity and resort to conciliation. But later, they crush the enemy, like a full pot against a rock.<sup>55</sup> O king! One must never trust a person against whom one has committed an evil act. Having injured the other person, one only reaps misery from the trust.'

"Brahmadatta said, 'Without trusting others, one can never accomplish the objectives. If one is always terrified, it is like being dead.'

"Pujani replied, 'When there are wounds in the feet, one can only creep along on those feet. Even if those feet are guarded well, one cannot run on them, even for a brief moment. If a person has sore eyes and looks at the wind, it is certain that his eyes will be wounded even more by the wind. If, because of confusion, a person has resorted to a bad path and does not know his own strength, his life will come to an end. If a man ploughs the field without knowing about the rain, his endeavour will be inferior and no crops will be reaped. If a person always eats food that is beneficial, regardless of whether it is bitter, astringent, tasty or devoid of taste, he will be like one who is immortal. If a man does not know the consequences and ignoring wholesome food greedily eats something else, that is the end of his life. Destiny and human endeavour exist and depend on each other. Deeds are resorted to by the enterprising and destiny by the impotent. One must do deeds that are good for one's own self, regardless of whether they are harsh or mild. He who is not devoted to action will always be devoured by some disaster. Therefore, whenever there is doubt over an act, one must exhibit one's valour. Men must give up everything and perform acts that are good for their own selves. Those who are learned say that knowledge, bravery, skill, strength and patience are five natural friends and make things happen in this world. It is said that men can obtain residences, metals,<sup>56</sup> fields, wives and well-wishers everywhere. A wise person is always delighted and is always radiant. He does not frighten anyone. Even when there is an attempt to terrify him, he is not scared. If a person is intelligent, his wealth always increases, bit by bit. He bases himself in self-control and undertakes his tasks through skill. Men of limited intelligence are tied to their houses by bonds of affection. They have bad wives who devour their flesh, like female crabs and young crabs.<sup>57</sup> Other men are deficient in intelligence and think of homes, fields, friends and their own country as belonging to them. But one must flee from a country that is afflicted, or is plagued by disease and famine. One must always go and dwell elsewhere and live there, always respected. Therefore, I will go elsewhere. I do not wish to dwell with you. O king! What has been done by your son cannot be accepted. One must keep a bad wife, a bad son, a bad king, a bad relative and a bad country a great distance away. There is no trust in a bad friend. How can there be pleasure in a bad wife? There can be no growth in a bad kingdom. There can be no livelihood in a bad country. There can be no association with a bad friend, because that friendship will always be fickle. When there is a monetary disaster, a bad relative becomes disrespectful. One who speaks pleasantly is truly a wife. One who provides growth is truly a son. If there is trust, one is truly a friend. If there is a livelihood, that is truly a country. Though the king is fierce in his rule, there is no exercise of force. He<sup>58</sup> cherishes the poor and does not avoid an association with them. The wife, the country, friends, sons, allies and relatives—all these possess qualities, and the king has the eye of dharma. A king who is careful and rules is the foundation of the three objectives.<sup>59</sup> The subjects who do not know about dharma are restrained and head towards their destruction. A tax can be imposed and one-sixth can be collected as tax. However, a king who does not protect the subjects well is nothing but a thief. If a king himself grants assurance but does not act according to that norm, he is wicked. He will collect the adharma of all the people and go to hell. If a king grants assurance and acts according to that norm, he is known as one who protects the subjects according to dharma and grants every kind of happiness. Prajapati Manu said that a king possesses seven attributes—father, mother, preceptor, protector, Agni, Vaishravana<sup>60</sup> and Yama. By

exhibiting compassion towards the subjects, the king is the father of the kingdom. A man who behaves falsely towards him is reborn as inferior species. By nourishing those who are distressed, he is like a mother. Like Agni, he consumes wicked ones. By controlling, he is like Yama. By releasing objects of desire, he is like Kubera, the one who grants wishes. Like a preceptor, he instructs about dharma. He protects like a protector. When the king delights the residents of the city and the countryside with his qualities, he protects with his attributes and with dharma and is not dislodged from his kingdom. He himself knows about the rites followed in the city and the countryside. That king enjoys happiness, in this world and in the next. If the subjects are always anxious and oppressed by the burden of taxes, or overcome by various calamities, then he<sup>61</sup> will head towards destruction. When his subjects prosper, like large lotuses in a pond, he attains greatness in the worlds and enjoys a share in the fruits of all sacrifices. O king! Strife with a strong person is not praised. If one is seized by a stronger person, how can there be a kingdom? How can there be happiness?”

‘Bhishma said, “The bird spoke these words to King Brahmadata. With the king’s permission, she then headed for her desired direction. This was the conversation between Brahmadata and Pujani. O best among the Bharata lineage! I have recounted it to you. What else do you wish to hear?”’



## Chapter 1466(138)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! When the yugas progress and dharma decays, when the world is afflicted by bandits, how should one establish oneself?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about the policy for times of calamity. At such a time, the lord of the earth should conduct himself by abandoning compassion. On this, there is the example of an ancient history. There was a conversation between Bharadvaja and King Shatruntapa. King Shatruntapa was a maharatha from Souvira. He approached Kaninka<sup>62</sup> and asked him about his notion of artha. How can one obtain something that has not been got? Having obtained it, how can it be increased? When it has increased, how can it be protected? When it has been protected, how can it be used? The brahmana had determined the nature of artha.

“When he was asked about his determination of artha, he spoke these words, full of reason, in reply. ‘He<sup>63</sup> must always raise the rod of chastisement. He must always exhibit his manliness. He must not have any weaknesses. He must look towards the weaknesses of others, searching for openings. On seeing that the rod is always raised, people will be extremely frightened. Therefore, all beings must be restrained with the rod. This is praised by learned people who have seen the truth. Out of the four, the rod is said to be the most important.<sup>64</sup> When the foundation has been severed, all those who earn a living from it are also killed. When the root of a tree has been severed, how can the branches remain? A learned person first strikes down the root of the enemy’s side. After this, he makes all the aides and the allies<sup>65</sup> follow him. At a time of difficulty, without thinking about it, he must follow good counsel, show great valour, fight well and retreat well. He must be humble only in his words. His heart must be like a razor. He must first speak mildly, abandoning desire and anger. To accomplish an objective, he can have an alliance with a rival, but must not trust him. Having accomplished the objective, a clear-sighted person will quickly withdraw from the alliance. Assuming the guise of a friend, the enemy must be assured through conciliation. But one must always be careful about the enemy, since he is like a snake which has entered the house. If the intelligence of the other person can be overwhelmed, he must be conciliated with what has already happened. If the other person is not wise, he can be conciliated with the future. And a learned person can be conciliated with the present. If he<sup>66</sup> desires prosperity, he must join his hands in supplication, take pledges, resort to conciliation, bow down his head at the time of speaking and even shed tears. As long as the time of calamity continues, the enemy can be borne on the shoulder. But when the right time arrives, he<sup>67</sup> must be smashed, like an earthen pot against a rock. O Indra among kings! It is better to blaze for a short period of time like ebony, than to burn without smoke for a long period of time, like chaff of grain. If one knows about the nature of artha, it is futile to associate with an ungrateful person. Such a person only enjoys the riches and is disrespectful when the task has been accomplished. Therefore, in all tasks, something must be left incomplete.<sup>68</sup> To ensure the best for himself, he must act like a cuckoo, a boar, Mount Meru, an empty house, a predatory beast and an actor.<sup>69</sup> He must always be ready to rise up and go to the house of the enemy. Even if the enemy is not well, he must ask him about his welfare. Those who are lazy, those who are impotent, those who are proud, those who are scared of the disapprobation of people and those who are perennially waiting, never accomplish their objectives. The enemy must not know about his weaknesses. But he must know about the weaknesses of the enemy. He must protect his own weaknesses, like a turtle hiding its limbs. Like a crane, he must think of accomplishing his objective.<sup>70</sup> Like a lion, he must show his valour. He must be like a wolf in attacking. In running away, he must be like a rabbit. Drinking, gambling with the dice, women, hunting, singing and musical instruments can be indulged in, but any addiction is sinful. The bow can be made to resemble a blade of grass and he can sleep like a deer.<sup>71</sup> He should be blind when it is best to be blind and he can even resort to being deaf. A discerning person resorts to valour when it is the right time and the right place. If valour does not pay heed to time and place, it is unsuccessful. He must think about the right time and the wrong time, about his

strengths and his weaknesses. He must engage himself only after he has discerned the relative strengths. Having made an enemy bow down through the use of the rod, if a king does not restrain him, he is clinging to death, like a pregnant she-mule.<sup>72</sup> A tree with many flowers may bear no fruit. A tree with fruit may be difficult to climb. Sometimes, a mango may seem to be unripe, or cannot be shaken down. The hope should be appropriate to the time and one must not engage oneself if there is an obstacle. The obstacle is due to a cause and he must speak about the reasons that are behind those causes. As long as the reason for the fear has not presented itself, he must seem to be frightened and seek to counter it. Once the fear is seen to have presented itself, he must fearlessly strike against it. A man will not see anything fortunate as long as he does not surmount an uncertainty. If he surmounts the uncertainty, if he remains alive, he will see the fortune. He must know about what has not yet come. He must sever the danger that has presented itself. However, having pacified it, he must act so as to control it, in case it does not decay, but grows again. When the time for happiness has presented itself, those who are intelligent do not think it is good policy to shun it, in the hope of future happiness. A person may have an alliance with an enemy and sleep, happily and trustfully. He is like a person who sleeps atop a tree and awakens only when he falls down. As long as one is capable, whether the task is mild or terrible, one must uplift oneself and act in accordance with dharma. He must tend to all the rivals of his rivals. He must know his own spies and those engaged by the enemy. Spies must be well-appointed in their tasks, in his country and in that of the enemy. Wicked men and ascetics must be made to enter the enemy's kingdom. They act against dharma, are wicked in their conduct and are like thorns to people.<sup>73</sup> They frequent gardens, pleasure grounds, watering places, dwelling houses for travellers, drinking houses, brothels, places of pilgrimage and assemblies. Knowing that they have come, he must control and pacify them. He must not trust a person who should not be trusted. He must not even trust someone who should be trusted. Danger results from trust. One must not trust without examination. Having generated the enemy's trust through assertions of truth and reason, at the right time, when his<sup>74</sup> position is somewhat unstable, one must strike back. He must suspect even those who should not be suspected. He must always suspect someone who should be suspected. There can be danger from someone who should be suspected and its root must be severed. Having generated the enemy's confidence by not striking him, silence, ochre robes, matted hair and garments of hides, he must then leap on him, like a wolf. For the sake of increasing prosperity, those who created obstructions in the way of wealth must be slain—even if it is a son, a brother, a father, or a well-wisher. If there is an arrogant preceptor who does not know the difference between what should be done and what should not be done, and has thus deviated off the path, the rod must be used to chastise him. He must give his enemy gifts. But then, like a bird with a sharp beak, he must rise against him and destroy all his riches. Without having pierced the inner organs, without having performed terrible deeds and without having killed like a fisherman, one does not obtain supreme prosperity. No one is born as an enemy. No one is born as a friend. Depending on capacity and circumstances, one becomes a friend or an enemy. An enemy must not be freed, even if he is lamenting piteously. One should not grieve after having killed someone who has caused an earlier injury. However, he must always act without malice and endeavour to accumulate and show favours. In a desire for prosperity, he must also endeavour to punish. Before striking, he must speak pleasantly. After striking, it should be even more pleasant. If the head has to be struck down, he must weep and sorrow. If he desires prosperity, he must placate the enemy, comfort him, show him honour and patience and give him reasons for hope. One should not create enmity over minor matters. One should not try to cross a river using one's arms. The eating of a cow's horn is a pointless exercise. One's teeth are ground down and no juices are obtained. The three objectives have three evils and three bonds.<sup>75</sup> Knowing the bonds that can tie one down, one must avoid the evils. A debt that is not repaid, a fire that has not gone out and an enemy who is not eliminated, repeatedly keep on growing. Therefore, even a trifle becomes difficult to resist. A debt that keeps on increasing and an enemy who has been defeated can lead to terrible calamity, like a disease that is ignored. One must always be careful and complete the task well. When a thorn is not properly cut out, it can create pain for a long time. The enemy's kingdom must be destroyed by killing the men, devastating the roads and destroying the mines. The king must not be anxious and must be as far-sighted about the future as the vulture, as active as the dog, as valorous as the lion, as sceptical as the crow and have a movement like that of the snake. He must seed dissension among the foremost members of the groups and placate those who love him. He must protect the advisers and ensure that they do not create dissension and opposition. He will be disrespected if he is mild. He will be hated if he is fierce. He

must be fierce at a time when fierceness is required and mild at a time when mildness is required. Mildness can be used to kill those who are mild. Mildness can also be used to kill those who are terrible. There is nothing that cannot be obtained through mildness. Therefore, mildness is superior to fierceness. He must be mild at times and terrible at other times. In this way, his tasks become successful and he becomes superior to the enemy. When a learned man is against him, he must not be reassured simply because that person is a long distance away. An intelligent person has long arms and can be injurious, if he has been harmed. He must not cross when the other shore cannot be reached. He must not take what can be seized back again.

## Chapter 1467(139)

‘Yudhishtira said, “When the supreme forms of dharma decay and are transgressed by all the people, adharma transforms into dharma and dharma goes into adharma. Boundaries are broken down and the determination to follow dharma is agitated. O lord of the earth! The world is oppressed by kings and thieves. All the ashramas are confused and the duties are destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Fear is seen from desire, confusion and avarice. O king! Everyone is always distrustful and frightened. They use fraud to kill and deceive each other. The country is ablaze and brahmanas are afflicted. The rains do not shower down. Dissension and strife arise. All the means of sustenance on earth are taken over by bandits. When that terrible time arrives, how does a brahmana survive? O lord of men! Because of extreme compassion, he may be unwilling to give up his sons and grandsons.<sup>77</sup> O grandfather! How will he conduct himself? Tell me that. How will the king conduct himself when the world has been rendered impure? O scorcher of enemies! How can artha and dharma be prevented from decaying?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! The king is the foundation for the people to obtain yoga, kshema, good rains and lack of fear from disease and death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have no doubt that the king is the foundation of everything in krita, treta, dvapara and kali. When a time that causes confusion among subjects arrives, one must live on the basis of the strength of discernment. On this, an ancient history is recounted. It concerns a conversation between Vishvamitra and a chandala in the hut of the chandala. O king! In ancient times, in the intervening period<sup>78</sup> between treta and dvapara, it was ordained by destiny that there should be a terrible drought for twelve years. At the end of the yuga, subjects became extremely aged. As treta gave away and dvapara took hold, the thousand-eyed one<sup>79</sup> did not rain. Jupiter<sup>80</sup> moved in a retrograde direction. The moon abandoned its characteristics and moved along a southern path. There was no dew at the end of the night. There were no collections of clouds. The flow of water in the rivers became less and in some places, it disappeared. Because of destiny, the natural condition and beauty of lakes, rivers, wells and springs were destroyed. The water in waterbodies dried up and water was no longer distributed.<sup>81</sup> There were no sacrifices and recitations of svadha. All the auspicious sounds of vashatkara also ceased. Agriculture and animal husbandry were destroyed. Shops and markets disappeared. There were no assemblies of people and all the great festivals vanished. Bones and skeletons were strewn around. The place was frequented by large numbers of demons. Most of the cities were emptied. Villages and habitations were burnt up. Sometimes, this was because of thieves. Sometimes, this was because of weapons. Sometimes, this was because of oppressive kings. They were afraid of each other and the desolate spots were also generally empty. No resolutions were made to the gods. The old and the young were abandoned. Cows, goats and buffaloes fought against each other<sup>82</sup> and perished. Brahmanas were killed. There was an end to protection. The stores of herbs were destroyed. The men and the earth turned almost brown then. O Yudhishtira! At that fearful time, dharma was in decay. All the mortals were hungry and ate each other. The rishis abandoned their rituals. They abandoned the sacrificial fire and the gods. They abandoned their hermitages and ran around, here and there.

“The illustrious maharshi Vishvamitra was without a house.<sup>83</sup> The intelligent one was afflicted by hunger and wandered around in every direction. On one occasion, in the forest, he came upon the houses of violent shvapachas, who killed animals and ate their flesh. The place was strewn with broken pots and the hides of dogs. There were heaps of shattered bones from boars and asses. There were pots made of skulls. It was strewn with garments of the dead and ornamented with used garlands.<sup>84</sup> The huts were decorated with garlands made from the cast-off skins of snakes. The temples bore flags made out of the feathers of owls. There were iron bells and the place was surrounded by packs of dogs. Afflicted by hunger, the great rishi, Gadhi’s son, entered there. He made great efforts to search for some food there. Though he was begging for alms, Koushika could find nothing there.<sup>85</sup> There was no meat, rice, roots or fruit, or anything else. Koushika thought, ‘Alas! A great hardship has come upon me.’ Because

of his weakness, in that hamlet of the chandalas, he fell down on the ground. O supreme among kings! The sage thought, 'Do I have any good merits left? How can I avoid a pointless death?' O king! The sage then saw some dog meat hung out from a rope in the chandala's house, from an animal that had just been killed by a weapon. He thought, 'I must steal this now. Other than this, there is no other means for me to remain alive. In a time of catastrophe, it has been determined that even an especially distinguished person can steal. It has been determined that this must be in succession, from an earlier category to the next. One must first take from someone who is inferior and then from someone who is equal. If these are impossible, one can take from an eminent person, even if he follows dharma. I will therefore take it from those who live on the outside fringes. I do not see any sin in this theft. I will steal the meat.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having used his intelligence to determine this, Vishvamitra, the great sage, began to sleep at the spot where he had fallen down. When he saw that it was night and everyone in the chandala hamlet was asleep, the illustrious one arose and gently entered the hut.

"The chandala was asleep. His eyes were covered with mucus. His voice was broken and harsh and he was unpleasant to look at. He asked, 'When the hamlet of the chandalas is asleep, who is stirring the rope? I am awake. I am not asleep. I am terrible and I will kill you.' At these sudden and forceful words and anxious at the prospect of his actually doing this, he replied, 'I am Vishvamitra.' The chandala heard these words from the maharshi who had perfected his soul and was terrified. He leapt up from his supine position. Tears flowed from his eyes.

"He joined his hands in salutation, showed a great deal of honour and told Koushika, 'O, brahmana! What do you wish to do here in the night?' Vishvamitra assured Matanga<sup>86</sup> and replied, 'I am hungry and have almost lost my life. I will steal the dog's haunch. The breath of my life is ebbing away. The hunger is destroying my memory. Though I know my own dharma, I will steal the dog's haunch. Despite begging everywhere, I could find no food until I saw some in your house. Then I turned my mind to sin. I will steal the dog's haunch. A thirsty person will drink dirty water. There is no shame for someone who is looking for food. Hunger destroys dharma. I will steal the dog's haunch. Agni is the priest and the mouth of the gods and the illustrious one's footsteps are clean. Just as the one who devours everything still remains a brahmana, know that so will I, according to dharma.' The chandala said, 'O maharshi! Listen to my words. Having heard me, act accordingly, so that dharma is not made to decay. The learned say that dogs are the worst among animals. The worst part of the body is said to be the thighs and the haunches. O maharshi! You did not act properly when you decided to commit this perverse deed. You should not steal from a chandala, in particular, food that you should not eat. Look towards some other means so that you may be successful in remaining alive. O great sage! Do not destroy your austerities because of this greed for meat. You know that this is a forbidden path. You should not act so as to mix up dharma.'<sup>87</sup> O supreme among those who know about dharma! You should not abandon dharma.' O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, the great sage, Vishvamitra, afflicted by hunger, again replied in these words. 'I have been running around for a very long time, without any food. There is no other means for me to remain alive. If one faces a hardship, one should do whatever is possible to remain alive, and if possible, act in accordance with dharma. Indra's dharma is from kshatriyas and Agni's for brahmanas. The brahmana Agni is my strength and I will eat at the time when I am hungry. One should unhesitatingly act so as to remain alive. It is better to be alive than dead. One can follow dharma only if one remains alive. In my desire to remain alive, I will also eat what should not be eaten. I have used my intelligence to determine this earlier. Grant me permission. I am following the dharma of remaining alive and will cleanse all the impurities through my knowledge and austerities, like stellar bodies dispelling great darkness.' The shvapacha said, 'If you eat this, I do not think that you will obtain your breath of life, a long life-span, or the satisfaction of amrita. Beg for something else. Do not set your mind on begging for, and eating, dogs. Dogs should not be eaten by brahmanas.' Vishvamitra replied, 'O shvapacha! At a time of famine, no other meat is easily available, or rice. Nor do I possess riches. I am afflicted by hunger and have lost all hope of even being able to move. I think that dog meat will provide the six different kinds of flavours.'<sup>88</sup> The shvapacha said, 'O brahmana! Brahmanas and kshatriyas should only eat five animals that have five claws.'<sup>89</sup> If you accept the proofs of the sacred texts, do not pointlessly have a desire to eat what should not be eaten.' Vishvamitra replied, 'When he was hungry, Agastya ate the asura Vatapi.'<sup>90</sup> I am afflicted and agitated by hunger. I will eat the dog's haunch.' The shvapacha said, 'Beg for something else. You should not act like this. You should certainly not act in this way. However, since you so wish, take the dog's haunch.' Vishvamitra replied, 'The virtuous act in accordance with

dharma and I will follow their conduct.<sup>91</sup> I think that eating this dog's haunch is better than eating food obtained from sacrifices.' The shvapacha said, 'If someone has followed an unrighteous path, this does not become eternal dharma. You should not vainly engage in wicked conduct on the basis of deceitful and false reasons.' Vishvamitra replied, 'Since I am a rishi, I will not do anything wicked, or anything that should not be done. I think that a dog and a deer are the same. Therefore, I will eat the dog's haunch.' The shvapacha said, 'The rishi's<sup>92</sup> right to eat and the act that he did was for the sake of brahmanas. Dharma is that which is not wicked and it must be protected, by whatever means that are possible.' Vishvamitra replied, 'I am a brahmana and this body is my friend. In this world, it is worshipped as the most loved. Since I desire to maintain it, I will take this. I am not frightened of any violence that may result from this.' The shvapacha said, 'Do as you wish. There are men who act so as to give up their lives, instead of eating what should not be eaten. They obtain all their desires. O learned one! Since you are afflicted by hunger, do what appeals to you.' Vishvamitra replied, 'There is an uncertainty about what will happen to me after death. Perhaps all my deeds will be destroyed. If I protect the foundation by eating what should not be eaten, I may still return with a cleansed soul.<sup>93</sup> In my knowledge, I am satisfied that the two<sup>94</sup> are distinct, like the skin and sight, and thinking that they are the same is confusion. I am certain that if I act in this way, I will not become someone like you.'<sup>95</sup> The shvapacha said, 'My view is that this downfall is misery. It is because of this that I am committing the evil act of censuring a virtuous brahmana.' Vishvamitra replied, 'Even when frogs croak, cows drink. You have no right to dharma. Do not praise yourself greatly.' The shvapacha said, 'O brahmana! I entreated you as a well-wisher. I felt compassion for you. Therefore, accept what is best. Because of greed, do not eat the dog.' Vishvamitra replied, 'If you are my well-wisher and desire my happiness, then save me from this distress. I know what dharma is. Give me the dog's haunch.' The shvapacha said, 'I am not interested in giving you this. Nor can I ignore my own food being taken away. O brahmana! Both of us will be stained by sins—I, because I am the giver, and you, because you are receiving it.' Vishvamitra replied, 'After perpetrating this wicked act today, if I am still alive and roam around, I will act so as to greatly cleanse myself. Having purified myself, I will obtain dharma. Of these two,<sup>96</sup> tell me which is better.' The shvapacha said, 'The atman is the witness to everything that is done in this world. You yourself know what is wicked here. I think that anyone who is prepared to eat dog meat will not be ready to abstain from anything.' Vishvamitra replied, 'There is no sin in taking it, or eating it. It is always good policy to allow for exceptions. There has been no violence. No false words have been spoken. This can therefore be eaten and there will be no grave sin.' The shvapacha said, 'If this is the reason behind your eating it, it has no rationale from the Vedas, or from dharma. O Indra among brahmanas! Therefore, as you have said, I do not see any sin attached to food that should not be eaten, or from your eating it.' Vishvamitra replied, 'It is not seen that there is a great sin from eating this. If one drinks liquor, one is bound to fall down—these are only words used in this world. This is also true of many other similar deeds. Such deeds do not bring about the slightest bit of downfall.' The shvapacha said, 'If a person is learned, his good conduct restrains him from going to where he should not, from becoming inferior and from being censured. But because of desire, if he nevertheless goes to such a place, he will have to bear the punishment.' Having told Koushika this, Matanga desisted.

“Having made up his mind, Vishvamitra took the dog's haunch. In a desire to remain alive, the great sage seized those five limbs.<sup>97</sup> The great sage went to the forest, to gratify his wife with this. At that time, Vasava began to rain down. All the subjects were revived and the herbs were generated. The illustrious Vishvamitra performed austerities and burnt his sins. In the course of time, he obtained great and extraordinary success. If a learned person confronts a calamity and desires to remain alive, as long as he is not miserable in his heart and knows of different means, he must cheerfully use every method to save himself. One must thus always resort to one's intelligence and remain alive. If a man remains alive, he obtains what is sacred and sees fortune. O Kounteya! Therefore, resort to the intelligence used by learned people in determining dharma and adharma. Make efforts and conduct yourself in this world accordingly.”



## Chapter 1468(140)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You have instructed me about a terrible thing that is false and lacks devotion. This is the kind of restraint followed by bandits and I avoid it. I am confused and distressed. My bonds of dharma have become weak. I do not have any initiative in following this. How can I even think about it?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In instructing you about dharma, I have not depended on the sacred texts alone. This is wisdom and experience and it is the honey that wise people have collected. A wise king will have many means of prevention, from here and there. Progress on the journey does not take place along a single branch of dharma. O Kouravya! When kings ignite their intelligence to follow dharma, they are always victorious. Therefore, understand my words. Kings who desire victory and regard intelligence as the best, are always triumphant. Here and there, using his intelligence, a king thinks of means that are in conformity with dharma. The dharma for kings was not determined as a dharma that only has a single branch. Why has the dharma for weak ones not been described earlier?<sup>98</sup> If an ignorant person sees a fork in the road, he will be confused. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should have already realized that intelligence can also offer a dilemma.<sup>99</sup> The wisdom is by one’s side, but it flows everywhere, like a river. One must know that the dharma followed by people can have a course and also the opposite course. Some know this properly. There are others who possess an understanding that is false. Understanding the truth of all this, one acquires knowledge from the virtuous. Those who steal<sup>100</sup> from the sacred texts are against dharma. They understand their purport unevenly and vainly seek to explain them. They desire fame in every way and wish to earn a living off this learning. All of them are the worst among men and are against dharma. They are stupid and their views are not ripe. They do not know the true purport. In every way, their final objective is never to be accomplished in the sacred texts. They steal from the sacred texts and point to what is wrong in the sacred texts. They do not act well when they proclaim their own knowledge. In an attempt to establish their own learning, they criticize the knowledge of others. They use words as their weapons and words as their knives. Their milking of knowledge is fruitless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know them to be the traders of knowledge, like rakshasas. They laugh at dharma and believe that all of it is deceitful. ‘We have not heard of any words of dharma in their words, or any intelligence.’ When speaking of Brihaspati’s knowledge, Maghavan himself said this.<sup>101</sup> There are no words that are spoken in this world without a reason and some are versed in the sacred texts. But others do not act in accordance with them. There are learned ones who have said that dharma is only what people follow in this world. Even if a person is learned, virtuous and instructed about dharma, he cannot understand it on his own. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He can be intolerant about the sacred texts, or confused in his learning. Even when wise men speak about the sacred texts collectively, insight may be missing. What is praised is intelligent words that are derived from the sacred texts. Even if an ignorant person speaks words that are full of knowledge and reason, that is thought of as virtuous. In ancient times, to dispel the doubts of daityas, Ushanas said, ‘Know that if the sacred texts do not possess meaning, they are abhorrent. Knowledge that cannot be defined is non-existent.’<sup>102</sup> Why do you wish to be satisfied with something that has a severed root? Do not resort to words that are false and injurious. You have been created for fierce deeds, but you are paying no attention to what you should do. O king! Look towards my own limbs, decorated with the effects of good policy.<sup>103</sup> Others escaped and are delighted because of this. Brahma created the goat, the horse and the kshatriya for similar reasons.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, some<sup>105</sup> are successful in their journey by glancing towards other beings. The sacred texts say that the sin from killing someone who should not be killed is the same as the sin from not killing someone who should be killed. This is certainly a rule which they<sup>106</sup> shun. If the king does not establish them in their own dharma, the subjects face extreme decay. They roam around and devour each other, like wolves. If there is a kingdom where bandits roam around and steal the possessions of others, like egrets snatching fish from the water, that person is the

worst among kshatriyas. Choose noble advisers who possess the learning of the Vedas. O king! Rule the earth. Follow dharma and protect the subjects. If a lord of the earth appoints inferior people to tasks and seizes, without knowing the difference between the two,<sup>107</sup> he is a eunuch among kshatriyas. According to dharma, fierceness is not praised. But nor is lack of fierceness. One should not transgress either. Having been fierce, become mild. The dharma of kshatriyas is difficult to follow and there is plenty of affection in you. But you were created for fierce deeds. Rule the kingdom accordingly. Always chastise the wicked and protect the virtuous. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The intelligent Shakra said that this was what should be done in a time of distress.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Do you think that there is a rule followed by bandits that should never be violated? O best among righteous ones! O grandfather! I am asking you this. Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “One must always serve learned and aged brahmanas and ascetics and also those who are firm and pure in their learning, character and conduct. This is the supreme objective. The conduct towards brahmanas must always be like that towards the gods. O king! If brahmanas are enraged, they can perform many acts. The best fame arises from their affection and their disaffection leads to calamity. When pleased, brahmanas are like amrita. When wrathful, they are like poison.”’



## Chapter 1469(141)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! Tell me about the dharma that should be followed by someone who is protecting a person who has sought refuge.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! There is great dharma in protecting someone who has sought refuge. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That you have asked such a question is deserving of you. O king! After they protected those who came and sought refuge, Nriga and the other kings obtained supreme success. O great king! It has been heard that a pigeon honoured its enemy when he sought refuge. As is proper, it honoured him and offered him its own flesh.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “In ancient times, how did an enemy come and seek refuge with a pigeon? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! What objective did it attain after offering him its own flesh?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen to this divine account, which destroys all sins. This was recounted by Bhargava<sup>108</sup> to King Muchukunda. O Partha! O bull among the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, King Muchukunda bowed down and asked Bhargava about this. At this, Bhargava recounted the story to the one who wished to listen. O lord of men! He told him about how the pigeon attained success. This account is certainly full of dharma and of kama and artha too. O king! O mighty-armed one! Listen as I tell you this.”

“There used to be a wicked and terrible hunter of birds. Inferior in conduct, he roamed around the earth. He was regarded as death on earth. His limbs were as dark as a raven. He was harsh and full of wickedness. His middle was like barley.<sup>109</sup> His neck was thin. His feet were small. His jaws were large. He did not have any well-wishers. Nor did he have any allies or relatives. Because of his terrible deeds, all of them abandoned him. Grasping a net,<sup>110</sup> he would always kill birds in the forest. O lord of men! He would then sell those birds. This is the way that evil-minded one found a means of survival. Without understanding that this was adharma, he followed this for a very long period of time. For a long period, he pleased with his wife. He was confounded by destiny and no other means of livelihood appealed to him. On one occasion, he was in the forest. A great storm arose and whirled around and brought down the trees. Clouds gathered in the sky and they were tinged with flashes of lightning. In a short period of time, it was as if the ocean was covered with many boats.<sup>111</sup> Delighted, Shatakratu poured down torrents of rain. In a short while, he flooded the earth with water. Because of that torrential downpour in the world, he<sup>112</sup> was terrified and lost his senses. In that forest, he was afflicted with cold. His mind was greatly anxious. The bird-killer could not see any low ground anywhere.<sup>113</sup> The path in the forest was covered in a flood of water. Birds were killed by the force of the wind and vanished. Deer, lions and boars resorted to bits of land and stayed there. All the residents of the forest were terrified because of the strong wind and the rain. They were oppressed by fear. They were afflicted by hunger. Together, they wandered around in the forest. His<sup>114</sup> body was afflicted by the cold. Instead of stopping, he wandered around and in a thicket in the forest, he saw a tree that was as blue as the clouds. Against the background of stars in the clear sky, it looked like a lotus. Lubdhaka<sup>115</sup> was afflicted by the cold and saw that the sky was clear of clouds. O lord! The evil-souled one looked towards the directions and thought that his home in the village was a long distance away from the spot. He therefore made up his mind to spend the night there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Joining his hands in salutation, he spoke these words to the tree. ‘I seek refuge from whatever gods reside here.’ He spread out some leaves on the ground and laid his head down on a stone. In great misery, the slayer of birds slept there.”

## Chapter 1470(142)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! With its well-wishers, a bird lived on the branches of that tree. Its plumage was colourful and it had lived on the tree for a long time. Its wife had gone out in the morning to roam around and had not returned.<sup>116</sup> On seeing that it was night, the bird lamented. ‘There was a great storm and my beloved has not returned. What can be the reason for her not returning yet? I hope my beloved is safe in the forest. Without her, this home of mine is empty now. Her eyes were tinged with red. Her plumage was colourful. Her voice was sweet. Since my wife is not here, there is no purpose in my remaining alive. Her dharma was in devotion to her husband. She was virtuous. She was more important than my life. That ascetic one was devoted to my welfare when she knew that I was exhausted or hungry. She was devoted to her husband. On earth, a man who has a wife like that is fortunate. It has been read that a wife is a man’s supreme protector and that in this world, a man who does not have her as a companion along the journey, is helpless. For someone who has been overwhelmed by disease, for someone who has faced a hardship and for someone who is afflicted, there is no medication that is equal to a wife. There is no relative who is equal to a wife. There is no objective who is equal to a wife. In accomplishing dharma in this world, there is no aide who is equal to a wife.’ Distressed, the bird lamented in this way there.

“‘The wife had been seized by the slayer of birds and heard these words. Since her husband was miserable, she was also distressed by grief and thought, ‘Someone whose husband is not satisfied does not deserve to be called a wife. With the fire as a witness,<sup>117</sup> a husband becomes a wife’s refuge.’ The she-pigeon, captured by Lubdhaka, carefully spoke these words. ‘I will tell you what is indeed beneficial for you. Having heard, act accordingly. O beloved one! In particular, one must always provide succour to someone who seeks refuge. This fowler has resorted to your residence and is lying down. He is afflicted by cold. He is afflicted by hunger. It is necessary to honour him. If someone who seeks refuge is allowed to perish, the sin is equal to that from killing a brahmana or a cow, who is the mother of the worlds. Following the dharma of different species, that of pigeons has been ordained for us.<sup>118</sup> A knowledgeable person like you must always practise what is proper. If a householder follows dharma to the best of his capacity, when he dies, we have heard that he obtains the undecaying worlds. O bird! You have obtained offspring. You have sons. Therefore, follow dharma and artha and give up all love for your body. Engage in honouring him, so that his mind is cheered.’ The ascetic she-bird was imprisoned inside the cage. Extremely miserable, it glanced towards its husband and spoke these words. When it<sup>119</sup> heard its wife’s words, which were full of dharma and reason, its eyes overflowed with tears and it was filled with great joy. It glanced towards the fowler, who earned a living from birds. The bird carefully honoured him, following the ordained rites. It said, ‘Welcome. What can I do for you? Since this is like your own house, you should not suffer from any misery. Therefore, tell me quickly what I should do. What do you desire? You have sought refuge with me and I am speaking affectionately towards you. If a guest comes and seeks refuge, one must tend to him carefully. This is particularly true of a householder who is engaged in the five sacrifices.<sup>120</sup> If a person who is a householder is confused and does not observe these five sacrifices, then, according to dharma, he possesses neither this world, nor the next. Therefore, without any hesitation, tell me. Speak to me carefully and I will do everything. Do not unnecessarily sorrow in your mind.’

“‘Hearing these words, Lubdhaka spoke to the bird. ‘The cold is constraining me. You should free me from the cold.’ Having been thus addressed, the bird carefully covered the ground with dry leaves. The bird then quickly departed to fetch fire. It went to a place where charcoal was burnt and having obtained some fire, brought it back. It kindled a fire in those dry leaves. Having created a great fire, it told the one who had sought refuge, ‘Be assured and without fear. Heat your limbs.’ Having been thus addressed, Lubdhaka agreed and warmed his limbs. His life having been restored by the fire, he spoke to the bird. ‘The hunger is killing me. I desire that you should give me

some food.' On hearing this, the bird spoke these words. 'I do not possess any riches with which I can destroy your hunger. We, residents of the forest, survive on what grows here. Like the sages in a forest, we do not possess any stores.' Having spoken thus, its face turned pale. O best among the Bharata lineage! It began to think about what should be done next and condemned its own mode of existence.<sup>121</sup> Having thought for an instant, the bird regained its senses and spoke to the slayer of birds. 'Wait for a while. I will satisfy you.' Having said this, it kindled a fire with dry leaves. Filled with great delight, the pigeon spoke again. 'From great-souled gods, sages and ancestors, I have earlier heard about the great dharma that comes from honouring guests. Show me your favours.<sup>122</sup> I am telling you this truthfully. My mind has certainly been made up on honouring a guest.' Having taken this pledge, the bird seemed to be smiling. O lord of the earth! It circumambulated the fire three times and entered. When Lubdhaka saw that the bird had entered in the midst of the fire, he began to think in his mind, 'What have I done? Alas. Shame on my reprehensible and violent deeds. There is no doubt that I have committed great and terrible adharma.' In this fashion, Lubdhaka repeatedly lamented in many ways. On seeing that the bird had gone, he condemned his own deeds.'"

## Chapter 1471(143)

‘Bhishma said, “On seeing that the pigeon had descended into the fire, Lubdhaka was overcome with compassion and again spoke these words. ‘In my stupidity, I have committed a violent deed like this. As long as I am alive, this sin will always be lodged in my heart.’ Condemning himself, he repeatedly kept speaking in this way. ‘Shame on my great stupidity and the deceitful conduct I have always engaged in. Having abandoned auspicious deeds, I have sought to capture birds. I have resorted to violence. There is no doubt that, by offering me its own flesh, the great-souled pigeon has instructed me. I will abandon my sons and wife and give up my own beloved life. The pigeon, extremely devoted to dharma, has instructed me about dharma. I will offer up my own body and avoid all objects of pleasure. I will shrivel it up, like a little bit of water during the summer. I will endure the torment of hunger and thirst. I will become lean, as if I am made up of veins. To ensure the worlds hereafter, I will observe many different kinds of fasting. Alas! By giving up its own body, it has shown me how guests must be treated. Therefore, I will follow dharma. Dharma is the supreme objective. O supreme among birds!<sup>123</sup> Dharma is seen to be that which has been followed by that foremost practitioner of dharma.’ Having spoken this, Lubdhaka, the performer of evil deeds, became rigid in his vows and resolved to depart on *mahaprasthanā*.<sup>124</sup> He discarded his staff, his pointed stick,<sup>125</sup> his net and his cage. He also freed the imprisoned pigeons<sup>126</sup> and departed.”’

## Chapter 1472(144)

‘Bhishma said, “When the fowler had left, the miserable she-pigeon remembered its husband. It became senseless with grief and wept. It lamented in sorrow. ‘O beloved! I cannot remember a single instance of your having acted in an unpleasant way. O bird! Even when a spirited woman possesses many sons, when she becomes a widow and is bereft of her husband, her relatives grieve for her. I have always been loved by you and have been comforted and greatly revered by sweet, pleasant and agreeable words. We have sported in valleys, mountains, rivers and springs. O beloved one! We have pleased in the delightful tops of trees. I have found delight with you, happily roaming through the sky. O beloved one! I have sported with you. Where has all that gone now? What a father gives is limited. What a mother gives is limited. What a son gives is limited. What a husband gives is unlimited and who will not worship him. There is no protector like a husband. There is no happiness like a husband. Abandoning all riches, husbands are the refuges of women. O lord! Without you, there is no point to remaining alive. Which virtuous woman will be interested in remaining alive, if she is without her husband?’ Extremely miserable, it lamented piteously in many ways. Devoted to its husband, it entered the blazing fire. And there it saw its husband, attired in colourful garments, astride a celestial vehicle and honoured by great-souled ones who had performed good deeds. It was adorned in colourful garlands and garments and was decorated with every kind of ornament. It was surrounded by the performers of auspicious deeds, astride hundreds of crores of celestial vehicles. The bird had gone to heaven and was joined by its wife. It was worshipped because of its deeds and found pleasure there with its wife.’”

## Chapter 1473(145)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! The fowler saw them in that celestial vehicle. On seeing the couple, he grieved, thinking about attaining a good end.

‘Through what kind of austerities can I attain the supreme goal?’ Having thought about this, he decided to set about his journey. Lubdhaka, who earned a living from birds, embarked on mahaprasthan. He gave up all efforts, subsisted on air and gave up all sense of ownership, desiring to attain heaven. He then saw an extremely large lake, adorned with lotus flowers. The lake was full of cool and sparkling water and was frequented by a large number of birds. He was afflicted by thirst and on seeing this, had no doubt that he would be able to satisfy himself. O king! Because of the fasting, Lubdhaka was extremely thin. In the forest frequented by predatory beasts, he cheerfully crept along. Having summoned up great resolution, Lubdhaka entered the forest and was grasped by some thorns. His limbs were mangled by those thorns and he was covered with red blood. He roamed around in that desolate spot, frequented by many kinds of animals. As the large trees in the forest rubbed against each other, a great fire was ignited and fanned by the wind. That forest was full of trees and covered with shrubs and creepers. The fire angrily consumed them, as radiant as the fire at the end of a yuga. It blazed with sparks that were fanned by the wind. It fiercely burnt the forest, which teemed with animals and birds. Lubdhaka was delighted in his mind. Desiring to free himself of his body, he rushed towards the raging fire. Burnt by the fire, Lubdhaka’s sins were destroyed. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! He then attained supreme success. Devoid of all anxiety, he saw himself in heaven. Like Indra, he was radiant in the midst of yakshas, gandharvas and siddhas. In this way, because of their auspicious deeds, the male pigeon and the female pigeon which was devoted to its hus-

band indeed went to heaven, accompanied by Lubdhaka. In this way, like the she-pigeon, a woman who is devoted to her husband is quickly established in heaven and becomes radiant there. This is the ancient account of the great-souled Lubdhaka and the pigeon. Because of their auspicious deeds, they attained the objective of those who follow dharma. A person who always hears this, or a person who recounts this, will never confront anything inauspicious, even if he is confused in his mind. O Yudhishtira! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! This great dharma provides salvation to even the perpetrators of wicked deeds, such as those who kill cows. But there is no salvation for someone who allows a person who seeks refuge to perish.””

## Chapter 1474(146)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! If a person commits a sin out of ignorance, how can he be freed from it? Tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is described. This is what the brahmana Indrota, the son of Shunaka, told Janamejaya. There was an extremely valorous king named Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit.<sup>127</sup> In his ignorance, that lord of the earth committed the sin of killing a brahmana. All the brahmanas and the priests abandoned him. Tormented day and night, the king went to the forest. Abandoned by his subjects, he acted so that he might obtain great welfare. He was tormented by repentance and performed extreme austerities. I will tell you about that history, about how he accumulated dharma. Janamejaya was tormented because of the sin he had committed and departed. He went to Indrota, the son of Shunaka, who was rigid in his vows. Having approached him, he seized his feet and embraced them. At this, the immensely wise one was alarmed and severely reprimanded him. ‘You have committed a great sin, like one who has killed a foetus. Why have you come here? What do you wish to do to me? Under no circumstances, should you touch me. Go. Go from this spot. It is certain that your presence does not give me pleasure. There is a smell of blood in you. You look like a corpse. It is inauspicious for you to be near auspicious things. Though you seem to be alive, you are actually dead. You are dead within and your soul is impure. You are only thinking about wickedness. You are awake, but you are actually asleep. You are roaming around, unhappy.<sup>128</sup> O king! Your being alive is futile. You will live in misery. You have been created for wicked and ignoble deeds. In this world, fathers desire sons who will bring great welfare. They perform austerities, offer sacrifices to the gods, worship the gods and are patient. Behold. Because of your deeds, this lineage of your forefathers has gone to hell. All their hopes have been rendered futile and so has their dependence on you. Those who worship brahmanas enjoy heaven, long lives, fame and happiness. But your constant hatred towards them has rendered this futile. Having been freed from this world, because of your wicked deed, you will fall head downwards for many years, though not for eternity. You will be devoured by vultures and peacocks with iron beaks. Once this has happened, you will return again and advance towards a wicked birth. O king! If you think that this world is nothing, not to speak of the one hereafter, in Yama’s eternal abode, Yama’s messengers will remind you about this.’”



## Chapter 1475(147)

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, Janamejaya replied to the sage. ‘You are censuring someone who deserves to be censured. You are condemning someone who deserves to be condemned. You are shaming someone who deserves to be shamed. Nevertheless, show me your favours. All this has come about because of what I have myself done. I am being burnt, as if I am in the midst of a fire. It is not as if my mind is delighted at being associated with my deeds. I certainly suffer because of my terrible fear of Vaivasvata.<sup>129</sup> Without uprooting that stake, how can I possibly remain alive? O Shounaka!<sup>130</sup> Suppress all your anger towards me and instruct me. There used to be a great kitchen for brahmanas<sup>131</sup> and I will accomplish that objective again. There must be a remnant to this lineage. This lineage cannot be destroyed. But if we are cursed by brahmanas, if we do not have access to the sacred texts and if we are not conscious of what has been determined in the Vedas, there will be no remnant left. I am in great despair. I am telling you again about what confronts me. Those who are without dharma and without meditation are repeatedly not acknowledged.<sup>132</sup> In the hereafter, their foundation is like that of the Pulindas and the Shabaras.<sup>133</sup> Those who do not perform sacrifices do not obtain any worlds. O extremely learned one! I am ignorant. Impart wisdom to me, like that to a child, like a father to his son. O brahmana! O Shounaka! Be gratified with me.’

“Shounaka said, ‘There is nothing surprising in a wise person performing many appropriate acts. A learned person is not concerned with what has happened or what will happen.<sup>134</sup> Having obtained the favours of wisdom, he does not grieve about what other people sorrow over. As if he is stationed on the top of a mountain, he looks on the entire universe with wisdom. Someone who is fickle, someone who is degraded in his soul and someone who is shamed by all the virtuous people and hides himself, does not see the course of action. Knowing that there is freedom from fear, vigour and greatness in the Vedas and the sacred texts, perform a great rite of pacification. The brahmanas are your refuge. If the brahmanas are no longer enraged with you, this will ensure your welfare in the hereafter. This is on the assumption that you are repenting your wicked deed and are looking towards dharma.’

“Janamejaya replied, ‘I am repenting my wicked deed and I will never follow adharma again. O Shounaka! I am looking for someone who will be affectionate and desire my welfare.’

“Shounaka said, ‘O king! Since you have given up your arrogance and pride, I desire to be affectionate towards you. Remain established in the welfare of all beings and remember dharma. I am not summoning you<sup>135</sup> because of fear, weakness or avarice. The gods and the brahmanas will hear the truthful words I speak to you. I do not desire anything from anyone. I am summoning you to a rite of dharma, even though all the beings are uttering words of shame towards you. They will say that I am ignorant about dharma and people who are not well-wishers will speak in this way. If I hear such words from a well-wisher, I will be extremely anxious. There will be some immensely wise ones who will recognize that this is the right course of action.<sup>136</sup> O son!<sup>137</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that I am doing this for the sake of brahmanas. For my sake, act so that they may obtain peace. O lord of men! Pledge that you will not show hatred towards brahmanas.’

“Janamejaya replied, ‘O brahmana! I touch your feet and pledge that I will never again injure brahmanas, in words, thoughts and deeds.’”

## Chapter 1476(148)

“Shounaka said, ‘Therefore, since your senses have been agitated, I will speak to you about dharma. You are prosperous, immensely strong and content and are looking towards dharma. Having been terrible earlier, you have now become extremely distinguished. O king! Favour all beings through your own conduct. In this world, there is good and bad in everything. You were like that earlier. But you are now looking towards dharma. O Janamejaya! You gave up extremely wonderful food and objects of pleasure and resorted to austerities. These things seem extraordinary to beings. There is nothing extraordinary in a weak person becoming generous, or in a miserable person resorting to the store of austerities. It is said that this conduct is close to their state of being. This wretchedness<sup>138</sup> has not been considered properly. Therefore, one must examine it properly. Only then will one appreciate its qualities. O lord of the earth! Sacrifices, donations, compassion, the Vedas and truth—these are the five things that purify. Extremely severe austerities constitute the sixth. O Janamejaya! This is the supreme form of purification for kings. If you accept this completely, you will obtain supreme dharma. Visiting auspicious spots is said to be the supreme purifier. On this, the song sung by Yayati is recounted. “A mortal can obtain a long life, or even live again, by attentively performing sacrifices alone. Thereafter, having renounced, he should observe austerities.” Kurukshetra is said to be an auspicious region and Prithudaka,<sup>139</sup> on the banks of the Sarasvati. If a person bathes or drinks there, he need not be tormented about premature death.<sup>140</sup> You must go to the great lakes, Pushkara, Prabhasa and Manasa, to the north. Having gone to Kaloda,<sup>141</sup> one obtains one’s breath of life again. You should go to the confluence of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati. You must study and observe good conduct in all these places, touching the waters there. He<sup>142</sup> said that renunciation and sannyasa is sacred and supreme dharma. On this, a song composed by Satyavat is recited. “Be as truthful as a child, without any auspicious or wicked deeds. Then, since there will be no unhappiness for all the beings in this world, how can there be happiness?<sup>143</sup> This is the natural state of all beings. In general, this is characteristic of the lives of those who give up all kinds of association and abandon both good and wicked deeds.” I will now tell you about the tasks that are best for a king. Use your strength and generosity to again conquer heaven. A man who possesses strength and energy becomes the lord of dharma. For the sake of the happiness of brahmanas, roam around this earth. Since you disrespected them earlier, placate them now. This is despite being condemned and abandoned by many of them. O learned one! Have knowledge of your own self. Do not be enraged and injure them. Be engaged in your own tasks and work towards supreme welfare. A king can be as cold as ice, or as fiery as the fire. O scorcher of enemies! Others can be like a plough or thunder.<sup>144</sup> Do not think that there will be no remnants,<sup>145</sup> or that treatment is not possible. Thinking that there is nothing left of your existence, do not associate with those who are wicked. If one repents one’s wicked deed, one is freed from one-fourth of the sin. If one decides that one will not act in this way again, one is freed from a second one-fourth. If one resolves to follow dharma, one is freed from a third one-fourth. A man who desires prosperity should only think about welfare. Those who smell good fragrances also smell like that. Those who smell foul smells also smell like that. A person who devotes himself to austerities is immediately freed from his sins. A person who has been accused is freed if he worships the fire for a year. A person guilty of feticide is freed if he worships the fire for three years. If a person guilty of killing foetuses, saves as many living beings as would naturally have been killed,<sup>146</sup> he is freed. Manu has said that if one immerses oneself in the water and chants Aghamarshana three times,<sup>147</sup> one obtains the benefits equal to those from the final bath after a horse sacrifice. One is swiftly freed from sins and obtains great reverence. Beings seek his favours, as if they are dumb and mute. O king! Once, all the gods and the asuras assembled and asked Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. “O maharshi! You know about the fruits that result from dharma and also about those that lead to hell, the world of the wicked.

When a person has performed both of these well, which of these triumphs over the other? O maharshi! Tell us about the fruits of deeds. How does a person with auspicious conduct dispel evil?"

““Brihaspati replied, “Having ignorantly performed wicked deeds earlier, if a person deliberately performs auspicious deeds, his auspicious conduct dispels that evil, just as a dirty garment is cleansed with a caustic substance. A man who has committed a wicked deed should not think that he has been destroyed. Without any malice and with devotion, he should desire to ensure welfare, just as a hole in a garment can be covered with a good piece. Even after having performed a wicked deed, a man can obtain welfare, just as the sun arises again and drives away all the darkness. If one acts so as to ensure welfare, all sins can be driven away.””

‘Bhishma said, “Indrota spoke in this way to King Janamejaya. Having said this, following the prescribed rites, Shounaka performed a horse sacrifice. After this, the king’s sin was cleansed. He was full of prosperity and his form was like that of a blazing fire. The destroyer of enemies entered his own kingdom, like the full moon rising in the sky.”’

## Chapter 1477(149)

‘Bhishma said, “O Partha! Listen to this account of an ancient history. This is an account of an ancient conversation that took place between a vulture and a jackal in Vidisha. There were some people who were miserable. There was a child who had not yet become a youth. He died and he was the only possession the family had. They wept and were distracted by grief. They picked up the dead child and advanced in the direction of the cremation ground. They sat down on the ground there. They passed the child from one lap to another and wept. On hearing the sounds of their weeping, a vulture approached and spoke these words. ‘He is just one person in this world. Abandon him and quickly go away. Time has brought thousands of men and thousands of women to this place. Did they not have relatives? Behold. The entire universe is full of joy and misery. In due course, there is union and separation. There are those who pick up the dead and come here and there are those who follow them. However, once their lifespans are over, these people also depart. You have spent sufficient time in this cremation ground, frequented by vultures and jackals. It is full of terrible skeletons and is fearful to all beings. Someone who has followed the dharma of time will never become alive again. Whether it is someone who is loved or whether it is someone who is hated, all beings attain this kind of end. Everyone who is born in the world of mortals will indeed die. This is a path that has been ordained by the Destroyer. How can someone who is dead become alive again? People have finished their tasks<sup>148</sup> and the sun is about to set. Return to your own residences and abandon this affection for the son.’ O king! On hearing the words of the vulture, they lamented. Abandoning their son on the ground, the relatives departed. They determined that they should abandon their son. They had no hope of his becoming alive. They arose and took to the road.

“At this time, a jackal emerged from its hole. Its complexion was like that of a crow or a cloud. As they advanced, it told them, ‘It is evident that humans have no compassion. O stupid people! The sun is still there. Do not be frightened and show some affection. This moment has many forms and perhaps he may come back to life. You have abandoned all affection for your son and have flung him away on the ground. Without any compassion, how can you forsake your son on the cremation ground and go away? This child was sweet in speech and you have no affection for your son. He spoke to please you and you are about to go away. You do not see the affection animals and birds have towards their sons. This is despite their obtaining no fruits from this nurturing.<sup>149</sup> Quadrupeds, birds and insects are beings that are only driven by affection. They will obtain their places in the world hereafter, like sages who perform sacrifices. They take delight in their sons, though this brings nothing in this world, or in the next. We do not see any qualities these beings obtain from this act of nurturing. Yet, when they do not see their beloved sons, they are full of sorrow. After growing up, the mother and the father are never sustained. Do humans have affection? So how can there be grief? This son was the extender of the lineage. Abandoning him, you are going away. For a long time, release your tears. For a long time, gaze on him affectionately. In particular, it must be extremely difficult to abandon something that one loves. When one faces decay, when one has been accused and when one advances towards a cremation ground, it is relatives who stay with that person, and not others. Everyone loves life. Everyone obtains affection. Behold the kind of affection that can be seen in those from inferior species.<sup>150</sup> This one has large eyes, like the petals of a lotus. How can you abandon him and go away? He has been bathed and decorated with garlands, like one who has just been married.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing these piteous laments of the jackal, all those men returned, for the sake of the corpse.

“The vulture said, ‘Alas! O ones limited in intelligence! Shame on you. This jackal is cruel, inferior and limited in spirit. Are these men returning because of what it has said? Why are you grieving over something that has given up the five elements and is like an empty piece of wood? It is immobile. Why are you not sorrowing over your own selves? Perform terrible austerities and cleanse yourself from sin. Everything can be obtained through austerities.

What will lamentations achieve? Know that those with bodies must suffer from ill fortune. Everyone must leave this world, giving rise to endless sorrow. Austerities are the foundation for riches, cattle, gold, gems and jewels. These are obtained through the yoga of austerities. Depending on what they have done,<sup>151</sup> beings obtain happiness and unhappiness. Accepting this unhappiness and happiness, beings are born. The son does not get the father's karma. The father does not get the son's karma. Tied down by their good and wicked deeds, they advance along different paths. Carefully follow dharma and retreat from what is adharma. At the right time, act appropriately towards gods and brahmanas. Give up your sorrow and misery and withdraw from affection towards your son. Whether one has performed auspicious deeds, or whether one has perpetrated extremely terrible ones of adharma, the results will be reaped. What role is there for relatives? When relatives leave their beloved relatives here, they do not linger. With eyes full of tears, they abandon their affection and depart. Whether one is wise or stupid, whether one is rich or poor, whether one is auspicious or inauspicious, everyone comes under the subjugation of time. What will you accomplish through grief? Why are you sorrowing over the dead? Time is the lord of everyone and following dharma, he looks on everyone equally. Everyone faces death—youth, children, the aged and even foetuses. This is the way of the universe.'

“The jackal said, ‘You were extremely sorrowful, overcome by affection on account of your son. Alas! The vulture with limited intelligence has diluted that affection. His words were appropriate, chosen well and respectful. That is the reason you have abandoned your affection, which is so difficult to let go, and are going towards the pond.’<sup>152</sup> Alas! Separation from a dead son leaves one empty. One laments in severe misery, like a cow without a calf. I now know the sorrow that men face on this earth. On seeing the pity associated with affection, I am also shedding tears. One must always seek to strive, though success is determined by destiny. Destiny and manliness combine with earlier deeds. One must always be hopeful. How can there be happiness from despair? Success is obtained through endeavour. How can you leave in this cruel way? He has resulted from your own flesh. His form has been generated from half of your body.’<sup>153</sup> He was the extender of the lineage of your fathers. After abandoning him in the forest, where will you go? Stay here until the sun has set and evening has presented itself. Perhaps you will stay here with your son, or take him away.’<sup>154</sup>

“The vulture said, ‘O men! It is now one thousand years since I have been born. I have never seen a dead woman or man come back to life again. Some who died in the womb are born. Some die the moment they are born. Others died after they have attained youth and exhibit valour.’<sup>155</sup> The fortune of quadrupeds and birds is temporary. The lifespan of mobile and immobile objects has been determined earlier. There are those who are separated from their beloved wives and those who sorrow over their sons. Tormented by grief, they always go home. Abandoning thousands who were not liked and hundreds who were loved, relatives are extremely miserable and depart. Abandon the one who is without energy. He is like an empty piece of wood. His life is wandering around in vapour. Therefore, abandon him and go. This affection is futile. This concern for him is futile. He cannot see you with his eyes. He cannot hear you with his ears. Therefore, swiftly abandon him and return to your own homes. I have used the dharma of moksha.’<sup>156</sup> Though they seem to be cruel, I have spoken words that are full of reason. As I have said, quickly go away to your own respective homes. You have heard words that are full of the knowledge of wisdom. They will give you intelligence and consciousness, though they are harsh. O men! Return.’

“The jackal said, ‘He has the complexion of gold and he is adorned with ornaments. On hearing the words of the vulture, how can you abandon your son? He has the complexion of gold and is adorned with ornaments. He is the one who will offer funeral cakes to the ancestors. There is nothing that prevents affection, lamentation and weeping. But if you abandon the one who has died, it is certain that you will suffer. It has been heard that Rama, truthful in his valour, killed the shudra Shambuka, resorted to dharma, and brought a brahmana child back to life.’<sup>157</sup> In that way, rajarshi Shveta's child met his destiny. But since he<sup>158</sup> always followed dharma, the very next day, he could again bring the dead back to life. In that fashion, while you are lamenting, perhaps a siddha, a sage or a god can perform an act of compassion.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, afflicted by grief and devoted to their son, they returned. Placing his head on their laps, they wept for a long period of time.”

‘The vulture said, “He has been bathed with your tears. You have kneaded him with the touch of your hands. However, ordained by Dharmaraja,<sup>159</sup> he has entered a long period of sleep. A person who has engaged in austeri-

ties is also not spared by destiny. This is the end of all affection. This is the residence of the dead. Thousands of the young and the aged are always abandoned by their relatives on the ground, after they have spent days and nights in misery. Refrain from grief. There has been enough of this bond. It cannot be believed that he will come back to life again. He will not become alive again because of the words of the jackal. Someone who is dead, and has discarded his body, does not get that body back again. Even if hundreds of jackals give up their bodies, this will not happen. In hundreds of years, this child is incapable of becoming alive again. The child can only come back to life if Rudra, Kumara, Brahma or Vishnu grants a boon. However, he will not become alive again because of the shedding of tears, because of any assurances, or because of a long period of lamentation. I, the jackal, you and the relatives are all of us travelling in that direction too, accepting our share of dharma and adharma. A wise person should keep unpleasantness, harshness, hatred towards others, desire for the wives of others, adharma and falsehood a long distance away. He must carefully follow the path of truth, dharma, purity, fairness, great compassion towards beings, lack of deceit and lack of fraudulence. While they are alive, those who do not look towards their mothers, fathers, relatives and well-wishers—suffer destruction of dharma. He cannot see with his two eyes. His limbs will never move. His period of being here has come to an end. What will weeping achieve?”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, they were overcome by grief and abandoned their son on the ground. They were tormented by affection for their son. The relatives left for home.

“‘The jackal said, ‘The world of mortals is terrible. All living beings are destroyed. We live for a short time and are separated from our beloved kin. There is a lot of pretension, fraud, arguing and unpleasant speech. Considering this, coming back here again will only increase sorrow and misery. Even for an instant, the world of humans does not appeal to me. Alas! Shame on the men who are retreating because of the words of the vulture. You are blazing from sorrow on account of your son. Yet, you behave like those who are ignorant. If you have any affection, how can you discard the affection towards your son and go away? On hearing the words of the vulture, you have made up your minds to do that which is wicked. Unhappiness comes at the end of happiness. Happiness comes at the end of unhappiness. There is happiness and unhappiness in this world and there is nothing that does not come to an end. You have laid this handsome child down on the surface of the ground. He has caused grief to your lineage. O stupid ones! After abandoning your son, where will you go? There is no doubt that I can see him alive in my mind, full of beauty and youth, blazing in his prosperity. His destruction was not deserved. O men! You will obtain happiness again. The fire that is tormenting you because of the sorrow over your son’s death will be pacified. Once you have suffered from sorrow, you will be able to ensure your own happiness. How can you ensure that if you abandon him in this foolish way and go away now?’”

‘Bhishma said, “They thus faced a conflict over dharma and paid heed to these pleasant, but false, words. The resident of the cremation ground waited for the night and for his food.<sup>160</sup> In their midst, he brought them supreme words that were like amrita. For his own objectives, the jackal made those relatives stay.

“‘The vulture said, ‘This place is full of the spirits of the dead and is frequented by yakshas and rakshasas. It is a terrible and desolate spot and echoes with the screeches of owls. It is fierce and extremely horrible, with a complexion like that of dark and blue clouds. Abandon the corpse and decide to perform the funeral rites. As long as the sun has not set and as long as the directions are clear, abandon him and decide to perform the funeral rites. Hawks are shrieking in harsh tones. Jackals are screaming in fierce tones. Lions are roaring and the sun is about to set. The blue smoke from funeral pyres is imparting a hue to the trees. Hungry beings are finding delight in this cremation ground. In this extremely terrible spot, all of them are brave and energetic. They are malformed and subsist on flesh. They will attack you. Go far away from this spot in the forest. There is fear here. He is like a piece of wood and must be abandoned. Tolerate the jackal’s words. If you deviate from knowledge and listen to the futile and false words of the jackal, all of you will be destroyed.’

“‘The jackal said, ‘Remain here. As long as the sun is shining, there is nothing to be scared about. Driven by affection for your son, as long as you have hope, remain here. Without any fear, confidently weep over him. Confidently, look at him with affection. As long as the sun is here, remain here. What is the point to the words of that predator?<sup>161</sup> If you accept the fierce and wild words of the vulture, you will delude your own selves and your son will indeed have no future.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The vulture said the sun had set. The jackal said that it had not set. They were both hungry and addressed the relatives of the dead person. O king! Both the vulture and the jackal were accomplished in attaining their own objectives. They were hungry, thirsty and exhausted and spoke, seeking support in the sacred texts. Both the jackal and the bird were knowledgeable and learned. Their words were like amrita. They<sup>162</sup> stood up and left. Then they were overcome by sorrow and misery and wept and remained. They<sup>163</sup> were skilled in attaining their own objective. They were accomplished in speaking respectfully. Both of them spoke about knowledge and learning. The relatives were confused and remained there. At that time, Shankara approached. The wielder of the trident spoke these words to the men. ‘I am the one who grants boons.’ Having been thus addressed, those miserable ones bowed down and remained standing there. They said, ‘All of us have been deprived of our single son. We desire his life. You should grant us life by granting that our son becomes alive.’ Having been thus addressed, the illustrious one filled his hand with water and granted the child a lifespan of one hundred years. The illustrious one, the wielder of *pinaka* who was engaged in the welfare of all beings, also granted the jackal and the vulture the boon that they should no longer suffer from hunger. They were full of joy at this great benefit and bowed down to the god. O lord! They were delighted and happy that their objectives had been accomplished and stood there. Through a long period of faith and certain and firm devotion, and through the grace of the god of the gods, fruits are swiftly obtained. Behold the god’s decision and the determination of the relatives. The tears of the miserable and weeping ones were wiped away. Behold. Certain in their pursuit and through the favours of Shankara, the miserable ones obtained happiness in a short period of time. At their son coming to life again, they were amazed and delighted. O best among the Bharata lineage! All of this was possible because of Shankara’s favours. O king! They heard from Bhava<sup>164</sup> about how sorrow can be countered. Taking their son with them, they were filled with joy and entered their city. This is the intelligence that has been indicated for the four varnas. This is the auspicious history, full of dharma, artha and moksha. If a man hears this, he obtains delight in this world and in the next.”’



## Chapter 1478(150)

‘Bhishma said, “On this, an ancient history is recounted. O best among the Bharata lineage! This is a conversation between a *shalmali* tree<sup>165</sup> and the wind. There was a gigantic tree on the slopes of the Himalayas. It had grown for many years and possessed a trunk, branches and foliage. O mighty-armed one! Crazy elephants, afflicted by heat and oppressed by exhaustion, would rest there. So would other kinds of animals. The tree was dense with foliage and was a *nalva*<sup>166</sup> in circumference. It was covered with fruits and flowers and frequented by parrots and *sharika* birds. This was beautiful and supreme among trees. Merchants in search of riches, ascetics, residents of the forest and travellers along the path would rest under it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Narada saw the large trunk and the branches that extended in every direction. He approached and said, ‘You are beautiful. You are handsome. O shalmali! O best among trees! You always please us. O son!’<sup>167</sup> Birds, animals and elephants have always cheerfully resided under your delicate shade. Your branches, larger branches and trunk are gigantic. Under no circumstance do I see any of these being shattered by the wind. O son! Is the wind your affectionate well-wisher? It is certain that the wind always protects you in this forest. The wind uproots large and small trees from their places. Its force dislodges the peaks of mountains. With its fragrant and sacred scent, the wind even dries up the nether regions and also the lakes, the rivers and the oceans. There is no doubt that the wind protects you as a friend. That is the reason you have these many branches, leaves and flowers. O tree! O son! It is seen to be beautiful that these birds sport and find pleasure in you. Their delicate voices can be separately heard. When it is the time for flowering, one can hear these extremely beautiful sounds. The elephants, the adornments of their herds, also take delight. O shalmali! They are afflicted by the heat and find joy on seeking refuge with you. In that way, other kinds of animals are also radiant near you. Those who are in search of riches seek refuge. O tree! You are as resplendent as Mount Meru. There are brahmanas, successful ascetics, hermits and mendicants. I think that your shelter is like heaven. The wind goes everywhere and is fierce. O shalmali! There is no doubt that it protects you because you are a relative or a friend. O shalmali! When the wind approaches you, perhaps you bow down supremely and say, “I belong to you.” That is the reason the wind always protects you. I have not seen a tree or a firm mountain that has not been shattered by the wind. It is my view that there is nothing like this on earth. O shalmali! But then again, for some reason, you and your family are always protected by the wind. That is the reason you stand, free from fear.’

“The shalmali replied, ‘O brahmana! The wind is not my friend, my relative, or my well-wisher. Nor is the wind my supreme lord that it should protect me. O Narada! My energy and strength are more terrible than that of the wind. The wind cannot even attain one-eighteenth of my force of life. When the strong wind arrives and destroys trees, mountains and everything else, I resist it with my force. The wind does the shattering,<sup>168</sup> but has been shattered by me many times. O devarshi! That is the reason I am not terrified of even an enraged wind.’

“Narada said, ‘O shalmali! There is no doubt that you look at this in a contrary way. There is nothing anywhere that has a strength that is equal to the wind’s strength. Indra, Yama, Vaishravana<sup>169</sup> and Varuna, the lord of the waters, are not the wind’s equal, not to speak of a tree. O shalmali! When any living being moves on this earth, everywhere, it is the illustrious wind, the lord, who makes the breath of life move. When it exerts itself properly, it reassures all living beings. When it is not properly exerted, men move in perverse ways. This is the nature of the wind and it is the supreme upholder of all life. You do not worship someone who should be worshipped. What can this be, other than lack of intelligence? You have no substance. You are evil in your intelligence. You only speak a lot. O shalmali! Since you have spoken in this false way, I am enraged with you. My anger has been roused at what you have said. I will myself tell the wind about the many wicked words you have spoken. There are other trees that are stronger still—sandalwood, *spandana*,<sup>170</sup> shala,<sup>171</sup> sarala,<sup>172</sup> devadaru,<sup>173</sup> cane and reeds. They are cleansed in their souls and do not evil-mindedly speak about the wind in this way. They know their own strengths and that



of the wind. That is the reason those supreme trees bow down before the wind. You are deluded and do not know about the wind's infinite strength.'"

## Chapter 1479(151)

‘Bhishma said, “O Indra among kings! Having spoken in this way, Narada, knowledgeable about the brahman, went and told the wind everything that the shalmali had said. ‘There is a shalmali tree and its followers on the slopes of the Himalayas. It has a gigantic trunk and many branches. O wind! It shows you disrespect. It spoke many words of irreverence towards you. O wind! O lord! It is not appropriate that I should repeat those words before you. O wind! I know that you are the supreme upholder of all living beings. You are best and the greatest. In your rage, you are like Vaivasvata.’<sup>174</sup> Having heard these words of Narada, the wind went to the shalmali and angrily spoke these words. ‘O shalmali! You have spoken disrespectful words before Narada. I am the wind. I will show you my influence and my own strength. I know who you are. O tree! You are known to me. The lord, the grandfather,<sup>175</sup> ended his act of creation with you. Because he ended with you, he showed you favours. O evil-minded one! O worst among trees! That is what has protected you against my valour. Since you have disrespected me as any other natural force, I will show myself to you, so that you know who I am.’ Having been thus addressed, the shalmali tree seemed to smile when it replied. ‘O wind! Go to the woods and show your enraged self to your own self. Release your anger towards me. What will you do in your rage? O wind! I would not have been frightened of you, even if you had been the lord of beings.’ Having been thus addressed, the wind said that it would exhibit its energy the next day.

“‘It was night and the shalmali thought about what should be done. It saw that it was not the equal of the wind. ‘I spoke inappropriate words about the wind to Narada. I cannot match the wind in strength. It is stronger than me. Narada was right when he said that the wind is always strong. There is no doubt that I am weaker than other trees. However, I do not think there is any other tree that is my equal in intelligence. By resorting to that intelligence, I can free myself from the fear that comes from the wind. There is no doubt that if the trees in the forest used their intelligence, they would always be able to save themselves from any injury on account of the enraged wind. But they are foolish and do not know the wind. Unlike me, they do not know how the angry wind blows.’ Having made up its mind, the shalmali began to shake itself. It itself cast off its trunk, branches and smaller branches. It cast off its branches, leaves and flowers. Having done this, the tree waited for morning and for the approach of the wind. The wind blew and angrily brought down large trees. It came to the spot where the shalmali was standing. It was without leaves and the tips of the branches had fallen down. The flowers had fallen down. The wind glanced at it and smiling, cheerfully spoke these words to the shalmali tree, which was without any branches. ‘O shalmali! In my anger, I would have done exactly this to you and brought down all your branches. You have done this yourself. You are without flowers and the tips of your branches. Your buds and foliage have been destroyed. Through your own evil intelligence, you have come under the subjugation of my valour.’ Addressed in these words by the wind, the shalmali tree was ashamed. It remembered the words that Narada had spoken to it and was tormented.

“‘O tiger among kings! In this way, if a weak person engages in hostilities with someone who is stronger, he is foolish and will be tormented like the shalmali tree. Therefore, a weak person should have enmity with someone who is superior in strength. If he engages in such enmity, he will sorrow, like the shalmali tree. Even against those who cause grievous injury, great-souled ones do not display their enmity. O great king! Instead, they exhibit their strength gradually and gently. A man without intelligence should not act in enmity towards someone who lives by his intelligence. An intelligent person’s intelligence is like a fire raging through dry grass. O king! Among men, there is nothing that is equal to intelligence. O Indra among kings! One might think that there is nothing that is equal to strength. O Indra among kings! O slayer of enemies! You have thus seen that one must tolerate the foolish, the dumb, the deaf and those who are superior in strength. O immensely radiant one! O king! The eleven and seven akshouhinis<sup>176</sup> were not equal in strength to the great-souled Arjuna. The illustrious Pandava, the son of the chas-

tiser of Paka, roamed around and slew and shattered them in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have been told about rajadharma and apad dharma in detail. O great king! What shall I tell you about next?”

## Chapter 1480(152)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the true nature of evil’s foundation and about how sin propagates.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of men! Hear about the foundation of evil. Greed alone is the great grasper. Evil is propagated by greed. It is from this that evil, adharma and supreme misery flow. This is the foundation for misdeeds and makes people commit sin. Anger results from greed. Desire results from greed. Confusion and delusion result from greed and so do pride, arrogance, malice and lack of forgiveness. Modesty is abandoned. Prosperity is destroyed and dharma decays. Anxiety and lack of wisdom—all of these result from greed. There are also lack of fairness, lack of reflection and the performance of perverse deeds. One becomes learned in deceit and is proud of one’s beauty and prosperity. One is distrustful of all beings. One is crooked towards all beings. One acts injuriously towards all beings. One behaves inappropriately towards all beings. One steals the property of others. One ravishes other people’s wives. There is violence in words and thought. There is violence in criticizing. There is turbulence in one’s groin and belly. There is the terrible turbulence that is associated with death. There is the violence of envy. The strong impulse to lie is extremely difficult to give up. It is difficult to withstand the impulse of passions. It is impossible to withstand the impulse to hear bad words and boasting. One is malicious, wicked and perpetrates evil deeds. One is rash in every kind of deed and action. At birth, childhood and youth, a man cannot give up the consequences of the deeds that he has done. Though he decays, these do not decay. O extender of the Kuru lineage! One is incapable of satisfying greed through acquisitions. It is always like an ocean, incapable of being filled by deep-flowing rivers. Greed is not satisfied. Nor is desire satiated. O king! Its true nature is not known by the gods, the gandharvas, the asuras, the great serpents and all the large numbers of other beings. One who conquers greed and delusion conquers his soul. O Kouravya! Insolence, hatred, criticism, maligning and malice—these are found in greedy people who have not perfected their souls. There are those who are extremely learned, the repositories of the extremely great sacred texts. They can sever doubt. But on this, even they can have limited intelligence and are afflicted. They become addicted to hatred and anger and are cast out by those who are good in conduct. Though they are harsh inside, their words may be sweet. They are like pits that have been covered with grass. Though they hold up the flag,<sup>177</sup> they are inferior and against dharma. They steal from the universe. They resort to the strength of arguments and follow many different kinds of paths. But because they base themselves on greed and ignorance, they destroy every kind of path. If evil-souled ones, driven primarily by greed, take over dharma, they deform it. But that practice tends to be established. O Kouravya! Arrogance, anger, pride, laziness, delight, sorrow, extreme vanity—these are seen among the greedy and the ignorant. Know that they have not been instructed. They are always full of greed. Ask those who have been instructed. I will tell you about the ones who are auspicious in their vows. They do not have any fear about their conduct. Nor do they fear the world hereafter. They find no delight in flesh, nor are they addicted to the agreeable and the disagreeable. Good conduct is agreeable to them. Self-control is established in them. They are beyond happiness and unhappiness. They are devoted to the truth and the ultimate. Though they are compassionate, they are neither givers, nor receivers. They are always devoted to the ancestors, the gods and guests. They always exert, in every kind of way. They follow every kind of dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They are prepared to give up everything. Having reached the ultimate shore of dharma, they are incapable of being dislodged and moved from their conduct, which was fashioned by virtuous people in ancient times. They are based on the path of virtue and are not frightened, fickle or fierce. They are beyond desire and anger. They are without a sense of ownership and without a sense of the ego. They are good in their vows and firm in their honour. O Yudhishtira! You should worship them and ask them. They do not seek cattle or fame, only dharma. They do perform the functions

of the body, because that is necessary. But they do not know fear, anger, fickleness and sorrow. They do not fly the flag of dharma and there is nothing that is secret among them. They do not suffer from greed and delusion. They are upright and devoted to the truth. O Kounteya! You should find delight in them. Their minds are attentive. They find no delight in acquisitions. Nor do they grieve if there are no acquisitions. They are without sense of ownership and without sense of ego. They are based on the truth and look on everything equally. O son! Gain and lack of gain, happiness and unhappiness, pleasant and unpleasant, death and life—these are the same to them, because they are firm in their valour. They are full of intelligence and base themselves on the truth. They are extremely powerful. Attentively and according to your capacity, you should do what brings them happiness and is agreeable. Words used in conversation may be good or bad. Like that, through the working of destiny, all beings may have qualities.”<sup>178</sup>

## Chapter 1481(153)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! You have said that greed is the foundation of everything that is injurious. O father!<sup>179</sup> I wish to hear about the true nature of ignorance.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person commits a wicked deed as a result of ignorance, he does not know what is good for him. He hates people who observe good conduct and people talk about him.<sup>180</sup> Because of ignorance, he goes to hell. Because of ignorance, he comes to an evil end. Because of ignorance, he suffers misery and is submerged in disaster.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I desire to hear about wickedness—its inclination, status, growth, increase and decrease, the source, its working, progress, periodicity, reasons and causes. O king! I wish to hear exactly and completely, about the consequence of ignorance, since unhappiness in this earth has it as its origin.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Attachment, hatred, confusion, delight, sorrow, arrogance, desire, anger, pride, procrastination, laziness, wishing, aversion, torment, suffering from the prosperity of others—these wicked acts are indicated as ignorance. You have asked about their working, their increase and other things. O mighty-armed one! O lord of the earth! Therefore, listen to this in detail. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Know that both ignorance and excessive greed are equal in consequences and equal in wickedness. They are the same. The influence of greed is again increased if ignorance increases. If one is constant, so is the other. If one decays, so does the other. Each one has many courses. The source of greed is the great influence of destiny. Even if one has severed greed in every way, the source that is based on destiny remains. Thus, greed comes from ignorance and ignorance comes from greed. Greed is the source of all sins. Therefore, one

should avoid greed. Janaka, Yuvanashva, Vrishadarbhi, Prasenjit and other lords of the earth attained heaven because they destroyed their greed. O foremost among the Kurus! In this world, it is evident that you must cast aside greed from your soul. Having abandoned greed, you will follow the path of happiness in this world and the next.””

## Chapter 1482(154)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O one with dharma in his soul! In this world, what is said to be the best thing for a brahmana who desires dharma and makes the effort to study? Many things are seen as best in this world. O grandfather! Tell me what you think to be best in this world and the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The path of dharma is great and it has many branches. Which are the elements of dharma that are held to be the best? O king! In truth, dharma is great and has many branches. O father! Tell me carefully about all this and about what is the supreme foundation.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will indeed tell you about how you may obtain the ultimate benefit. O wise one! You will drink this, which is like amrita, and be satisfied with the knowledge. Each of the maharshis has depended on his knowledge and has talked about a separate aspect of dharma. Self-control is the ultimate among them. The ancients were certain in their foresight when they said that self-control is the supreme quality. In particular, for a brahmana, self-control is eternal dharma. If one is not self-controlled, the success of deeds is not properly obtained. Self-control and generosity surpass sacrifices and studying. Self-control increases energy and self-control is the supreme purifier. A man who is without sin and possesses energy obtains greatness. We have not heard of any dharma that is equal to self-control in any world. Those who follow complete dharma praise self-control as supreme in this world. O Indra among men! Even in the world hereafter, one obtains supreme happiness. Being united with self-control, one obtains great dharma. A self-controlled person sleeps happily. He wakes in happiness. He moves through the world in happiness and his mind is cheerful. A person who is not self-controlled obtains hardship and decay. Because of his own sins, he creates many calamities. Among the four ashramas, this is said to be the supreme vow. I will tell you about the signs that give rise to self-control. Forgiveness, fortitude, non-violence, impartiality, truthfulness, uprightness, conquest of the senses, skill, mildness, modesty, steadfastness, generosity, lack of anger, satisfaction, pleasantness in speech, lack of an acquisitive tendency and lack of malice—these unite and give rise to self-control. O Kouravya! One must also worship the seniors, show compassion towards all beings, be free of slander and tendency to gossip, not indulge in futile conversation and avoid both praise and censure. A self-controlled man does not indulge in desire, anger, greed, pride, insolence, boasting, confusion, jealousy and disrespect of others. He is not censured and is free of desire. He desires little and is not resentful. Such a man is like the ocean and is never filled.<sup>181</sup> ‘I am yours. You are mine. They are mine. I am theirs.’ The self-controlled person does not say such things about his former relatives.<sup>182</sup> Whatever be the conduct of people in the village or in the forest, such a person does not speak words of censure or praise. He is friendly and good in conduct. He is supremely devoted to his aides. He is free from many kinds of attachment and obtains great fruits in the world hereafter. He is excellent in conduct. He is good in conduct. He is cheerful in his soul and knows about his soul. He obtains reverence in this world and a good end thereafter. There are auspicious deeds in this world. These are practised by the virtuous. He possesses knowledge about these and does not diminish the dharma of sages. He departs and resorts to the forest. He is united with knowledge and conquers his senses. He roams around, waiting for the time.<sup>183</sup> He is capable of attaining the brahman. He has no fear from beings. Beings have no fear from him. He has no fear on account of being separated from his body. He has exhausted his good deeds and has none to accumulate. He acts equally towards all beings and behaves affectionately towards them. He is like a bird in the sky or like an aquatic creature in the water. There is no doubt that his progress cannot be seen.<sup>184</sup> O king! He abandons his home and attains moksha. He obtains the worlds of energy for an eternal period of time. He renounces all deeds. He renounces all the recommended austerities. He renounces the different kinds of learning. He renounces everything. He does not return to desire. He is cheerful and pure in his soul. He obtains great reverence in this world and heaven thereafter. This is the place of the grandfather<sup>185</sup> and Brahma’s essence arises from there. This is always concealed in



secret, but can be obtained through self-control. A person who takes comfort in wisdom and possesses intelligence and who does not indulge in hostility towards any being has no fear of returning again.<sup>186</sup> What fear can he have of the world hereafter? There is one sin associated with self-control and a second one does not exist. Because he is forgiving, people think that he is incapable. O immensely wise one! But there is an extremely good quality associated with this taint. Because forgiveness is great, the patient person easily obtains the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A self-controlled person doesn't need the forest. A person without self-control also finds nothing there. Wherever a self-controlled person resides, that is his forest and his hermitage.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing these words of Bhishma, King Yudhishtira was cheerful and extremely satisfied, as if he had savoured amrita. He again asked Bhishma, supreme among the upholders of dharma. O extender of the Kuru lineage!<sup>187</sup> He told him everything about austerities.’

## Chapter 1483(155)

‘Bhishma said, “The wise have said that austerities are the foundation of everything. A stupid person who has not been tormented through austerities does not obtain the fruits of his deeds. The lord Prajapati created everything here through austerities. The rishis acquired the Vedas through austerities. The siddhas perform austerities in the due order and subsist on fruits, roots and the wind. Extremely controlled, they can see the three worlds through their austerities. Herbs and other medications and the three types of learning<sup>188</sup> are perfected and made successful through austerities. Austerities are the foundation of all endeavour. Everything that is difficult to obtain, difficult to name, difficult to assail and difficult to withstand—all this can be made possible through austerities. There is nothing that can surpass austerities. A sinful man who drinks liquor, seizes objects of others without permission, kills foetuses and violates the bed of his preceptor—can be freed if he torments himself well through austerities. Austerities have many forms and many gates through which they flow. Among the austerities that involve restraint, abstention from food is the best. O great king! Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, donations, restraint of the senses—abstention from food is superior to these austerities too. There is nothing more difficult than giving and no ashrama that surpasses the mother. There is nothing that is superior to the three kinds of learning. Renunciation is the supreme austerity. In this world, the senses protect riches and grain. But in this protection of dharma, artha and austerities, there is nothing superior to abstention from food. The rishis, the ancestors, the gods, humans, the best of animals and all other beings, mobile and immobile—all of them are devoted to austerities. They become successful through austerities. It is through austerities that the gods attained greatness. They always obtained their desirable shares

and fruits through austerities. It has been determined that through austerities, one can even attain divinity.””

## Chapter 1484(156)

‘Yudhishtira said, “The brahmana rishis, ancestors and gods all praise the dharma of truth. O grandfather! I wish to hear about the truth. Tell me about it. O king! What are the signs of the truth? How can it be obtained? Having obtained truth, what does one become? How is all this spoken of?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The mixing of the dharma of the four varnas is not praised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without any distortion, truth exists in all the varnas. For the virtuous, truth is always dharma. Truth is the eternal dharma. It is truth that one should bow down to. Truth is the supreme objective. Truth is dharma, austerities and yoga. Truth is the eternal brahman. Truth is said to be the supreme sacrifice. Everything is established in the truth. In this world, truly and in proper order, I will tell you about the conduct associated with truth. In proper order, I will tell you about the characteristics associated with truth. You should hear about how truth can truly be acquired. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In all the worlds, there are thirteen kinds of truth. There is no doubt that truth is impartiality and self-control. There is also lack of malice, forgiveness, modesty, patience, lack of envy, renunciation, meditation, wisdom, fortitude, constant adherence and non-violence. O Indra among kings! These are the thirteen forms of the truth. The truth is described as immutable. It never undergoes a transformation. It is not against any kind of dharma and it can be obtained through yoga. There must be impartiality towards the desirable and the undesirable, towards one’s own self and towards the enemy. When preference and aversion are destroyed, desire and anger are also destroyed. Self-control means one doesn’t desire the possessions of others. There is always patience and gravity. There is fearlessness and the pacification of anger. All of these are obtained through knowledge. The learned say that lack of malice manifests itself in generosity and control in the practice of dharma. Those who always base themselves on the truth do not suffer from malice. The virtuous person forgives everyone—those who should be forgiven and those who should not be forgiven, those who are liked and those who are not liked. The virtuous obtain the truth. They do good in secret ways. The modest person never boasts. The dharma of modesty can always be obtained through restraint in speech. The form of forgiveness that is indulged in for the sake of dharma or artha is said to be endurance. This is for the propagation of the worlds and is obtained through patience. If a person renounces affection, if a person renounces objects and if a person gives up love and hatred, he becomes one who renounces—not otherwise. If a person makes efforts to undertake good deeds, without making it obvious and without any attachment, that is said to be nobility among beings. There is fortitude when one does not perform perverse deeds, whether it is in a situation of happiness or unhappiness. A wise person who desires his own prosperity must always pursue this. One must always have sentiments of being forgiving. One must be devoted to the truth. Devoid of delight, fear and anger, a learned person obtains fortitude. Lack of hatred towards all beings, in deeds, thought and words, kindness and generosity—these are the eternal dharma of the virtuous. These are the thirteen separate characteristics of the truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These forms of truth are worshipped and extended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is impossible to speak about the infinite qualities of the truth. That is the reason truth is praised by the brahmanas, the ancestors and the gods. There is no dharma superior to the truth. There is no sin that is worse than falsehood. Truth is the foundation of dharma. That is the reason truth must not be destroyed. The giving of gifts, sacrifices with dakshina, vows, agnihotra sacrifices, the Vedas and other manifestations of dharma result from the truth. One thousand horse sacrifices and truth were held up on a weighing scale and truth surpassed the one thousand horse sacrifices.”’

## Chapter 1485(157)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! Tell me accurately about the origin of anger, desire, sorrow, confusion, scepticism, lassitude, intoxication, avarice, jealousy, contempt, slander, intolerance and pity. Tell me about all these.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Amongst beings, these thirteen are said to be extremely strong enemies. O great king! In this world, all of them unite and serve a man. They distract a man and distracted, he takes delight. They jump like wolves, when they see other men approach.<sup>189</sup> Misery flows from these. Sin flows from these. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Mortal men must always realize this. O supreme among men! I will indeed tell you about the origin, status and destruction of these. Listen attentively. Anger results from greed and is stimulated by the sins of others. O king! It remains dormant through forgiveness. A prosperous person must refrain from it.<sup>190</sup> Desire flows from resolution and grows when one serves it. When a wise person uses his knowledge to discern its true nature, it can no longer be seen and withers away. Scepticism is against the sacred texts and is seen to originate among those who are limited in intelligence. If one possesses true knowledge, it withdraws. Among beings, sorrow results from affection and separation.<sup>191</sup> If one knows that this is futile, it is immediately destroyed. Lassitude results from the practice of anger and avarice. Indifference and kindness towards all beings makes it withdraw. Dispirited people serve malice and that which is injurious. O son! If virtuous people are served, these are destroyed. There are beings who are proud of their lineage, their knowledge and their prosperity. When they discern the reason behind this pride, it is immediately destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Envy flows from desire and rivalry. Among those who are mortals, wisdom destroys these. O king! Slander is generated from spiteful words of misguided people, those who are not on one’s side. The act of ignoring pacifies this. There may be a powerful person who causes injury and one may be incapable of countering him. Fierce resentment is generated. But compassion makes it withdraw. It is seen that pity<sup>192</sup> always generates pity. If one knows about being devoted to dharma, that pity is pacified. These are said to be the ways whereby these thirteen can be conquered and pacified. All these thirteen sins were there among the sons of Dhritarashtra. You always conquered them in your soul. That is the reason you triumphed over them.”<sup>193</sup>

## Chapter 1486(158)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I know what non-violence is. I have always seen it among the virtuous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, I do not comprehend violent men and their deeds. Like men avoid thorns, pits and fire, a man must avoid a man who performs violent deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A violent person is always the worst, in this world and in the next. O Kouravya! Therefore, tell me what dharma has determined about such a person.”

‘Bhishma replied, “His intentions may be hidden. But his deeds are known. He slanders others, but is censured. He binds others, but is himself tied down. He boasts about his acts of generosity. But he is unfair, inferior, fraudulent and deceitful. He does not share his pleasures. He is insolent. He and his companions are boastful. Such a man suspects everyone. He is foolish and miserly. He always praises his own group and creates enmity in the ashramas, mixing them up. He always indulges in violence and has no particular good qualities or bad ones. He is extremely boastful and spirited. He is extremely greedy and is the perpetrator of violent deeds. If there is a person of good conduct who is devoted to dharma and possesses the qualities, he regards such a person as wicked. Judging on the basis of his own character, he does not trust anyone. Even if the taints of others are hidden, he divulges them. Even if his faults and conduct are similar, he does not talk about them. He thinks that a person who does him good has been cleverly deceived. Even if he gives away riches at the right time to someone who has helped him, he repents this. While others watch, he eats food, licks and enjoys such good food. If a person eats in this way, the learned know him as violent. If there is a person who first gives food to brahmanas and then eats, together with his well-wishers, such a person obtains the infinite in this

world and heaven after death. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The nature of a violent person has been recounted. A man who desires benefit must always avoid such a person.””

## Chapter 1487(159)

‘Bhishma said, “He who has accomplished his objective, he who is about to perform a sacrifice, he who knows all the Vedas, he who is discharging obligations to a preceptor, a father, or a wife, he who is pursuing the objective of studying—such a brahmana is virtuous and is begging for the sake of dharma. In accordance with their learning, one must give to them, since they have nothing of their own. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! To the others, only dakshina is to be given. There are others for whom it is recommended that uncooked food must be given, but away from the sacrificial altar. In accordance with what they deserve, the king must give every kind of jewel. Brahmanas at a sacrifice must be given food and dakshina. A person who has enough to sustain his dependents and servants for three years or more deserves to drink soma.<sup>194</sup> A sacrifice may suffer because some single ingredient is missing at the sacrifice. Especially if it is a brahmana’s sacrifice, a king who follows dharma may take that ingredient away<sup>195</sup> from the household of a vaishya who has many animals, but does not perform sacrifices or drink soma. For the purpose of the sacrifice, the king may take that object away from his household. In his household, a shudra possesses nothing that he actually owns. Therefore, from a shudra’s household, he<sup>196</sup> can take away any object that he desires. If there is someone with one hundred cattle who does not have the sacrificial fire, or if there is someone with one thousand cows who does not perform sacrifices, he can seize from those households too, without thinking about it. O lord! Having explained the reason, the king can always take from those who do not donate. The dharma of a king who acts in this way will not suffer.

““There may be a person who has not eaten six meals. And there may be another person who does not care for tomorrow and does not perform deeds. For the seventh meal, one should take away from such a person.<sup>197</sup> This can be taken from the place for husking, the field, the store, or from anywhere. However, this must be told to the king, irrespective of whether he asks or does not ask. The king who knows about dharma will not follow dharma and punish him. Brahmanas suffer from hunger because of the folly of kshatriyas. Having ascertained about the conduct of a learned person, he must think of a means of sustenance.<sup>198</sup> He must protect him, the way a father protects a son born from his loins. At the end of every year, he<sup>199</sup> must always perform the sacrifice to the fire.<sup>200</sup> In ancient times, there was no alternative to dharma. What was spoken about in dharma was sufficient. However, because they were scared of death in times of catastrophe, the vishvadevas, the sadhyas, the brahmanas and the maharshis allowed for many kinds of substitution. But an evil-minded person who does not follow the primary course and follows the secondary course instead, does not obtain any fruits in the world hereafter. A man must not tell the king about brahmanas.<sup>201</sup> When he is told, he should know that he has no energy, compared to their learning and excellent energy. Their energy is superior. That is the reason the king can never withstand the energy of those who know about the brahman. As a creator, ruler and ordainer, a brahmana is said to be god. Therefore, nothing harmful should be spoken to them. Nor must dry words be spoken. A kshatriya tides over his difficulties through the valour of his arms. A vaishya and a shudra use riches. A brahmana uses mantras and offerings. Mantras are not for maidens, young women, or stupid people. Stupid people cannot serve at agnihotra sacrifices. Nor can those who have not been cleansed. If such a person offers oblations there, he is flung into hell. Those who know about dharma say that if an officiating priest who ignites the sacrificial fire at a *prajapatya* sacrifice is not given a horse as dakshina, it is as if the sacrificial fire has not been ignited at all. There are others who perform auspicious deeds. They are faithful and have conquered their senses. However, they can never perform sacrifices without offering dakshina at those sacrifices. If dakshina is not offered at a sacrifice, this destroys the offspring, the animals and heaven for the performer and diminishes his senses, fame, deeds and span of life.

““All these follow the dharma of shudras—those who cohabit with menstruating women, those who are without the sacrificial fire and those whose families lack knowledge of the Vedas. There may be a village with its supply of



water coming from a well.<sup>202</sup> A brahmana may be the husband of a shudra woman and dwell there for twelve years. In that case, he has become a shudra through his deeds. A brahmana who is married, but sleeps with a woman who is not an arya and whom he has not married, is not thought of as a brahmana. He must sit on grass and at the rear.<sup>203</sup> O king! Hear my words about how he may be purified. If he performs that sin for a single night, the brahmana assumes a black complexion.<sup>204</sup> He can pacify his own sin by observing the vow of standing during the day and sitting during the night for a period of three years. O king! It is said that five kinds of lies are not sin — words of jest that cause no harm, those spoken to women, those at the time of marriage, those for the sake of one's preceptor and those for the sake of protecting one's own life. One who is faithful can obtain sacred learning even from someone who is inferior. It has been determined that gold can be picked up, even from a filthy place. If a woman is a gem, she may be taken from an inferior lineage. This is like drinking amrita from poison. According to dharma, women, gems and water are not tainted. For the welfare of cattle and brahmanas and to protect himself, when there is a mixing of varnas, a vaishya can take up the bow. The drinking of liquor, the killing of a brahmana and the violation of the preceptor's bed — it is thought that these cannot be atoned for, as long as one bears life. The stealing of gold, the theft of a brahmana's property, living a life of pleasure, the drinking of liquor<sup>205</sup> and sexual intercourse with women one should not have intercourse with are sins. O great king! If one associates with those who have fallen, even if they have been born as brahmanas, one soon becomes like them. If one associates with those who have fallen, acts as an officiating priest for them, teaches them, travels with them, sits with them or eats with them, one also falls within a year. For these and other things, atonement has been determined. By following the rites of atonement, one is freed from the calamity within a period of time, as long as one does not indulge in them again. At the funeral rites of someone who has committed the afore-mentioned three, unlike the funeral rites of those who have not fallen down, one need not bother about whether the funeral oblations are offered sideways.<sup>206</sup> A person who follows dharma should abandon advisers and preceptors if they follow adharma. If they do not perform rites of atonement, he must not even speak to them. A person who performs adharma can destroy the sin by following dharma and performing austerities. If one addresses a 'thief', one incurs a sin. However, if one addresses a person who is not a thief as a 'thief', one incurs double that sin.

“A maiden who allows herself to be spoilt acquires three-fourths of the sin of killing a brahmana. The one who does the spoiling acquires the remainder of the sin. Abusing a brahmana is a sin that removes one's status for one hundred years. Touching<sup>207</sup> is even more serious. For killing him, one dwells in hell for one thousand years. Therefore, one must not abuse him and never kill him. O king! As many particles of dust are needed to soak up a brahmana's wound, for that number of years one is whirled around in hell. If a person kills a foetus, he is purified if he is slain through a weapon in the midst of a battle. Or one must offer oneself as kindling into a blazing fire and thereby purify oneself. If one drinks liquor, one is freed from that sin by drinking hot *varuni* liquor.<sup>208</sup> That act burns him. Once he dies, he is purified after death. A brahmana then obtains the worlds. Indeed, there is no other way that he can obtain them. A person who violates his preceptor's bed is evil in his soul and wicked in his intelligence. He must embrace a blazing *surmi*<sup>209</sup> and death will purify him. Or he may himself sever his penis and testicles and holding them in his hands, walk straight in the southwest direction,<sup>210</sup> until he dies and falls down. If he<sup>211</sup> gives up his life for the sake of a brahmana, he will be purified. Or he may perform a horse sacrifice, a cow sacrifice or an agnishtoma sacrifice well and be purified in this world and in the next. A person who has killed a brahmana can hold a skull in his hand for twelve years. He begs and lives as a brahmachari hermit, loudly proclaiming his deed. In this way, the slayer of a brahmana retires to the forest and performs austerities. Not knowing whether she is pregnant or not, one may have intercourse with and kill an *atreyi* woman.<sup>212</sup> Killing an *atreyi* is double the sin of killing a brahmana. A person who drinks liquor must be restrained in his food and observe brahmacharya. He must sleep on the ground for three years and perform an agnishtoma sacrifice. Finally, when he has given away one thousand cows and a bull, he will obtain purification. Someone who has killed a vaishya must live in that way for two years and then give away one hundred cows and a bull. Someone who has killed a shudra must live in that way for one year and then give away ten cows and a bull. If one has killed a dog, a barbarian<sup>213</sup> or a donkey, one must observe the same vow as for a shudra. This is also true of a cat, a blue jay, a frog, a crow, a vulture, or a rat. O king! For killing any other living being, the same dharma as for killing an animal must be observed.

“In due order, I will now tell you about the other kinds of atonement. If one violates another person’s bed or indulges in theft, one must live separately for one year. This is said to be three years for the wife of a brahmana who is learned in the Vedas and two years for someone else’s wife.<sup>214</sup> A person who makes the sacred fire impure must follow the vow of a brahmachari and only eat during the fourth quarter of the day. He must stand during the day and remain seated at night. For three days, he must arise and not sip any water. O Kouravya! If someone abandons his father or his mother without a valid reason, he becomes fallen. That is the determination of dharma. It has been determined that only food and garments need to be given to wives who are guilty of adultery, especially those who have been imprisoned. Vows imposed on men who violate other men’s wives must also be imposed on them. If a woman abandons the bed of someone superior and desires that of someone wicked, the king must feed her to the dogs in a place that is frequented by many people. A wise person<sup>215</sup> binds down such a man on an iron bed that has been heated. Wood must be kindled underneath and the perpetrator of wicked deeds burnt there. O great king! This is also the punishment for women who transgress their husbands. If a wicked person is accused for one year,<sup>216</sup> the sin is doubled. If someone associates with such a person for two, three or four years, he must lead a difficult existence for five years. He must beg and observe the vow of a hermit. A man whose younger brother marries though he is yet unmarried, a man who marries before his elder brother has married, the woman who marries the younger brother and the one who conducts the marriage—under dharma, all of them are said to have fallen. All of them must observe the vow meant for someone who kills a hero.<sup>217</sup> Or they may observe *chandrayana*<sup>218</sup> or some other kind of fasting and thereby cleanse their sin. The younger brother who has married must offer his wife to his elder brother, who has not married, as a daughter-in-law. Having obtained the permission of the elder, he then takes her back again. Following dharma, this is the way she is freed and so are the other two.

“If one has inhuman intercourse,<sup>219</sup> provided it is not a cow, one is not stained, as long as one has not ejaculated.<sup>220</sup> It is known that man is the lord of animals and their eater. However, one must don a hide with the hair on the outside. One must take an earthen bowl in one’s hand. With this, one must beg at seven houses, recounting one’s deed. If he eats what he has thus obtained, he is purified in twelve days. If he performs the vow without displaying the signs,<sup>221</sup> he must observe it for one year. Even for men,<sup>222</sup> this is the supreme form of atonement. For all those who are addicted to giving and receiving, that<sup>223</sup> is recommended. Among non-believers, it is said that giving a cow is like giving up a breath of life. If one has eaten the meat of dogs, boars, men, cocks or donkeys, or has drunk urine or eaten excrement, one must perform the atonement of being cleansed again. If a brahmana who drinks soma inhales the breath of someone who has drunk liquor, he can drink hot water for three days, or drink hot milk for three days. He can also drink hot ghee for three days or only subsist on air for three days. These are the eternal modes of atonement that have been indicated. This is especially true for brahmanas and has originated from those who possess true knowledge.”

## Chapter 1488(160)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Nakula was accomplished in fighting with the sword. During a break in the conversation, he spoke to the grandfather, who was lying down on a bed of arrows. “O grandfather! It is said that the bow is the best weapon. O one who knows about dharma! But it is my view that a well-fashioned sword is the best. O king! When the bow has been severed and when the horses have been killed in a battle, a person is capable of successfully protecting himself with a sword. A brave person wielding a sword is single-handedly capable of warding off those who wield bows and those who wield clubs and spears. I have a doubt and curiosity about this. O king! What is the best weapon for battles? How did a sword arise? Who fashioned it and why? O grandfather!<sup>224</sup> Tell me about the first person who instructed about the use of the sword.” He heard the words of Madri’s intelligent son. He knew about all the techniques. He spoke auspicious words that were subtle, colourful and full of purport. He replied to him in words that had vowels and accents. The great-souled Nakula, Drona’s son, was skilled in learning and policy. Bhishma was accomplished in dhanurveda and was knowledgeable about all forms of dharma.

‘Lying down on the bed of arrows, he said, “O Madri’s son! Concerning what you have asked me, listen to the truth. I look like a mountain with minerals flowing from it<sup>225</sup> and you have stirred me. O son!<sup>226</sup> In ancient times, everything was in an ocean of water. There was no sky and the surface of the earth could not be discerned. It was enveloped in darkness. It was enveloped in darkness and it was extremely deep to look at. There was no sound. It was immeasurable. The grandfather<sup>227</sup> was born there. He created wind and fire and the energetic sun. He created the sky above and below it, the earth and the nether regions. He created the sky, with the moon, the stars, the nakshatras and the planets, the year, day and night, the seasons, lava and kshana. The grandfather established his body in the worlds. The illustrious one generated supreme and energetic sons—the rishis Marichi, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Angiras and the lord god Rudra. There was Daksha Prachetasa, who gave birth to sixty daughters. All the brahmarshis accepted them for the sake of offspring. All the beings in the universe resulted from them—the gods, the large numbers of ancestors, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the many kinds of rakshasas, the birds, the animals, the fish, the apes, the giant serpents and many others that had different forms and strengths, travelling in the water or on the land. O son! There were plants, those born from sweat, those born from eggs and those born from wombs. Everything in the universe was born, mobile and immobile. The grandfather of all the worlds created all these categories of beings. He then again united them to the eternal dharma that is laid down in the Vedas. The gods, with their preceptors and their priests, remained within the fold of dharma—the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, the Maruts and the Ashvins. So did Bhṛigu, Atri, Angiras, the Siddhas, Kashyapa, rich in austerities, Vasishtha, Goutama, Agastya, Narada, Parvata, the Valakhilya rishis, the Prabhasas, the Sikatas, the Ghrītachas, the Somavayavyas, the Vaikhanasas, the Marichipas, the Akrishtas, the Hamsas, the rishis who were born from the fire, the Vanaprasthas and the Prishnis. All of them based themselves on Brahma’s instructions.

“However, the lords of the danavas transgressed the grandfather’s instructions.<sup>228</sup> They were full of anger and avarice and diminished dharma. Hiranyakashipu, Hiranyaksha, Virochana, Shambara, Viprachitti, Prahrada, Namuchi, Bali—these and many other large numbers of daityas and danavas crossed the boundaries set by dharma and enjoyed themselves, having determined to follow adharma. ‘All of us are their equals. We are just like the gods are.’ Having reasoned in this way, they challenged the gods and the rishis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They showed no favour or compassion to any of the beings. They disregarded the three methods and punished the subjects with danda.<sup>229</sup> Because of their insolence, those supreme among the asuras entered into an agreement with them.<sup>230</sup> At this, the brahmarshis presented themselves before the illustrious Brahma. At that time, he was on the beautiful slopes of the Himalayas, in Padmataraka.<sup>231</sup> It was one hundred yojanas in area and was decorated with jewels and pearls. O son! In that supreme mountain, there were groves with blossoming trees. Brahma, the best of

the gods, was there, engaged in the success and welfare of the worlds. At the end of one thousand years, the lord made arrangements for a grand sacrifice there, following the rites instructed in the *kalpas*.<sup>232</sup> Rishis who were accomplished in performing sacrifices were there. As required, they were capable of undertaking all the acts. The Maruts covered the place and there were blazing fires. The place was radiant and seemed to be decorated with the golden sacrificial vessels. The circle of the sacrifice was resplendent, because it was surrounded by gods.

“I have heard that the rishis suffered something terrible there. The sparkling moon arises in the sky and surpasses the stars. Like that, it has been heard that a being broke through the fire and arose there. Its complexion was like that of a blue lotus. It possessed sharp teeth and a lean stomach. It was tall and difficult to behold because of its great energy. When it arose, the earth began to tremble. Large waves and whirlpools agitated the great ocean. Meteors showered down and there were grave portents. Branches fell down from the trees. All the directions were disturbed. Inauspicious winds began to blow. All the beings were continuously frightened and afflicted. On witnessing the tumult and the being that had arisen, the grandfather told the maharshis, the gods and the gandharvas, ‘This valiant being is known as a sword and I have thought of it. This is for the protection of the worlds and for slaying those who hate the gods.’ The sword then abandoned that form and became sharp-edged. It sparkled and was sharp at the edges. It was as if the Destroyer had arisen. Brahma gave the blazing sword to Shitikantha<sup>233</sup> Rudra, the one with the bull on his banner. This was for the purpose of countering adharma. At this, the illustrious Rudra was worshipped by the large number of brahmarshis. The one who was immeasurable in his soul accepted the sword and assumed another form. He was four-armed. Though he stood on the ground, he touched the firmament with his head. Mahalinga<sup>234</sup> glanced upwards and released flames from his mouth. He assumed many different complexions—blue, pale and red. His garment was made out of black antelope skin and was decorated with stars made out of the best gold. There was a giant eye on his forehead and it was like the sun. He was beautiful with two other sparkling eyes and they were dark brown. The god Mahadeva wielded the trident in his hand and he was the one who plucked out Bhaga’s eyes.<sup>235</sup> He grasped the sword, which was like the Destroyer, the sun, or the fire. He grasped a shield that was embossed in three places and it looked like a cloud tinged with lightning. The immensely strong and valorous one roamed around in many different kinds of paths. He waved the sword around in the sky, wishing to bring an end to the danavas.

“He released a roar and laughed loudly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rudra’s fearful form was resplendent then. On seeing Rudra’s form, all the danavas, wishing to perform terrible deeds, attacked him. They showered down rocks and blazing torches. There were many other terrible weapons, razor-sharp and tipped with iron. That army of the danavas had never wavered earlier. However, because of the force that was generated from Rudra’s sword, it trembled and was confused. With the sword in his hand, he moved around, in even faster and colourful ways. All the asuras thought that the solitary person was actually one thousand. He severed, pierced, struck, sliced, shattered and mangled. Rudra roamed around amidst that mass of daityas, like a fire amidst dead-wood. The rakshasas were devastated by the force of the sword and their arms, thighs and breasts were severed. Their heads were completely cut down and the great asuras fell down on the ground. There were other danavas who were shattered and afflicted by Rudra’s force. They screamed at each other and fled in different directions. Some entered the ground. Others entered mountains. There were others who rose up into the sky. Still others submerged themselves in the water. A great and extremely terrible encounter took place. The earth was then covered with the mud of blood and looked horrible. O mighty-armed one! It was strewn with the large bodies of danavas, wounded and bloodied. They were like mountains, covered with *kimshuka* trees. The earth was covered with blood and looked beautiful then. She was like a dark woman, intoxicated with liquor and attired in a red and wet garment.

“When he had killed the danavas and established supreme dharma in the universe, Rudra swiftly abandoned his terrible form and took up his auspicious form of Shiva. All the maharshis and all the large numbers of gods worshipped the god of the gods because of the wonderful nature of his victory. The sword, the protector of dharma, was still wet with the blood of danavas. Respectfully, the illustrious Rudra gave it to Vishnu. Vishnu gave it to Marichi and the illustrious Marichi gave it to the maharshis. The rishis gave the sword to Vasava. O son! The great Indra gave it to the guardians of the world and the guardians of the world gave the extremely large sword to Manu, Surya’s son.<sup>236</sup> They told the first man, ‘You are the lord. This sword has dharma in its womb. Use it to protect the

subjects. Those who transgress the boundaries of dharma, because of subtle or gross reasons, must be punished and protected by the rod, not as one wills, but following dharma. Harsh words are also punishment and chastisement can also take the form of fining a large quantity of gold. For trifling reasons, a limb of the body must not be severed. Nor should there be execution. Harsh words of censure are indicated as a form of the sword. The sword has different measures<sup>237</sup> and there are also exceptions to these measures.’ Having created his own son, Kshupa, Manu, the lord of subjects, gave him the sword, for the protection of the subjects. On earth, Ikshvaku accepted the sword from Kshupa and Pururava from Ikshvaku.<sup>238</sup> Ayu obtained it from him and Nahusha from him. Yayati got it from Nahusha and Puru obtained it from him. Amurtarayasa got it from him and King Bhumishaya from him. O king! Bharata, the son of Duhshanta, obtained the sword from Bhumishaya and Aidabida, knowledgeable about dharma, obtained it from him. From Aidabida, Dhundhumara, lord of men, obtained it. Kamboja got it from Dhundhumara and Muchukunda from him. Marutta got it from Muchukunda and Raivata from Marutta. Yuvanashva got it from Raivata and Raghu from Yuvanashva. The powerful Harinashva, descended from the lineage of Ikshvaku, got it from him. Shunaka got the sword from Harinashva and Ushinara, with dharma in his soul, from Shunaka. The Bhojas and the Yadavas got it from him. Shibi obtained it from the Yadus and Pratardana from Shibi. Ashtaka got it from Pratardana and Rushadashva from Ashtaka. Bharadvaja got it from Rushadashva, Drona from him, and Kripa from him. You and all your brothers obtained the supreme sword from him.

“‘The Kritikas are the nakshatra for the sword.<sup>239</sup> The fire is its god. Rohini is its gotra. Rudra is its supreme preceptor. O Pandaveya! Listen to the eight secret names of the sword. Recounting these, one can always obtain victory in the world—Asi, Vishasana, Khadga, Tikshnavartma, Durasada, Shrigarbha, Vijaya and Dharmapala.<sup>240</sup> O son of Madravati!<sup>241</sup> The sword is the foremost among weapons. The ancient tales have certainly stated that it was first wielded by Maheshvara. O destroyer of enemies! Prithu created the first bow and with this, Vena’s son<sup>242</sup> protected the world earlier. O son of Madri! You must also follow the standard set by the rishis. The sword must always be worshipped by those who are accomplished in war. This is the first principle and this has been explained to you in great detail. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the sword’s origin and association. If a person listens to the supreme and complete account about how the sword was fashioned, that man obtains fame in this world and eternity in the world hereafter.’”

## Chapter 1489(161)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Bhishma said this and became silent, Yudhishtira left his presence and asked his brothers, with Vidura as the fifth, “The conduct of people is based on dharma, artha<sup>243</sup> and kama. Which of these is the most important? Which is medium and which is the least important? If one wishes to conquer all three categories together, which of these must one control? O wise ones! You should speak truthful words and satisfy me.”

‘Vidura was foremost among those who knew the truth about the progress of artha. He possessed qualities. Remembering the texts of dharma, he spoke these words. “A great deal of learning, austerities, renunciation, faith, the performance of sacrifices, forgiveness, the purification of sentiments, compassion, truthfulness, restraint and richness of the soul—these must be cultivated and the mind must not waver. These are the foundations of dharma and artha and can be subsumed in the single word of ‘welfare’. The rishis crossed over through dharma. The worlds are established in dharma. The gods obtained heaven through dharma. Artha is submerged in dharma. O king! Dharma is the supreme in qualities. Artha is said to be medium. The learned ones say that kama is the worst. Therefore, a person must control his soul and make dharma the most important.”

‘When he stopped, the attentive Partha, who knew the true words about artha, spoke. “O king! This world is the arena of action and such conduct is praised—agriculture, trade, animal husbandry and many kinds of artisanship. Among all these tasks, there is nothing that transcends the need for artha. The sacred texts have said that without artha, dharma and kama cannot occur. A victorious person obtains artha and can pursue supreme dharma. He is capable of following kama, which is difficult for those with unclean souls to pursue. The sacred texts say that dharma and kama take the form of artha. These two can be attained through the successful acquisition of artha. Those who have been born in superior lineages surround the man who possesses artha, just as the beings always worship Brahma. Those who have matted hair, are clad in deerskin, are controlled and have smeared themselves with mud, those who have conquered their senses, have shaven heads, have no offspring and dwell separately—even they hanker after artha. There are others who are bearded and attired in ochre garments, covering themselves with humility. They are learned and tranquil. They are free and have given up all their possessions. Even among them, some seek heaven and others strive for artha. Some follow the practices of their lineages and are established in their own individual paths. There are believers and non-believers, completely engaged in supreme restraint. Lack of wisdom is submerged in darkness and wisdom provides the radiance.<sup>244</sup> A person who possesses artha can maintain his servants in pleasure and exert the rod against his enemies. O best among intelligent ones! That is the reason my view is accurate. Now listen to the words of these two. Their voices are choking with words.”

‘Madri’s sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, accomplished in dharma and artha, spoke these supreme words next. “Whether one is seated, lying down, roaming around or standing, through the pursuit of superior and inferior means, one must always attempt to firmly pursue the acquisition of artha. This is extremely difficult to obtain and is supremely loved. In this world, once one has obtained this, there is no doubt that one can obtain kama. Artha is united with dharma and dharma is united with artha. This is the way amrita is united with honey. Therefore, our view is the following. There can be no kama without artha. How can there be dharma without artha? Thus, people are scared of those who are outside the pale of dharma and artha. Therefore, even if a person thinks that dharma is the most important, he must control his soul and seek to accomplish artha. If people trust a person, he can accomplish everything. One must first pursue dharma and then artha that is in conformity with dharma. Kama should be pursued later. These are the fruits of the successful pursuit of artha.” Having spoken these words, the sons of the two Ashvins ceased.

‘Bhimasena then spoke these words. “A person without kama does not desire artha. A person without kama does not desire dharma. A person without kama cannot follow the path of desire. Therefore, kama is the best. It is be-



cause they are united with kama that the rishis are controlled in their austerities. They eat leaves, fruits and roots. They subsist on air and are greatly restrained. There are others who are engaged in chanting the Vedas, they are devoted to studying. They perform funeral rites and sacrifices and receive donations. Merchants, farmers, herdsmen, craftsmen and artisans are engaged in the tasks of the gods. But it is kama that drives the action. Driven by kama, men enter the ocean. Kama has many different forms. Everything is driven by kama. There is nothing, there was nothing and there will be nothing that is beyond the simple fact of kama. O great king! This is the essence and dharma and artha are dependent on it. Kama is to dharma and artha what butter is to curds. Oil is better than what is left of oilseeds after the extraction of oil. Ghee is better than what is left of milk after churning. Good fruit is better than wood. Kama is superior to dharma and artha. Just as honey comes from the juice of flowers, like that, happiness comes from kama. O king! Serve kama. Pleasure yourself with women who are attired in extremely beautiful garments and are ornamented, mad with intoxication and pleasant in speech. Kama will come to you swiftly. In this group, this is my view. O Dharma's son! You should not reflect about this for a long time. If virtuous people paid heed to these beneficial words, which are not shallow in import, there would be the greatest kindness. One must serve dharma, artha and kama in equal measure. If a man serves only one of these, he is the worst. A person who is accomplished in two is said to be medium. The superior person is engaged in all three categories. He is wise. His well-wishers smear him with sandalwood paste. He is adorned in colourful garlands and ornaments." Having spoken these words, briefly and in detail, Bhima, the younger brother, stopped.

'For an instant, Dharmaraja thought well about the words that had been spoken to him. Extremely learned and supreme among the upholders of dharma, he smiled and spoke these truthful words. "There is no doubt that all your determinations are based on the sacred texts of dharma and that you are acquainted with the proof. You have carefully spoken these words to me and I have got to know about kama. You have said that it is essential in this world. However, single-mindedly, listen to the sentiments in my words. A man who is engaged in neither good deeds nor evil ones, and not engaged in artha, dharma or kama, is freed from all sins and looks on gold and stones in the same way. He is successful in freeing himself from unhappiness and happiness. Beings are born and they die. They face old age and decay. There have been repeated instructions on moksha and it has been praised. But we do not know this. The illustrious Svayambhu<sup>245</sup> has said that one who is not bound down by affection does not suffer these.<sup>246</sup> The learned ones have said that nirvana<sup>247</sup> is supreme. Therefore, one should not act in accordance with what is pleasant and what is unpleasant. However, a person who follows kama does not attach importance to this. I act wherever I have been appointed. All the beings have been appointed by destiny. Know that destiny is powerful in everything. One cannot attain the objective by performing deeds. Know that whatever is going to happen will happen. Even if a person is devoid of the three modes, he can attain this objective.<sup>248</sup> Thus, this is the secret for the welfare of the worlds." These foremost words were pleasant to the mind and full of reason. They heard them and were delighted. They joined their hands in salutation to the foremost one among the Kuru lineage. Those words were extremely beautiful and adorned with letters, syllables and words. They were pleasant to hear and devoid of thorns. O king! On hearing the words spoken by Partha,<sup>249</sup> those Indras among men applauded those words. The one who had never been dispirited<sup>250</sup> again questioned the son of the river<sup>251</sup> about supreme dharma.'

## Chapter 1490(162)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage! I will ask you a question. You should explain this to me completely. What kind of men are amiable and who are the ones towards whom one can have great affection? Tell me who can be depended upon, in the present and in the future. It is my view that a growing store of wealth, kin and relatives cannot occupy the space that well-wishers do. A well-wisher who listens is extremely difficult to get. A well-wisher who does good is extremely difficult to get. O best among those who uphold dharma! You should explain all this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O Yudhishtira! I will tell you everything in detail. Listen to me about the true nature of men one should have alliances with, and those with whom one should not. O bull among men! O lord of men! Greedy, cruel, one who has forsaken dharma, deceitful, fraudulent, inferior, one who is wicked in conduct, one who is suspicious of everyone, lazy, one who is a procrastinator, one who is not upright, a sufferer, one who has molested his preceptor’s wife, one who abandons you at the time of a calamity, an evil-souled person, one who is without shame, one who sees wickedness everywhere, a non-believer, one who criticizes the Vedas, one who cannot control his senses in this world, one who incessantly follows kama, a liar, one who hates people, one who does not adhere to agreements, a person who slanders, one who does not possess wisdom, one who is envious, a person who has made up his mind about doing evil, one who is evil in behaviour, one who has not cleansed his soul, a person who is violent, a gambler, one who causes injury to friends, one who always desires the wealth that belongs to others, an evil-minded person who is not satisfied even if someone gives him a lot and to the best of giver’s capacity, one who always behaves with friends as if they are enemies, one who is enraged for the wrong reasons, one who suddenly loses interest, one who is wicked and swiftly abandons his well-wishers for a benefit, one who behaves foolishly when a trifling and involuntary injury has been done to him, one whose friendship is for an ulterior motive, one who pretends to be a friend but is actually an enemy, one who is confused and is blind to his own good, one who does not find delight in what is beneficial—such a man must be avoided. If a man drinks liquor, is hateful, cruel, devoid of compassion, harsh, takes delight in the sufferings of others, injures friends, is engaged in the killing of beings, is ungrateful and wicked—you must never have an alliance with him. You should never have an alliance with someone who is looking for your weakness.

“Now listen to me about the ones you should have an alliance with—one who is noble, eloquent in speech, accomplished in jnana and vijnana, devoted to friends, grateful, knowledgeable about everything, devoid of sorrow, possessing the quality of pleasantness, devoted to the truth, one who has conquered his senses, one who is always devoted to physical exercise, one who comes from a noble lineage and has servants and sons, one who is handsome, possesses the qualities, one who is not greedy, one who has conquered exhaustion, one who is bereft of taints and one who is famous. These are the ones a king should accept. O lord! There are also those who act to the best of their abilities, are virtuous and content, are not angered for the wrong reasons, do not suddenly change their inclinations, are not angered when opposed, are mentally accomplished about artha, are devoted to the tasks of well-wishers even if this causes a suffering to themselves, in the manner of a red garment, find delight in their friends,<sup>252</sup> do not suffer from the vices of greed and delusion and pursue riches and young women, do not show such paths to well-wishers, trust and are devoted to their friends, regard gold and rock to be equal in value, do not have fraudulent tendencies towards their well-wishers, are modest in their conduct, are not interested in acquiring riches and ornaments, collect their followers and are always supremely interested in ensuring the prosperity of their master. These kinds of men are the best and a king must have an alliance with them. That is the means for extending the kingdom, like moonlight emanating from the lord of the planets. You must always have alliances with the best of men—those who are always based on the sacred texts, those who have conquered their anger, those



who have power, those who take delight in war, those who are forgiving and those who possess the qualities of good conduct. O unblemished one! O king! Among the wicked men that I have mentioned, the worst are those who are ungrateful and kill their friends. Under all circumstances, it is certain that such a person, evil in conduct, must be cast aside.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! I wish to hear in detail about the reason for not allying with those who kill their enemies and are ungrateful, as stated by you. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Indeed, on this, there is an ancient history that occurred. O lord of men! It happened in the northern direction, where the mlecchas dwell. There was a brahmana from the central regions. He was dark in limbs and had abandoned the brahman. He saw a village that was full of people and entered there, desiring to beg for alms. A rich bandit lived there and he knew specifically about all the varnas. He was devoted to brahmanas, devoted to the truth and always engaged in donations. He<sup>253</sup> went to his house and begged for alms. He begged for a place where he could reside and alms that would last him for a year. He gave the brahmana all this and also a garment that seemed to be new.<sup>254</sup> He also gave him a mature woman who had then lost her husband. Having obtained all this from the bandit, the brahmana was delighted in his mind. O king! In that supreme house, Goutama<sup>255</sup> found pleasure with her. He aided in the household work of the bandit who had helped him. He lived in Shabara’s<sup>256</sup> prosperous house throughout the monsoon. Goutama made supreme efforts to learn archery. O king! Like the large number of bandits, in every direction, Goutama could always kill the cranes that came within the range of his arrows. He lost all compassion and became addicted to violence. He was always engaged in slaying beings. Because of his association with them, Goutama became just like the bandits. In this way, he resided happily in that village of the bandits. Many months passed and he slew many birds.

“On one occasion, another brahmana arrived at that spot. He had matted hair and was dressed in rags and hides. He was extremely pure and devoted to studying. He was humble and controlled in his food. He was devoted to the brahman and accomplished in the Vedas. The brahmachari, who hailed from the same country<sup>257</sup> as his beloved friend, came to that village of the bandits. Since he avoided food cooked by shudras, he looked for the home of a brahmana. In the village, which was inhabited by a large number of bandits, he roamed around in every direction. That supreme among brahmanas then entered Goutama’s house. When Goutama returned, they met each other. When he returned, he had a load of cranes in his hand and wielded a bow in his hand. His limbs were covered in blood and he appeared at the door of the house. On seeing this flesh-eater, who had deviated and fallen, he still recognized him as the brahmana and in shame, spoke these words. ‘Why are you acting in this stupid way? You were born in the lineage of a brahmana. You were known in the central regions. How have you come to act like a bandit? Remember the first and foremost among the brahmanas, renowned for their knowledge of the Vedas. You were born in that lineage! The way you are now, you are the worst of your lineage. Awake and realize your own self of truthfulness, good conduct, learning and self-control. O brahmana! Remember your compassion and give up this attire.’ O king! He was thus addressed by his well-wisher, who had his welfare in mind. Having decided, he miserably replied, ‘O best among brahmanas! I possess no riches. I am not learned in the Vedas. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that I have come to this state in search of a means of subsistence. O brahmana rishi! On seeing you, I know that I will be successful. We will leave together in the morning. Dwell here during the night.’”

## Chapter 1491(163)

‘Bhishma said, “When night was over, that supreme among brahmanas departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Goutama also left and headed in the direction of the ocean. Along the road, he saw some traders advancing towards the ocean. In the company of their caravan, he went towards the ocean. O great king! However, in a mountainous cavern, that caravan was attacked by a crazy elephant and most of them were killed. In some way, the brahmana managed to escape. Not knowing the directions but wishing to save his life, he fled in the northern direction. He lost everything—the caravan, the directions, the riches. He fled alone through the forest, like a *kimpurusha*. He eventually managed to reach a road that led in the direction of the ocean and then reached a beautiful forest that was full of large blossoming trees. There were beautiful and flowering mango trees in every direction. That spot was like Nandana<sup>258</sup> and was inhabited by yakshas and kinnaras. There were groves of shala, *tala*, *dhava*, *ashvattha* and sandalwood trees. The best among trees were full of flowers. The beautiful valley in the mountains was extremely fragrant with auspicious scents. Excellent birds warbled and chirped in every direction. There were the famous bharunda birds,<sup>259</sup> with faces like that of men. In every direction, there were *bhulingas*<sup>260</sup> and other birds that frequented the ocean. Listening to the extremely melodious and pleasant sounds of the birds, the brahmana, Goutama, moved along.

“He then saw a lovely region that was spread with golden sand. It was wonderful and the region had a complexion like that of heaven. There was a giant and handsome banyan tree and it was rounded. It was adorned with beautiful branches and was like an umbrella. Its root was sprinkled extremely well with water mixed with the best of sandalwood. Covered with divine flowers, it was as handsome as the grandfather’s<sup>261</sup> throne. It was supreme and loved by the sages. On seeing it, Goutama was delighted. Surrounded by flowering trees, it looked like the house of a god. He joyfully approached it and seated himself under its branches. O Kouravya! As Goutama was seated there, a pleasant and auspicious breeze began to blow. O king! That sacred breeze touched all the flowers and removed all the exhaustion from Goutama’s heart and limbs. The brahmana was touched by the auspicious breeze. He slept happily and the sun set. When the sun set, twilight manifested. The king of cranes was known by the name of Nadijangha. He was supreme among birds and was Brahma’s beloved friend. The immensely wise one was descended from Kashyapa. He returned to his abode. Unsurpassed on earth, he was also known by the name of Rajadharma. He was the son of a celestial maiden. He was handsome and learned and was like the lord of the gods in his complexion. He was covered in golden plumage and his ornaments were like the sun. Blazing in prosperity, he was adorned all over his body. He was descended from the gods. On seeing the bird arrive, Goutama was astounded. He was overcome by hunger and thirst and glanced at it, desirous of causing injury.<sup>262</sup>

“Rajadharma said, ‘O brahmana! Welcome. It is through good fortune that you have come to my house. The sun has set and twilight has presented itself. You have come to my residence as a beloved and unblemished guest. In accordance with the prescribed rites, you will be worshipped. Leave in the morning.’”

## Chapter 1492(164)

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing these sweet words, Goutama was astounded. O king! He was curious and looked at Rajadharma.

“‘Rajadharma said, ‘I am the son of Kashyapa and Dakshayani is my mother.<sup>263</sup> O bull among brahmanas! You are a guest and possess all the qualities. Welcome.’”

‘Bhishma said, “In accordance with the prescribed rites, he gave him all the honours. He fashioned a celestial seat that was covered with shala flowers. That region around the Ganga was traversed by Bhagiratha’s chariot and was inhabited by a large number of fishes. Kashyapa<sup>264</sup> properly lit a blazing fire and cooked some extremely large fish, offering them to Goutama, the guest. The brahmana fed on these and was delighted. The great-minded one then fanned him with his wings, so that his exhaustion might become less. When he was seated and rested, he asked him about his gotra. He said, ‘I am Goutama, a brahmana.’ He did not say anything else. He gave him a celestial bed covered with fragrant leaves and adorned with divine flowers. Goutama happily lay down on it. Once he had lain down on the bed, the eloquent Kashyapa, the king of the cranes, asked him, ‘What is the reason behind your coming here?’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, Goutama replied, ‘O immensely intelligent one! I am poor. I have come to the ocean with the object of acquiring some riches.’ Kashyapa cheerfully replied, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! You should not be anxious. You will be successful. You will return to your home with riches. O lord! It is Brihaspati’s view that there are four means of obtaining riches—inheritance, fate, deeds and friends. I have appeared before you as a friend and you are also my well-wisher. I will try on your account, so that you can truly obtain riches.’ When it was morning, he asked him<sup>265</sup> whether he was comfortable and said, ‘O amiable one! Advance along this path and you will be successful. Once you have travelled three yojanas, there will be a great lord of the rakshasas. He is immensely strong and is known by the name of Virupaksha. He is my friend. O best among brahmanas! Go to him. Because of my telling him, there is no doubt that he will give you as much of riches as you desire.’ O king! Having been thus addressed, Goutama was no longer exhausted and departed.

“‘O great king! Along the way, as much as he wished, he ate fruit that was like amrita and progressed quickly. There were excellent forests of sandalwood, aloe and cinnamon. He reached a city named Meruvraja, with stone walls. There were ramparts made out of stone and a mechanical gate made out of stone. O king! It was announced to the intelligent Indra among rakshasas that a beloved well-wisher had sent a beloved guest to him. O Yudhishtira! At this, the Indra among rakshasas told his messengers, ‘Goutama has arrived at the gates of the city. Quickly go and bring him here.’ Men attired in white garments emerged from that supreme city. O great king! The messengers of the lord of the rakshasas went to the city gates and told the brahmana, ‘O Goutama! Make haste and come quickly. The king wishes to see you. The brave lord of the rakshasas is Virupaksha and you have heard of him. He wishes to see you swiftly. Therefore, you must make haste.’ Because of his amazement, the brahmana’s exhaustion vanished and he hurried. Goutama saw the prosperity of the city and marvelled greatly. With the servants, he quickly arrived at the king’s residence. At that time, the brahmana wished to see the Indra among the rakshasas.’”

## Chapter 1493(165)

‘Bhishma said, “Announced to the king, he entered that supreme house. He was honoured by the Indra among rakshasas and seated himself on an excellent seat. He was asked about his gotra, his code of behaviour, his studies and the nature of his brahmacharya. However, the brahmana told him nothing, other than his gotra. He no longer observed brahmacharya and had stopped studying. The king only got to know about his gotra and asked him where he lived. ‘O fortunate one! Where do you dwell? What is the gotra of your brahmana wife? Tell me everything. Do not be frightened. You should happily rest.’ Goutama replied, ‘I have been born in the central regions. I dwell in Shabara’s house. My wife is a shudra who has married again. I am telling you this truthfully.’ At this, the king thought, ‘How is this possible? What should I do now? How can I obtain merit?’ He used his intelligence to think about this. ‘This one has been born as a brahmana. He was sent here to me by my great-souled well-wisher, Kashyapa. Since he has always sought refuge with him, I must do what pleases him. He is my brother and relative.<sup>266</sup> He is also a friend who is dear to my heart. This is full moon in the month of Kartika<sup>267</sup> and one thousand excellent brahmanas will eat in my house. He will also eat here and I will give him some of my riches.’ One thousand learned and ornamented brahmanas arrived there. They had bathed and prepared themselves. They were attired in long linen garments. O lord of the earth! Those best among brahmanas came to Virupaksha from many directions. He received them as they deserved, following the prescribed rites.

“On the instructions of the Indra among the rakshasas, blankets were spread out on the ground. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The servants spread out cushions on these. Seated there, the best among brahmanas were worshipped by the king. O great king! They were as radiant as the lord of the nakshatras.<sup>268</sup> There were sparkling, pure and golden vessels, decorated with diamonds. These were filled with excellent rice, flowing with honey and ghee, and offered to the brahmanas. Many brahmanas always received this, in the months of Ashadha and Magha.<sup>269</sup> Honoured well, they always received the excellent food that they desired. But it has been heard that the full moon in Kartika, after autumn is over, was special and brahmanas were given jewels—gold, silver, gems, pearls, extremely expensive diamonds, lapis lazuli, skins of black antelope and skins of ranku deer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The immensely illustrious Virupaksha threw away a large pile of jewels as dakshina and told the foremost among the brahmanas, ‘Take these jewels, as much as you can, and as much as you wish. O best among brahmanas! Whatever be the vessels you have eaten from, take those too, and go to your own homes.’ When addressed by the great-souled Indra among rakshasas in these words, the bulls among brahmanas accepted a sufficient quantity of jewels. All of them were worshipped with those sparkling and extremely expensive jewels. Attired in excellent garments, the brahmanas were delighted. O king! The Indra among rakshasas restrained the rakshasas and again spoke to the brahmanas, who had arrived from many directions. ‘O brahmanas! This is one day when you need have no fear from the rakshasas. Amuse yourselves, as you like, and leave quickly.’ At this, all the large numbers of brahmanas fled in different directions.

“Goutama also swiftly grasped a load of gold. O brave one! He bore this with difficulty and approached the banyan tree. He was exhausted and sat down. He was tired and hungry. O king! At that time, Rajadharma, supreme among birds, who was devoted to his friend, arrived and welcomed Goutama. The bird fanned him with his wings and removed his exhaustion. He honoured him and made arrangements for his food. Having eaten and having rested well, Goutama began to think. ‘Because of both my greed and my confusion, I have seized this extremely large burden of gold. I have a long distance to travel. There will be no food on the way, whereby I can stay alive. How will I be able to sustain my life?’ He thought in this way. He could not see any food that would be available along the route. O tiger among men! The ingrate thought in his mind, ‘This lord of the cranes is by my side and he is a heap of flesh. I will kill him and take him with me. I will then swiftly depart.’”

## Chapter 1494(166)

‘Bhishma said, “For the sake of protection, the Indra among the birds had kindled a great and blazing fire there and the wind was its charioteer. Having done this, the king of the cranes trustfully went to sleep by the side. Wishing to kill him, the evil-souled ingrate remained awake. With a blazing brand, he killed that trustful one. Having killed him, he was delighted, not seeing the consequences this would lead to. He removed the wings and the feathers and cooked the rest over the fire. Then, taking this and the gold, the brahmana left speedily.

“After another day passed, Virupaksha told his son, ‘O son! Today, I have not seen Rajadharma, supreme among birds. Every evening, he always goes to show his obeisance to Brahma. After this, the bird never goes home without having seen me first. It is now two evenings and two nights since he came to my residence. Therefore, I am disturbed and must find out about my well-wisher. That worst among brahmanas was disunited from studying and the radiance of the brahman wasn’t there in him. He has gone there and it is my fear that he might have killed him. I noticed that his conduct was wicked and from signs, could make out that he was evil-minded. He did not perform rites and was terrible in form. He was dark, like the worst among bandits. Goutama has gone there. That is the reason my mind is anxious. O son! Swiftly go to Rajadharma’s abode. Immediately find out if the one who is pure in his soul is still alive.’ Having been thus addressed, he quickly went to the banyan tree with some rakshasas and saw Rajadharma’s skeleton there. Weeping, the intelligent son of the Indra among the rakshasas speedily rushed, to the best of his capacity, to seize Goutama. A short distance away, the rakshasas seized Goutama. They also obtained Rajadharma’s body, bereft of the wings, the bones and the feet. Having taken this, the rakshasas hastened to Meruvraja.

“They showed Rajadharma’s body and the ungrateful man, Goutama, wicked in his senses, to the king. The king, with his advisers and priests, lamented on seeing him. Great sounds of lamentation arose in the residence. The city, with the women and the children, were distracted. The king told his son, ‘Slay this wretch. As you wish, all of you merrily feast on his flesh. He is wicked in his conduct. He is evil in his deeds. He is dastardly in his soul. His determination is sinful. It is my view that the rakshasas should kill him.’ Having been addressed by the Indra among the rakshasas, the rakshasas, terrible in their valour, did not wish to eat him and said, ‘He is wicked in his deeds. It is proper that this worst among men should be given to the bandits.’ O great king! The travellers of the night addressed the Indra among the rakshasas in this way. Before the lord of the large number of rakshasas, they bowed their heads down on the ground and said, ‘You should not give him to us to eat. He is evil.’ Having been thus addressed by the travellers of the night, the Indra among rakshasas instructed the rakshasas that he should be given to the bandits. Thus instructed, the servants picked up tridents and clubs in their hands. They chopped the wicked one up into pieces and gave him to the bandits. However, even the bandits did not desire to eat the evil-acting one. O Indra among kings! Predatory creatures did not eat the ingrate either.

“If someone kills a brahmana, if someone is a drunkard, if someone is a thief, if someone has broken his vows—there are indicated means of atonement. O king! But there is no salvation for someone

who is ungrateful. Someone who injures his friends, someone who is violent and someone who is ungrateful is the worst among men. Predatory creatures, worms and other such beings will not devour someone like this.”

## Chapter 1495(167)

‘Bhishma said, “The rakshasa<sup>270</sup> had a funeral pyre constructed for the king of the cranes. It was decorated with gems, fragrances and garments. O king! The Indra among the rakshasas then followed the prescribed ordinances and performed the funeral rites for the powerful king of the cranes. At that time, the auspicious and illustrious goddess, Dakshayani Surabhi,<sup>271</sup> appeared overhead. O unblemished one! Froth and milk flowed from her mouth and streamed onto Rajadharma’s funeral pyre. O unblemished one! The king of the cranes was revived at this. The lord of the cranes arose and approached Virupaksha. At that time, the king of the gods came to Virupaksha’s city and told Virupaksha, ‘It is good fortune that he has come alive.’ Indra told Virupaksha about an ancient curse that had, in earlier times, been imposed by Brahma on Rajadharma. ‘O king! When the lord of the cranes did not worship Brahma, the grandfather was enraged and spoke to the Indra among the cranes. “This worst among cranes has foolishly not presented himself before me. Therefore, this evil-souled one will shortly be killed.” Because of those words, he was slain by Goutama. Having been sprinkled with amrita, the crane has again been brought back to life.’ When this was spoken, Rajadharma bowed down before Purandara and said, ‘O Purandara! If your mind is inclined towards showing me favours, let my extremely beloved friend, Goutama, come back to life.’ O bull among men! Vasava agreed to these words. He revived Goutama and handed him over to his friend. O king! The lord of the cranes was supremely delighted and embraced his friend, who was still carrying the burden.<sup>272</sup> Then, Rajadharma, the lord of the cranes, took his leave of the evil-acting one and his riches and entered his own residence. The crane went to Brahma’s assembly, as he should have. And Brahma honoured the great-souled one as a guest.

“Goutama again reached Shabara’s abode. Through the shudra woman, he had many sons who were the perpetrators of wicked deeds. The large number of gods then imposed an extremely severe curse on him. O lord! Over a long period of time, having given birth through his remarried wife,<sup>273</sup> the immensely ungrateful one would go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Narada told me all this earlier. O bull among men! I remembered and told you the great account. Everything happened exactly as I have recounted it. How can an ungrateful person obtain fame? What is his status? Where is his happiness? An ingrate is never respected. There is no salvation for an ungrateful person. A man must, especially, never injure his friends. A person who injures his friends obtains a terrible and infinite hell. O unblemished one! One must always have sentiments of gratitude and affection towards friends. Truth comes from friends. Strength comes from friends. The discerning person honours his friends well. The learned avoid a person who is wicked, ungrateful, shameless, injurious towards friends, the worst of his lineage, sinful in his deeds and the worst among men. O best among those who uphold dharma! I have thus spoken to you about the wicked person who was ungrateful and injured his friend. What do you again wish to hear?”

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! On hearing these words spoken by the great-souled Bhishma, Yudhishtira was delighted.’

*This concludes Apad Dharma Parva.*







## Section Eighty-six

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MOKSHA DHARMA PARVA

*This parva has 6,935 shlokas and 186 chapters.*

*Chapter 1496(168): 53 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1497(169): 37 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1498(170): 23 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1499(171): 61 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1500(172): 37 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1501(173): 52 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1502(174): 20 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1503(175): 37 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1504(176): 17 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1505(177): 39 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1506(178): 17 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1507(179): 15 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1508(180): 30 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1509(181): 20 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1510(182): 17 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1511(183): 16 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1512(184): 18 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1513(185): 27 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1514(186): 32 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1515(187): 60 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1516(188): 22 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1517(189): 21 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1518(190): 13 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1519(191): 11 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1520(192): 127 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1521(193): 32 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1522(194): 24 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1523(195): 23 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1524(196): 23 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1525(197): 20 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1526(198): 18 shlokas*  
*Chapter 1527(199): 32 shlokas*

*Moksha means liberation, as opposed to the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama.*

## Chapter 1496(168)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have spoken about how one can resort to the sacred rajadharma. O king! You should tell me about the best dharma for those who are in the ashramas.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are many doors to dharma and the rites are never unsuccessful. Everywhere, dharma, the path to heaven, truthfulness and the fruits of austerities have been indicated. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Whatever rules one has thought of, and has determined to observe, is understood to be the only one—there being no other. Whenever one meditates, there is no doubt that detachment is generated and this world becomes like a fabric. O Yudhishtira! When the world is full of deception and many taints, an intelligent man must try to accomplish the objective of moksha for his soul.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! When riches are destroyed and a wife, a son or a father dies, how can one use one’s intelligence to dispel that sorrow? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When riches are destroyed and a wife, a son or a father dies, one laments in grief. However, one must act so as to dispel that sorrow through meditation. On this, an ancient history is recounted about the words that were spoken by a brahmana to Senajit, when the king was tormented by grief on account of his son and was distracted with misery. On seeing that his face was sorrowful, the brahmana spoke these words. ‘You are as stupid as a millstone. Why are you sorrowing? What are you grieving about? There are those who will sorrow over you and those mourners will also advance to the same end. O king! You, I, and all the others who worship you, all of us will go to the spot where we have come from.’ Senajit asked, ‘O brahmana! O one who is rich in austerities! What intelligence, austerities, meditation, wisdom and learning can be obtained, so that one does not grieve?’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘Behold. All the beings are tied down in misery. For me, my atman is not mine. But the entire earth is mine. What is mine also belongs to others. Because of this intelligence, I am not distressed. Having obtained this intelligence, I am neither delighted, nor distressed. Just as a piece of wood approaches another piece of wood in the great ocean, comes together and drifts apart, that is the way beings meet each other. Sons, grandsons, kin and relatives are like that. One should not be attached to them, since separation from them is certain. He<sup>1</sup> came from what cannot be seen. He has gone to what cannot be seen. He did not know you. You did not know him. Who are you? Who are you sorrowing over? Misery is an affliction created by desire. Happiness results when that affliction of sorrow becomes less. Then again, misery is repeatedly generated by joy. Unhappiness comes after happiness. Happiness comes after unhappiness. Unhappiness is not permanently obtained. Nor is happiness permanently obtained. Friends are truly not the reason for happiness. Enemies are truly not the reason for unhappiness. One cannot obtain riches through wisdom. Nor indeed can riches bring about happiness. One cannot obtain riches through intelligence. Nor is stupidity the reason for penury. It is only a wise person, and no one else, who understands the progress of the world. The intelligent, the stupid, the brave, the coward, the foolish, the wise, the weak, the powerful—all of them enjoy happiness because of destiny. The cow simultaneously belongs to the calf, the cowherd, the master and the thief. But it is certain that the cow actually belongs to the person who drinks her milk.<sup>2</sup> Those who are the most foolish in the world and those who have attained supreme intelligence—only these men can enjoy happiness. People who are in between are miserable. The wise find delight in the two extremes, not in the ones that are in the middle.<sup>3</sup> It is said that happiness is associated with the two extremes and unhappiness with the ones that are intermediate. Those who have obtained happiness through their intelligence and those who are free from opposite sentiments,<sup>4</sup> devoid of jealousy—are never distressed by prosperity or adversity. However, there are also foolish people who have not obtained that intelligence. They have not been able to go beyond excessive delight and extreme misery. There are foolish ones who are bereft of consciousness. They are haughty because of their strength and are given to incessant delight, as if they are like the large numbers of gods in heaven. Howev-

er, because of their laziness, such happiness terminates in unhappiness. And because of skill, unhappiness can give rise to happiness. Riches and prosperity dwell with those who are accomplished, not with those who are lazy. Whether it is happiness or unhappiness, whether it is unpleasant or pleasant—whatever has been obtained must be enjoyed with an unvanquished heart. From one day to another, there are a thousand reasons for misery and a hundred reasons for joy. Stupid people are submerged in these, but not those who are learned. If a man is intelligent, accomplished in his wisdom, given to servitude<sup>5</sup> and lack of envy, and is self-controlled, having conquered his senses—sorrow cannot touch him. The wise person resorts to this intelligence and guards his consciousness. Sorrow cannot touch a person who knows the origin and the end of everything.<sup>6</sup> The reasons behind sorrow, fright, unhappiness and exertion must be severed from the roots, like casting aside one of the limbs in the body. If objects of desire are cast aside, this fills one with happiness. A man who follows desire is destroyed by that desire. The happiness obtained from the pursuit of desire in this world or the great bliss obtained in heaven is not even one-sixteenth of the happiness obtained from the extinction of desire. The deeds committed in an earlier body, good or bad, and the consequences of those deeds are felt by the wise, the foolish and the brave. In this way, the pleasant and the unpleasant, unhappiness and happiness, incessantly circulate among living beings. Knowing this and resorting to this intelligence, a person with qualities lives in joy. He disregards all desire and turns his back on all attachment. The wise regard this kind of approach of the heart as equivalent to mental death. A tortoise draws in all its limbs. Like that, such a person contracts desire and with a shining atman, is pleased with his atman. Even if there is the slightest sense of ownership left, that will give rise to repentance and pervade everything. He is not frightened of anything. No one is frightened of him. He has no desire and no hate. He is then immersed in the brahman. He gives up truth and falsehood, sorrow and joy, fear and freedom from fear, pleasant and unpleasant. Having abandoned these, he is tranquil in his soul. That resolute person does not do anything wicked towards any being, in deeds, thoughts and words. He is then immersed in the brahman. He abandons the thirst<sup>7</sup> that is so difficult for the evil-minded to give up, a fear that does not diminish with age and is like a disease that brings an end to life. Having done this, he obtains happiness. O king! On this, a verse sung by Pingala has been heard. This is about how she obtained eternal dharma at a time of hardship. A prostitute named Pingala went to the place meant for the rendezvous, but was rejected by her lover. Despite facing that calamity, by resorting to her intelligence, she found peace.

““Pingala said, “I have been crazy for a long time. In my madness, I have dwelt with my beloved. Because my beloved was nearby, I did not pursue the path of virtue earlier. This pillar has nine gates and I will cover it.<sup>8</sup> Even when he<sup>9</sup> approaches, which woman in this world regards him as a beloved? I have been thwarted in my desire. But, in the form of desire, those crafty ones<sup>10</sup> are like hell. They will not deceive me again. I know now and have woken up. Depending on destiny and earlier deeds, failure gives rise to success. I have now conquered my senses and have obtained the realization that I am without form. I am without any hope and am happy. There is great happiness when there is nothing to hope. Having destroyed hope, Pingala sleeps in happiness.””

‘Bhishma said, “The learned brahmana mentioned these and other reasons. King Senajit was comforted and found joy and happiness.”’

## Chapter 1497(169)

‘Yudhishtira said, “This time, which brings about the destruction of all beings, moves on. O grandfather! What is the supreme benefit one should try for? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between a father and a son. O Yudhishtira! Listen to it. O Partha! There was a certain brahmana who was devoted to studying. He had an intelligent son named Medhavin.<sup>11</sup> The son was accomplished in the objective of moksha dharma and was also conversant with the true nature of the world. He spoke to his father, who was engaged in the act of studying. ‘O father! Since the lifespan of beings passes so quickly and men are destroyed, what should a wise person do? O father! Tell me about proper yoga and about the progressive way one should follow dharma.’

“The father replied, ‘O son! In brahmacharya, one must study the Vedas. Then, one must desire sons, so that the ancestors can be saved. Next, one must accept the sacrificial fire and perform sacrifices, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Finally, one must enter the forest and strive as a hermit.’

“The son asked, ‘The world is surrounded from all sides and is afflicted. A fall is certain. How can you speak with such patience?’

“The father replied, ‘How is the world afflicted? By what is it surrounded? Why is fall certain? Why are you scaring me?’

“The son said, ‘The world is afflicted by death. It is surrounded by old age. Day and night, there is downfall. How can you not comprehend this? I know that death does not wait for anyone.<sup>12</sup> How can I wait for it, with my feet tied in that net? As one night follows another night, the lifespan is decreased. Being like a fish in shallow water, how can one then be happy? The learned person knows that every day is fruitless. Before all desires are satisfied, a man encounters death. It is as if a ram is inattentive and is roaming around, feeding on young grass, when a she-wolf grabs him and conveys him to death. Do what is best today, lest you are overtaken by death. Death attracts, even if tasks are left incomplete. Tomorrow’s task should be done today, the afternoon’s in the forenoon. Death does not wait, to see if a task has been done or is yet undone. Who knows that he will not be approached by death today itself? When one is young, one must accept the pursuit of dharma as the only reason for remaining alive.<sup>13</sup> Observing dharma, one obtains deeds in this world and happiness after death. Overcome by confusion, one strives for the sake of sons and wives. In an attempt to sustain them, one performs desirable and undesirable acts. A man thinks in his mind that sons and animals are important and is devoted to this. While he is thus asleep, death grasps him, like an extremely powerful tiger. He has still not been satisfied by obtaining the objects of desire. Nevertheless, like a tiger grabbing an animal, death takes him away and goes. He is still thinking about the tasks that have been done, those which have been done and those which have partly been done. While he is attached to happiness in this death, he comes under the subjugation of death. This happens even before he has obtained the fruits of the deeds that have been completed. He is attached to the field, the shop and the home and attached to the fruits of deeds, but death takes him and goes away. There is death, old age and disease—and many other reasons for misery. All of them dwell in the body. How can you then remain, as if you are healthy? From the moment a being is born, death and old age pursue him, to bring about his end. Everything, mobile and immobile, is afflicted by these two. The learned texts have said that the pleasure<sup>14</sup> from attachment to dwelling in homes in villages and habitations is just like death. However, this can be contained in the forest. The attachment to villages and habitations binds one down with ropes. The performer of good deeds can sever these. But the performer of evil deeds cannot sever these. A person who does not unnecessarily injure beings through thoughts, words and deeds, is not destroyed by those who seek to take away life and wealth. He is not tied down by his action. When the soldiers of death advance, nothing can withstand them, with the exception of truth and the abandonment of falsehood. There

is amrita in truth. Therefore, one must follow the vow of truth and be devoted to the yoga of truth. There is delight, peace and tranquility in truth. It is through truth that one triumphs over death. Both immortality and death exist in the body. Through confusion, one obtains death. Through truth, one obtains immortality. That is the reason I am non-violent and pursuing the truth. I have cast aside desire and anger. I am impartial towards happiness and unhappiness. I am tranquil and look on death, as if I am immortal. I will be a hermit who will be devoted to sacrifices for peace, sacrifices for the brahman, sacrifices through words and sacrifices through deeds, thereby making myself awaken. How can one perform such violent sacrifices that involve the slaughter of animals? How can a wise person acts like a flesh-eater, injure himself internally, and observe the sacrifices of kshatriyas? If a person is single-minded in his words, thoughts, austerities, renunciation and yoga and follows these well, he obtains everything. There is no sight that is equal to knowledge. There is no strength that is equal to knowledge. There is no misery that is like that of attachment. There is no joy that is equal to renunciation. My atman has been generated from the atman.<sup>15</sup> Though I have no offspring, I will base myself on the atman.<sup>16</sup> My salvation will come from the atman, not from offspring. There are no riches for a brahmana that are equal to solitude and truth. Basing himself on good conduct, not chastising anyone, resorting to uprightness—he performs the supreme rites. Where are your riches? Where are your relatives? Where are your wives? O brahmana! They will all die. Your atman is hidden inside a cave. Where have your grandfather and your father gone?”<sup>17</sup>

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Hearing the words of the son, the father acted accordingly. You should also conduct yourself in that way, observing the dharma of truth.”’

## Chapter 1498(170)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! The rich and the poor observe their own rites. How, and from where, do they face happiness and unhappiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. Shamyaka, who was liberated and had obtained peace, sung a song. In ancient times, a brahmana who had renounced told me this. He was afflicted because of a bad wife, whose conduct was bad. He was also suffering from hunger. ‘Since the time he is born on earth, many different kinds of joy and sorrow afflict a man. If he is conveyed along either of these paths,<sup>18</sup> he will not be delighted on obtaining joy, or be anxious on obtaining sorrow. On this earth, you are not following what is best for yourself. Even though you have no desire, you are bearing a heavy burden. If you roam around, thinking all this to be insignificant, you will obtain happiness. A person with nothing sleeps, and awakes, in happiness. Not possessing anything is the medication for happiness in the world. This is healthy and auspicious. This path is extremely difficult, even for those who have no enemies.<sup>19</sup> But it is easily obtained by those who are virtuous. Glancing at the three worlds, I do not find anyone with possessions who is equal to a virtuous person who is without possessions. I weighed the lack of possessions and a kingdom on a balance and found that the lack of possessions surpassed the kingdom in qualities. Specifically, there is a great difference between the lack of possessions and a kingdom. A prosperous person is always anxious, as if he is in the jaws of death. A fire, the sun, death and bandits have no power over a person who has freed himself from riches and is without hopes. Depending on his wishes, he lies down on the bare ground, using his arms as a pillow. He has obtained tranquility and is praised by the residents of heaven. A wealthy person is afflicted by both anger and avarice and loses his senses. He is wicked, casts sideways glances, has a frown on his face and his mouth is dry. He bites his lower lips with his teeth. He is enraged and terrible in speech. Even if he desires to give the earth away, who will wish to look at him? Dwelling in continuous prosperity confuses a person who is not very discerning. It robs him of his senses, like the wind bearing away autumn clouds. He takes delight in, “I am handsome. I am wealthy. I am noble. I am successful. I am not an ordinary man.” His consciousness is sprinkled with these three reasons.<sup>20</sup> Thus sprinkled and attached to objects of pleasure, he is deprived of the riches his ancestors accumulated. When these have decayed, he thinks it is virtuous to appropriate the property of others. He transgresses boundaries and seizes from every direction. The kings then restrain the greedy person, like deer with arrows. These are the many different kinds of sorrows that then touch the man’s body. Afflicted by these supreme hardships, he realizes that he needs medication. He abandons the dharma of the world,<sup>21</sup> with everything that is temporary and permanent. Without renunciation, one cannot enjoy supreme happiness. Without renunciation, one can neither sleep, nor be happy in every way.’<sup>22</sup> This is what the brahmana told me in earlier times in Hastinapura, about what had been said by Shamyaka. Therefore, it is my view that renunciation is supreme.”’

## Chapter 1499(171)

‘Yudhishtira said, “If a person undertakes sacrifices and does not possess riches,<sup>23</sup> and the thirst for riches overcomes him, what can he possibly do to obtain happiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A person who looks on everything equally, a person who doesn’t make an effort,<sup>24</sup> a person who is truthful in speech, a person who disregards worldly objects, a person who pursues knowledge—such a man is indeed happy. The ancient ones have said that these five are the steps towards tranquility. These are heaven. These are dharma. These are happiness. These are supreme virtue. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about what Manki, who had freed himself from worldly possessions, had sung. O Yudhishtira! Listen to it.

“Manki was repeatedly frustrated in his pursuit of riches. Finally, with some riches that were left, he bought two bulls and a yoke. Once, he bound them to the yoke and took them out, so as to control them.<sup>25</sup> A camel was lying down in the middle and they suddenly rushed towards it. They approached and fell down on the camel’s neck. The enraged camel arose. It ran at great speed, dragging the two bulls with it. Dragged along by the camel, the two bulls were tormented. On seeing that they were about to die, Manki spoke these words. ‘If it has not been ordained, even an accomplished person is incapable of obtaining wealth, despite his making every effort, faithfully and well. Earlier, I have tried many ways of obtaining riches. But behold the calamity that destiny has inflicted me with. My two bulls have been raised up and are being dragged over uneven terrain. They are being raised up and flung down, as if a crow is tearing at palm fruit or rose apples.<sup>26</sup> My beloved calves are dangling from the camel’s neck, like jewels. This is certainly because of destiny and I know that manliness does not exist. Even if there exists something by the name of manliness, if one examines this, one will find that this too is based on destiny. Therefore, someone who wishes to advance towards happiness must be indifferent. A person who shuns all hope of obtaining riches sleeps happily. When Shuka freed himself from everything and went to the great forest from his father’s residence, he spoke well.<sup>27</sup> “Between a person who satisfies all his desires and a person who only renounces, the one who renounces is superior to the one who obtains all the objects of desire.”<sup>28</sup> There is no end to all desires and one can never attain a state where they are extinguished. As long as he is alive, a foolish person’s thirst increases. Refrain from desire. Let tranquility pervade me. Having been deceived by what should not be pursued, it should no longer pervade my body. You desire riches.<sup>29</sup> If I am not going to be destroyed and if you wish to take delight in me, then do not engage me in this futile path of greed. You have repeatedly accumulated riches and they have repeatedly been destroyed. O stupid one! O one who is addicted to riches! When will you free yourself from this desire for wealth? Shame on my folly. This has led me to becoming a puppet in your hands. It is in this way that men who are born become the slaves of others. No person born earlier has ever obtained an end to desire. Nor will any person who is born later. Having abandoned all efforts, I now know and am awake. O desire! It is certain that your heart is as firm as a diamond. That is the reason why, though it is afflicted by one hundred calamities, it does not shatter into one hundred fragments. O desire! I will abandon you and everything that is agreeable to you. Severing what you find to be agreeable, I will obtain happiness. O desire! I know your foundation. You certainly result from resolutions. If I do not have any resolutions, you will not have any foundations. Wealth does not yield happiness on earth. If obtained, it leads to a lot of anxiety. If it is destroyed after having been obtained, that seems like death. Nor does one know whether it can be obtained or not. There is nothing that is a greater misery than its going away after it has been obtained. One is not satisfied when it has been obtained. Instead, one looks for paths to enhance it. Riches are like the tasty waters of the Ganga, since one keeps hankering for more. This is also the reason for my lamentation. I now know and will abandon it. It<sup>30</sup> has sought refuge in the natural elements of my body. As it wishes, let it dwell here, or wherever else it finds happiness.<sup>31</sup> I have no affection for any of you<sup>32</sup> who



follow desire and avarice. Therefore, I am abandoning all of you. I will seek refuge with truth alone. My atman will behold all the elements in the body and my mind. I will base myself in yoga, intelligence, learning and spirit and uphold the brahman in my mind. I will happily roam the worlds, without any attachment and without any disease, so that you can no longer try to immerse me in misery again.<sup>33</sup> I have been agitated by you and there is no other path left to me. O desire! Thirst, sorrow and exhaustion have always been manifestations of your powers. I think that the sorrow which results from the destruction of riches is the greatest of all miseries. Relatives and friends disrespect the person who has been separated from his wealth. Other than disrespect, in the absence of riches, there are one thousand other taints that are more severe. However, even though riches provide a little bit of happiness, it is mingled with a great deal of unhappiness. In everyone's sight, bandits slay the person who possesses riches. They torment him with many kinds of punishment and always terrify him. After a long period of time, I have realized the stupidity and misery that greed leads to. O desire! You make me follow whatever you get addicted to. You do not know the truth. You are foolish. You are difficult to satisfy. You are never satiated. You are like a fire. You do not consider whether something is easy to obtain, or difficult to obtain. You are as difficult to fill as the nether regions. You wish to fling me into misery. O desire! From today, I am incapable of dwelling with you again. I am free from possessions now. As they will, let the objects be destroyed. I have obtained supreme renunciation now. I no longer think about desire. Because of you, I suffered greatly earlier. I now know myself to be intelligent. Because of the destruction of the riches, I have been deceived. But I can lie down now, without any fever in any of my limbs. O desire! I am casting you away and abandoning all my mental inclinations towards you. O desire! You will not associate with me or find pleasure in me again. I will forgive even those who should not be forgiven. I will not injure, even though I am injured against. I will speak pleasantly to those who hate me and ignore their disagreeable words. I will be satisfied and my senses will be at ease. I will always sustain myself on what has been obtained. You are an enemy of my atman and I will not satisfy your wishes. Know that lack of possessions, lack of desire, satisfaction, tranquility, truth, self-control, forgiveness and compassion towards all beings have now sought refuge with me. Therefore, desire, avarice, thirst and miserliness have been cast away. I have based myself on my spirit. I have abandoned desire, avarice, anger and harshness. I will no longer come under the subjugation of greed and subject myself to misery. Whoever casts aside desire is filled with happiness. Someone who is under the subjugation of desire is always confronted with misery. When a man casts aside the passions that result from desire, he abandons the rajas quality. Sorrow and other hardships always result from desire and anger. I have now immersed myself in the brahman, like entering a cool lake during the summer. I have calmed myself. I have withdrawn myself. I only enjoy happiness. The happiness one obtains in the worlds from the satisfaction of desire and the great happiness one enjoys in heaven are less than one-sixteenth of the happiness one obtains from the extinguishing of thirst. I have slain supreme enemies of the atman, desire being the seventh.<sup>34</sup> I have attained Brahma's indestructible city. I will be happy there, like a king.' Resorting to his own intelligence, Manki became free from all possessions. He abandoned all desire and obtained great bliss with Brahma. Because the bulls had been destroyed, Manki obtained immortality. Having severed the foundation of desire, he obtained great happiness.

"In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a song sung by Janaka, the king of Videha, who obtained tranquility. 'Though I possess nothing, my wealth is infinite. Even if Mithila<sup>35</sup> is set ablaze, nothing that belongs to me will be consumed.' In this connection, about lack of possessions, there is also what Bodhya, who attained the supreme objective, said. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this. The self-controlled rishi Bodhya was asked by King Nahusha. 'You are without possessions. You have obtained tranquility. You are at peace. You are full of wisdom. O immensely wise one! Instruct me about how one can obtain tranquility. What intelligence should one resort to, so that one can withdraw and roam around in peace?' Bodhya replied, 'I follow the instructions of others, but never instruct anyone. I will tell you about the signs. You can then yourself reflect on those. My six preceptors are Pingala, the osprey, the snake, the bee that is searching in the forest, the one who makes arrows and the maiden.'"<sup>36</sup>

## Chapter 1500(172)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O one who knows about conduct! What is the conduct through which one can roam around on earth, free from sorrow? What should a man do in this world, so as to attain the supreme objective?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between Prahada and the sage Ajagara. O king! There was a brahmana who was intelligent and revered by the wise. His consciousness was unblemished. While he was roaming around, he was asked by Prahada. ‘You are at ease, capable, mild, self-controlled, without any desire, free from malice, extremely eloquent, extremely revered in the world and wise. You roam around like a child. There is nothing that you seek to obtain. You do not grieve over anything that has not been obtained. O brahmana! It is as if you are always content. There is nothing that you think about. The beings are distracted, as they are borne along on currents of deeds connected with dharma, kama and artha. But to you, these seem to be illusory. You do not follow dharma or artha, nor are you engaged in kama. You ignore the objectives of the senses. You roam around free, like a witness. O sage! What is your wisdom? What is your learning? What is your conduct? How did you become like this? O sage! O brahmana! If you think that is beneficial for me, please tell me this immediately.’ The intelligent one, who knew about dharma and the conduct of the worlds, was asked in this way.

“‘Asked by Prahada, he gently spoke these words, which were full of import. ‘O Prahada! Behold. The origin, decay, increase and destruction of beings have no evident reason. That is the reason I am not delighted, nor distressed. They are seen to be engaged in their own natural conduct. Everyone is engaged in natural conduct and there is nothing to be tormented about. O Prahada! Behold. Every kind of union is subject to separation. All stores eventually end in destruction. Hence, my mind has never turned to acquisition. In front of us, every being that possesses qualities comes to an end. If one knows about origin and destruction, what tasks remain to be undertaken? In due course, it is seen that every aquatic creature in this great ocean, be its form gigantic or subtle, confronts destruction. O lord of asuras! I see it as evident that death comes to all beings on earth, and all mobile and immobile objects. O supreme among danavas! When the time comes, all the birds which rise up and roam around in the sky come under the power of death. When the time is right, all the stellar bodies that roam around in the firmament, whether they are small or large, are seen to fall down. Thus, all beings are seen to be attracted by death. Knowing that everything has this general nature, I sleep happily, doing nothing, since there is nothing to be done. If, without trying for it, I obtain a great deal of food, I eat it. There are again many days when I lie down, without having had anything to eat. There are many who give me many different kinds of food, with many different qualities. However, sometimes I get little, with few qualities, or nothing at all. There are times when I eat minute grains, and food from which the oil has been squeezed out. There are also times when I eat the best food, rice mixed with meat. There are times when I sleep on beds and times when I sleep on the bare ground. There are also times when I get a bed inside a palace. I am sometimes attired in rags, hemp, linen and hides. There are also times when I am clad in extremely expensive garments. As I wish, I do not reject objects of pleasure that are in conformity with dharma. but I do not strive for things that are difficult to obtain. I follow the pure vow that is known as *ajagara*.<sup>37</sup> I do not waver from this and have no possessions. This is auspicious and bereft of sorrow. This is infinitely sacred and I have immersed myself in this intelligence of the learned. Foolish ones do not follow it and show it disrespect. I follow the pure vow that is known as *ajagara*. My mind does not deviate from it. I have not been dislodged from my own dharma. I am restrained in everything and know everything about cause and effect. I am devoid of fear, stupidity, greed and confusion. I follow the pure vow that is known as *ajagara*. This has no rules about consequences, what should be eaten, what should be enjoyed and what should be drunk. Since everything depends on destiny, nothing is determined in accordance with the time and the place. This contributes to the happiness of my heart and

those who are mean do not follow this. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. Because of their thirst, people pursue many kinds of riches. When they don't get them, they grieve. I have used my accomplished intelligence to discern the truth. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. To obtain riches, I have seen distressed people seek refuge with both noble and ignoble men. However, I am relieved of this and have found peace in my soul. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I know the truth—everything is ordained by destiny. I look on happiness and unhappiness, the acquisition of riches and the loss of riches, love and hatred and death and life equally. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have overcome fear, attachment, confusion and insolence. I have fortitude, wisdom, intelligence and tranquility. I am content with enjoying the fruit that presents itself before me.<sup>38</sup> I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have no restrictions on where I should sleep and what I should eat. I am naturally united with self-control, restraint, vows, truth and purity. I have transcended the need to store any fruits. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have always controlled the thirst in my mind. Based on my atman, I look towards everything with my intelligence. I have transcended the sorrows that come from the pursuit of riches and the lack of riches. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. The heart and the mind strive for the agreeable and the pleasant. But these are difficult to obtain and are transient and I have realized both these aspects. Therefore, I have overcome these. There are learned and intelligent men who have spoken about this in many ways. Those wise ones have sought to establish their own views. They have spoken about this and that and have censured the views of others. But this is beyond debate. I have seen that there are many men who are confused and have been led in separate directions. However, I dwell in the infinite that is beyond all these taints. Having controlled anger and thirst, I roam around among men.' If there is a great-souled man who follows the vow of ajagara in this world, having controlled attachment and having overcome fear, anger, avarice and confusion, he will certainly be happy. He will find delight in this pleasure.'"

## Chapter 1501(173)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! Relatives, deeds, riches and wisdom—which of these actually establishes a man? I am asking you. Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Wisdom is the foundation for beings. It is held that wisdom is the greatest of gains. Wisdom is the most beneficial in the world. The virtuous are of the view that wisdom leads to the attainment of heaven. When their riches were destroyed, it is through wisdom that Bali, Prahada, Namuchi and Manki attained their objectives. What can be greater than that? On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Indra and Kashyapa. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this.

“O son! There was a rishi named Kashyapa who was rigid in his vows. There was a prosperous vaishya. Because of his insolence, he brought the ascetic down through his chariot. He fell down and was distressed and was about to give up his life. He angrily said, ‘I will die. There is no point to a person without riches remaining alive.’ He was seated thus, about to die, and lamented, bereft of his senses. His thoughts were enraged. At that time, Indra appeared before him in the form of a jackal and said, ‘All the beings always desire to be born as humans. Among all humans, the status of a brahmana is always praised. O Kashyapa! You are a human and a learned brahmana. This is extremely difficult to obtain. You should not commit this sin.’<sup>39</sup> The learned texts have truthfully said that all acquisitions give rise to insolence. You are the form of contentment. But what you are thinking of is full of greed. The virtuous ones who possess hands accomplish their objectives. We desire hands, just as you desire riches. There is no gain that is superior to the obtaining of hands. O brahmana! Without hands, I cannot take out the thorn that is painning my body. For those who possess hands, the gods have given them ten fingers. They can use these to uproot the insects that are biting their limbs. They can act so as to save themselves from the cold, the rains and the heat.<sup>40</sup> They can cheerfully obtain food and enjoy these in beds that are safe from the wind. In this world, they enjoy cattle and employ them to carry burdens. They employ many other means to bring them under their subjugation. Those without hands and those who cannot grind with their tongues<sup>41</sup> do not live for a long time. They have to tolerate many hardships. O sage! It is good fortune that you are not like them. It is good fortune that you are not a jackal, a worm, a rat, a snake, a frog, or some other being born in an inferior species. O Kashyapa! You should be content with this gain. Then again, among all living beings, you are a supreme brahmana. These worms are biting me. Look at my state. Because I lack hands, I am incapable of saving myself from them. Despite being unsuccessful in this, I do not wish to give up my life. If I performed this wicked deed, I would descend into an even more inferior species.<sup>42</sup> I am in the state of a jackal and this is about medium among those of wicked species. There are many others who belong to even more wicked species and are greater in evil. Through birth, some are happy and virtuous and others are extremely miserable. However, I do not see anyone who is entirely happy. Having gained prosperity, humans next want a kingdom. Having obtained kingdoms, they wish to become gods. Having become gods, they desire to become Indra. Even if you obtain riches, you will never become a king or a god.<sup>43</sup> Even if you become a god, you will not be satisfied without becoming Indra. You will not be content after obtaining what you desire. The thirst will not be slaked. This is like a fire that is again ignited through the offering of kindling. There is sorrow in you. But there is also delight in you. Since there is both sorrow and joy, why should you grieve? Like birds imprisoned in a cage, restrain the foundations of your senses and confine all your desires and your deeds. If a person does not experience something, there can be no desire on account of that, since it<sup>44</sup> is generated from touch, sight and hearing. You do not remember varuni or the bird known as *latvaka*.<sup>45</sup> There is no food or drink that is superior to these two. O Kashyapa! There are many other distant objects of food and drink. Since you have not experienced these earlier, you do not remember them. Not to eat, not to touch, not to see—I think that this is certainly the supreme rule for a man. There is no doubt that those with hands obtain riches and

are powerful. Men use these to reduce other men to a state of servitude. They repeatedly use these to torment, slay, bind and afflict others. They take pleasure in deceit, sport and are happy. Accomplished in their learning, those spirited ones control others through the strength of their arms. They adopt reprehensible and extremely miserable conduct and follow wicked means of subsistence. They become interested in influencing the conduct followed by others. They are bound by their own deeds and this is the working of destiny. Even *pulkasas* and chandalas do not wish to give up their own lives.<sup>46</sup> Behold the maya and consider others, since you are dissatisfied with your own birth. Look towards the men who have withered arms. There are those who are not healthy. O Kashyapa! Looking towards the others, since you are complete in your limbs, you should think that you have gained. O brahmana! You are well and without fear in this body. You possess all your limbs and are not shamed amongst people. O brahmana rishi! Even if you were to be censured because of a true reason and even if you deviated from dharma, you should not give up your own life. O brahmana! If you listen to my words and act accordingly, you will obtain the best of fruits, as stated in the dharma laid down in the Vedas. Study and, without any distractions, maintain the sacrificial fire. Follow truth, self-control and generosity. Never seek to rival another. Those who study, sacrifice and perform sacrifices for others, how can there be any sorrow in them? They are ornaments among officiating priests. They roam around as they please and obtain great happiness. They are born under auspicious nakshatras, on auspicious lunar days and at extremely energetic muhurtas. But there are also those who are born under extremely inauspicious nakshatras, bad lunar days and extremely weak muhurtas. They descend into the wombs of asuras and their birth deprives them of sacrifices. I used to be learned.<sup>47</sup> I sought reasons and criticized the Vedas. My inclinations were argumentative and I was addicted to pointless debating. I was an exponent of arguments and reasons and spoke about subtle differences. I spoke disparagingly about the sacrifices of brahmanas and brahmanas. I was a non-believer and was suspicious of everything. I was foolish and insolent about my learning. O brahmana! Because of that, I have reaped the fruits of being born as a jackal. I have been born as a jackal and after hundreds of days and nights, may again be born as a human. I will then be satisfied and without being distracted, will perform sacrifices and give donations. I will then know what should be known. I will then cast away what should be cast away.' He spoke in this way and the sage Kashyapa arose and said, 'O son! You are accomplished in your intelligence and I marvel at this.' Because of his knowledge, the brahmana was far-sighted. He looked and realized that it was actually Indra of the gods, the god who was Shachi's consort. At this, Kashyapa worshipped the one with the tawny horses.<sup>48</sup> He took his permission and went to his own hermitage.'"

## Chapter 1502(174)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Tell me about donations, sacrifices, tormenting oneself through austerities and the serving of seniors.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If one’s soul turns towards what is not beneficial, if the mind is immersed in sin, then one performs wicked deeds and has to suffer from great hardships. Those perpetrators of wicked deeds are born poor. They starve in the midst of famine. They face difficulties amidst hardships. They are terrified in the midst of fear. They become dead in the midst of death. The performers of auspicious deeds are wealthy. They are festive amidst festivities. They obtain heaven in celestial regions. They obtain bliss in the midst of happiness. They are devoted and self-controlled. Non-believers are bound by their hands and dispatched to desolate spots frequented by predatory beasts and elephants, full of fear from snakes and thieves. What else should one say about them? However, there are those who speak agreeably towards gods and guests. They are affectionate towards virtuous people. The tranquility of their souls takes them along paths that are travelled by those who are correct.<sup>49</sup> Those who do not find reasons in dharma are like shrivelled grain among grains, termites<sup>50</sup> among birds and the worst among men. Ordained destiny follows and swiftly pursues a person, sleeping when he sleeps and accompanying him in everything that he does. It stands when he stands. It walks when he walks. It acts whenever he acts and follows him like a shadow. Whatever acts a man may have done earlier, it has been apportioned that he must enjoy the consequences. Destiny protects the fruits of his own deeds and flings him into these. From every direction, time naturally attracts all beings. At the right time, without being goaded, flowers and fruits blossom on their own. Like that, the consequences of earlier deeds cannot be withdrawn. Repeatedly, destiny determines honour and disrespect, gain and loss, decay and growth, until those have been exhausted. One has oneself determined one’s unhappiness. One has oneself determined one’s happiness. From the moment one lies down in the womb, one enjoys the outcome of earlier bodies. Whether it is in childhood, youth or old age, whatever auspicious and inauspicious deeds are performed by a person, in exactly that way, he will enjoy this, from one birth to another. A calf seeks out its mother, even in the midst of one thousand cows. In that way, deeds performed earlier follow the doer. A piece of cloth is drenched in water.<sup>51</sup> Like that, subsequent purification through fasting, austerities and repentance can lead to a long period of infinite happiness. One can dwell in a hermitage and perform austerities for a long time. One can wash away sins through dharma and be successful in attaining one’s wishes. Like

birds in the sky and like fish in the water, the footsteps of a person who is wise in his learning cannot be discerned. There is no need to talk about any other acts of transgression. One must delicately perform the tasks that will ensure one's own welfare.”

## Chapter 1503(175)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “From where was this universe created? When there is destruction, where does the world, with all its mobile and immobile objects, go? O grandfather! Tell me this. Who is the one who constructed this world, with its oceans, sky, mountains, clouds, earth, fire and wind? How were the beings created and how were they divided into varnas? What about their purity and impurity? Where did dharma and adharma originate? How do living beings live? Where do they go when they die? Tell me everything about this world and that other world.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the great words Bhrigu spoke, when he was asked by Bharadvaja. Bharadvaja saw maharshi Bhrigu seated on the peak of Kailasa, blazing in his energy. He asked, ‘Who created this world, with its oceans, sky, mountains, clouds, earth, fire and wind? How were beings created and how were they divided into varnas? What about their purity and impurity? Where did dharma and adharma originate? How do living beings live? Where do they go when they die? You should tell me everything about this world and the world hereafter.’ Bharadvaja asked the illustrious maharshi, who was like Brahma himself, about his doubts.

“He told him everything. ‘The maharshis have earlier heard about the famous one named Manasa.<sup>52</sup> He is without beginning and without end. That god cannot be penetrated. He is without old age and without death. He is known as Avyakta.<sup>53</sup> He is eternal. He is without decay. He is immutable. He is the one who created all the beings that are born and die. He first created a great god named Mahanta.<sup>54</sup> That lord and upholder of all beings created Akasha.<sup>55</sup> Water was created from space. The fire and the wind were created from water. The earth was created from the combination of the fire and the wind. Svayambhu<sup>56</sup> then created a celestial lotus that was full of energy. From that lotus arose Brahma, the store of the essence of the Vedas. He is famous as Ahamkara.<sup>57</sup> All the beings were born from him and he is the creator of all beings. These five elements are the greatly energetic Brahma. The mountains were generated from his bones. The earth is his flesh and fat. The oceans are his blood. The sky is his stomach. The wind is his breath. The fire is his energy. The rivers are his veins. Agni and Soma, the sun and the moon, are known as his eyes. The firmament that is above is his head. His feet are the ground. The directions are his arms. There is no doubt that he is infinite and is impossible to comprehend, even by those who are successful. The illustrious one is known as the infinite Vishnu. He is inside all living beings. However, those whose souls are not cleansed cannot comprehend him. He is the one who created ego. He is the one who thought of all beings. The entire universe was generated from him. He is the one you asked me about.’ Bharadvaja asked, ‘What are the dimensions of the sky, the directions, the earth and the wind? Tell me the truth about these and resolve my doubts.’ Bhrigu replied, ‘The sky is infinite and is frequented by siddhas and *charanas*. It is beautiful and has many habitations. It is impossible to decipher its ends. As one ascends, there are regions the moon and the sun cannot see. The stellar bodies<sup>58</sup> are radiant in their own resplendence there, as radiant as the fire. O one who is famous for his energy! Where these end, the sky cannot be seen. O one who shows honours! Know that those regions are difficult to reach and infinite. High above and higher still, there are bodies that blaze in their own radiance. Those are the limits of the sky. But they cannot be measured, not even by the gods. The oceans are at the extremities of the earth. It is said that there is darkness where the oceans end. It is said that when darkness ends, there is water. Where water ends, there is fire. There is water at the end of the nether regions.<sup>59</sup> And where this water ends, there is the lord of the serpents. Where this ends, there is the sky again. At the end of this sky, there is water again. In this way, the boundaries of the illustrious one end in water. The fire and the wind are difficult to fathom, even by the gods. The nature of fire, wind, water and the surface of the ground are like that of space. Because one lacks the sight, the differences cannot be understood. The sages read many kinds of sacred texts that have determined the measures of the three worlds and the oceans. But these cannot be seen and one cannot go there. Who can speak about their mea-



sure? The siddhas and gods are restricted in where they can go. But even those minor regions seem to be infinite, not to speak of the regions that are actually known as infinite. Its form is like its name, infinite. It is the great-souled Manasa. His divine form sometimes waxes and sometimes wanes. Which other person is capable of knowing him, unless that other person is his equal? The omniscient lord Brahma was created and manifested himself earlier from the lotus. He is the essence of dharma. He is the supreme Prajapati.' Bharadvaja said, 'If he was created from the lotus, the lotus should be regarded as the elder. Why should Brahma be regarded as the first? Remove this doubt of mine.' Bhrigu replied, 'It is the earth that is known as the lotus. Manasa manifested himself in the form of Brahma and needed a seat. Mount Meru extended up to the sky and became the stalk of that lotus. Situated inside it, the lord created the universe and all the worlds.'"

## Chapter 1504(176)

“Bharadvaja said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! Situated in the midst of Meru, how did the lord Brahma create the different categories of beings? Tell me this.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Manasa created many different categories of subjects through the powers of his mind. To protect the subjects, he first created water, since it is the life of all beings and it is through it that all the subjects grow. If it did not exist, everything would be destroyed. Everything is pervaded by it. The earth, the mountains, the clouds and everything else that has form is known to be water. They are its solidified form.’

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘How was water created? What about fire and the wind? How was the earth created? I have great doubts about this.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘O brahmana! In ancient times, in the period that is known as Brahma’s era, the great-souled brahmana rishis assembled and had a doubt about how the worlds were created. They remained silent and immobile, resorting to meditation. Those brahmanas gave up food and subsisted on air for one hundred celestial years. After that, they all heard words that were full of dharma. This celestial and divine voice was heard in the firmament. “Earlier, there was only silent space. It was motionless and immobile. Without the moon, sun and wind, it seemed to be asleep. Then water was created, like darkness emerging from darkness. When that water stirred, the wind was created. An empty vessel without a hole is seen to be silent. But when it has been filled with water, the wind creates a noise inside it. Like that, the infinite space was filled with water. After that, the wind penetrated the water and created a loud noise. Generated from the stirring of the water, the wind whirled around in this way. It reached up into the sky, but was still not pacified. As a result of the friction between the wind and

the water, the immensely powerful fire arose, blazing in energy. It rose upwards and removed the darkness that covered the firmament. The wind fanned the fire and brought the sky and the water together. As a result of uniting with the wind, fire became dense. As it descended from the sky, the friction caused its liquid part to solidify and created the earth. The juices, different kinds of fragrances, liquids, beings—the earth is known to be the womb that gave rise to all these things.””””

## Chapter 1505(177)

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘There are five elements<sup>60</sup> that Brahma created first. They pervade this world and are known as the great elements. The immensely intelligent one created thousands of beings. Therefore, why are these five known as the elements?’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Only those infinite beings that were created with a loud noise are addressed by the appellation “great element”. The wind is exertion. The sound is the sky and space. The fire is solidified water. The earth resulted from their friction. The body consists of the five elements. Everything, mobile and immobile, is made out of these five elements and the five senses—hearing, smell, taste, touch and sight, result from them.’<sup>61</sup>

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘If all mobile and immobile objects are constituted from these five elements, why are these five elements not seen in the bodies of immobile objects? Trees do not have any heat. They do not move. Their essence is dense. The five elements are not seen in their bodies. They do not hear. They do not see. They do not know smell and taste. They do not know touch either. How can they be made out of the five elements? They do not have any liquid in them, or fire, or earth, or wind, or space. In any measure of the trees, the elements don’t exist.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Though trees are dense, there is no doubt that space exists in them. Manifestations of flowers and fruits are always noticed in them. It is because of the heat in them that leaves, bark, fruits and flowers are seen to decay. They decay and dry and this shows that they possess touch. Crushed by the wind and thunder, fruits and flowers wither away. That sound is received by the ears. Therefore, trees can hear. A creeper winds around a tree and envelopes it from every side. Someone without sight cannot advance along a path. Therefore, trees can see. When trees are healthy, there are flowers and many kinds of auspicious and inauspicious scents and fragrances. Therefore, trees can smell. They drink water with their roots. It is seen that they suffer from disease. Those diseases can also be cured. Therefore, trees possess taste. One can raise water and drink it up through the bent stalk of a lotus. Like that, aided by the wind, trees drink water through their roots. They experience happiness and unhappiness. When severed, they grow again. I see trees as living. They are not without consciousness. The water that has been ingested is digested with the fire and the wind. Depending on the amount of food it has taken, the tree grows and is cool. The five elements exist in the bodies of all mobile objects, though the extent differs from one to the other. It is because of these that the bodies move. The skin, the flesh, the bones, the marrow and veins as the fifth—these things that exist in the body are enumerated as made out of earth. Energy, anger, the eyes, the internal fire and the fire of digestion—these five things in the body are made out of fire. The ears, the nose, the mouth, the heart and the stomach—these five elements in the bodies of living beings are made out of space. Phlegm, bile, sweat, fat and blood—these are the five kinds of water that are always in the bodies of living beings. Prana makes a living being move, vyana provides the impulse to act.<sup>62</sup> Apana advances towards the tongue. Samana resides in the heart. Udana is the state of not breathing and when it penetrates, one can speak. These are the five kinds of wind that enable bodies to move. The quality of the earth enables smell. Taste is the water in the body. The eyes see because of the fire. One experiences touch because of the wind. Of these, I will recount the qualities of scent in detail. *Ishta*, *anishta*, *madhura*, *katu*, *nirhari*, *samhata*, *snigdha*, *ruksha*, *vishada*—these are the nine types of scent that are known to be extensions of the earth.<sup>63</sup> Sound, touch, sight and taste are said to be the qualities of water. I will tell you about the knowledge of taste. Listen to me attentively. The gods, famous for their souls, have spoken about many kinds of taste. They are sweet, salty, bitter, astringent, sour and pungent. These six kinds of taste are said to be extensions of the water. Sound, touch and form are said to be the three qualities of fire. It is said that the fire sees and makes one see many different kinds of form. Short, tall, thick, quadrangular, triangular, circular, white, black, dark red, blue, yellow, light red—these twelve kinds of form are said to represent the extensive qualities of the fire. Sound and touch are known as the two qualities of the wind. Touch represents the quality of the wind.

There are said to be many different kinds of touch—hard, smooth, soft, slippery, mild, terrible, warm, cold, pleasant, disagreeable, delicate and clear. These twelve are said to be the extensive qualities of the wind. It is said that space has only one quality, that of sound. I will now tell you in detail about the many different kinds of sound. Know them to be *shadaja*, *rishabha*, *gandhara*, *madhyama*, *panchama*, *dhaivata* and *nishadaka*.<sup>64</sup> These are said to be the seven types of qualities and signs of space. Though it may exist in drums and other musical instruments, sound is everywhere. It is said that sound is characteristic of space and mingles with the qualities of the air, because it cannot be heard when different kinds of touch are not used. The elements are always mixed with other elements. Water, fire and air are always awake in the bodies of living beings.’”

## Chapter 1506(178)

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘How do qualities of the earth resort to the body and create fire? How does the wind find a place for itself and flow?’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘O unblemished one! O brahmana! I will recount to you the flow of the air. In the bodies of all living beings, the powerful wind leads to endeavour. There is fire in the head and this protects the body. Prana is the fire in the head and this causes exertion. This is the living being. This is in all living beings. This is the eternal being. This is the mind, intelligence and ego of all living beings. It is also the object of the senses. Everything is sustained in every way by prana. Because of samana at the rear, each of them<sup>65</sup> follows its own course of action. There is a fire at the root of the genital organs and the anus. This is apana. It circulates and bears along urine and excrement. In each of these three,<sup>66</sup> there is a single force that makes all the efforts at action. Learned people refer to it as udana. There is a fire that resides in all the joints of human bodies. This is said to be vyana. The qualities of the fire are circulated by samana. This part of the element circulates in the liquids and the diseases. There is a fire that resides in its own spot between apana and prana. It works with prana and apana and enables the digestion of food. There is a channel that is from the mouth to the anus and ends at the anus. All the other channels in living bodies emerge from this main channel. The different kinds of breaths of life flow and mingle together. The fire that leads to the digestion of food in bodies is *ushma*. Prana bears the force of the fire down to the anus and then sends that fire upwards again. What has been digested resides below the intestine. What has not been digested resides above the navel. All the life in the body is sustained in the midst of the navel. All of them flow out from the heart, diagonally, upwards and downwards. Goaded by prana, these ten<sup>67</sup> convey the juices along the veins. This is the path<sup>68</sup> followed by yogis who go towards the supreme objective. They conquer fatigue. They are patient. They drive the atman up to the head. These are the different kinds of prana and apana in the bodies of living beings. That fire always burns inside, just as if it had been placed on a plate.’”

## Chapter 1507(179)

“Bharadvaja said, ‘If it is the wind that sustains life, if it is the wind that makes us move, if it makes us breathe and speak, then remaining alive is futile.<sup>69</sup> If heat is the quality of fire and the fire cooks food, if the fire ensures digestion, then remaining alive is futile. When an animal dies, the breath of life is not noticed. The wind departs and the heat is destroyed. If life is equivalent to the wind, if it depended only on the wind, then, it should have been seen to leave into the circle of air and mingle with the wind. If life depended on the wind, then, when it is destroyed, it should have mingled outside, like waters released into the great ocean. If water is flung into a well, or if a lamp is hurled into the fire, then, both of them are instantly destroyed,<sup>70</sup> as soon as they are flung away. How can a living body be constituted out of the five general elements? If one of them does not exist, the aggregate of the other four does not exist either. Water is destroyed if there is no food. The wind is destroyed if breathing is restrained. If one doesn’t pass excrement, space doesn’t exist. If one doesn’t take food, fire is destroyed. Disease, wounds and other hardships make the earth decay. When these five elements are separated,<sup>71</sup> where does life go? What does life know? What does it hear? What does it speak? It is said that a cow will save me in the next world.<sup>72</sup> But after having been given away, that animal dies? Whom will that cow save? The receiver of the cow and the giver are both equal; in this world, they both meet with destruction. Where will they meet again? If a person has been eaten up by birds, if he has fallen down from the summit of a mountain, if he has been consumed by the fire, how will he take life again? If the root of a tree has been severed, it does not grow again. Other seeds can sprout. How can someone who is dead revive? In earlier times, only seeds were created and everything circulated

from those. Those who die, are destroyed by death. Seeds can only circulate from seeds.'”



## Chapter 1508(180)

“Bhrigu replied, ‘The living being, what has been given and what has been done, are not destroyed. The being goes into another body. It is the body alone that is destroyed. Though the being has resorted to the body, when it is destroyed, the being is not destroyed. It is like the fire not being destroyed when the kindling has been consumed.’

“Bharadvaja said, ‘If it is like the fire and faces no destruction, then it is also the case that when there is no kindling, the fire cannot be seen. When there is no kindling, I know that the fire has been pacified and destroyed. If there is no movement and no existence can be discerned, that is proof enough.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘When there is no kindling, it is true that the fire can no longer be seen. It goes up into space, because there is no longer any refuge it can adhere to. In that way, after the body has been discarded, the being is located in space. There is no doubt that, like the fire, it cannot be discerned because it is subtle. It is fire that sustains prana and that holds up the living being. The fire holds up the breath of life and is destroyed when breathing is restrained. Therefore, when the fire in the body is extinguished, the body loses its consciousness. It falls down on the ground and the earth is the destination. This is true of all mobile and immobile objects. The wind goes up into space and the fire follows them. Those three are united and two of them<sup>73</sup> exist on the ground. The wind exists where there is space. The fire exists where there is wind. They are known to have no form. Water and the earth have form.’

“Bharadvaja said, ‘O unblemished one! If fire, wind, earth, space and water exist in all bodies, then what are the signs of a living being? Tell me that. I wish to know about life in the bodies of living beings, since those five come together,<sup>74</sup> one is engaged in the five acts<sup>75</sup> and one is united with the five kinds of discernment.<sup>76</sup> The body is a mixture of flesh and blood, a store of fat, sinews and bones. When that is destroyed, the living being can no longer be discerned. The body of a living being consists of the five elements. When that is not there, who experiences pain and physical and mental sorrow? How can a living being hear, if there are no ears to hear with, or if his mind is elsewhere? O maharshi! Therefore, life is futile. Sight can see everything when the mind is united with the eyes. If the mind is anxious, though the eyes see, they do not really see. Then again, when one is asleep, one does not see, or speak, or hear, or smell. Nor does one experience touch and taste. Who feels joy? Who is angered? Who grieves? Who suffers? Who is the one who desires, meditates, hates and speaks?’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Just as the five general elements become one in the body, it is like that in the inner atman too. That is the one who knows scent, taste, sound, touch, form and the other qualities. These five come together and become one and are everywhere in the body. The inner atman follows and witnesses these five qualities. It knows unhappiness and happiness. When it is separated from the body, it no longer experiences these. When there is no form, no touch and no heat in the fire, the fire in the body is pacified. But though it gives up the body, it is not destroyed. Everything is made out of water. Water manifests itself in bodies. Brahma, the creator of all beings and the worlds, is in the mind and in the atman. Know the atman, which intends the welfare of all the worlds. It is the one which seeks refuge in the body, like a drop of water in a lotus. Always know the kshetrajna,<sup>77</sup> who intends the welfare of all the worlds. Know that tamas, rajas and sattva are the qualities of living beings. Consciousness is said to be the quality of a living being. It<sup>78</sup> strives and makes everything else strive. Those who know about kshetras say that the supreme one has created the seven worlds.<sup>79</sup> When the body is destroyed, the living being is not destroyed. Those who are foolish falsely state that it dies. The living being goes to another body. Death is only the destruction of the body.<sup>80</sup> This is the way it is with all living beings, moving in subtle and unnoticed ways. Using their attentive intelligence, those who know about the subtle truth can see this. Having eaten and having purified his soul, through mediation, every night, before and after sleep, a wise person can see his atman within himself. With a cheerful consciousness, abandoning all auspicious and inauspicious acts, basing oneself on one’s joyous atman,

one can obtain infinite happiness. Inside the body, there is a fire in the mind and this is known as the living being. Prajapati created this. This is the determination of those who have examined living beings and the atman.'”

## Chapter 1509(181)

“Bhrigu said, ‘Brahma Prajapati first created some brahmanas.<sup>81</sup> They were created from his energy and were like the sun and the fire in their resplendence. The lord Brahma then created eternal truth, dharma, austerities, good conduct and purity, so that one could go to heaven. O supreme among brahmanas! Without any sense of ownership, he then created the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the daityas, the asuras, the giant serpents, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the serpents, the pishachas, men who were brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras and masses and masses of other beings. The complexion of brahmanas was white, while that of kshatriyas was red. The complexion of vaishyas was yellow, while that of shudras was black.’<sup>82</sup>

“Bharadvaja said, ‘If the distinction between the four varnas is only on the basis of complexion and that is how the varnas are to be differentiated, then it is evident and can be seen that among the varnas, there has been a mixture of varnas. Desire, anger, fear, avarice, sorrow, anxiety, hunger and exhaustion influence everyone. How can varnas be differentiated on the basis of this? Sweat, urine, excrement, phlegm, bile and blood flow in the bodies of everyone. How can varnas be differentiated on the basis of this? There are an infinite number of mobile objects and so are the categories of the immobile. They have many different complexions. How can one determine their varna?’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘There is no special difference between the varnas. Everything in this universe first consisted of brahmanas. Brahma created all of them earlier and they attained varnas because of their deeds. There were brahmanas who loved desire and objects of pleasure. They were fierce and angry and loved courage. They abandoned their own dharma and having turned red in their limbs, became kshatriyas. There were brahmanas who earned a living from animal husbandry and subsisted on agriculture. They did not follow their own dharma, turned yellow and became vaishyas. There were brahmanas who loved violence and falsehood. They were avaricious and turned to all kinds of deeds to earn a living. They were dislodged from purity, turned black and became shudras. In this way, depending on their deeds, brahmanas became other varnas. Dharma, sacrifices and rites are never forbidden to them.<sup>83</sup> In this way, following the instructions of Brahma, all the four varnas were created as brahmanas originally. But in their ignorance, some of them became prone to avarice. Brahmanas who are devoted to sacred texts on dharma and austerities are never destroyed. They always uphold the brahman and observe vows and rituals. There are some who do not know about what Brahma created in ancient times. Among them, there

are many kinds of other species—pishachas, rakshasas, ghost and diverse kinds of mlechas. Their jnana and vijnana has been destroyed. They try to act as they wish. There were subjects who were created as brahmanas and determined to observe their own dharma. Through their own austerities, these rishis then created others. However, their original creation was from that first god and had the eternal Brahma as the foundation. That creation is known as mental and they were devoted to the strands of dharma.’’’<sup>84</sup>

## Chapter 1510(182)

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! How does one become a brahmana? What about a kshatriya? O brahmana rishi! O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about vaishyas and shudras.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘A brahmana is said to be someone who has been cleansed and purified by jatakarma and other samskaras,<sup>85</sup> is devoted to studying the Vedas, is engaged in the six tasks,<sup>86</sup> is always devoted to the vows and is devoted to the truth. Truthfulness, donations, self-control, non-violence, lack of injury, forgiveness, withdrawal from improper acts, austerities—where these are seen, that person is said to be a brahmana. A person devoted to the tasks of kshatriyas,<sup>87</sup> devoted to studying the Vedas, one who donates and seizes<sup>88</sup>—such a person is said to be a kshatriya. A person engaged in animal husbandry, agriculture and trade, always immersed in purity and devoted to the study of the Vedas—such a person has the signs of a vaishya. If a person is always addicted to devouring every kind of food, performs all tasks and is impure, if he abandons the conduct prescribed in the Vedas—such a person is said to be a shudra. If the signs are not seen in a shudra, then that shudra is not a shudra. If they are not seen in a brahmana, then that brahmana is not a brahmana. One must use every means to control avarice and anger. Know that these are impure and that the atman must be controlled. For welfare, one must always restrain anger, lack of austerities and jealousy. Knowledge and honour must be protected from disrespect. The atman must not be distracted. A person who undertakes everything without any hope and without any bonds, a person who renounces everything as an oblation, such an intelligent person is known as a true renouncer. One must be non-violent towards all beings and act as if everyone is a friend. There is no need to disclose it. One should uphold one’s atman in secrecy. One must forsake all gifts. An intelligent person must control his senses. One should base oneself of lack of sorrow and freedom from fear, both here and there.<sup>89</sup> The sages are always in control of their souls, self-restrained and always engaged in the observance of austerities. One must conquer desire, which is difficult to vanquish. Even in the midst of attachments, one must cultivate sentiments of not being attached. Everything that can be grasped by the senses has an existence that is manifest. But one must attentively seek to know what is not manifest and grasp the linga.<sup>90</sup> One must grasp prana in the mind and uphold the brahman in prana. If one can free oneself from attachments, there is no need to think of any other kind of attachment. In this way, a brahmana can obtain bliss in the brah-

man. Constant purity, devotion to good conduct and compassion towards all beings—these are the signs of a brahmana.””

## Chapter 1511(183)

“Bhrigu said, ‘Brahma is truth. Austerities are truth. Subjects are created through truth. The world is sustained through truth. It is through truth that one goes to heaven. Falsehood is the form of darkness. Darkness takes one downwards. When one is grasped by darkness, one cannot see the light, because one is enveloped in darkness. It is said that heaven is light and hell is darkness. Those who roam around in this universe can obtain both truth and falsehood. In this world, different kinds of conduct can lead to truth and falsehood, dharma and adharma, light and darkness, joy and misery. That which is truth is dharma. What is dharma is light. What is light is joy. That which is false is adharma. What is adharma is darkness. What is darkness is misery. It is said—those who are discerning see that this created world is full of physical and mental misery and that joy also ends in misery. They are not confused. The discerning person seeks to free himself from misery. For living beings, joy is temporary, in this world and in the next.<sup>91</sup> When Rahu devours the moon, the moonlight is no longer radiant. In that way, darkness overcomes beings and the joy of beings is destroyed. It is indeed said that there are two types of joy, physical and mental. In this world and in the next, every kind of conduct is prescribed for the sake of happiness. There is nothing superior to the fruits of the three objectives. These are the specific qualities of dharma, artha and kama. All acts are undertaken with the specific purpose of obtaining happiness.’

“Bharadvaja said, ‘You have said that happiness is the supreme objective behind these three. But I don’t accept this. The great rishis do not base themselves on these qualities. Nor do they desire these. It has been heard that the illustrious lord Brahma, the creator of the three worlds, is established as a brahmachari. He does not want the happiness of kama for himself. The illustrious lord, the consort of Uma, overcame kama and pacified Ananga.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, great-souled ones do not want this. This is evidently not a specific quality that the illustrious ones want. O illustrious one! I cannot accept what you have said, that happiness is the supreme objective behind those three. In this world, it is said that there are two kinds of fruits—happiness from good deeds and unhappiness from bad deeds. This is what is commonly said.’

“Bhrigu said, ‘Indeed, darkness results from falsehood. Those who are devoured by darkness follow adharma, not dharma. Those who are enveloped by anger, avarice, confusion and falsehood do not obtain happiness in this world, or in the next. It is said that they suffer from many kinds of disease and hardships. They are oppressed by death, imprisonment and disease. They are tormented by hunger, thirst and other kinds of exhaustion. They suffer from turbulent winds, burning heat, extreme cold and fear and are tormented by many kinds of physical grief. They are also overcome by many kinds of mental grief—the destruction of relatives and wealth and separation from these. There are also old age and death. A person who is not touched by physical and mental grief experiences happiness. None of these blemishes is experienced in heaven. Instead, there are extremely pleasant breezes and extremely fragrant scents in heaven. There is no hunger, thirst or exhaustion. There is no old age and no sin. There is only happiness in heaven. In this world, there are both happiness and unhappiness. It is said that there is only unhappiness in hell. Therefore, that<sup>93</sup> is the supreme objective. The earth is the womb of all beings and women represent the earth. Man is like Prajapati. Know that semen is full of energy. This is the way Brahma created the worlds in ancient times and determined their conduct. Subjects wander around, engaged in their own respective tasks.’”

## Chapter 1512(184)

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘What are said to be the fruits of donations? What about dharma and conduct? What about austerities, extremely severe austerities, studying and oblations?’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Sins are pacified through oblations. Studying leads to supreme peace. It is said that one obtains objects of pleasure through donations. Everything is obtained through austerities. It is said that donations are for two purposes, for the sake of the next world and for this one. Out of whatever is given to the virtuous, something accrues in the next world. Whatever one gives to those who are not virtuous leads to objects of pleasure in this world. One obtains fruits in accordance with the donations one has given.’

“Bharadvaja asked, ‘In the conduct of dharma, who should follow what? What are the signs of dharma? How many kinds of dharma are there? You should tell me this.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘Those who are engaged in following their own dharma are learned. They obtain the fruits of dharma. If one doesn’t act in this way, one is deluded.’

“Bharadvaja said, ‘O brahmana rishi! Four kinds of ashramas were ordained in earlier times. You should tell me about the conduct that is prescribed for each of these.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘In ancient times, the illustrious one<sup>94</sup> laid down four ashramas for the sake of protecting dharma and for the welfare of the worlds. Of these, residing in the household of the preceptor is said to be the first ashrama.<sup>95</sup> He must cleanse himself properly. He must be humble and follow the prescribed rituals. He must be modest in his soul. He must worship the two twilights<sup>96</sup>, the sun, the fire and the gods. He must give up excessive sleep and laziness. He must worship the preceptor. He must study the Vedas and listen to them. He must purify his soul. He must perform ablutions thrice.<sup>97</sup> He must follow brahmacharya. He must tend to the fire. He must always serve his preceptor. He must always subsist on begging and single-mindedly give him<sup>98</sup> everything that has been obtained. He must receive all the instructions the preceptor favourably bestows on him.<sup>99</sup> He must attentively meditate on whatever has been obtained through the preceptor’s favours. On this, there is a shloka. “A brahmana who obtains the Vedas by serving his preceptor obtains the fruits of heaven and is successful in his desires.” Indeed, garhasthya is said to be the second ashrama. I will tell you in detail about all the conduct and signs for this. It is recommended that those who have returned<sup>100</sup> follow the ashrama of the householder. With a view to attaining fruits, such a person should marry and observe the conduct of dharma with her. All the three objectives of dharma, artha and kama can be obtained through this mode. One must look towards these and obtain riches through beneficial deeds. The householder should follow garhasthya and obtain riches from the mountains and the oceans. These will be obtained if he studies well and serves the cause of the brahmana rishis. He must offer oblations and practise rituals. Through the favours of the gods, riches will then be obtained. This is said to be the foundation of all the ashramas. There are those who dwell in the residences of their preceptors. There are others who are mendicants. There are also those who have resolved to follow the vows and rituals of dharma. All these enjoy sustenance through shares in alms and sacrifices.<sup>101</sup> Those in vanaprastha must renounce and not store objects. These righteous and virtuous people generally look for medication in being devoted to studying, visiting the tirthas for the purpose of seeing different countries and in roaming around the earth. Without any malice, one must stand up and greet them with pleasant words and gifts, depending on one’s capacity. One must give them the best of seats and beds. This must be one’s conduct and action. On this, there is a shloka. “If a guest returns from a house with his wishes unsatisfied, he takes away all the good deeds<sup>102</sup> and leaves him with his bad deeds.” Therefore, sacrifices must be performed.<sup>103</sup> The gods must be pleased and the ancestors must be satisfied. One must study the Vedas, listen to them and tend to the rishis. For the sake of Prajapati, one must have offspring. On this, there are two shlokas. “One must be affectionate towards all beings, with pleasant words that are agreeable to hear. Censure, the



inflicting of hardships and harshness are reprehensible. Disrespect, pride and insolence are condemned. There must be non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger and austerities, recommended for all the ashramas.” A person in the householder stage must always observe the qualities of the three objectives. Wearing garlands, ornaments and garlands, the smearing of the body with unguents, taking pleasure from singing, dancing and musical instruments, pleasant and cheerful objects that bring delight to hearing and sight, the enjoyment of food and drink that is swallowed, licked, drunk and sucked, satisfaction with many kinds of desirable objects and the gratification of sexual desire with one’s own wife are allowed. Such a person enjoys happiness and obtains the objective of the virtuous. There may be a householder who follows his own dharma, but observes *unchhavritti*.<sup>104</sup> He gives up all exertion that is for the pursuit of desire and happiness. The attainment of heaven is not at all difficult for him.’”

## Chapter 1513(185)

“Bhrigu said, ‘Those who are in vanaprastha follow the dharma of rishis. They go to sacred tirthas, rivers and streams and deserted and desolate forests frequented by deer, buffaloes, boars, *srimaras*<sup>105</sup> and elephants. They practise austerities. They abandon ordinary garments and objects of food. They are controlled, limited and wonderful in their diet and subsist on wild herbs, roots, fruits and leaves. They sit and lie down on the bare ground, rocks, gravel, pebbles, sand and ashes. They cover their limbs with *kasha*, kusha,<sup>106</sup> hides and bark. They do not cut their hair, beards or nails. They perform their ablutions at the right time. They offer food, oblations and sacrifices at the right time. They do not rest until they have collected the required kusha, flowers and other ingredients required for oblations to the fire. Their skin is cracked everywhere, because of the cold, the heat, the wind and the rain. They observe different kinds of vows and yoga recommended by dharma. Because of these observances, they are nothing but flesh, blood, skin and bones. They are full of fortitude and spirited in their yoga. They bear their bodies in this way. If a person observes these rituals and conduct, recommended by the brahmana rishis, his sins are burnt, as if by a fire. He conquers worlds that are difficult to win. The conduct of a mendicant<sup>107</sup> is the following. He frees himself from attachment to the fire, riches, wives and family. He casts aside the bond of affection and wanders around. Stone, iron and gold are the same to him. He is not interested in pursuing the three objectives. His intelligence frees him from these attachments. Towards enemies, friends and neutrals, his conduct is the same. In words, deeds and thoughts, he does not injure immobile objects, those born from wombs, those born from eggs, those born from sweat and beings that are in the nature of herbs and plants. He has no abode. He roams around mountains, islands, the roots of trees and temples. He may go to a city or a village for residence. But he will not dwell in a city for more than five nights and in a village for more than one night. For the sake of sustaining life,<sup>108</sup> he will only present himself at the houses of brahmanas who are generous in their deeds. He should not ask for alms that are more than what has been placed in his vessel. He will restrain anger, insolence, delusion, avarice, miserliness, pride, slander, vanity and violence. In this connection, there is a shloka. “If a sage roams around, without causing fear to any being, he never faces fear from any being.” He performs the agnihotra sacrifice with his own body. The body is the fire that offers oblations into his mouth. That fire is fed oblations that are obtained through begging. Because of this fire, he transcends the world. As stated, he observes the ashrama of moksha. His resolution and intelligence are properly turned towards purification. He is as tranquil as a blazing body that has no kindling. Such a brahmana obtains Brahma’s world.’

“Bharadvaja said, ‘There is a world beyond this world. I have heard about it, but have not seen it. I wish to know about it. You should tell me.’

“Bhrigu replied, ‘There is a sacred spot towards the north, on the slopes of the Himalayas. It has all the qualities. It is said that this is a supreme world—sacred, tranquil and desirable. The men there have abandoned greed and delusion and do not suffer from any difficulties. They do not perform wicked deeds. They are pure and extremely clean. It is said that this region has such auspicious qualities that it is like heaven. Death comes at the right time and disease does not touch them. Men are devoted to their own wives and do not desire the wives of others. It is amazing that they do not kill each other and do not desire each other’s possessions. Since dharma is clearly followed, there is no scope for any doubt. The fruits of all acts are directly obtained there. They possess beds, vehicles, seats, palaces and mansions that have all the objects of desire. Some are adorned in golden ornaments. However, there are also some who only eat enough to remain alive. So as to remain alive, some perform great exertions. In this world, some men are devoted to dharma, while others practise deceit. Some are happy, while others are unhappy. Some are poor, while others are rich. In this world, exertion, fear, delusion and hunger are fierce. There is greed for riches among men and this confuses even those who are learned. There are many kinds of thoughts in

this world, about deeds of dharma and adharma. A wise person knows the difference between the two and sin does not touch him. There is fraud, deceit, theft, slander, jealousy, injury towards others, violence, verbal abuse and falsehood. If someone practises these, then his austerities are diminished. However, if a person knows this and acts righteously, his austerities are enhanced. This world is the arena for action. In this world, auspicious and inauspicious deeds can be performed. Good deeds lead to good gains. If one performs inauspicious deeds, the opposite occurs. In ancient times, in this world, Prajapati<sup>109</sup> and the gods, along with masses of rishis, performed sacrifices and austerities, thus attaining Brahma's world. The northern part of the earth is the most sacred and auspicious. People who perform auspicious deeds in this world are born there. There are others who perform wicked deeds and are born as inferior species. There are others who have short lifespans and are destroyed on the surface of the earth. They are addicted to devouring each other and are full of avarice and confusion. They circle around here and do not go to the northern direction. If a person serves his preceptor, is controlled and follows brahmacharya, the learned know that he follows the path indicated for all the worlds. I have briefly told you about the dharma that has been ordained by Brahma. A person who knows about dharma and adharma in this world is intelligent.”

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Thus did Bhrigu speak to the powerful Bharadvaja. The one with supreme dharma in his soul<sup>110</sup> was astounded and worshipped Bhrigu back. O king! Thus, everything about the creation of the universe has been recounted to you. O immensely wise one! What do you wish to hear again?”’

## Chapter 1514(186)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O unblemished one! O one who knows about dharma! It is my view that you know everything. O father! I desire that you should tell me about the recommendations on good conduct.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Those with bad conduct, bad efforts and bad wisdom, characterized by rashness, are known as the wicked. The virtuous have signs of good conduct. Auspicious men are those who do not pass urine and excrement along royal roads, amidst cattle and in the midst of fields of paddy. After doing this,<sup>111</sup> it is said to be dharma for men to purify oneself by performing ablutions along the banks of a river and offering water to the gods. The sun must always be worshipped. One must not sleep after the sun has arisen. In the morning and the evening, one must perform the sandhya meditation by facing the east and subsequently, the west.<sup>112</sup> After having washed the five limbs,<sup>113</sup> one must eat silently, facing the east. One must not censure the food one is eating, regardless of whether the food is tasty, or is not tasty. One must wash the hands and then arise. In the night, one must not go to sleep with wet feet. Devarshi Narada has said that these are signs of good conduct. With a desire to purify one’s mind and limbs, every day, one must circumambulate a bull, a god, a cow pen, a place where four roads meet and a brahmana who follows dharma. In matters of food, a man who generally does not differentiate between all the guests, attendants, relatives and servants is praised. The gods have ordained that men must eat twice, in the morning and in the evening. In between, it has not been said that one should eat. One should fast instead. At the right time, oblations must be offered. When it is her season, a wise person will go to his wife. He will behave like a brahmachari towards the wives of others. Leftover food from a brahmana is like amrita. It is like milk from a mother’s breast. These are truly worshipped by people. The virtuous truly worship them. If a person has abstained from meat,<sup>114</sup> he must refrain from eating meat, even if it has been sanctified by reciting from the Yajur Veda. One must not eat useless flesh.<sup>115</sup> One must also avoid meat from the back. Whether one is in one’s own country, or whether one is in some other country, a guest must never be made to fast. Having obtained the desired fruits of action, one must offer them to the seniors. It is a duty to offer one’s seat to seniors and respectfully greet them. By worshipping one’s seniors, one is united with long life, fame and prosperity. One must not look towards the rising sun. When she is naked, nor should one look towards another man’s wife. Sexual intercourse that is in conformity with dharma must be practised, but in secret. The heart is a tirtha among all tirthas. The heart is the purest of the pure. All acts done by a noble person are pure, including the touching of hair. Every time one meets another person, one must ask him questions about his welfare. It has been instructed that, in the morning and in the evening, brahmanas must be worshipped. The right hand must be used in an assembly of gods, amidst cows, in performing rites among brahmanas, in studying and in eating. Through this, the stores of a merchant and the crops of an agriculturist increase manifold. Grain, beasts of burden and cattle also multiply. When one has finished eating, one must perform *tarpana* with the hand.<sup>116</sup> One must always say that the payasa and krisara have been cooked well.<sup>117</sup> After shaving, spitting, bathing, eating and recovering from a disease, one must greet everyone with, ‘May you have a long life.’ While facing the sun, one must not pass urine. One must not look at one’s own excrement. One must not sleep with a woman who is a suta. One must also avoid eating with her. One must avoid addressing elders by name or by using ‘*tvam*’.<sup>118</sup> There is no sin in addressing either juniors or equals in this way. If there is wickedness in the heart, this shows up in deeds. If wicked people conceal their wrong deeds, performed knowingly, from good people, they are nevertheless destroyed. Wicked deeds performed knowingly may be hidden from extremely learned people. Men may not see them. But they are seen by the residents of heaven. A sin committed by a wicked person leads to a further sin. An act of dharma performed by someone who observes dharma follows the doer. A foolish person does not remember the sins that he has committed. However, they circle around the doer. Just as Rahu approaches the moon, those wicked deeds approach that ignorant person. Objects stored with

the hope of something are not enjoyed at the right time. The learned do not praise this, because death does not wait for anyone. The learned have said that for all beings, dharma exists in the mind. Therefore, all beings must observe purity in their minds. Dharma must be practised singly. There is no aide in dharma. One should only resort to the ordinances. What will an aide do? Men are born from the gods. The gods have amrita in heaven. If one observes dharma, after death, one enjoys extreme happiness.”

## Chapter 1515(187)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! A man should think about *adhyatma*.<sup>119</sup> Tell me about *adhyatma*.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Partha! You have asked me about *adhyatma*. O son! It is supremely beneficial and brings happiness and I will tell you about it. Knowing this, men in this world have obtained affection, happiness, immediate fruits and gains and even the welfare of all beings. Earth, air, space, water, and fire as the fifth—these are the great elements and the origins of creation and destruction of all beings. They originate with him<sup>120</sup> and it is to him that these great elements in the beings repeatedly return, like the waves in an ocean. It is like a tortoise extending its limbs and retracting them again. In that way, the creator of beings creates beings and withdraws them again. To create beings, he places the five great elements in all beings, changing the proportions. But the being does not see this. Sound, hearing and the holes<sup>121</sup>—these three originate in space. Skin, touch, exertion and speech—these four have to do with the wind. Form, eye and digestion—these three are said to be of the fire. Taste, liquid secretions and tongue—these three are said to be the qualities of water. Scent, nose and body—these three are the qualities of the earth. There are five great elements and the mind<sup>122</sup> is said to be the sixth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The senses and the mind are the source of discernment. Intelligence<sup>123</sup> is said to be the seventh and the *kshetrajna* is the eighth. The eyes and the others are for seeing. But the mind doubts. Exerting intelligence, the *kshetrajna* is stationed like a witness. Everything that is above the feet, to the rear and to the front, is seen by it. Know that it<sup>124</sup> pervades everything, without there being a gap anywhere. Men must know this and all the senses. Know that the qualities of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* depend on them. A man must use his intelligence to know the coming and going of all beings. If he looks at it in this way, he will obtain tranquility and supreme benefit. The qualities<sup>125</sup> influence intelligence and intelligence influences the senses. The mind is the sixth in all this intelligence. Where will the qualities come from?<sup>126</sup> Everything, mobile and immobile, is pervaded by this. It has been instructed that all destruction and creation results from this. That which sees is the eye. That which hears is said to be the ear. The one which is used to smell is the nose. The tongue tastes. The skin touches and these influence and distort intelligence. If there is a resolution to accomplish something, that is done by the mind. For different objectives, intelligence is established in five separate things. These are said to be the five senses and the invisible entity<sup>127</sup> rests on them. Depending on intelligence, a man can have three kinds of sentiments.<sup>128</sup> Sometimes he is delighted, and sometimes he grieves. Sometimes, there is neither happiness, nor unhappiness. In this way, there are three kinds of sentiments in the minds of men. However, sometimes, one can surpass these three kinds of sentiments, like the ocean, the lord of the rivers, uses its waves to cross the great shoreline. That pure kind of intelligence only exists in the mind.<sup>129</sup> But sometimes, following the *rajas* quality, it is impelled to act. All the senses then manifest themselves. There is joy in *sattva*. There is sorrow in *rajas*. There is confusion in *tamas*. These are the three. All the sentiments one sees in the world are based on these three. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have thus told you everything about the nature of intelligence. An intelligent person must conquer all the senses. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* always attach themselves to living beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That is the reason three different kinds of pain, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are seen in all living beings. A touch of happiness is the quality of *sattva*. A touch of sorrow is the quality of *rajas*. When these are combined with the quality of *tamas*, confusion is the result. If there is anything joyous in the body or in the mind, that is seen to be the consequence of the *sattva* quality. Unhappiness is not desired by anyone. This is due to the *rajas* quality and one should not think about this with fear.<sup>130</sup> There is a state where one is confused and does not know what should be known and what should be done. This is the outcome of *tamas*. Delight, satisfaction, bliss, happiness, tranquility in thought—when these are seen, that is the quality of *sattva*. Dissatisfaction, repentance, sorrow, greed, lack of forgiveness—when

these signs are seen, those are ascribed to rajas. Insolence, confusion, distraction, excessive sleep, lack of care—when many such traits are evident, that is the quality of tamas.

“A person may be doubtful about what he has obtained. He will be able to go far, in many different directions. If he is able to control his mind, he will obtain happiness, in this world and in the next. Notice the subtle difference inside between intelligence and the kshetrajna. One of these<sup>131</sup> creates many qualities. The other one<sup>132</sup> creates no qualities at all. It is like a mosquito and a fig being united to each other. They are with each other, but they are also separated from each other. Although they are naturally separate, they are always united. This is like a fish and water being united. The atman possesses no qualities. It only perceives all the qualities. It looks at all the qualities and thinks that it has created them. The senses are inactive and do not know. It<sup>133</sup> uses the seventh, intelligence, to light up the paramatman, like a lamp. The kshetrajna sees the qualities that are created by the intelligence. This is certainly the connection between the intelligence and the kshetrajna. There is never any refuge for the intelligence or the kshetrajna. The mind creates intelligence, but never its qualities. When the mind controls the reins<sup>134</sup> well, then the atman becomes visible, like a lamp concealed inside a pot. If a sage discards ordinary acts and always controls his atman, then he may be able to see himself in all beings and attain the supreme objective. A bird roaming in the waters is touched, but is yet not touched. That is the way a person who has obtained wisdom wanders around beings. Using his intelligence, a man must naturally roam around in this way. He should neither grieve, nor be delighted. He should roam around, without any malice. If he is naturally successful in this way, he is always successful in creating the qualities. With that knowledge, he creates the qualities, like a spider creating strands. Some say the qualities<sup>135</sup> are destroyed. Others say that they are destroyed and become invisible. Whether they are manifest, or not manifest, cannot be established on the basis of guesses. Some, basing themselves on their studies, say they remain. Others say that they are destroyed. Considering both views, one must use one's intelligence to decide. One must use one's intelligence to firmly sever these strands in the heart. Having freed oneself, there is no doubt that one will obtain happiness and not sorrow. By bathing in a full river, men cleanse themselves. Know that in this way, filthy people can also purify themselves in knowledge and become extremely learned. A person who is accomplished is not tormented on seeing the further shore of a great river. In that way, a person who knows about adhyatma is only driven by supreme knowledge. A man who has comprehended the ultimate end and origin of all beings looks at it in this way and slowly obtains supreme, using his intelligence. If a person knows about the three objectives, he is freed from what stands before the light. He searches with his mind. He is not interested in anything other than seeing the truth. Because of the different senses, one is incapable of seeing the atman. They distract in different directions and are difficult for someone who has not controlled his soul to restrain. A person who knows this is intelligent. What else can be the characteristics of a learned person? Obtaining this knowledge, learned people regard themselves as having become successful. Things which cause great fear to those who are not learned do not cause any fear to those who are learned. There is no other end that is greater than this. But the learned say that the qualities attained are not comparable.<sup>136</sup> If a person acts without attachment, he destroys the effects of his earlier deeds. There is nothing that is disagreeable. If someone tries for the agreeable, his birth on earth will always happen. In this world, people censure those who are afflicted.<sup>137</sup> Behold. They sorrow in many ways. Also, behold. Those who are accomplished do not sorrow. A person who knows about both<sup>138</sup> always accomplishes the objective.”

## Chapter 1516(188)

‘Bhishma said, “O Partha! I will now tell you about the four kinds of meditation in yoga.<sup>139</sup> The supreme rishis who know this, advance towards eternal success in this world. *Yogis* engage themselves in this kind of meditation. These are maharshis who are satisfied with their knowledge and have set their minds on emancipation. O Partha! They are freed from the taints of this world and do not return again. The sins associated with their births are destroyed and they become established in their natural states. They are free of opposite sentiments and are always based in their selves. They are always based in freedom. They are without attachments. They do not debate. They seek to bring about tranquility in their minds. They are single-mindedly devoted to studying and hold up their atmans. Such a sage is seated like a piece of wood, crushing his senses. He does not hear any sound through his ears. His skin does not know anything through touch. His eyes do not know any form and his tongue does not know any tastes. He smells nothing. Immersed in the yoga of meditation, he experiences nothing. The valiant one does not desire anything that ignites the five categories.<sup>140</sup> The accomplished person withdraws the five categories into his mind. He uses the five senses to control his wavering mind. Since they no longer have a support, they do not wander. The five gates<sup>141</sup> are mobile, but are rendered immobile. Inside, the patient person first controls his mind to the path of meditation. He uses his mind to crush the senses. I have described this path of meditation to you first. Having controlled these first, the sixth one, the mind,<sup>142</sup> is then restrained. It is as fickle as lightning flashing around in the clouds. A drop of water on a leaf is unstable and always moves around. In the process of meditation, the consciousness is first like that. However, after one has meditated for some time, it becomes controlled. However, if the mind again strays into the path of the wind,<sup>143</sup> it becomes like the wind. But a person who knows is not disturbed by this. He strives single-mindedly, without malice. He restrains his consciousness in meditation again, engaged in the yoga of meditation. Engaged in meditation, the sage first accomplishes discrimination, reasoning and judgement.<sup>144</sup> At first, in the process of meditation, the sage first fixes his mind. Disturbed by it, he controls it. A sage must not engage in despair, but must seek to ensure benefit for his atman. Heaps of dust and ashes from burnt cow dung do not become wet when they are sprinkled with water. Even if they become slightly wet, that dust still seems to be dry. They must be continuously and slowly sprinkled before they become wet. The senses must be slowly controlled, in that way. In this way, the senses are gradually controlled. They are gradually restrained and finally pacified. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By incessantly pacifying the mind through yoga, one first engages the mind and the five categories in the path of meditation. The happiness obtained through manliness or destiny is nothing compared to what is obtained through the control of the atman. United with such bliss, he remains engaged in the task of meditation. Without any disturbance, the yogi then advances towards emancipation.”’



## Chapter 1517(189)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You have spoken about the four ashramas and about rajadharma. You have separately spoken about many different kinds of history. O immensely intelligent one! I have also heard many true accounts connected with dharma. However, I still have a doubt and you should remove it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the fruits obtained by *japakas*.<sup>145</sup> What fruits are obtained by the *japakas* who recite in this way? O unblemished one! You should tell me about all the norms that have been laid down for *japa*. What are the different rules and procedures that have been laid down for *japakas* in sankhya and yoga?<sup>146</sup> What are the ordinances for sacrifices? What is recommended for *japa*? Tell me all this. It is my view that you know everything.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what transpired in ancient times between Yama, Time and a brahmana. Vedanta has said that renunciation is meditation. The words of the Vedas are about withdrawal, tranquility and resort to the brahman. The paths<sup>147</sup> can be resorted to, or not resorted to. O king! I will tell you about the reasons for resorting to it.<sup>148</sup> It has been said that the mind must be controlled and the senses must be conquered. One must be truthful and tend to the fire. One must immerse oneself in reflection, with meditation, austerities, self-control, forgiveness, lack of jealousy, restraint in food, withdrawal from material objects, frugality in speech and tranquility. This is the way dharma flows. Listen to the mode of abstention now. Those who follow the path of the brahman perform *japa* and withdraw from rituals. As I have said, all these must be completely renounced. There are three paths one can resort to, external, internal and without any.<sup>149</sup> He must seat himself on kusha grass. He will hold kusha in his hand and tie kusha around his hair. He must surround himself with tattered rags and in its midst, attire himself in kusha. He must bow down before material objects and after that, no longer think of material objects. He must be tranquil in his mind and fix his mind on his mind. With his intelligence, he must meditate on the brahman and engage in *japa* for his benefit. He must then withdraw from even this and immerse himself in samadhi.<sup>150</sup> Having resorted to meditation, he must use his concentrated powers. Through austerities and self-control, he will purify his atman. He will withdraw from all hatred and desire. He will be without attachment and confusion. He will not sorrow. Nor will he be delighted. He does not think of himself as the doer, nor as the one who enjoys from this action. Nor does he suffer from the action. In yoga, the mind has no sense of ego. Nor does he seek to establish anything. He is not engaged in receiving anything for himself. But he does not ignore this.<sup>151</sup> Nor does he not perform acts. He is engaged in the task of meditation. He is engaged in meditation, having set his mind on meditation. Through the meditation, he obtains samadhi and then gradually gives it up.<sup>152</sup> In that state, he obtains the bliss that is obtained by renouncing everything. He is not interested in this world. He has renounced everything. He gives up his life and merges with the body of the brahman. Or perhaps he does not desire to merge into the body of the brahman then. He follows the path upwards, never to be born again. He resorts to knowledge about the brahman. He is tranquil and without disease. He is immortal and free from all passions. He obtains the purity of his atman.”’

## Chapter 1518(190)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “You have spoken about the supreme ends that japakas obtain. Is this the only end, or is there any other possibility?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O lord! Listen attentively to the end attained by japakas. O bull among men! They may also descend into many kinds of hell.<sup>153</sup> If there is a japaka who does not initially follow what has already been stated, or if he cannot complete those rites, he goes to hell. If there is a japaka who shows disrespect, is not satisfied and grieves, there is no doubt that such a person goes to hell. All those who suffer from ego go to hell. A man who insults others will also go to hell. Those who are confused and perform japa with the objective of obtaining fruits, are also those who desire hell. Those japakas who conduct themselves in the pursuit of riches<sup>154</sup> are also destined for hell and there is no emancipation for them. Those who are confused and perform japa because of attachments descend into a state where they obtain those attachments.<sup>155</sup> If a person is evil-minded and his mind is not stable in wisdom, then his end is also unstable and he goes to hell. There may be a japaka who is foolish and is not accomplished in his wisdom. In his delusion, he goes to hell and having gone there, he has to sorrow. If there is a japaka who performs japa with a firm mind, but fails to complete it, he too goes to hell.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “If a japaka has no specific objective and bases himself on the supreme and unmanifest brahman, why does he have to take birth in a body?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is because of the lack of wisdom that one has to go to many different kinds of hell. Japakas are praised. But they have taints in their atmans.”

## Chapter 1519(191)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What kind of a hell does a japaka go to? Describe it to me. A great curiosity has arisen in me. You should tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “You have been born from Dharma.<sup>156</sup> You are naturally devoted to dharma. O unblemished one! Listen attentively to these words, which have dharma as their foundation. There are regions for the gods with supreme souls. These regions are of many colours, many forms and many fruits. They are divine and have celestial vehicles and assembly halls that can go anywhere at will. O king! There are many kinds of arenas, with lotuses and sparkling water. The residents of heaven, the four guardians of the world, Shukra, Brihaspati, the Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, the Ashvins, the Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus and others are there. O son! But in comparison with the region of the paramatman, these are also hells. This spot has no fear or no objective and is not enveloped in any kind of hardship whatsoever. It is free from both.<sup>157</sup> It is free from the three.<sup>158</sup> It is free from the eight.<sup>159</sup> It is free from the three.<sup>160</sup> It is free of the four characteristics and devoid of the four reasons.<sup>161</sup> It has neither unhappiness nor happiness, nor sorrow or exhaustion. Time is cooked there<sup>162</sup> and time is not the lord there. O king! That region is the lord of time and is also the lord of heaven. The atman alone is obtained there. Having gone there, one does not grieve. This is the supreme region. Hell is not like this. I have accurately detailed all the hells to you. That is the supreme region. Everything else has characteristics of hell.”’

## Chapter 1520(192)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Earlier, you mentioned to me the dispute between Time, Death, Yama and the virtuous brahmana. You should tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This transpired between a brahmana and Ikshvaku, Surya’s son. It also involved Time and Death. Listen to the account of the conversation that took place at that spot. There was an immensely illustrious japaka brahmana who was devoted to dharma. He was descended from Kushika and was Pippalada’s son. He was immensely wise and knew about the six Angas.<sup>163</sup> He knew about the six Angas and about the one who is not manifest.<sup>164</sup> He was accomplished in the Vedas and dwelt on the slopes of the Himalayas. He performed other austerities for attaining the brahman. He controlled himself and performed japa. He observed such rituals for one thousand years. The goddess manifested herself before him and said, ‘I am pleased.’<sup>165</sup> Because he was silent in the midst of his japa, he did not say anything in reply. The goddess was pleased and felt compassion for him. The mother of the Vedas<sup>166</sup> honoured his japa. When the japa was over, he arose and bowed his head down at her feet. Having prostrated himself before the goddess, the one with dharma in his soul spoke the following words. ‘O goddess! It is good fortune that you are pleased with me, have appeared before me and have shown yourself to me. If you are pleased with me, may my mind always find delight in japa.’

“‘Savitri said, ‘O brahmana rishi! What do you desire? What shall I do for you? O supreme among those who perform japa! Tell me. Everything will be as you wish.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the goddess, the brahmana who was devoted to dharma replied, ‘Let my desire for japa repeatedly increase. O auspicious one! Day and night, let my inclination towards the dharma of samadhi increase.’ In a sweet tone, the goddess replied that it would be this way. Wishing to do what would bring him pleasure, the goddess again said, ‘You will not go to the hell where other bulls among brahmanas go. You will go to the unblemished region of the brahman, which has not been created by anyone. I will depart now. But what you have wished for will become successful. Single-mindedly, perform japa. Dharma will present himself before you. Time, Death and Yama will also present themselves before you. There will be a dispute between them and you on dharma.’ Having said this, the illustrious one returned to her own abode. The brahmana continued to perform japa for one hundred celestial years. The intelligent brahmana remained there, completing his rituals. Pleased at this, Dharma presented himself before that brahmana.

“‘Dharma said, ‘O brahmana! Look at me. I am Dharma. I have come here to see you. Listen to me. You have obtained the fruits that result from japa. You have obtained all the worlds, the divine and the human. You will be successful in passing through all the hells that are inhabited by the gods. O sage! Give up your life and go to the worlds that you desire. If you cast aside your own body, you will obtain those worlds.’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘O Dharma! I have obtained all the worlds here. Go to whatever spot brings you pleasure. O lord! Though this body suffers from a lot of joy and misery, I will not give it up.’

“‘Dharma said, ‘O bull among sages! This body should certainly be cast aside. O brahmana! Go to heaven. O unblemished one! What is it that pleases you?’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘O lord! Without this body, I will find no delight in residing in heaven. O Dharma! Go away. Without my body, I am not interested in going to heaven.’

“‘Dharma said, ‘There has been enough of this body. Make up your mind to give up this body and be happy. Go to the world where there is no rajas. Having gone there, you will not sorrow.’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘O immensely fortunate one! I take pleasure in japa and have obtained all the eternal worlds. O lord! I wish to go to heaven in my body, or not at all.’

“Dharma said, ‘O brahmana! Behold. If you do not wish to cast aside your body, Time, Death and Yama will present themselves before you.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O lord! There were those three—Vaivasvata,<sup>167</sup> Time and Death. They approached the immensely fortunate brahmana and spoke to him. Yama said, ‘I am Yama. You have tormented yourself well with austerities and your conduct is good. I am telling you that you will obtain the best of fruits.’ Time said, ‘I am Time and I have come before you. Because of your recitations and japa, you have obtained supreme fruits. The time has come for you to ascend to heaven.’ Death said, ‘O one who knows about dharma! Know me to be death. I have shown my own form to you. O brahmana! I have been urged by Time and have come to take you away.’ The brahmana replied, ‘Welcome to Surya’s son,<sup>168</sup> great-souled Time, Death and Dharma. What can I do for you?’ To those who had come, he offered padya and arghya.<sup>169</sup> Extremely delighted, he asked, ‘According to my capacity, what can I do for you?’ At that time, Ikshvaku was on a visit to the tirthas and arrived at the spot where those lords were assembled together.

“The rajarshi affectionately honoured all of them. The supreme among kings asked them questions about their welfare. The brahmana offered him a seat and padya and arghya too. Having asked him questions about his welfare, he said, ‘O great king! Welcome. Tell me what you desire. According to my capacity, please tell me what I can do for you.’ The king replied, ‘I am a king. You are a brahmana engaged in the six tasks.’<sup>170</sup> I wish to give you some riches. Tell me how much you want.’ The brahmana said, ‘O king! There are two kinds of brahmanas and dharma is said to be of two kinds. There is attachment and withdrawal. I have accepted the path of withdrawal. O lord of men! Donate gifts to those who are on the path of attachment. I will not accept anything. What can I give you for your welfare instead? O best among kings! Tell me. I will ensure its success through my austerities.’ The king replied, ‘I am a kshatriya. I do not know the words, “Please give.” O best among brahmanas! The only thing we ask for is, “Give us battle.”’ The brahmana said, ‘O king! You are content in your own dharma and in a similar way, so am I with mine. There is no difference between us. Therefore, act as you wish.’ The king replied, ‘You are the one who first said that you would give according to your capacity. O brahmana! I am asking you. Give me the fruits that you have obtained through japa.’ The brahmana said, ‘In your words, you boasted that you always asked for battle. Why don’t you then ask that I should fight with you?’ The king replied, ‘It has been said that brahmanas have the power of speech and kshatriyas live through the strength of their arms. O brahmana! That is the reason there has been this fierce duel with words between you and me.’ The brahmana said, ‘Even now, that is my resolution. According to my capacity, what will I give you? O Indra among kings! I possess wealth. Tell me immediately. What shall I give you?’ The king replied, ‘You have performed japa for a full hundred years. If you wish to give me something, give me the fruits of that japa.’ The brahmana said, ‘Take the supreme fruits that I have obtained through japa. Without reflecting, take half of those fruits. Or, take all the fruits of the japa from me. O king! If you so wish, take them entirely.’ The king replied, ‘O fortunate one! Though I asked for all the fruits of japa, I don’t want them. May you be fortunate. I am leaving you. But tell me what those fruits are.’ The brahmana said, ‘I don’t know what fruits have been given to me because of the japa. However, Dharma, Time, Yama and Death are witnesses.’<sup>171</sup> The king replied, ‘If you do not even know what the fruits of this dharma are, what will I do with them? O brahmana! Since there are doubts about what they are, I do not desire them.’

“The brahmana said, ‘I will not accept any other words for you. I have already given you my fruits. O rajarshi! Let both your words and mine be true. Earlier, I have never performed japa with any specific objective in mind. O tiger among kings! How will I then know the fruits from japa? You said, “give” and I said “take”. Let those words not be falsified. We must be steady and protect the truth. O king! If you do not keep the words that you spoke to me,<sup>172</sup> then, because of the falsehood, a great adharmas will descend on you. O scorcher of enemies! The words that you have spoken should not be tainted with falsehood. In that way, I am also incapable of falsifying my words. Without any hesitation, I have earlier pledged to give it to you. Therefore, if you wish to adhere to the truth, you should accept it without any reflection. O king! You came here and asked me for the fruits of the japa. Therefore, adhere to the truth and accept what has been given to you. O king! There are no worlds for those who are supremely addicted to falsehood. Their past, or their future, cannot be saved. Sacrifices, studying, donations and rituals are incapable of saving them. O bull among men! In this world and in the next, there is nothing as supreme as the truth. Truth is superior to all the austerities you have performed and all the austerities you will undergo for hun-

dreds and thousands of years. Truth is the single syllable of the brahman. Truth is the single syllable of austerities. Truth is the single syllable of sacrifices. Truth is the single syllable of learning. The Vedas remain awake in truth. The learned texts have said that truth brings the supreme fruits. Truth is dharma and self-control. Everything is established in truth. The Vedas and the Vedangas are truth. The sacrifices and rituals are in truth. Vows and good conduct are truth. Om is truth. The birth of beings is based on truth. Truth is their offspring. The wind blows because of truth. The sun heats because of truth. The fire burns because of truth. Heaven is established in truth. Truth is sacrifices, austerities, the Vedas, hymns, mantras and Sarasvati. We have heard that dharma and truth were weighed on a pair of scales and when they were weighed together, truth was heavier. Where there is dharma, truth is there. Everything is enhanced through truth. O king! Why do you wish to perform an act of falsehood? O king! Fix your sentiments on truth and not futilely on falsehood. Why do you wish to inauspiciously falsify the word “give” that you spoke? O king! I have given you the fruits of my japa. If you refuse to accept them, you will roam around the world, dislodged from your own dharma. Having pledged, if one does not give, and if one does not accept, both are tainted by falsehood. Therefore, you should not act in a false way.’

“The king said, ‘O brahmana! The dharma of kshatriyas is to fight and protect. It is said that kshatriyas are givers. How can I accept from you?’

“The brahmana replied, ‘O king! I did not go to your house and insist. You came here and asked from me. How can you then not accept?’

“Dharma said, ‘Let there be an end to this excessive dispute between you. Know that I am Dharma. Let the brahmana obtain the fruits of giving. Let the king obtain the fruits of adhering to the truth.’

“Heaven said, ‘O Indra among kings! Know that I am Heaven and have myself appeared before you. Let there be an end to this excessive dispute. Both of you are equal in obtaining the fruits.’

“The king replied, ‘I have performed tasks that will ensure heaven for me. O Heaven! Go wherever you want. If the brahmana so desires, I will give him the riches that I have obtained.’

“The brahmana said, ‘In my words, I may have ignorantly stretched out my hand.<sup>173</sup> I now follow the dharma that has the characteristics of not being attached and I am engaged in japa. O king! I have been engaged in withdrawal for a long time. Why do you wish to tempt me? I will perform my own acts. O king! I do not desire your fruits. I am engaged in austerities, studying and good conduct and have accepted the path of withdrawal.’

“The king replied, ‘O brahmana! If you wish to give me the supreme fruits of your japa, then accept some of my fruits and let us divide them. Brahmanas are engaged in accepting. Those born in royal lineages are engaged in giving. O brahmana! If you are learned about dharma, let our fruits be equal. Or if you do not wish to share equally, take all the fruits from me. If you wish to show me your favours, accept what I have earned through dharma.’”

‘Bhishma said, “At that time, two malformed men arrived there. They were dressed badly and each of them had his hand on the other one’s shoulder. They said, ‘You don’t owe me anything. It is I who owe you. We are debating in this way and here is a king who is a ruler. I am telling you truthfully. You don’t owe me anything. You are speaking falsely, when you say that you owe me something.’ Engaged in this furious debate, they approached the king and said, ‘Examine the case, so that neither one of us is censured.’ Virupa said, ‘O tiger among men! I owe Vikrita the fruits of giving away a cow.<sup>174</sup> O lord of the earth! I wish to return this to him. But Vikrita refuses to accept it.’ Vikrita said, ‘O lord of men! Virupa does not owe me anything. O lord of men! He is lying to you. This is false.’ The king asked, ‘O Virupa! Tell me. What do you owe him? It is my view that, having heard, I will do what needs to be done.’ Virupa replied, ‘O king! Listen attentively to what happened and how I owe a debt to Vikrita. O rajarshi! O bull among men! I will tell you everything. O unblemished one! O rajarshi! For the sake of obtaining riches, in earlier times, he had given away an auspicious cow to a brahmana who was of good conduct and was engaged in austerities and studying. O king! I went to him and asked for the fruits of that act. Pure in his soul, he gave me the fruits of what he had done. Thereafter, after purifying myself, I performed some good deeds. I bought two brown cows<sup>175</sup> with calves and they yielded a lot of milk. O king! O lord! There was a brahmana who was devoted to the conduct of unchhavritti. Faithfully, and following the prescribed rites, I donated these to him. Having received earlier, I now wished to give him twice the fruits.<sup>176</sup> O tiger among men! This being the background, who among us is pure? Who is sinful? O king! We have debated this among us and have come before you. Decide on dharma and adharma and we will accept it with all humility. O lord! If he does not wish to accept the

gift that he had bestowed on me earlier, then you must determine the right course for both of us to take.’ The king asked, ‘Why are you not accepting, when your debt is being repaid now? Grant your permission and receive it quickly.’ Vikrita replied, ‘He says that he owes me. But what I gave was given away. Therefore, he does not owe me anything. Let him go wherever he wishes.’ The king said, ‘He is willing to give, but you do not accept. To me, this does not seem fair. In my view, there is no doubt that you should be punished on this account.’ Vikrita replied, ‘O rajarshi! I gave him a gift. How can I take it back again? O lord! If it is your view that I am guilty, then please punish me.’ Virupa retorted, ‘I am willing to give, but you are unwilling to accept. The king is the protector of dharma and must restrain you.’ Vikrita replied, ‘I myself gave what he asked for. How can I take that back now? I am giving you. Having accepted it, you have my permission to go away.’ The brahmana said, ‘O king! You have heard what these two have said. Without any reflection, take what I have pledged to give you.’ The king replied, ‘An extremely grave task confronts us, like a bottomless pit. The japaka is firm in his resolution. How will this end? If I do not accept what has been earned by the brahmana, how will I avoid being tainted with a great sin?’ The rajarshi told those two, ‘You have accomplished your objectives. Depart now. Rajadharma is vested in me and I must ensure that it is not rendered futile. It has been determined that kings must protect their own dharma. It is extremely unfortunate that the dharma of brahmanas<sup>177</sup> has presented itself before me.’ The brahmana said, ‘Accept what I owe you. I have heard you ask for it. O king! If you refuse to accept it, it is certain that I will curse you.’ The king replied, ‘Shame on rajadharma, since it has been determined that I must do this. I must accept what you are giving, so that the two are rendered equal.’<sup>178</sup> My hand is stretched out. Earlier, it used to be stretched out only for giving. O brahmana! Give me whatever you owe me.’ The brahmana said, ‘Whatever qualities I have obtained through the performance of japa and whatever is vested in me, accept all of those.’ The king replied, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! These drops of water have fallen on my hands. Accept those from me, so that we are equal.’ Virupa said, ‘Know that we are Desire and Anger and we have goaded you to act in this way. As you have said, the two of you are equal and will be equal in all the worlds. He<sup>179</sup> does not owe me anything. We questioned you for your own sake. Time, Dharma and Death, and the two of us, Desire and Anger, have examined everything about you, in your presence. As you desired, go to the worlds that you have won through your deeds.’ I have recounted to you the fruits obtained by japakas and the end, status and worlds conquered by japakas.

“A person who studies goes to the supreme abode of Brahma, or goes to Agni and enters into Surya. If he is attached, he imbibes that energy. Confounded by attachment, he imbibes those qualities.”<sup>180</sup> This is also the case if his body is with Soma, Vayu, the earth or space. If there is attachment, he dwells and acts in accordance with those qualities. However, if he is detached, he is doubtful even if he goes there. He desires for the supreme and eventually penetrates that. He obtains the amrita of all amritas. He is tranquil and it is as if he has no atman. He becomes part of the brahman and is freed from opposite sentiments. He is happy, peaceful and without disease. He obtains the abode of the brahman, from which, there is no return. This is characterized by the single akshara alone. There is no misery. There is no decay. He obtains that region of tranquility. He is devoid of the four characteristics and the six and the sixteen.<sup>181</sup> He passes over Purusha and is immersed in space.<sup>182</sup> However, if he still has attachment in his soul and does not desire all this, he obtains everything that his mind desires. Or he looks upon all the worlds that have earlier been called hells. If he does not desire anything, he is free and finds delight in bliss. O great king! This is the end obtained by japakas. I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear?”



## Chapter 1521(193)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! What answer was given then by the brahmana or the king? Tell me this. In accordance with what you have described, what were their ends? What was the conversation between them? What transpired and what did they do there?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He<sup>183</sup> accepted the agreement and worshipped Dharma, Yama, Time, Death and Heaven, as they deserved to be honoured. He worshipped all the other bulls among brahmanas who had assembled there. He bowed his head down and honoured all of them. He then spoke to the king in these words. ‘O rajarshi! United with the fruits, go to the sacred regions. With your permission, I will devote myself to japa once again. O immensely strong one! O lord of the earth! The goddess<sup>184</sup> granted me a boon earlier—that my devotion to japa would always remain.’ The king replied, ‘O brahmana! If you are devoted to japa and if your success has been rendered futile, then go with my half and let the fruits of japa remain with you.’<sup>185</sup> The brahmana said, ‘In the presence of all these people, you have made great efforts.<sup>186</sup> Therefore, let us be equal and go wherever our ends take us.’

“Knowing what they had decided, the lord of the thirty gods came there, with all those who had forms of gods, the guardians of the worlds, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Maruts, the large stellar bodies, the rivers, the mountains, the oceans, the many tirthas, the austerities, the various rites of the Vedas, the hymns, Sarasvati, Narada, Parvata, Vishvasu, the Hahas, the Huhus,<sup>187</sup> the gandharva Chitrasena with a large number of his family members, the serpents, the successful sages, Prajapati, the god of the gods and the unfathomable and thousand-headed Vishnu. Musical instruments like drums and trumpets were sounded in the sky. Celestial flowers were showered down on those great-souled ones. Large numbers of apsaras danced around in every direction.

“Heaven appeared there in personified form and spoke these words. ‘O brahmana! You are immensely fortunate and have become successful. O king! You have also become successful.’ O king! Having done what was proper towards each other, those two<sup>188</sup> prepared to withdraw themselves from all material objects. They established prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana in their minds and turned their minds towards prana and apana. They concentrated these at the tips of their noses and below their eyebrows. Using their minds, they gently held them there. They rendered their bodies immobile and were fixed and controlled in their looks. Having seated and controlled themselves in that way, they sent their atmans upwards. A great and blazing mass of energy penetrated the crown of the great-souled brahmana’s head and went up to heaven. Great sounds of lamentation arose in all the directions. Worshipped by everyone, that energy entered the brahman. O lord of the earth! The grandfather advanced and welcomed that mass of energy, which was as tall as a man. He again spoke these supreme and sweet words. ‘There is no doubt that japakas obtain the same fruits as yogis. The fruits of yoga are directly evident. However, japakas are superior, because I advance to welcome them. Dwell with me.’ Having said this, he again imparted consciousness<sup>189</sup> and without any anxiety, the brahmana entered into his<sup>190</sup> mouth. Like that tiger among brahmanas, the king, following the prescribed rites, also entered into the illustrious grandfather.

“The gods worshipped Svayambhu and spoke these words. ‘We have made exertions to come to accomplish the objectives of the japaka. You have made them<sup>191</sup> equal in honour and equal in obtaining the fruits. We have witnessed the great fruits obtained by yogis and japakas. They can go wherever they wish, passing over all the worlds.’ Brahma replied, ‘If a person follows the rites and reads the great sacred texts, or the auspicious ones that follow the sacred texts, he also goes to my world.’<sup>192</sup> If someone follows yoga in accordance with the prescribed rites, there is no doubt that, after death, he will obtain my worlds. I will now go. To accomplish your objectives, all of you also return to your places.’ Having said this, the god disappeared. Having taken his leave earlier, all the gods also returned to their own abodes. O king! All those great-souled ones honoured Dharma and, delighted in



their minds, followed him at the rear. These are said to be the fruits and ends obtained by japakas. O great king! This is what I have heard. What else do you wish to hear?””

## Chapter 1522(194)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What are the fruits obtained through the yoga of knowledge, the Vedas and rituals? How can the atman in beings be known? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between Prajapati Manu and maharshi Brihaspati. Prajapati was supreme on earth and maharshi Brihaspati was foremost amongst the large number of devavarshis. In ancient times, the student bowed down before the preceptor<sup>193</sup> and asked him a question. ‘What is the cause?’<sup>194</sup> Where have mantras and ordinances come from? What are the fruits that brahmanas say are attached to knowledge? O illustrious one! Tell me accurately, what are the things that mantras and sounds are not able to reveal? There are those who know about artha, the sacred texts, the subsequent sacred texts<sup>195</sup> and mantras. They perform many supreme sacrifices, at which, they give away cows. What are the great fruits that flow from these? Where are they found? From where have the earth, those on earth, the wind, the sky, aquatic creatures, water, heaven and the residents of heaven originated? O illustrious one! Tell me this ancient account. Men desire and exert for knowledge and their inclination turns towards what they know. But I have no knowledge of that supreme and ancient one.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, how can I avoid being false in my inclinations? I have studied the large material of the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, prosody, the paths of the nakshatras, *nirukta*,<sup>197</sup> grammar, *samkalpa*<sup>198</sup> and *shiksha*.<sup>199</sup> But I still do not know about the element that is in all nature. You should tell me everything, about the fruits that follow from knowledge and deeds and about how an embodied being gives up a body and again enters another body.’

“Manu said, ‘Anything that is agreeable is said to represent happiness. Similarly, anything disagreeable is said to represent unhappiness. I will obtain happiness from this and not from that—one performs all rites and rituals because of such sentiments. However, those who are engaged in the pursuit of knowledge serve neither happiness, nor unhappiness. Prosody and the yoga of action are because of this desire in the soul. However, if someone is freed from this, he attains the supreme. In the pursuit of happiness, a man engages in many things along the path of action. But he does not go towards the supreme. By freeing oneself from acts, one obtains the supreme. He is without desire and certainly obtains the supreme brahman. Subjects have been created through the mind and through deeds. These are the two virtuous paths, revered by everyone. Acts are seen to have outcomes that are both eternal and temporary. To obtain the eternal, there is no method other than renouncing any desire in the mind. When the night is over and the atman is no longer enveloped in darkness, the eye can lead the atman. Similarly, when a person has the qualities of jnana and vijnana, he can see which inauspicious deeds need to be avoided. When men know, they avoid snakes, the pointed ends of kusha and wells. In their folly, stupid people fall down there. In that way, behold the superior fruits of knowledge. The complete utterance of mantras, sacrifices performed according to the prescribed ordinances, the giving of dakshina, the donation of food and contemplation in the mind—these five are said to be the fruits the atman obtains through action. The Vedas say that deeds have qualities in them.<sup>200</sup> Mantras form the foundations of deeds and mantras also possess these. It is evident that rituals must also have them. Fruits originate in the mind and the embodied being enjoys them. In the world of action, auspicious and sacred sounds, forms, taste, touch and scent can be successfully obtained as fruits. When acts are performed through the body, they are also enjoyed through the body. The body is the frame for happiness. The body is also the frame for unhappiness. However, if any tasks are performed through words, all of them are also enjoyed through words. Whatever acts are performed through the mind, it is the mind alone that enjoys them. Whatever quality and category of action a person desires and acts accordingly, the fruits of his action are also like that. Those qualities become attached and he enjoys the fruits of those auspicious and inauspicious deeds. Like a fish that swims against the tide, one has to confront the deeds one has committed earlier. The embodied being is satisfied because of his good deeds

and is not satisfied because of his bad deeds. I will now tell you about the supreme one. Listen to me. He is the one from whom everything in the universe has originated. It is through knowing him that one can overcome everything. He cannot be expressed through mantras and words. He is distinct from the many kinds of tastes and scent and sound, touch and form. He is incapable of being understood by the senses. He is the one who is not manifest. He is without complexion. He is the single one. He has created the five kinds of beings.<sup>201</sup> He is not female, male, or neuter. He does not exist. But nor does he not exist. Men who know about the brahman can behold him. Know that he is Akshara, without decay.””

## Chapter 1523(195)

“Manu said, ‘Wind originated in Akshara. Energy originated in wind. Water originated in energy. The universe originated in water. Everything in the universe originated from the universe. All these bodies eventually enter into the water first.<sup>202</sup> From the water, they then progressively go to energy, wind and space. The enlightened ones who obtain the supreme do not have to return from space. There is no heat, cold, mildness, sharpness, sourness, astringency, sweetness, bitterness, sound, scent or form in that supreme state. One does not feel touch. The tongue does not feel taste. The nose does not feel scent. The ears do not hear sound. In that supreme state, the eyes do not see form. Men who are learned about adhyatma accept that state. The tongue withdraws from taste, the nose from scent, the ears from hearing, the skin from touch and the eyes from the qualities of form. In that supreme state, such a person beholds his own natural state. It has been said that the doer, the act, the facilitators for an act, the inclination, the reasons behind the act and the methods are the soul.<sup>203</sup> But the true doer is the one who pervades everything in the world, just as the mantras have stated. He is the reason behind everything. He is behind the supreme objective. He is the cause. Everything else is an effect. Because of the good and bad deeds performed, a man obtains the good and the bad, sometimes in contradiction to each other. Because of his own deeds, the good and the bad reside in the body, and knowledge is also bound down there.<sup>204</sup> When a lamp is lit, the lamp illuminates everything that is in front. The senses are like lamps on trees. When ignited with knowledge, they illuminate everything. The many advisers of a king cite different reasons, but also come together. Those five in the body<sup>205</sup> are also subservient to supreme knowledge. The flames of the fire, the force of the wind, the rays of the sun and the water in the rivers repeatedly come and go. Like that, embodied beings repeatedly come and go in different bodies. When a person grasps an axe and cuts wood, he sees neither smoke nor fire inside it. Like that, by severing the body, the stomach, the hands and the feet, one cannot see the other one. When wood is rubbed against another piece of wood, one can see both smoke and fire. Like that, a person with excellent intelligence and wisdom, can control his senses to see the supreme in his own natural state. When one is dreaming, one can see one’s own body lying down on the ground, as if it is separate from one’s own self. Like that, a person with hearing and the others senses, excellent in his mind and in his intelligence, sees himself going from one body into another body. The supreme in the body<sup>206</sup> is not subject to birth, growth, decay and destruction. Unseen, it goes through a process of transition and passes from one body into another body. The eye cannot behold the form of the atman. It cannot be felt by anyone through touch. It does not perform any acts. No one can see it. But it sees them. When a lamp is lit, it assumes a form because of the fire and the heat. That which is inside is also seen to assume form and qualities from the body. Unseen, a man gives up his body and enters another body. He casts aside the body formed of the great elements, but still resorts to a form constituted by them. He enters the body of wind, fire, water, space and earth in every way. Depending on their action, hearing and the other senses resort to the five different qualities. The ear is for space, smell is for the earth and sight is for energy and fire. Sweat and taste are said to resort to water. The quality of touch has the property of wind. The objects of the senses, and the five senses themselves, dwell in the five great elements. All of them follow the mind. The mind follows intelligence and the mind follows one’s nature. Whatever good and bad deeds may have been performed are received in one’s own body. They follow the lead of the mind, just as aquatic creatures follow a favourable current. When a moving object comes into the range of vision, even if it is extremely small, it seems to assume a large form. In the path of intelligence, one can see one’s supreme form in one’s own form.’”

## Chapter 1524(196)

“Manu said, ‘When the senses are collected together and obtain their qualities, they remember what has been done a long time ago. When the senses are collected together later, through the use of the intelligence, one comprehends one’s supreme nature. When all the objects of the senses are simultaneously controlled and, over time, one uses one’s strength to prevent them from wandering around, the intelligent person understands himself to be the single supreme embodied being.<sup>207</sup> One passes through the three—rajas, tamas and sattva—and the three qualities and forms of knowledge. In that way, the embodied being penetrates the senses, like wind entering a kindled fire. The eyes cannot see the form of the atman. Touch cannot comprehend it. It is beyond the senses to fathom it. The ears cannot comprehend the soul through hearing. Whichever sense comprehends it is destroyed.<sup>208</sup> Hearing and the other senses cannot fathom the atman on their own. The kshetrajna knows everything, sees everything and witnesses. No man has seen the other side of the Himalayas, or the dark side of the moon. But this doesn’t mean that they don’t exist. In that way, the atman exists in a subtle way in all beings and is based in knowledge. Something that has not been seen earlier and something that has not been heard of earlier is not necessarily non-existent. Even if one looks, one doesn’t always see the universe in the moon. It is like that for those who are not fixed on the final objective. The learned see that form is created and form is also destroyed. Through their intelligence, they can understand the motion of the sun.<sup>209</sup> With the lamp of intelligence, the extremely learned see what is far away. Through their intelligence, they can immediately investigate what should be known. Indeed, nothing can be accomplished without the use of means. Fishermen kill fish by using nets that are made out of strings. Deer are used to capture other deer, birds for other birds and elephants for other elephants. In that way, what needs to be known can be seen through knowledge. As an example, only a snake can see a snake’s legs. Through knowledge, inside the body, one can see what is based in the body and deserves to be known. One will not be able to comprehend the senses through the use of the senses. In that way, what is beyond intelligence cannot be understood through the use of supreme intelligence. On the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, even a subtle form of the moon cannot be seen. That does not mean that it has been destroyed. Know that the embodied being is like that. On the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, the faint form of the moon is not evident in the sky. In that way, when it is separated from its body, its own body cannot comprehend the soul. Having attained another position, the moon begins to shine again. In that way, having obtained another body, the soul is resplendent again. The birth, growth and decay of the moon can immediately be seen. But the soul is not like that. The birth, growth and decay of the body should also be accepted like that. Even in its dark state, the moon possesses a form. One does not see darkness seize the moon and release it. In that way, the release and entering of the soul cannot be seen.<sup>210</sup> Darkness is seen when it approaches the moon and the sun.<sup>211</sup> In that way, the soul can be understood as separate from the body. When the moon and the sun have been freed, Rahu can no longer be seen.<sup>212</sup> In that way, when it has been separated from the body, the soul can no longer be comprehended. Even on the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, the nakshatras are still united with the moon. In that way, though it has been separated from the body, the fruits of acts performed are still united with it.’”

## Chapter 1525(197)

“Manu said, ‘When the manifest body is asleep, consciousness roams around in his dreams. Like that, consciousness is separated from knowledge and the senses after death. There are both existence and non-existence.<sup>213</sup> When the water is clear, the eyes can see the image in it. In that way, when the senses are clear, knowledge can be used to see what should be known. When the water is agitated, the image cannot be seen. In that way, when the senses are agitated, knowledge cannot be used to see what should be known. Lack of intelligence leads to lack of wisdom. Lack of intelligence taints the mind. When the mind is tainted, the five which are based in the mind<sup>214</sup> are also tainted. If one is immersed in material objects, one is ignorant and not satisfied. One does not see. Though the atman is pure, not being able to see, it circles around in material objects. Because of the sins, a man’s thirst is never satisfied. The thirst is conquered only when one has destroyed the sins. The attachment to material objects has a tendency to perpetuate. The mind hankers for what one should not desire, and the supreme is not obtained. To obtain knowledge, a man must destroy his wicked deeds. When the sight is clear, one sees the atman in one’s own self. If the senses are not controlled, one is miserable. When they are restrained, one is happy. Therefore, one must use one’s atman to sever that attachment one has for objects of the senses. The mind is above the senses and the intelligence is above that. Knowledge is above intelligence and the supreme<sup>215</sup> is above knowledge. The soul originates in what is not manifest. Knowledge comes from the soul. Intelligence comes from knowledge. The mind comes from intelligence. The virtuous see that the mind is united with hearing and the other senses and sounds and the like. He who casts aside sounds and the like and everything that is manifest is freed from everything that is natural and ordinary. Having been freed, he enjoys immortality. When the sun rises, it creates a circle of rays. When it sets, it withdraws what it had itself created. In that way, the atman enters the body and spreads the rays of the senses, obtaining the qualities of the five senses. But when it sets, it restrains them. A person is repeatedly conveyed along the path of action. Though there is dharma in the soul, he grows old, having obtained the fruits of these deeds. If a person withdraws, material objects also withdraw from him. If a person has beheld the supreme, he abandons objects of desire and desire also leaves him. When the intelligence has rid itself of qualities associated with action and has immersed itself in the mind, there is destruction<sup>216</sup> and one obtains the brahman. This is not something that can be touched, heard, tasted, seen or smelt. This is beyond debate. It is only the spirit that can penetrate that supreme being. Everything created by the mind can be drawn back into it. The mind can be withdrawn into intelligence. Intelligence can be withdrawn into knowledge. Knowledge can be withdrawn into the supreme. The senses cannot ensure the mind’s success. The mind cannot understand intelligence. Intelligence cannot comprehend what is not manifest. The subtle soul can alone see.’”

## Chapter 1526(198)

“Manu said, ‘That which should be known exists in the midst of that knowledge. Know that the mind is only a quality of knowledge. When it is united with the faculties of wisdom, then intelligence is the result. When intelligence is freed from the qualities of action and is immersed in the mind, then wisdom is the result. One is engaged in the yoga of meditation and knows the brahman. If intelligence still possesses those qualities,<sup>217</sup> it circles around because of those qualities and flows down like a stream from the summit of a mountain, heading in different directions. But if one disengages from the qualities and the mind is first immersed in meditation, then one knows the brahman, like gold through a touchstone. The mind pursues the objects of the senses and clouds intelligence. Because it is obsessed with those qualities, it is incapable of seeing what is without qualities. One must close all the doors<sup>218</sup> and base oneself in the mind. Having fixed one’s mind, one can then obtain the supreme. When the qualities are extinguished, the great elements are withdrawn. In that way, when the senses are withdrawn, the intelligence circles around in the mind. When intelligence is based in the mind and circles around inside, there are no longer any qualities that the mind is engaged with. When the mind is engaged in the qualities of meditation, it can cast aside its qualities. Devoid of all the qualities, it can know what is without qualities.<sup>219</sup> There is no vijñāna that is capable of proving the existence of what is not manifest. There are no arrangements of words that can express it. How can it be understood through material objects? A person who has cleansed his atman inside can seek to approach the supreme brahman through austerities, inferences and the qualities prescribed in the sacred texts. Freeing oneself from the qualities, one can also follow him in the external path.<sup>220</sup> Because there are no natural attributes, the one who should be known cannot be known through debate. When one withdraws from the qualities, one obtains the brahman, who is devoid of qualities. The intelligence is such that it reaches towards the qualities, like a fire towards kindling. When the five senses are freed from their respective actions, the supreme brahman is also freed and transcends nature. All embodied beings are naturally influenced.<sup>221</sup> When they withdraw, they are freed, and some go to heaven. Man, nature, intelligence, senses in particular, ego and pride are created in beings. Their first creation emanated from that foremost one. The second creation resulted from sexual intercourse and is restrained by

rules.<sup>222</sup> Benefit is obtained by observing dharma. The practice of adharma leads to injury. Attachment leads to the normal course.<sup>223</sup> Detachment leads to knowledge.’’’



## Chapter 1527(199)

“Manu said, ‘When the five attributes and the five<sup>224</sup> are separated from the mind, one can see the brahman, like a gem that is strung on a thread. That thread may be made out of gold, pearls, coral, clay or silver. This is because, as a consequence of its own acts, the atman is attracted and may dwell in cows, humans, elephants, other animals, insects and worms. The body depends on the acts one has performed. In that kind of body, one must enjoy the fruits. Though the earth is sprinkled with the same juices, it follows its nature and yields different kinds of herbs. In that way, intelligence follows the atman and the consequences of earlier deeds. Desire originally comes from knowledge. Resolution first comes from desire. Action flows from resolution. Action is foundation for the fruits. Fruits thus result from action. Knowledge results in action and the atman leads to knowledge. There is knowledge that enables one to know what should be known. This knowledge is virtuous and involves the destruction of ignorance. The destruction of knowledge,<sup>225</sup> fruits, understanding and action leads to divine fruits and knowledge of what should be known. Yogis behold that great and supreme being. Those who are ignorant and only perceive the qualities in themselves do not see it. The form of water is greater than the form of the earth. Energy is greater than water. The wind is greater than energy. Space is greater than the wind. In that way, the supreme is greater than the mind. Intelligence is greater than the mind. It is said that time is greater than intelligence. The illustrious Vishnu, to whom this entire universe belongs, is greater than time. That god has no beginning, no middle and no end. He is without beginning, without middle and without an end. He is without decay. He is beyond all misery, because it is said that misery has an end. He is said to be the supreme Brahma. He is said to be the supreme refuge. Going to him, there are those who are freed from time and material objects and obtain emancipation. Everything is seen to possess qualities. However, the supreme is without qualities. The signs of withdrawal are thought of as eternal dharma. The hymns of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas have a base in the body and flow from the tip of the tongue. But these require effort for success and are also subject to destruction. The brahman cannot be obtained in this way, by relying on things that are dependent on the body. The brahman is without beginning, without middle and without end and cannot be obtained through exertion. The hymns of the Rig, Sama and Yajur Vedas are said to have a beginning. Everything with a beginning has an end. But the brahman is said to be without a beginning. Because there is no beginning and no end, it is infinite and without decay. It is without decay and is without opposite sentiments. It is beyond opposite pairs of sentiments. Mortals do not succeed in seeing or going to the supreme because of their ill fortune, the lack of methods, lack of resolution and because of their deeds. They do not attain the supreme because they are addicted to material objects, because they wish to see something else, or because their minds desire something else. There are other people who see qualities in this world. They desire those qualities and do not desire the supreme, which is without qualities. They are devoted to inferior qualities. How will they know something that has superior qualities? It is beyond qualities and form and one can attain it on the basis of inference. One can know it through the subtleties of the mind and one is incapable of describing it in words. The mind is attracted by the mind. Sight is attracted by sight. It is intelligence that cleans knowledge and knowledge cleans the mind. Through the mind, and by fixing the senses, one obtains the infinite. Accepting intelligence, the mind is enriched. A person may not be interested in the qualities. Like the wind that keeps fire apart from kindling, if he is not driven by greed, he obtains the supreme in this world. When one is disinterested in obtaining all the qualities, the mind always attains what is superior to intelligence. If one is engaged in this mode and disassociates from all the qualities, one merges into the body of the brahman. The atman of a man is not manifest. It becomes manifest through his deeds. While he is destroyed, it becomes unmanifest again. The soul does not act. It is extended by the senses and there is joy and misery. Action is performed. It obtains a body and is united with the senses and finds a refuge in the five elements. However, unless it is goaded by the supreme and undecaying one, it is inca-

pable of performing any action. No man on earth will see its end, but knows that there will be an end. He is agitated and is conveyed to the supreme, like a boat whirled by winds on the ocean. The sun obtains its qualities by spreading its circle of rays. But when it withdraws them, it is without qualities. In that way, in this world, a sage can give up all attachments and enter into the undecaying brahman, devoid of all qualities. It is without beginning. It is the supreme refuge for virtuous people. This is the undecaying Svayambhu. Everything originates in him and everything ends in him. He is eternal and the immortal and undecaying objective. A person who reflects on this obtains tranquility and immortality.’”

*Section 86 will conclude in Volume 9.*

*Chapter 1681(353): 9 shlokas*

*Moksha means liberation, as opposed to the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama.*

## Chapter 1528(200)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O best among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the truth about Pundarikaksha, Achyuta, the creator who himself has not been created, Vishnu, from whom all beings originate and into whom they all return, Narayana, Hrishiksha, the unvanquished Govinda, Keshava.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I have heard the truth about this from Jamadagni’s son, Rama,<sup>1</sup> when he spoke about it, from *devarshi* Narada and from Krishna Dvaipayana.<sup>2</sup> O son! Asita-Devala,<sup>3</sup> the immensely ascetic Valmiki and Markandeya have spoken about the extraordinarily great Govinda. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Keshava is the illustrious almighty lord. He is Purusha and pervades everything. The lord is heard of in many ways. O mightyarmed one! O Yudhishtira! He is the wielder of the *sharnga* bow.<sup>4</sup> Learned brahmanas in the world have spoken about his greatness. Listen to this. O Indra among men! People who know about the ancient accounts speak about this. Govinda’s qualities are infinite and I will recount them to you. He is the great being. He is in all beings. Purushottama is great in his soul. He created wind, energy, water, space and the earth. The lord, the god of all beings, looked at the earth. The great-souled Purushottama proceeded to lie down on the water. The first among all the beings was full of energy and lay down on that supreme bed and created attraction.<sup>5</sup> We have heard that the soul of all beings created this refuge of all beings through his mental powers and this sustains both the past and the future. O mighty-armed one! After that had been created, a celestial lotus sprouted from the great-souled one’s navel and it had the radiance of the sun. O son! The illustrious god Brahma, the grandfather of all beings, was created from that lotus and the directions shone with his radiance. O mighty-armed one! When that great-souled one manifested himself, there was a great asura named Madhu, who had earlier been born from darkness. He was fierce. He was fierce in his deeds and his resolution was fierce.<sup>6</sup> To ensure Brahma’s welfare, Purushottama slew him. O son! Because of this act of slaying, all the gods, *danavas* and humans came to call that bull among all the Satvatas by the name of Madhusudana.<sup>7</sup>

“Through his mental powers, Brahma created seven sons, Daksha and the others—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu.<sup>8</sup> O son! Through his mental powers, Marichi created his first son, Kashyapa. He was like Brahma in his energy. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Even before Marichi had been created, from his toe, Brahma created the Prajapati named Daksha.<sup>9</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thirteen daughters were first born to him. The eldest of Prajapati’s daughters was Diti. O son! Marichi’s son, Kashyapa, knew about all forms of dharma, was immensely illustrious and auspicious in his deeds. He became a husband to all of them. Daksha Prajapati, the immensely fortunate one, who knew about dharma, then had ten other daughters and gave them to Dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharma’s sons were the Vasus, the infinitely energetic Rudras, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas and the Maruts. He<sup>10</sup> then had twenty-seven younger daughters. The immensely fortunate Soma<sup>11</sup> became a husband to all of them. The others<sup>12</sup> gave birth to *gandharvas*,<sup>13</sup> horses, birds, cattle, *kimpurushas*,<sup>14</sup> fish, plants and trees. Aditi gave birth to the Adityas, the immensely strong ones who were foremost among the gods. The lord Vishnu, also known as Govinda, was born among them as a dwarf.<sup>15</sup> Through his valour, the prosperity of the gods increased and the danavas were vanquished. Diti’s offspring were the *asuras*.<sup>16</sup> Danu gave birth to danavas and Viprachitti was foremost among them. Diti gave birth to all the great-spirited asuras.

“Madhusudana also created day and night, the proper reckoning of time, forenoon and afternoon. Using his intelligence, he created clouds from the water and mobile and immobile objects. The immensely energetic one created the earth and its directions. O Yudhishtira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The mighty-armed lord Krishna, Keshava, then again created one hundred brahmanas from his mouth, one hundred kshatriyas from his arms, one hundred vaishyas from his thighs and one hundred shudras from his feet. The immensely illustrious one thus created the four varnas. The lord made Dhata the supervisor of all beings.<sup>17</sup> In those days, men could live for as long as they wished to and there was no fear on account of Yama. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At that time, offspring were generated from resolution alone and there was no need to resort to the dharma of sexual intercourse. O lord of men! During the period of *treta yuga* too, offspring resulted from resolution and there was no need for the

dharma of sexual intercourse.<sup>18</sup> O king! During dvapara, offspring were generated through the dharma of sexual intercourse. O king! In kali yuga, people began to live in pairs. O son! I have told you about the lord of all beings, the one who rules himself. O Kounteya! I will now tell you about the ones who cannot be controlled—all those who are born in the southern regions, the Talavaras, the Andhrakas, the Utsas, the Pulindas, the Shabaras, the Chuchupas and the Mandapas. I will also recount to you those born in the northern regions, the Younas, the Kambojas, the Gandharas, the Kiratas and the Barbaras. O son! These are the performers of wicked deeds and roam around on earth. O lord of men! They follow the dharma of dogs, crows, ravens and vultures. O son! They did not roam around on earth during krita yuga. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such people originated during treta yuga. When that extremely terrible intervening period that comes at the end of a yuga arrived,<sup>19</sup> the kings approached each other and began to fight. O best of the Kuru lineage! In this way, the great-souled one created everything. Devarshi Narada has spoken about the god as the creator of all the worlds. O lord of men! O mighty-armed one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Narada thinks that Krishna is supreme and eternal. This is the nature of Keshava, for whom, truth is his valour. Pundarikaksha is not only a man. He is inconceivable.”

## Chapter 1529(201)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Who were the first Prajapatis? Who are the immensely fortunate rishis and what directions do they preside over?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O best among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about what you have asked. Listen to the Prajapatis and the directions that each of them was said to preside over. There was the single, illustrious, original and eternal Svayambhu Brahma. The great-souled Svayambhu Brahma had seven sons—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and the immensely illustrious Vasishtha, who was like Svayambhu himself. The Puranas refer to them as the seven brahmanas. These were the first. I will now tell you about all the other Prajapatis. In Atri’s lineage was born the illustrious, eternal and ancient Barhi, descended from Brahma himself. The ten Prachetas were descended from him and those ten only had a single son—the Prajapati named Daksha. In this world, Daksha is known by both the names. Marichi’s son, Kashyapa, is also known by two names. Some learned ones know him as Arishtanemi.<sup>20</sup> The handsome and valiant Bhrouma was born to Angiras. He performed worship for one thousand divine yugas. O lord! The illustrious Aryama and others were his sons. They are famous as ones who laid down ordinances and created beings. O one without decay! Shashabindu<sup>21</sup> had ten thousand wives. Through each of them, he had one thousand sons. In this way, the great-souled one had one million sons. These sons did not allow anyone else to be a Prajapati. The ancient brahmanas addressed Shashabindu’s offspring by this name and from that great lineage of Prajapatis originated the Vrishni lineage. I have told you about the illustrious Prajapatis.

“I will now tell you about the gods who are the rulers of the three worlds—Bhaga, Amsha, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Savita, Dhata, the immensely strong Vivasvat, Pusha, Tvashta, Indra and Vishnu is said to be the twelfth. These twelve Adityas were descended from Kashyapa. Nasatya and Dasra are known as the two Ashvins. They were the sons of Martanda, the eighth of the Prajapatis.<sup>22</sup> Tvashta had handsome and immensely illustrious sons—Vishvarupa, Aja-Ekapada, Ahi, Budha, Virupaksha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Tryambaka as the lord of the gods, Savitra, Jayanta and the unvanquished Pinaki. The immensely illustrious eight Vasus have already been mentioned earlier. At the time of Prajapati Manu, these were the different kinds of gods. At first, they were known as both gods and ancestors. Among the Siddhas and the Sadhyas, depending on conduct and beauty, there were different types. The Ribhus and Maruts are categories of gods. In this way, the Vishvadevas and the Ashvins are revered. The Adityas are kshatriyas and the Maruts are vaishyas. The Ashvins are held to be shudras and performed fierce austerities. The gods descended from Angiras have certainly been determined to be brahmanas. I have thus recounted the four varnas among all the gods. If a person gets up in the morning and recites the names of the gods, he is freed from all sins, regardless of whether they have been committed by him or by others.<sup>23</sup> Yavakriti, Raibhya, Arvvasu, Paravasu, Oushija, Kakshivat and Bala were the sons of Angiras. O son! These, Kanva, the son of rishi Medhatithi, Barhishada and the *saptarshis*<sup>24</sup> who created the three worlds are in the east. Unmucha, Vimucha, the valiant Svastyatreya, Pramucha, Idhmavaha, the illustrious Dridavrata and Agastya, the son of Mitra-Varuna—

these brahmana rishis always resort to the southern direction. Rushadgu, Kavasha, Dhoumya, the valiant Parivvyadha, the *maharshis* known as Ekata, Dvita and Trita and Atri's son, the illustrious lord Sarasvata—these nine great-souled ones resort to the western direction. Atreya, Vasishtha, the great rishi Kashyapa, Goutama, Bharadvaja, Koushika Vishvamitra and Jamadagni, the great-souled and illustrious son of Richika—these seven resort to the northern direction. I have recounted to you the fiercely engertic ones in all the directions. These great-souled ones are the creators of beings and are witnesses. In this way, these great-souled ones are established in each of the directions. If one recites their names, one is freed from all sins. If a person seeks refuge in a direction that they pre-side over, he is freed from all sins and safely returns home.”

## Chapter 1530(202)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who has the valour of truth in battle! I wish to hear everything about lord Krishna, who is without decay. He has performed extremely great and energetic deeds in ancient times. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Accurately tell me everything about them. Why did Hari assume the form of an inferior species? What tasks did he accomplish? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Earlier, I went out on a hunt and went to Markandeya’s hermitage. There I saw many hermits seated, in their thousands. They honoured me by offering me *madhuparka*.<sup>25</sup> Accepting that, I worshipped and honoured the rishis back in return. What I will recount was stated by maharshi Kashyapa there. It is divine and delights the mind. Listen attentively. In ancient times, the foremost danavas were full of anger and avarice. There were also hundreds of giant asuras, intoxicated by their strength, Naraka and the others. There were many other danavas too, invincible in battle. They could not tolerate the supreme prosperity of the gods. The gods and devashis were oppressed by the danavas. O king! They could not find any peace and fled in different directions. The residents of heaven saw that the earth was in a miserable state. It was full of danavas who were terrible in form and were extremely strong. Afflicted by the load of that burden, it was miserable and submerged.<sup>26</sup> The Adityas were terrified. They went to Brahma and said, ‘O Brahma! How will we continue to bear the depredations of the danavas?’ Svayambhu replied, ‘I have already ordained what needs to be done. They are powerful and intoxicated because of boons. Those stupid ones do not know that Vishnu, whose form cannot be seen, has assumed the form of a boar.<sup>27</sup> That god cannot be assailed, even by all the immortals together. He will swiftly go to the spot where those worst among danavas are. Thousands of those terrible ones reside inside the bowels of the earth. He will pacify them all.’ Hearing this, the supreme ones among the gods were delighted. The immensely energetic Vishnu assumed the form of a boar. He penetrated the nether regions and advanced against Diti’s offspring. On seeing that superhuman being, all the daityas united. Goaded by destiny, all of them advanced violently and encircled him. From every direction, they rushed against the boar and seized it. From every direction, they angrily tugged at the boar. The Indras among the danavas were gigantic in form. They were immensely valorous and full of strength. O lord! But they were not able to do anything at all. Those Indras among the danavas were then terrified and overcome by fear. Though there were thousands of them, they were full of doubt in their minds. The god of the gods is the soul of yoga and the charioteer of yoga. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The illustrious one resorted to yoga. He emitted a mighty roar and agitated those daityas and danavas. The worlds and all the ten directions seemed to resound with these roars. At the sounds of those roars, all the worlds were agitated. The directions, and all the gods, with Shakra<sup>28</sup> at the forefront, were frightened. The entire universe was severely afflicted and became immobile. Mobile and immobile objects were confused by that roar. All the danavas were terrified by that noise. They lost their lives and fell down, confused by Vishnu’s energy. Those who hated the thirty gods sought refuge in *rasatala*.<sup>29</sup> But the boar tore into them with his hooves and mangled their flesh, fat and bones. Because of that great roar, he came to be known as Sanatana.<sup>30</sup> He is Padmanabha,<sup>31</sup> the great yogi, the preceptor of all beings and the king of all beings. All the large number of gods went to the grandfather and asked, ‘O lord! O god! Who is roaring like this? We cannot understand this. Who is this? Whom does this roar belong to? It has paralysed the universe.’ At that time, Vishnu was in his form of a boar and the maharshis praised the great god. The grandfather replied, ‘He has slain the lords among the danavas. He is great in his form and great in his strength. This god is the

great yogi. He is the soul of all beings and the creator of all beings. He is the yogi who is the lord of all beings. He is the womb. He is the atman. Be steady. He is Krishna, the destroyer of all sins. He is the immensely radiant one and has accomplished a task that others would have found impossible to undertake. He has now returned to his own atman. He is immensely fortunate and immensely radiant. He is Padmanabha, the great yogi. He is the soul of all beings and the creator of all beings. O supreme among the gods! You should not be tormented. Nor should you be frightened, or grieve. He is the one who ordains. He is the creator. He is time, the destroyer of everything. He is the one who holds up the worlds. He is the great-souled one who emitted the roar. He is the immensely fortunate one, revered by the worlds. He is Achyuta Pundarikaksha,<sup>32</sup> the origin of all beings.”“

## Chapter 1531(203)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O father!<sup>33</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Tell me about the supreme yoga of moksha. O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to know the truth about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation on moksha between a preceptor and a disciple. There was a supreme brahmana rishi who was a preceptor. His disciple was extremely intelligent and desirous of welfare. While the preceptor was seated, the disciple controlled himself and touched his feet. With hands joined in salutation, he said, ‘O illustrious one! I have a great doubt in my mind. If you are satisfied with my worship, you should explain this. Where have I come from? Where have you come from? What happens thereafter? Tell me accurately. O supreme among brahmanas! If all beings are the same and if their driving force is the same, why are their origin and destruction so different from each other? There are also detailed words in the Vedas about different kinds of people.<sup>34</sup> You know the truth about this and you should explain all this to me.’

“The preceptor said, ‘O disciple! O immensely wise one! Listen to the supreme mystery about the brahman, described in the sacred texts. This is *adhyatma* and represents wealth for all beings. Vasudeva is everything in the universe. He is the mouth of the brahman. He is truthfulness, generosity, sacrifices, renunciation, self-control and uprightness. He is the eternal Purusha. Those who know the Vedas know him as Vishnu. He is the cause of creation and destruction. He is the eternal brahman, who is not manifest. That brahman was born in the Vrishni lineage. Listen to the history. Brahmanas should hear this from brahmanas and kings from kshatriyas. This is about the greatness of the god of the gods, the infinitely energetic Vishnu. You should hear about the supreme Varshneya, since that will ensure your welfare. He is the wheel of time. He is without beginning and without end. His signs are both existence and non-existence. He is the one who makes all beings in the three worlds revolve on the wheel. He is Akshara.<sup>35</sup> He is Avyakta.<sup>36</sup> He is Amrita.<sup>37</sup> He is the eternal brahman. Keshava is spoken of as a tiger among men and a bull among men. The supreme and undecaying one created the ancestors, the gods, the rishis, the *yakshas*,<sup>38</sup> the danavas, the serpents, the asuras and human beings. In that way, the lord created the sacred texts of the Vedas and the eternal dharma of the worlds. Having destroyed everything, at the beginning of a new yuga, he creates nature.<sup>39</sup> As seasons with their many different signs and forms progressively come into being, these are also seen at the end of Brahma’s night. Through the progress of time, different yugas come into being. For the advance of the worlds, different kinds of knowledge are also decreed. At the end of a yuga, the Vedas and the histories also disappear. However, having obtained Svayambhu’s prior permission, the maharshis get them back through their austerities. The illustrious Brihaspati knew about the Vedas and the Vedangas.<sup>40</sup> For the sake of the universe and for the welfare of the universe, Bhargava obtained the sacred texts about good policy.<sup>41</sup> Narada accepted the knowledge about gandharva<sup>42</sup> and Bharadvaja about bows.<sup>43</sup> Gargya learnt about the conduct of the devarshis and Krishnatreya about medicine. There were many others who were learned and spoke about nyaya,<sup>44</sup> tantra, reasoning and the sacred texts. Let him<sup>45</sup> be worshipped through good conduct.’ “Neither the gods nor the rishis were capable of comprehending the supreme brahman. The illustrious lord, Dhata Narayana, was the only one who comprehended him. From Narayana, the large numbers of rishis, the foremost among the gods and the asuras and the ancient rajarshis got to know about the supreme one, who is the medication for all misery. With the appropriate cause, prakriti always brings forth, urged by the sentiments of *purusha*, and the entire universe begins to whirl around.<sup>46</sup> This is like thousands of lamps being lit from another lamp. In that way, prakriti creates many other



things, but is not exhausted. Though it is not manifest, it creates intelligence and ego, which lead to acts. Space results from ego and wind results from space. Energy results from wind. Water results from energy and the earth is created from water. These are the eight foundations of prakriti and the universe is established on these.<sup>47</sup> The five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five objects of the senses and the mind, as the sixteenth, result from transformations of these. The ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose are the five senses. The feet, the anus, the genitals, the mouth and the hands are the five organs of action. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell are what are to be known and pervade the consciousness, the mind going everywhere. It<sup>48</sup> knows taste through the tongue and is said to become words. United with the senses, the mind is engaged in everything. In their various forms, these sixteen should be known as divinities. They bring about knowledge within the body and are worshipped by those who know about worshipping. The tongue represents the qualities of water, smell the qualities of the earth, hearing the qualities of sound<sup>49</sup> and touch the qualities of the wind. This is always known to be the case with all beings. It is said that the mind is the quality of existence. Existence arises from that which is not manifest. Those who are intelligent know that it<sup>50</sup> is there in all beings, as the soul of beings. Its attributes are borne by the entire universe, by mobile and immobile objects. The blazing radiance of that god is said to be the supreme objective. This sacred city with nine gates<sup>51</sup> possesses all these characteristics. The great atman pervades and lies down inside and is known as purusha. It is without decay. It is immortal. It knows about what is manifest and also about what is not manifest. It is pervasive, with qualities, and subtle. It is the refuge of all beings and their qualities. A lamp shows whether a person is small or large. In that way, in all creatures, one can know the purusha through the knowledge of the atman. It is the one who knows what is to be known. It is the one who hears and sees. It is the reason behind this body. It is the doer of all the deeds. There is fire in wood, but it cannot be seen if the wood is cut. In that way, the atman is inside the body, but it can only be seen through yoga. The river has water and there are rays attached to the sun. In that way, it<sup>52</sup> goes where the body goes. Where there is the body, the soul is there. When a person dreams, the atman and the five senses leave the body. Like that, when the body is cast aside,<sup>53</sup> the atman departs and obtains another. It is bound down by its earlier acts and obtains the consequences of those acts. The powerful force of its own deeds conveys it elsewhere. Having left one body, it obtains another body and another one after that. I will now tell you about how beings naturally follow their own acts.”

## Chapter 1532(204)

“The preceptor said, ‘All mobile and immobile beings belong to four categories. They are not manifest, alive, manifest and dead. Know that the mind exists in the atman, which is not manifest. It<sup>54</sup> is not manifest and it is destroyed. A giant tree may be hidden inside the small blossom of an *ashvattha* flower. It is seen only when it has emerged. Like that, the manifest is created from what is not manifest. A piece of iron has no consciousness, but advances towards a lodestone. Some reasons and attributes are natural. But others are not like that.<sup>55</sup> Having become manifest, those attributes provide reasons and objectives to the doer. However, there are also unconscious attributes that provide reasons for the consciousness to be collected.<sup>56</sup> The earth, the sky, heaven, beings, the rishis, the gods, the asuras and nothing else existed, with the exception of the soul. It conveys everything. It goes everywhere. It is the cause behind the mind, which then possesses attributes. It has been said that reasons and characteristics are based on ignorant deeds. Because of being united with those reasons, it is made to engage in deeds again and the great wheel continues to revolve, without beginning and without end. That which is not manifest is the nave, while the manifest transformations represent the circumference. As the smooth axles revolve, the kshetrajna is certainly established in that wheel.<sup>57</sup> Those who extract oil crush sesamum seed in presses. Like that, because of the sentiments of desire and ignorance, the entire universe is crushed in that wheel. Having been seized by ego, the being performs acts. In the combination of acts and reasons, further reasons are generated.<sup>58</sup> There are no reasons behind acts. Nor are acts associated with reasons. In what is thought to be deeds and effects, it is time which is actually the doer. But prakriti is united with the reasons and the transformations work against each other. They transgress each other. However, the purusha is always established over them. Like dust following the wind, dust, darkness, impure sentiments and powerful reasons follow the kshetrajna. But they do not touch or effect the great-



souled one. It is like the wind, which bears dust, but is itself without dust. Just as the two<sup>59</sup> are different, a learned person knows the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna. If one practises, one does not have to go to prakriti again.’<sup>60</sup>

“‘The illustrious rishi thus severed the doubt that had arisen. Having considered this view, which has all the signs of accomplishment, the seeds<sup>61</sup> must be burnt, so that they do not sprout again. If they are burnt through knowledge, the atman is not tied down to hardships again.’”

## Chapter 1533(205)

“‘The preceptor said, ‘Those who exhibit signs of being engaged in action think that they are obtaining dharma through this. But others who are devoted to knowledge find no delight in them. Those who know about the Vedas and base themselves on what the Vedas have said are extremely rare. In this case, those who are learned, desire to follow the superior path.<sup>62</sup> Those who are of virtuous conduct practise this praiseworthy behaviour. These intelligent ones advance towards the supreme objective. Having obtained a body, everyone is seized by delusion. Such a person is overcome by desire and anger and *rajas* and *tamas*.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, one should not perform impure acts and should desire disassociation from the body. Having driven deeds into a hole, one obtains the auspicious worlds. When gold is mixed with iron, it becomes impure and does not shine. In that way, if mixed with the impure and the astringent,<sup>64</sup> knowledge no longer shines. Because of confusion, desire and avarice, if one follows *adharma*, one transgresses the path of dharma and is continuously destroyed. Therefore, one must not have attachment towards sound and the others<sup>65</sup> and material objects. Anger, delight and misery feed on each other. The five elements are in the body and so are *sattva*,<sup>66</sup> *rajas* and *tamas*. Who will one censure? Who will one praise? What will one say? Foolish people follow attachment towards things like touch, form and the others. Because of their ignorance, they do not realize that the bodies only represent earthy qualities. A house made of earth is plastered with earth. Like that, this body is made out of earth and is attached to earth.<sup>67</sup> Honey, oil, milk, butter, meat, salt, molasses, grain, fruits and roots are modifications of earth, mixed with water. There are those who resort to the wilderness. They are not interested in roaming around with other men. They obtain food with difficulty and taste it only for remaining alive. That is the way one should dwell in this world, which is also a wilderness. One must make efforts and take food only for the journey, like medicine by a patient.<sup>68</sup> Using truth, purity, uprightness, renunciation, fame, valour, forgiveness, fortitude, intelligence, the mind and austerities, one must search out the proper nature of everything, in due order. One must desire tranquility and not be distressed in the soul. One must restrain the senses. In their ignorance, beings are confused by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and are severely whirled around on the wheel. Therefore, one must properly examine all the sins that arise from ignorance. One must always cast aside the power of ignorance and ego. The great elements, the senses, the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and the three worlds and their lord are all established in the ego.<sup>69</sup> Time always shows afflicted people its qualities. In that way, know that, in all beings, it is the ego that makes beings embark on action. Know that *tamas* is responsible for confusion. It represents darkness and results from ignorance. All joys and sorrows are attached to the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Listen to them. Lack of confusion, delight, affection, lack of doubt, fortitude and memory—know that these are the virtuous qualities associated with *sattva*. Desire, anger, distraction, avarice, confusion, fear, exhaustion, despondency, sorrow, excessive pride, insolence, lack of nobility—without any distress, the severity or lack of severity of these faults must be examined. Each of these must always be tested, to the extent that they exist in the atman.’

“‘The disciple asked, ‘To loosen the bonds,<sup>70</sup> which sins do intelligent people banish from their minds? Like the fruits of confusion, which are the ones that keep on recurring? Using reasoning and intellect, which are the strong and weak faults an intelligent person should think about? O lord! Tell me about all this and instruct knowledge to me.’

“‘The preceptor replied, ‘A person who is pure in his soul severs the sins from their roots and is freed. An axe made of steel can destroy an object made of steel. That is the way a person who has cleansed his soul easily destroys the sins associated with *rajas*. In all bodies with the atman, *rajas*, *tamas* and those which give rise to pure

deeds<sup>71</sup> are like seeds. Therefore, the atman in the body must discard rajas and tamas. Having been freed from rajas and tamas, the sattva will make it clean. There are those who say that sacrifices and rites, when performed with mantras, are instruments in following pure dharma. However, if one performs acts of dharma driven by rajas, or if one performs them with a desire for artha, all these amount to a serving of kama. When tamas is united with avarice, one serves anger and one becomes full of violence, addicted to pleasure, lassitude and sleep. However, one who is based in sattva is virtuous. He sees, and resorts to, only what is virtuous. Such a being is sparkling, handsome, pure and full of learning.”“

## Chapter 1534(206)

““The preceptor said, ‘O bull among men! Delusion is brought about by rajas. Anger, avarice, fear and insolence—these are brought about by tamas. Purity<sup>72</sup> leads to the supreme *paramatman*, the god who is without decay and without change. This is Vishnu, who is not manifest, but pervades everything. He is the supreme god. It is because of his skilful maya that the bodies of men are dislodged from knowledge and the beneficial. With their knowledge confounded, they are led towards desire. Desire leads to anger, avarice and delusion in men and they perform deeds full of pride, insolence, ego and selfishness. From deeds, bonds of attachment arise and that attachment then leads to sorrow. Because these are undertaken, there is happiness and unhappiness and one is liable to birth and death. Since one is born from the mixture of semen and blood, one resides in the womb and that abode is full of excrement, urine, moisture and blood. Overcome by thirst, the being is flooded by these. One must know that women are the strands through which this cycle<sup>73</sup> is borne along. They are naturally the kshetra and men possess the qualities of kshetrajna. Therefore, learned men in particular must not follow young women. They are sorceresses,<sup>74</sup> terrible in form, and confuse those who are not learned. They are immersed in rajas and are the eternal embodiment of the senses. It is because of attraction for them that semen is created and beings are born. There are worms that get attached to one’s body. One knows that these are not really part of one’s body and flings them away. In that way, one should know that the offspring are also not really part of one’s body and should cast them aside, like worms. Beings are born from semen, juices and affection, determined naturally by the acts that they have performed earlier. An intelligent person ignores them. Rajas is established in tamas and sattva also bases itself on tamas.<sup>75</sup> Know that knowledge is based on ignorance and that there are signs of ego. There is a seed in beings and that seed is known as the *jiva* of consciousness.<sup>76</sup> Because of deeds performed and because of time, it is whirled around in this cycle. It takes pleasure in this body, like the mind does in a dream. Because there are qualities of a womb in those deeds, the living being obtains a womb. The seeds of deeds performed goad the senses in beings.<sup>77</sup> Ego, attachment and consciousness are generated. The attachment to sound leads to the atman obtaining ears. Because of the attachment to form, the eyes result and desire for scent leads to the nose. There is touch and the five kinds of wind, *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*, which lead to the sustaining of the body. The limbs are created because of attachment and the brahman<sup>78</sup> is engaged in action. In the body and in the mind, in the beginning, the middle and the end, there is sorrow and nothing but grief. Know that misery is inherent in birth and ego enhances it. It can be restrained through renunciation and a person who knows about renunciation is freed. Both the creation and the destruction of the senses result from rajas. Using the sight obtained from the sacred texts, a learned person must act so as to test them. Even if one accomplishes the objective of satisfying the senses, a person who knows can use the senses of knowledge to determine the reasons. Such a being does not have to accept a body again.”“

## Chapter 1535(207)

““The preceptor said, ‘I will now tell you about the means one can use, if one uses the sight obtained from the sacred texts. Using that knowledge, a wise person can attain the supreme objective. Among all beings, hu-

mans are said to be the best, brahmanas among humans and brahmanas who know the mantras among brahmanas. Brahmanas who know the truth about the Vedas can determine the purpose and progress of everything. They know everything and can see everything. They are special among all beings. A blind man who is travelling alone experiences hardships. It is like that for people devoid of knowledge. Therefore, those with knowledge are known to be superior. Thus, those who are blind about dharma, but yet desire to follow dharma, go by the sacred texts. But they only accomplish limited objectives and I will soon describe those qualities. Purity in words, body and mind, forgiveness, truthfulness, fortitude, learning—among all kinds of dharma, these are described as the qualities of those who know about dharma. The form of the brahman is said to be there in *brahmacharya*. This is the supreme way for all beings and takes one towards the supreme objective. This means the avoidance of any association with the genital organ.<sup>79</sup> It also means the avoidance of touch by the body, hearing by the ears, sight by the eyes and taste by the tongue. All these are to be cast aside. Using the intelligence, one follows the unblemished conduct of brahmacharya. A person who follows this conduct in its entirety obtains Brahma's world. A person who follows it in an average way obtains the world of the gods. A person who resorts to such conduct in an inferior kind of way is born learned, as a foremost one among the brahmanas. It is extremely difficult to follow the methods of brahmacharya. Listen to this. A brahmana who engages in this must control his mind. He must not speak to women, nor hear them. He must not look at them when they are naked. Sometimes, when one looks at them, passion arises in those who are weak. If there is attraction, one must follow a vow of hardship,<sup>80</sup> enter the water and spend three days there. If this happens when one is asleep, one must mentally recite *aghamarshana* thrice.<sup>81</sup> One must burn down the sins of passion that are inside. Using knowledge, the discriminating person controls his mind. Excrement and filth exist in ducts that are inside the body. Like that, know that the atman is also bound down inside the body. There are arteries inside the human body, with bile, phlegm, blood, skin, flesh, bones, marrow and nets of veins. These bear juices. Know that there are ten arteries that convey the qualities of the five senses.<sup>82</sup> From those arteries, thousands of others emanate out and those are subtler in form. The veins are like rivers that convey juices to the ocean of the body. In the midst, attached to the heart, there is a vein known as *manovaha*. When men think of it, it collects semen from all parts of the body and releases it. There are veins that follow it and extend to every part of the body. They also convey the quality of energy and terminate at the eyes. There is butter hidden inside milk and that is churned up through churning rods. Like that, when there is resolution, churning rods churn out semen from the body. Even when one is asleep, passion can lead to resolution in the mind. The semen is touched by manovaha and is released from the body. The illustrious maharshi Atri knows about the generation of semen. There are three seeds, Indra is the associated divinity and this is spoken of as indriya.<sup>83</sup> Know that the progress of the semen is the reason behind an admixture of species. Detachment can burn these sins and such men do not have to take up a body again. When it is the time to die and give up the functions of the body, if a person pacifies the qualities<sup>84</sup> and uses his mind to draw them into manovaha, he is freed.<sup>85</sup> The mind then obtains knowledge and everything proceeds from the mind. Such great-souled persons become successful and divine and blaze like stellar bodies. Therefore, one must undertake unblemished deeds. One must sever rajas and tamas and ascend upwards. The knowledge one has obtained when one is young becomes weak with old age. However, when one's intelligence matures with age, one can regain it through one's mental strength. But this is an extremely difficult path to follow and involves transcending the bonds of qualities. However, if one sees the sins, one can transcend them and obtain immortality.”

## Chapter 1536(208)

“The preceptor said, ‘Beings come to a bad end because they are lazy and addicted to the objects of the senses. However, not being attached to these, great-souled ones attain the supreme objective. Birth, death, old age, misery, disease and mental anguish—seeing that the world is always overwhelmed by these, an intelligent person seeks to bring about his emancipation. He must be pure and without ego in his words, mind and body. He must be tranquil, learned and a mendicant who is indifferent. He will then roam around happily. However, if there is attachment in his mind because of compassion towards beings, he must ignore this, knowing that everything in this

universe is because of the fruits of earlier deeds. Whether good or bad deeds have been committed earlier, those results must be borne. In words, intelligence and action—one must perform auspicious deeds. Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, uprightness towards all beings, forgiveness and lack of distraction—a person who follows this is happy. This is supreme dharma and brings joy to all beings. Know that this eliminates all misery. A person who knows the truth about this is happy. One must use one's intelligence to control one's mind and sustain all beings. One must not desire to injure them and one must not allow one's thoughts to bind one down. One should direct one's words and mind towards such action. He should always speak virtuous words, looking towards the subtleties of dharma, and speak words that do not censure, but are truthful and do not cause injury. Evil results from harsh and violent words which are cruel and condemning, as it does from excessive speech. One's consciousness is then distracted. Words lead to attachment. If one is detached, that should be reflected in words too. One should avoid *tamas* in intelligence, mind and deeds. If a person resorts to action because of *rajas*, he will reap the consequences. He will obtain misery in this world and hell thereafter. Therefore, one must exhibit patience in one's mind, words and body and act accordingly. Bandits who are carrying loads of sheep always opt for directions that are adverse.<sup>86</sup> Know that ignorant people in the world are like that. If the bandits wish to follow desirable directions, they have to fling aside their burdens. Like that, to obtain happiness, one has to cast aside acts based on *rajas* and *tamas*. Such a person is not suspicious. He doesn't desire anything. He has freed himself from possessions. He lives alone. He has attained all his desires. He is an ascetic. He is in control of his senses. He has burnt his hardships through knowledge. He has controlled his *atman*. Having withdrawn his mind, he obtains the supreme. There is no doubt that a patient man who has cleansed his soul must control his intelligence. The mind must be controlled with intelligence and desire for objects controlled with the mind. When the senses have been restrained and the mind is under subjugation, the god manifests himself and one cheerfully advances towards that lord. When the mind has been controlled, Brahma manifests himself. One must not engage in yoga and tantra, in any form at all. Instead, one must act so that one's conduct is permeated by the warp of that tantra.<sup>87</sup> One should seek to sustain oneself on broken bits of grain, seeds from which oil has been extracted, inferior kinds of grain,<sup>88</sup> vegetables, barley, coarsely ground meal, roots and fruit that have been obtained through begging. Depending on the time and the place, a virtuous person will be restrained in his diet. Having examined it, he will follow the appropriate conduct. This is like gradually kindling a fire. One must gently use the kindling of knowledge and the sun of knowledge will manifest itself. Ignorance is actually based on knowledge and the three worlds are based on that.<sup>89</sup> *Jnana* follows *vijnana*<sup>90</sup> and destroys the ignorance. One does not know the eternal because they seem to be separate.<sup>91</sup> A person who knows about renunciation is devoid of attachment and is freed. Having overcome age, old age and death, he wins the eternal brahman. He obtains immortality, the Akshara who is without change.”

## Chapter 1537(209)

““The preceptor said, ‘One must always desire to follow unblemished brahmacharya. Considering the sins that arise from dreaming, one must wholeheartedly try to give up sleep.<sup>92</sup> In sleep, the embodied being is overcome by *rajas* and *tamas*. Having lost its memory, it wanders around outside the body. Practising knowledge and thereafter enquiring about objectives, one must remain awake. Concentrating on *vijnana*, one must always remain awake at night. On this, there are feelings whereby one thinks about material objects during dreams. While the senses are suspended, the being behaves as if it still possesses a body. It has been said that Hari, the lord of yoga, knows how this occurs. The maharshis have said that what he has described is the truth. The learned say that when the senses are exhausted, everyone sees dreams. The mind has not been exhausted and it is said that is the reason. The mind is addicted to action and resolution is awake. That is the reason mental desire for prosperity surfaces in the mind during dreams. In this cycle, there are innumerable desires a being faces.<sup>93</sup> They may seem to have disappeared from the mind, but the supreme being inside knows them all. The qualities of those deeds become known and present themselves.<sup>94</sup> They affect the minds of beings and influence them. Those qualities of *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas* present themselves. This is even if one has engaged in virtuous deeds that yield infinite fruits. The ignorant see images that excite wind, bile and phlegm. It has been said that sentiments of *rajas* and *tamas* are difficult to cast

aside. Even when one's senses are tranquil, there are resolutions in the mind. In the course of dreams, the mind perceives these through its sight. The mind is pervasive and unrestrained in all beings. The mind is based in the body. The door that is the mind does disappear.<sup>95</sup> Everything that exists and does not exist becomes manifest in that state of sleep. But the learned person becomes acquainted with the quality of adhyatma,<sup>96</sup> which is inside all beings. At that time, the mind only has the resolution to be attached to the qualities of the supreme god and objective. Through the powers of his own atman, he knows everything and knows himself to be divinity. He is engaged in austerities. He is as radiant as the sun and is beyond darkness. Because of the austerities, the being becomes like Maheshvara and like the prakriti of the three worlds. These are the kinds of austerities the gods engaged in. The asuras represented tamas and destroyed those austerities. This is what was respectively protected by the gods and the asuras. This is said to be the signs of ignorance.<sup>97</sup> Know that the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas also characterize the gods and the asuras. Know that sattva is the quality of the gods and that the other two<sup>98</sup> represent the qualities of the asuras. Know that Brahma is beyond all this. He is immortal, radiant and Akshara. Those who are learned and have cleansed their souls go to that supreme objective. With the sight of knowledge, one is capable of recounting reasons about this. It is only through withdrawal that one is capable of knowing the brahman, which is not manifest.”

## Chapter 1538(210)

“The preceptor said, ‘A person who does not know about those four things does not know supreme dharma.’<sup>99</sup> The supreme rishi obtained the manifest, and that which is not manifest, as *tattvam*.<sup>100</sup> That which is manifest is in the jaws of death. Know that which is not manifest is the immortal objective. The rishi Narayana has spoken about the signs of inclination.<sup>101</sup> Everything in the three worlds, the mobile and the immobile, is established on this. The traits of the dharma of renunciation<sup>102</sup> are that this leads to the eternal brahman, who is not manifest. Prajapati has spoken about the characteristics of the dharma of pravritti. From pravritti, one has to return again.<sup>103</sup> Nivritti leads to the supreme objective. A supreme sage who is engaged in nivritti attains that supreme end. He is devoted to knowledge and always discriminates between what is auspicious and what is inauspicious. For that, one must know both the unmanifest and purusha. One must also know the one who is greater than the unmanifest and the purusha. One who is accomplished must specially look towards the differences between them. The signs of both of them<sup>104</sup> are that they are without beginning and without end. They are both always subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest. They are similar in this way. But there are also differences between them. Prakriti's dharma is creation and it has three kinds of traits.<sup>105</sup> Know that the traits of the kshetrajna are the converse.<sup>106</sup> Because of the qualities, prakriti is seen to have transformations. But purusha and the more powerful one<sup>107</sup> are incapable of being comprehended. Creation results from the union<sup>108</sup> and the attributes of action enable one to understand. A doer is characterized by action and withdrawal from action. Though words like ‘who’, ‘I’ and ‘this’ are used, they are meaningless. It is like a person who wears a headdress made out of three pieces of cloth. The embodied being is enveloped in sattva, rajas and tamas. Therefore, one must understand four subjects and aspects.<sup>109</sup> Someone who knows this will not be confused, even when his time draws to an end. If one desires the celestial prosperity of the brahman, one must be pure in words and mind. For the body, one must observe fierce rituals and be engaged in unblemished austerities. The three worlds are illuminated and pervaded by austerities performed by the inner being. The radiance of the sun and the moon in the sky is because of austerities. The power of austerities is in knowledge. Austerities are praised in the world. Because of its attributes, austerities free a person from acts committed because of rajas and tamas. Brahmacharya and non-violence are said to be the austerities of the body. Control over words and the mind and tranquility are said to be austerities of the mind. In particular, following the ordinances, one must receive food from brahmanas. If one is restrained in food, the sins that result from rajas are destroyed. In one's mind, one must withdraw from material objects and action. Thus, one must only accept that much of food as is necessary.

““When one is afflicted by old age and one's end has arrived, one must act without any distress. One must confront it by fixing one's mind on knowledge. Divested from rajas and the body, the embodied being silently moves

around. When one is freed from action and one's intelligence turns to lack of attachment, one is based in prakriti.<sup>110</sup> When one is freed from the distraction of the body, one can also be freed from what comes after the end of the body.<sup>111</sup> The creation and destruction of beings always has a reason. However, if one has belief in the supreme reason behind creation, one is freed from the compulsion to return.<sup>112</sup> But there are those who are ignorant about the forces behind the end of the world and creation and destruction. They use their patience to hold up their bodies and use their intelligence to withdraw their minds. They withdraw from places and objects that are destructible and worship what is subtle. They know everything that should be known from the sacred texts. After death, some of them, with cleansed souls, attain the ultimate resort. Some virtuous ones worship the object of meditation.<sup>113</sup> The supreme god cannot be destroyed and has been described as a flash of lightning. When the end comes, some have burnt their sins through austerities. All these great-souled ones go towards the supreme objective. The attributes<sup>114</sup> are subtle and one must look at them with sight gained from the sacred texts. Freed from all possessions, one knows that supreme body. One has fixed one's mind on dharana and has penetrated into what is inside. With the mind united with knowledge, one is then freed from the mortal world. Pure and having obtained the brahman, one attains the supreme objective. One obtains the knowledge that is free from folly and cannot be dislodged. This is the divine and illustrious one, without origin. This is Vishnu, who has the attributes of not being manifest. Those whose sentiments are pure have no desires and become content with that knowledge. With that knowledge, they base themselves in Hari. They suffer no decay and do not return. They obtain the supreme resort and take delight in the one who is without decay and without destruction. This is said to be knowledge and there is nothing else. The entire universe is bound down by thirst and is whirled around on a wheel. The strands of a lotus plant penetrate everywhere within the lotus. In that way, for those who are thirsty,<sup>115</sup> it always penetrates everything in the body, from the beginning to the end. This is like a weaver using his needle and thread to move around everywhere in a garment. Like that, the threads of this cycle are bound down by the needle of desire. Prakriti is subject to transformation. Purusha is eternal. A person who knows this is freed from desire. The illustrious rishi Narayana, the refuge of the universe, revealed all this, driven by compassion for beings and for the welfare of the universe. This is immortality.”

## Chapter 1539(211)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O one who knows about conduct! O one who knows about dharma! After discarding human objects of pleasure, what conduct did Janaka, the lord of Mithila,<sup>116</sup> follow, so as to advance towards emancipation?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. By following this conduct, the one who knew about conduct, advanced towards great happiness. In Mithila, there was a lord of men named Janadeva and he was descended from Janaka. He thought about the dharma that would uplift him beyond the body. One hundred preceptors always dwelt in his residence. They showed him different kinds of dharma and some of them were heretical. But basing himself on the sacred texts, he was not satisfied with what they repeatedly told him about their determinations about death, birth after death and the nature of the atman. There was a great sage named Pan-chashikha, the son of Kapila. Having travelled the entire earth, he came to Mithila. He had ascertained the true knowledge about all kinds of dharma connected with renunciation. He had settled all the meanings, was free from opposite sentiments,<sup>117</sup> and all his doubts had been dispelled. He was said to be the only rishi who was beyond the desire that characterizes humans. He desired the ultimate and eternal happiness that was so difficult to obtain. People were astounded at his form and thought that he was the supreme rishi, Prajapati Kapila, who expounded samkhya,<sup>118</sup> himself. He was the first disciple of Asuri and was said to be immortal. For one thousand years, he<sup>119</sup> had performed the sacrifice known as *panchasrota*.<sup>120</sup> There was a circle of the followers of Kapila and they were seated. They wished to hear from him about the supreme being, who was not manifest. Because of his own sacrifices and austerities, the sage had become successful. He had obtained divine sight and had understood the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna. The single Akshara of the brahman is seen in many different forms. In that circle, Asuri spoke about the one who is not manifest. There was a brahmana lady by the name of Kapila<sup>121</sup> and she



was Asuri's wife. Panchashikha became his<sup>122</sup> disciple and suckled milk at her breast. Because he suckled milk from the breasts of Kapila's wife, he came to be known as his son and obtained supreme intelligence. The illustrious one told me about how he became Kapila's son.<sup>123</sup> He also told me about how Kapila's son obtained every kind of supreme prosperity.

“Kapila's son knew about supreme forms of dharma and also knew that those one hundred ordinary preceptors were confused about the reasons. Kapila<sup>124</sup> therefore presented himself there and Janaka became devoted to him. He abandoned those one hundred preceptors and started to follow him. For the sake of supreme welfare, following dharma, he bowed down before him. He taught him about supreme emancipation, described as samkhya. He spoke to him about being free from birth and about being free from action. Having spoken to him about being free from action, he spoke to him about being free from everything. He spoke about being attached to action, and about the fruits those acts lead to. ‘These cannot be trusted, since they are certain to be temporary and subject to destruction.’<sup>125</sup> There are some who argue that people can directly witness the destruction. They therefore say that the supreme words of the sacred texts have evidently been defeated.<sup>126</sup> They say that there is no atman and one's self is subject to death, hardship, death,<sup>127</sup> old age and decay. A person who holds the view that the atman is different is completely confused. If something that does not exist is thought of as without decay and without death, then the king should also be thought of in that way.<sup>128</sup> Whether something exists or does not exist should be determined by the signs of its existence. How can the progress of people be determined to be based on such an object? The foundations of a conclusion must be based on what can be directly seen. Even if the sacred texts hold a different view, without direct evidence, one cannot arrive at such a conclusion. One's sentiments cannot be influenced by guesses. Thus, the view that there is another being in the body should actually be held to be the view of non-believers.<sup>129</sup> A banyan tree results from a single seed. Clarified butter results from the process of cooking. These are said to be properties of different species. Lodestone and the sun-crystal<sup>130</sup> drink up water.<sup>131</sup> When one is dead, why should there be a being that approaches the gods? There is certain proof that once one is dead, there is a cessation of action. However, these are not valid arguments for something that does not have a form. The immortal cannot be realized by ordinary mortals. There are some who say that rebirth is because of ignorance and because of the attempt to undertake action. The reasons are avarice and confusion and inclination towards sin. Ignorance is said to be the field, and deeds performed earlier are like the seed. Thirst generates affection and that leads to rebirth. It lies hidden in the consciousness. When the mortal body is burnt, it is born again in a different body, preserving the spirit.<sup>132</sup> This has been heard from some as the truth. However, since the body that one is born in may be a completely different one, how can there be an association between the two? In this case, what desire can there be for donations, learning and the strength of austerities, since the results of all such deeds are held to be obtained by someone else?<sup>133</sup> There are others who are miserable because of the deeds that they have performed earlier. One must arrive at a determination after looking towards this misery and joy. When the body is crushed by a club and is born again, it is sometimes held that the consciousness that results is a different one. This is held to be like seasons, years, lunar days, cold, heat, the pleasant and the unpleasant. Like these, one passes on,<sup>134</sup> but the spirit is preserved. However, this<sup>135</sup> will be overcome by old age and be destroyed by death. Like a house that is progressively weakened, it will eventually be destroyed. The senses, the mind, the wind, the blood, the flesh and the bones are all progressively destroyed and enter the elements that created them. There are many reasons that arise in the mind about the paths followed by people, the obtaining of the fruits from the dharma of donations, the meaning of the words in the Vedas and the conduct of people. But none of these would be valid.<sup>136</sup> Reflecting on such things, different people head in different directions. Some submerge in them and obtain intelligence. Others age like trees. Every being is made miserable because of good and bad deeds. The sacred texts bring them back, like elephants by those who control elephants. Thus, there are many who desire happiness, but are unwilling to pay the price. They are overcome by greater misery and like people who have been separated from their meat,<sup>137</sup> come under the subjugation of death. Everyone is certain to be destroyed. What is the point of relatives, friends and possessions? If one abandons these in an instant and then departs, one does not return. Earth, space, water, fire and the wind always nourish the body. If one thinks of this, how can one be freed of desire? However, these are also destroyed and there is no happiness in these.’ These words were supreme and were without deception. With the atman only as a wit-

ness, they were beyond disease. Hearing them, the king was astounded. He glanced towards him<sup>138</sup> and got ready to ask him once again.”

## Chapter 1540(212)

‘Bhishma said, “Janadeva, Janaka’s descendant, was thus instructed by the supreme rishi. He again asked him about existence and non-existence after death. ‘O illustrious one!<sup>139</sup> If there is indeed a consciousness after death, then what is ignorance and what is knowledge? What does one do? O supreme among brahmanas! If it is seen that all good deeds are destroyed, then what is the difference between being distracted and not being distracted? Whether there is attachment, or whether there is lack of attachment, a being is destroyed. Why should one undertake acts? What should one determine and resolve? What is the truth about this?’ He was thus confused, foolish and enveloped in darkness.<sup>140</sup>

“The wise Panchashika pacified him by speaking these words to him. ‘There is no destruction in that excellence.<sup>141</sup> Nor is there any existence in that excellence. This is an accumulation of the body, the senses and consciousness. They circle independently, but also influence each other and lead to action. The five branches are the elements of space, wind, fire, water and earth. They follow their own natures and are naturally distinct. Space, wind, heat, liquids and earth—these five come together in the body and become one. Knowledge, heat and wind—these are the three that give rise to action. The senses, the objects of the senses, natural consciousness, the mind, prana, apana and transformations flow from the elements. Hearing, touch, taste, sight and scent are the five senses and their qualities result from consciousness. When this is united with knowledge, three kinds of pain are said to be certain—happiness, unhappiness and the absence of both unhappiness and happiness. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell—these five exist in the body until the time of death. With the sixth quality of knowledge, they bring about everything. All acts, renunciation and all determinations about the truth depend on these. Intelligence is said to be the supreme, great and imperishable seed.<sup>142</sup> If a person sees the atman in this accumulation of qualities, then his sight is faulty and his infinite misery will not be destroyed. If a person looks on these as not being the atman, then he has no sense of ownership. In such a case, sorrow lacks a foundation to which it can attach itself. That is the reason there is the supreme sacred text known as *samyangamana*.<sup>143</sup> I will expound this to you. For the sake of your moksha, listen attentively. Renunciation is recommended for all those who wish to be free of their deeds. However, those who have always been versed in false views have to undergo hardship and sorrow. Deeds are for renouncing objects. Vows are for renouncing objects of pleasure. The yoga of austerities involves the renunciation of happiness and terminates in the renunciation of everything. I will tell you about what the learned have described as the path for renouncing everything. That leads to the alleviation of misery. Anything else leads to hardship. The five senses of knowledge, and the mind as the sixth, are based in consciousness. I have spoken of the mind as the sixth and there are the five organs of action. Know that the two hands are the organs of action and the two feet are the organs of movement. The penis is the organ for procreation and pleasure and the anus is the organ for release. The mouth is specially for uttering words. Know the movements of these five. With intelligence, there are eleven<sup>144</sup> and these must be cast away from the mind. The ears, sound and consciousness—these three are required for hearing. It is the same for touch, form, taste and smell. These fifteen<sup>145</sup> are required for the reception of the qualities. Three kinds of sentiments also present themselves. These three are sattva, rajas and tamas. In all kinds of attempts, they lead to three kinds of pain. Jubilation, delight, happiness, joy, tranquility in consciousness, irrespective of whether a reason is present or absent for this state of consciousness—these are the qualities of sattva. Dissatisfaction, repentance, sorrow, avarice, lack of forgiveness, irrespective of whether a reason is present or absent—these are the signs of rajas. Lack of judgement, confusion, distraction, dreaming and excessive sleep, irrespective of how these have been caused—these are the many qualities of tamas. If there are any signs of delight in the body or the mind, these should truly be known as the attributes of sattva. If there is any association of repentance or sorrow in a person, without any reflection, this can be identified to have been caused by rajas. Thus, if there is any confusion in the body or in the mind, even if it is incomprehensible or indiscernible, that has been caused by tamas. Hearing originates with sound and the ears base themselves on it. In the science of hearing, one cannot discern any differ-



ence between the two.<sup>146</sup> The skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose, as the fifth, are also like that. Touch, form, taste, smell and consciousness are based on the mind. The ten<sup>147</sup> undertake their own tasks, separately and collectively. Know that consciousness is the eleventh and intelligence is the twelfth. As long as these work together, *tamas* cannot be destroyed. Their simultaneous operation is commonly known as conduct. The learning of the sacred texts has earlier determined the working of the senses and the three kinds of qualities have been thought of. Confused by them, consciousness swiftly roams around amidst what is impermanent. Even at the best of times, this is said to be *tamas* happiness. If one does not serve what has been described in all the sacred texts, then one is enveloped in darkness and serves what is false and manifest. These are the thoughts on how dependence on the qualities leads to individual action. Some follow them completely and some not at all. There are those who have thought about *adhyatma*. They speak of this accumulation as *kshetra* and what exists in the mind as *kshetrajna*. This being the case, what is destroyed? What is eternal? All beings are driven by these reasons and their natures. Once a river has entered an ocean, it gives up its name. The spirit is destroyed in that way and no longer has an individuality. This being the case, after death, how can consciousness again be born? The *jivatma* merges and nothing in the middle can be grasped.<sup>148</sup> If a person possesses intelligence and knowledge about *moksha*, without any distraction, he then desires his own *atman* and does not get tainted by the fruits of any evil acts. He is like the leaf of a lotus, sprinkled with water. He is freed from the many firm bonds, whether these arise from offspring or from the gods.<sup>149</sup> He abandons both happiness and unhappiness. He is freed and goes to the foremost one, who is without any signs. This is the auspicious one. Accepting the proofs of the sacred texts, he then lies down, beyond old age, death and fear. His good deeds are destroyed. He is beyond the sins too. Therefore, the fruits of these are also destroyed. The great one is pure, free and without signs. He sees and gets attached to that greatness. When the strands are severed, a spider that has been stationed there, falls down. Like that, he is freed from his miseries, which are crushed like rocks on a mountain. A *ruru* deer casts aside its old horns and a snake its old skin. Like that, he goes beyond what can be seen and casting aside his miseries, is free. When a tree is about to fall down on water, a bird abandons it. In that way, he casts aside his happiness and unhappiness. He is free and goes to the supreme one, who is without any signs. A song is sung about the king of Mithila.<sup>150</sup> When he saw that his city was being burnt by a fire, he said, “Not even a chaff of mine is being burnt here.”<sup>151</sup> The lord of the earth had himself said this.’ Having heard these words about the immortal objective, spoken by Panchashikha himself, the king of Videha looked at everything. He ascertained the truth about everything and roamed around in great happiness, bereft of sorrow. He who reads this, determined to pursue *moksha*, always considers this and never decays. He does not suffer miseries because of any calamities. He is freed, like the lord of Mithila after meeting Kapila.”

## Chapter 154(213)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What action enables one to obtain happiness? What action leads one to obtain unhappiness? What action frees one from fear in this world? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! What conduct ensures success?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The intelligence of the ancient ones was based on the sacred texts and they praised self-control for all the *varnas*, but especially for *brahmanas*. A person who is not self-controlled does not obtain success in his rites. Rites, austerities and the *Vedas* are all based on self-control. Self-control increases energy and that is the reason self-control is said to be sacred. A person who is self-controlled is free from fear, is cleansed of sins and attains greatness. A self-controlled person sleeps in happiness and awakes in happiness. He roams around happily in the world and is cheerful in his mind. Self-control leads to restraint and one is not overcome by fierceness of energy. Such a person always sees his many enemies<sup>152</sup> as distinct from the *atman*. Those without self-control are like predatory beasts and always cause fear among beings. It was to control them that *Svayambhu* created kings. Among all the *ashramas*, self-control is special. The fruits of self-control are said to be greater than the *dharma* obtained through these. I will now tell you about the signs of those among whom self-control has arisen—lack of miserliness, lack of excitement, satisfaction, faithfulness, forgiveness, lack of anger, constant uprightness, lack of excessive speech, lack of pride, worship of seniors, lack of envy, compassion towards all beings, absence of slan-

der, refraining from speaking too much in public, lack of false speech and abstention from praise and censure. Among men, such a person is convinced about being virtuous and does not wish to pursue desire. He is not driven by enmity and possesses no deceit. He regards praise and censure equally. He immerses himself in good conduct. He is cheerful in his atman and is learned. He obtains reverence in this world. After death, he goes to heaven. He is engaged in the welfare of all beings and does not hate people. He is like a giant and calm lake. He is cheerful and content in his wisdom. He has no fear of any being and they are also not frightened of him. He bows down before all beings. Such a self-controlled person is learned. He is not delighted if he obtains great prosperity. He does not sorrow during a hardship. If a brahmana is thus accomplished in his wisdom, he is said to be self-controlled. His deeds are informed by the sacred texts. He follows the auspicious conduct of virtuous people. He is always full of self-restraint and enjoys great fruits. He has lack of jealousy, forgiveness, tranquility, satisfaction, pleasantness in speech, truthfulness, generosity and ease. That path is not for an evil-souled person. A brahmachari conquers his senses, having subjugated his desire and anger. Rigid in his vows, such a brahmana performs valiant and terrible austerities. He roams around in this world, waiting for his time.<sup>153</sup> He possesses no evil and is full of his atman.”

## Chapter 1542(214)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Brahmanas who observe vows sometimes eat the food that is offered as an oblation. O grandfather! What happens if a brahmana possesses this desire?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! If one eats after following the Vedas, it is different. But if one commits the act of eating in violation of the three Vedas, then one’s vows are destroyed.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Ordinary people say that fasting is like austerities. O great king! Is this really austerity? What are austerities?” ‘Bhishma replied, “People think that fasting for months or fortnights are austerities. But the virtuous do not regard them as austerities. Instead, they are an impediment in getting to know about the atman. Renunciation and becoming the disciple of a virtuous person is the supreme austerity. Such a person is always fasting and such a person is always a brahmachari. Such a brahmana will always become a sage and will always worship the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if he lives in a family,<sup>154</sup> he will always desire and dream of dharma. He will never eat flesh and will always meditate on the auspicious. He will always desire amrita and will never cause violence for food. He will always be devoted to guests and will always be like one who survives on leftovers.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How can one fast and be a brahmachari all the time? How can one always be devoted to guests and survive on leftovers?”

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person eats in the morning and eats again in the evening, without eating anything in between, he will be regarded as fasting all the time. If a brahmana goes to his wife only at the time of her season, he is a brahmachari, as long as that man always speaks the truth and is always devoted to wisdom. A person who does not pointlessly eat meat is said to be a vegetarian.<sup>155</sup> He will always be generous and pure by not dreaming or sleeping during the day. O Yudhishtira! Know that if a person only eats what has been left after the servants and guests have eaten is like a person who subsists on amrita. If a brahmana never eats until they<sup>156</sup> have eaten, through that act of not eating, he conquers heaven. If one survives on the leftovers after gods, ancestors, servants and guests have eaten, that is said to be like surviving on what is left at a sacrifice. They always obtain infinite worlds. With Brahma, the apsaras and the residents of heaven present themselves in their homes. They share their food with the gods and the ancestors.

They find delight with their sons and grandsons and obtain the supreme objective.”

## Chapter 1543(215)

udhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this world, men are united with their good and bad deeds, for the sake of reaping the fruits. But is a man actually the doer or not? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! I wish to hear the complete truth about this. I wish to hear the truth.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Prahlada and Indra is recounted. Though he<sup>157</sup> was born in an evil lineage, he was extremely learned and was unattached. His sins had been cleansed and he was bereft of confusion and insolence. He was virtuous and engaged in the observance of vows. Praise and censure were the same to him and he was self-controlled. It was as if he dwelt in an empty house. He knew about the creation and destruction of all beings, mobile and immobile. He was not enraged at objects that caused displeasure. Nor did he find delight in objects that caused pleasure. He looked upon gold and a lump of earth in the same way. He was patient and had resolved to fix his determination on the supreme knowledge about the atman. He knew everything, superior and inferior, about beings and looked upon them equally. He was in control of his senses. “Once, when Prahlada was seated alone, Shakra approached him, wishing to dislodge him from his wisdom, and spoke these words. ‘In this world, there are qualities that are revered among men. All of those qualities are seen to be present in you. Your intelligence is seen to be like that of a child. You know about the atman. What do you think is the supreme? You are now tied down in bonds. You have been dislodged from your place and have come under the subjugation of your enemies. O Prahlada! You are devoid of prosperity. Though you should grieve, you are not sorrowing. O son of Diti!<sup>158</sup> Is this because of the wisdom that you have obtained or is it because of your fortitude? O Prahlada! You seem to be well. But behold the state of your hardship.’ The patient one, who knew about what had to be determined, was thus urged. He used gentle words to describe his own state of wisdom. ‘He who does not understand the origin and destruction of all beings is confused because of that foolishness. But someone who sees this is not confused. Origin and destruction happen because of nature. In either existence or non-existence, no enterprise can be seen. There is no enterprise in non-existence and there is nothing that is the doer. Though the person never actually does anything in this world, there is a sense of vanity. If a person thinks himself to be the doer of good or bad deeds, he does not know his own self and his wisdom is tainted. That is my view. O Shakra! If a person is himself the doer, then it is certain that all the deeds he begins for the sake of his benefit will be successful. There will never be any defeat. It is seen that despite the best of efforts, there is no cessation of the unpleasant and no existence of the pleasant. Where is the scope for enterprise? It is seen that though some do not make any efforts, there is nothing unpleasant and they are covered by the pleasant. This must be because of nature. It is seen that some extremely intelligent people confront adversity and have to seek riches from those who are malformed and limited in intelligence. Indeed, all the qualities, good and bad, penetrate a person because of nature. Therefore, where is the scope for pride? Everything is because of nature. That is my determined view. Thus, my wisdom is based on the atman and there is nothing else. In this world, I think that the fruits of all good and bad deeds become attached. I will now tell you everything about action. Listen. When a crow eats, the presence of the food is known because of its cawing. In that way, all deeds are the manifestations of nature. A person who knows about the appearances of nature, but does not know about supreme nature, is confused because of his foolishness. He looks at everything through this foolishness. Everything flows from nature. A person who has comprehended all these manifestations has understood. What will he do with pride and insolence? I know everything about the rites of dharma and that all beings are not permanent. O Shakra! Therefore, I do not sorrow. I know that everything has an end. I have no sense of ownership. I am without insolence. I do not belong to this world. I am free of all bonds. I see that all beings have a beginning and an end and I am well. O Shakra! For a person who is accomplished in his wisdom, self-controlled, without thirst, without hope and without effort, everything in this world is looked at with the light of that knowledge. These are manifestations of nature and I do not love them or hate them. I do not see anyone who hates me. Nor do I see anyone who is my own. O Shakra! I do not desire anything above or below, or in the transverse directions.<sup>159</sup> There is no delight to be obtained<sup>160</sup> from knowledge, lack of knowledge, or the object of knowledge.’ Shakra asked, ‘O Prahlada! I am asking you. Tell me the means whereby one can obtain this kind of wisdom and this kind of tranquility.’ Prahlada said, ‘O Shakra! A man attains greatness through uprightness, lack of distraction, calmness, being immersed in the atman and serving the elders. One then obtains wisdom from nature and tranquility from nature. Everything that you see is obtained from nature.’ Thus addressed by the lord of the daityas, Shakra was astounded. O king! Delighted, he

then honoured these words. The lord of the three worlds<sup>161</sup> worshipped the Indra among the daityas. Having taken the permission of the Indra among the asuras, he returned to his own abode.”

## Chapter 1544(216)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! There may be a lord of the earth who has been dislodged from his prosperity and is roaming around the earth. He may have been crushed by the rod of destiny. What intelligence should he resort to? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Vasava<sup>162</sup> and Bali, Virochana’s son, is recounted. Having defeated all the asuras, Vasava went to the grandfather,<sup>163</sup> joined his hands in salutation and bowing down before him, asked him about Bali. ‘O Brahma! I do not see Bali, whose wealth did not diminish, despite his giving it away liberally.<sup>164</sup> Tell me where Bali is. He was the one who set and arose, lighting up the directions. He was the one who attentively showered down at the right time. I do not see Bali. O Brahma! Tell me where Bali is. He was Vayu, Varuna, Ravi,<sup>165</sup> Chandrama<sup>166</sup> and Agni, who heated beings and the earth. I do not see Bali. O Brahma! Tell me where Bali is.’

“Brahma replied, ‘O Maghavan!<sup>167</sup> It is not proper that you should ask about him now.<sup>168</sup> However, if one is asked, one should not utter a falsehood. I will tell you about Bali. O Shachi’s lord!<sup>169</sup> He may be<sup>170</sup> among camels, cows, asses or horses. He may be the best among those animals<sup>171</sup> and may be alone in his apartment.’

“Shakra asked, ‘O Brahma! If I meet Bali, alone in his apartment, should I kill him, or should I not kill him? O Brahma! Instruct me about that.’

“Brahma replied, ‘O Shakra! You should not cause injury to Bali. Bali does not deserve to be killed. O Shakra! You should ask him about good policy. O Vasava! But you should do as you wish.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Having been addressed by the illustrious one, the great Indra went to the earth. He was surrounded by great prosperity and was ascended on Airavata’s<sup>172</sup> shoulder. He saw Bali, in the form of an ass. As the illustrious one had said, he was alone in that abode.

“Shakra said, ‘O danava! You have now obtained the form of an ass and are subsisting on chaff. You have been born as an inferior species. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? I see what I have not seen earlier. You have been brought under the subjugation of your enemies. You are devoid of your prosperity and friends. You have been dislodged from your energy and valour. Earlier, when you advanced, you used to be surrounded by thousands of your relatives. You scorched all the worlds and did not think that we were worth considering. The daityas looked towards you and subjected themselves to your rule. It is because of your prosperity that the earth yielded crops, even when it had not been tilled. You have now been reduced to this hardship. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? In earlier times, you were full of pride and stationed yourself on the eastern shores of the ocean, dividing your riches amongst your relatives. What was the state of your mind then? You were honoured by thousands of celestial women, who danced before you. For thousands of years, you sported in blazing prosperity. All of them<sup>173</sup> were adorned in garlands made out of lotuses and all of them were golden in complexion. O lord of the danavas! What was the state of your mind then and what is it now? You used to possess a great and golden umbrella and it was adorned with gems. In seven different ways, sixty thousand gandharvas danced before you. In your sacrifices, there used to be a gigantic altar that was completely made out of gold. There, you gave away thousands and millions of cattle. You roamed around the entire earth, hurling the *shamya* according to the prescribed rites and performing sacrifices.<sup>174</sup> What was the state of your mind then? I do not see the vessel now, nor the umbrella or the whisks. O lord of the asuras! Nor do I see the garland that was given to you by Brahma.’

“Bali replied, ‘You do not see the vessel, the umbrella or the whisks. O Vasava! Nor do you see the garland that was given by Brahma. You have asked me about my gems. They have now been hidden inside a cave. When my time arrives, you will see them again. However, this conduct of yours is not appropriate for your fame or your lineage. When you see me amidst this adversity, why are you boasting about your prosperity? Learned ones who are accomplished in wisdom, virtuous, content in their wisdom and tranquil, do not grieve in misery and find delight in

happiness. O Purandara! You are boasting because of your common knowledge. When your sentiments become like mine, you will not speak in this way.””

## Chapter 1545(217)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage. He<sup>175</sup> was sighing like a serpent. Shakra laughed at him and again spoke words that were more piercing than those uttered earlier. ‘When you advanced earlier, you were surrounded by one thousand vehicles and relatives. You scorched all the worlds and disregarded all of us. O Bali! Behold your extremely miserable state now. Your relatives have abandoned you. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? You obtained unsurpassed delight earlier. You were stationed, with all the worlds under your subjugation. You have been brought down now. Are you grieving or are you not grieving?’

“Bali replied, ‘I see that all of this is transient and is because of what the progress of time has wrought on me. O Shakra! Since I know the truth about all of this, I do not sorrow. O lord of the immortals! These bodies of beings have an end. O Shakra! That is the reason I do not grieve. This is not because of any crime that I have committed. This life force and the physical body are born together and last till death. They grow up together and they are destroyed together. Having obtained this existence,<sup>176</sup> I am powerless only temporarily. Since I know this, because of that knowledge, I suffer no pain. Just as all flows head towards the ocean, all beings end in death. O wielder of the *vajra*! Men who know this are never confused. Those who do not know this are overcome by rajas and confusion. They sink down when they face hardships and their intelligence is destroyed. A man who gains intelligence destroys all his sins. Bereft of sins, one obtains virtue. Such a person is hale and delighted. Those who retreat from it<sup>177</sup> are born again and again. They are tormented by misery and are goaded by that which does not lead to welfare. Whether there is success in obtaining prosperity, whether there is adversity, whether one is alive or dead and whether there are fruits of joy or misery, I do not hate them. Nor do I crave them. There is a slayer and there is someone who is slain. But if a man thinks that he is the slayer, he is himself slain. Whether it is the slain or whether it is the slayer, neither of them truly knows. O Maghavan! A person who kills and is victorious and then boasts about his manliness, is not actually the doer. The actor who has done this is elsewhere. Who is the one who has brought about the creation and the destruction of the worlds? It may be thought that this task has been accomplished by a doer. But the actual doer is someone else. All beings are generated from earth, wind, space, water and light, as the fifth. Therefore, where is the scope for sorrow? Realize this great knowledge—a weak person, a strong one, a malformed person, a handsome one, an unfortunate person and a fortunate one, are all afflicted by time, deep in its own energy. Since I know that I have come under the subjugation of time, why should I be pained? What is being burnt is something that has already been burnt.<sup>178</sup> What is being slain is something that has already been slain. What is being destroyed is something that has been destroyed earlier. A man gets what has already been obtained for him. There is no island.<sup>179</sup> Where is the further shore? No boundary can be seen. This destiny is divine. Though I think about it, I do not see an end to it. O lord of Shachi! Had I not seen that time is behind the destruction of beings, then I might have felt delight, insolence and anger. I subsist on chaff. I have been abandoned by the people of the household and am in the form of a donkey. Knowing this, you are condemning me. If I so desire, even now, I can assume many kinds of forms that are so terrible that, looking at them, you will run away from me. But it is time that gives everything and it is time that takes everything away. Time pervades everything. O Shakra! Do not boast about your manliness. O Purandara! Earlier, everyone was distressed because of my rage. O Shakra! I know about the eternal dharma of the worlds. Like me, know about this and do not be overcome with amazement. Power and influence are never due to one’s own self. Your consciousness is like that of a child. It is just as it was in ancient times.<sup>180</sup> O Maghavan! Glance towards everything with your intelligence and obtain what is best for you. The gods, men, the ancestors, the gandharvas, the serpents and the rakshasas—all of them used to be under my subjugation earlier. O Vasava! You know this. “We bow down before the directions where Bali, Virochana’s son, is stationed.” Their intelligence confused because of envy, this is what they used to say to me. O lord of Shachi! I do not sorrow because of that reverence that was shown to me. My intelligence is firm and I will remain under the subjugation of the one who ordains. One may see a person who has been born in a noble lineage.

He is handsome and influential. But with his advisers, he lives in misery. This can be nothing other than destiny. O Shakra! On the other hand, one may see a person who has been born in an inferior lineage and is stupid. Despite his inferior birth, with his advisers, he may live in happiness. This can be nothing other than destiny. O Shakra! An auspicious and beautiful woman will be seen to suffer from misfortune. O Shakra! An inauspicious and ugly woman will be seen to be fortunate. O Shakra! My state is not because of anything I have done. O Shakra! My state is not because of anything you have done. O wielder of the vajra! Your state is not because of you and our state is not because of us. O Shatakratu! This is not because of anything you have done, not to speak of something I have done. Progressively, prosperity and adversity do not come about because of deeds. I see you in your resplendence, stationed as the king of the gods. You are handsome and radiant and are roaring at me. This would not have happened had time not attacked me and remained stationed here. Had that not been the case, despite your holding the vajra, I would have used my bare fists to bring you down now. But this is not the time for exhibiting valour. The time for exhibiting forgiveness has arrived. Everything is established in time and time cooks everything. There was a time when I was the lord of the danavas and was worshipped. I roared and tormented and there was no one who could advance against me. O king of the gods! I single-handedly robbed the twelve great-souled Adityas of their energy, with you included in that group. O Vasava! I was the one who soaked up the water and released it again.<sup>181</sup> I was the one who offered heat and light to the three worlds. I was the one who protected and I was the one who destroyed. I was the one who gave and I was the one who took away. I was the one who restrained and I was the one who released. I was the lord and master of the worlds. O lord of the immortals! That lordship has now been taken away. I have been assailed by the soldiers of time and none of that can be seen in me. O lord of Shachi! I am not the doer. You are not the doer. No one else is the doer. O Shakra! It is time that progressively destroys the worlds, as it desires. People who are learned about the Vedas say that the year is his mouth.<sup>182</sup> The months and the fortnights are his body and days and nights are his attire. The seasons are the gates.<sup>183</sup> There are also people who, because of their learning, say that everything should be thought of as him. The five sheaths one thinks of are nothing but his five aspects.<sup>184</sup> Brahma is deep and fathomless, like a gigantic ocean. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is said to be supreme and without decay. Though he himself possesses no attributes, he assumes attributes in beings. Men who have comprehended the truth certainly think of him in this way. They think that he brings about the progression and regression of beings. But there is no progression for that which is inside.<sup>185</sup> It is above nature. He is the resort of all beings. Where can one go, other than to that resort? One cannot avoid this by running, or by remaining stationary. All the five senses are incapable of seeing him. Some speak of him as Agni and some speak of him as Prajapati. Others say he is the seasons, the fortnights, the months, the days and the moments. There are others who say he is the forenoon, the afternoon, or midday, or an instant. Virtuous ones speak of him as one and many. Know him as time, the one who has everything under his subjugation. O Vasava! There have been many thousands of Indras. O lord of Shachi! Their strength and valour were just like your own. O Shakra! You are extremely strong. You are the king of the gods and are proud of your strength. However, when it is time, immensely valorous time will pacify you. It takes away everything. O Shakra! Therefore, be steady. Neither I, nor you, nor those who have come before us, are capable of transgressing it. You have obtained this supreme royal prosperity now. Know that it was earlier vested in me. It is not real and does not remain with one person alone. It was established in one thousand Indras before this and all of them were superior to you. O lord of the gods! It is unstable. It abandoned me and has approached you now. O Shakra! You should not boast again. You should be tranquil. If you have such sentiments, it will abandon you and swiftly go to someone else.’”

## Chapter 1546(218)

‘Bhishma said, “Shatakratu then saw the blazing Shri,<sup>186</sup> in her own form, emerge from the body of the great-souled Bali. The illustrious chastiser of Paka<sup>187</sup> saw her resplendent power. Vasava’s eyes dilated with wonder and he asked Bali. ‘Who is this one who is emerging, blazing in her own energy? Her bracelets and diadem are beautiful.’



“Bali replied, ‘I do not know whether she is an asura maiden, a goddess or a human. O Vasava! Do as you wish and ask her yourself.’

“Shakra asked, ‘O one with the beautiful smiles! O one with the diadem! O radiant one who is emerging from Bali! Who are you? I do not know you. Tell me your name. You are stationed here like Maya,<sup>188</sup> resplendent in your own energy. Who are you? O one with the beautiful eyebrows! You have abandoned the lord of the daityas. Tell me your true nature.’

“Shri replied, ‘Virochana did not know me. Virochana’s son, Bali, does not know me. I am known as Duhsaha and the learned know me as Vidhitsa.<sup>189</sup> O Vasava! I am also known by the names Bhuti, Lakshmi and Shri.<sup>190</sup> O Shakra! You do not know me. All the gods don’t know me.’

“Shakra asked, ‘O Duhsaha! You have dwelt with Bali for a long time. Why are you abandoning him now? Is it because of his acts or because of mine?’

“Shri replied, ‘Dhata and Vidhata<sup>191</sup> cannot control me. O Shakra! Time determines my progressive movement. O Shakra! Do not show disrespect.’<sup>192</sup>

“Shakra asked, ‘O one with the diadem! Why have you abandoned Bali? Why are you approaching me? O one with the sweet smiles! Tell me this.’

“Shri replied, ‘I am established in truth, donations, vows, austerities, valour and dharma. Bali has deviated from these. He was devoted to brahmanas. He was truthful and in control of his senses. But he began to hate brahmanas and touched clarified butter with soiled hands.<sup>193</sup> Earlier, he was devoted to the performance of sacrifices. However, he was afflicted by destiny and became foolish. He began to boast to people that he was capable of performing sacrifices to me.<sup>194</sup> O Shakra! O Vasava! I will therefore abandon him and dwell with you. Bear me up without distraction and through austerities and valour.’

“Shakra said, ‘O one whose abode is a lotus! There is no single man amongst gods, humans or amongst all beings, who is capable of bearing you for ever.’

“Shri replied, ‘O Purandara! Indeed, there is no single one amongst gods, gandharvas, asuras or rakshasas who is capable of bearing me for ever.’

“Shakra said, ‘O auspicious one! Tell me the means whereby you will always remain with me. You should tell me truthfully and I will act in accordance with those words.’

“Shri replied, ‘O Indra of the gods! I will tell you the means whereby I am always established with you. Listen. Following the ordinances of the Vedas, divide me into four parts.’

“Shakra said, ‘According to their capacity and their strength, I will determine abodes for you. O Lakshmi! When you are with me, I will never transgress you. O creator of all beings! Among men, let the earth bear you. It is my view that she is capable of bearing one quarter of you.’

“Shri replied, ‘This is one quarter of me. Let it be established on earth. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the second of my four quarters.’

“Shakra said, ‘Among men, the water tends to them in liquid form. Let the clear waters bear a quarter. They have the capacity to bear.’

“Shri replied, ‘This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the waters. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the third of my four quarters.’

“Shakra said, ‘The gods, the sacrifices and the Vedas are established in the fire. Let it bear the third quarter, since it is capable of bearing well.’

“Shri replied, ‘This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the fire. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the fourth of my four quarters.’

“Shakra said, ‘There are virtuous men who are truthful in speech and are devoted to brahmanas. Those unblemished and virtuous ones have the capacity to bear. Let them bear a quarter.’

“Shri replied, ‘This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the virtuous. O Shakra! With I having been distributed among beings, protect me.’

“Shakra said, ‘I have thus caused a distribution among beings. Listen to my words. I will kill those who injure you.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus abandoned by Shri, Bali, the king of the daityas, spoke these words. ‘The sun heats in front<sup>195</sup> and in the southern direction, in the west, as well as in the east. However, when the midday sun shines and does not set, there will again be a battle between the gods and the asuras and I will defeat you.<sup>196</sup> Amidst all the worlds, the sun will then heat only one spot. O Shatakratu! There will then be a battle between the gods and the asuras and I will vanquish you.’

“Shakra replied, ‘Brahma instructed me that you should not be killed by me. O Bali! That is the reason I am not releasing the vajra at your head. O Indra among the daityas! O great asura! Go wherever you wish and may you be at peace. There will be no occasion when the sun will only be stationed at the midpoint and heat there. Svayambhu<sup>197</sup> has earlier laid down the course of time it must follow. It follows that truth and heats subjects incessantly. It follows six months of a northward and southward course each. That is the way the sun creates cold and heat for all the worlds.’”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by Indra, Bali, the Indra among the daityas, left for the southern direction. Purandara went towards the north. Bali sang this song, which was without any trace of pride. Having heard his words, the one with the thousand eyes rose up into the sky.”’

## Chapter 1547(219)

‘**B**hishma said, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Shatakratu and Namuchi is recounted. He<sup>198</sup> was seated, bereft of prosperity, like an ocean that wasn’t agitated, knowledgeable about the creation and destruction of all beings. Purandara spoke to him. ‘O Namuchi! You have been tied down in bonds. You have been dislodged from your place. You are under the subjugation of your enemies. You are devoid of prosperity. Are you grieving, or are you not grieving?’

“Namuchi replied, ‘Nothing changes because of sorrow. The body alone is afflicted and enemies are delighted. No help is brought by grieving. O Shakra! I know that everything has an end. Therefore, I am not sorrowing. O lord of the gods! Grief destroys beauty and dharma. One must indeed subdue the sorrow that arises in one’s mind. Knowing what is beneficial, one must meditate on that in one’s mind and in one’s heart. There is no doubt that this is capable of ensuring success in everything. There is one ordainer. There is no second ordainer. The ordainer ordains the man, as he lies down in the womb. I am instructed by him, like water flowing downwards. I flow as I am appointed. I know about existence and non-existence and about that which is superior.<sup>199</sup> However, despite knowing what is best, I do not act in that way. Submerged in hopes, dharma and well-wishers, I do good deeds and their reverse. I flow as I am appointed. Whatever can be obtained is what will be obtained. Whatever is meant to happen is what will happen. As has been decided by the creator, one will repeatedly dwell in different wombs. One doesn’t go there because of one’s own wishes. The existence that I have obtained is because of my destiny. A person whose sentiments are like this will never be confused. Respect and the lack of a name occur progressively. Only a person who thinks his own self to be the actor sees unhappiness in this.<sup>200</sup> In this world, who is not afflicted by catastrophes—the sages, the gods, the great asuras, the aged ones who know the three Vedas and hermits in the forest? Those who know the supreme are not frightened by this. No anger is generated in a learned person. He does not suffer. Nor is he delighted. He does not sorrow if there is a hardship on account of lack of riches, or some other kind of difficulty. He is established, as naturally immobile as the Himalayas. If riches and success do not delight him and a time of hardship does not confuse him, such a person is superior. A man who can bear the burden when faced with happiness or unhappiness is medium. A man must always be cheerful and must not torment himself, even when he confronts a downfall. He must control the torment that grows in his mind, because that harms the body. If there is an assembly with virtuous people gathered there and if, on entering it, a person is not freed from fear, then that is not a virtuous assembly.<sup>201</sup> If an intelligent man immerses himself in dharma and then decides, he is capable of bearing a burden. The deeds of a wise man are difficult to fathom. Even when it is a time for confusion, a wise person is not confused. Even when he is dislodged from his position and faces a hardship and a disaster because of this, like Goutama in his old age, he is not confused.<sup>202</sup> In the world of the mortal, one cannot obtain what is not meant to be obtained through mantras, strength, valour, wisdom and manliness. Why should one sor-



row on account of that? In ancient times, the creator ordained this, before I was born. What was ordained has happened. What can death do to me? One obtains what was meant to be obtained. One goes where one is meant to go. One gets what is meant to be got, unhappiness or happiness. A man who knows all of this is not confused. He is skilled in the midst of joy and misery and is the lord of all riches.””

## Chapter 1548(220)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is best for a man when he is immersed in hardships and difficulties? O lord of the earth! What about when his relatives are destroyed and his kingdom is destroyed? O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this world, you are the supreme speaker for us. I am asking you about this. You should tell me about it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! If a person has been separated from his sons, wives, happiness and riches and is immersed in hardships and difficulties, fortitude is the best for him. For a person who has patience, the body does not suffer. Because the body is healthy, he again obtains prosperity. If a king or a man resorts to righteous conduct, his patience and steadfastness will manifest themselves in all the tasks he is engaged in. O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation that again took place between Bali and Vasava. There was a battle between the gods and the asuras and this led to a destruction of daityas and danavas. Vishnu obtained the worlds and the kingship of the gods for Shatakrtu.<sup>203</sup> Sacrifices were performed to the gods and the four varnas were established. The three worlds were prosperous and Svayambhu was filled with delight. Shakra was ascended on Airavata, which had four excellent tusks and was an Indra among elephants. Surrounded by prosperity, the lord travelled through the three worlds. He was surrounded by the Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, the Ashvins, the rishis, the gandharvas, the Indras among the serpents, the Siddhas and others. On one such occasion, on the frontiers of the ocean and in a cavern inside a mountain, the wielder of the vajra saw Bali, Virochana’s son, and approached him. Despite seeing Indra, the lord of the gods, seated on Airavata’s shoulder, surrounded by large numbers of gods, the Indra among the daityas was not distressed and did not sorrow. Shatakrtu was seated on that best of elephants and saw that Bali was stationed there, without any fear and without any agitation. He asked, ‘O daitya! You are not distressed. Is this because of your valour or is this because you have served your seniors? Is it because you have been cleaned through austerities? In every respect, this is a very difficult state to attain. You have been brought down from a supreme position and are now under the subjugation of your enemies. O Virochana’s son! What is the support that enables you not to grieve, though you should sorrow? With your relatives, you attained the best state possible and enjoyed supreme objects of pleasure. You have now been deprived of your army and your kingdom. Tell me. Why aren’t you mourning? Earlier, you were a god, occupying the seat of your father and grandfather. You have now seen that robbed by your rivals. Why aren’t you mourning? You have been tied down in Varuna’s nooses and have been struck by the vajra. You have been robbed of your wives. You have been robbed of your wealth. Tell me. Why aren’t you mourning? You have been dislodged from your prosperity. You have been dislodged from your riches. Yet, you are not sorrowing, and this is an extremely difficult thing to do. If the kingdom of the three worlds has been destroyed, who else would be interested in remaining alive?’ He spoke these and other harsh words, intending to subdue him.

“However, Virochana’s son, Bali, heard these words cheerfully. Without being frightened, he replied, ‘O Shakra! When I have been severely afflicted, why are you boasting? O Purandara! I see you standing here now, with the vajra upraised. Earlier, you were incapable of doing this. How have you acquired the capacity now? Indeed, who other than you could have spoken such extremely cruel words? The learned say that if someone has brought a brave enemy under his subjugation and control, but has the capacity to show mercy, that person is indeed a man. When two people quarrel and fight, the outcome is uncertain. One of them obtains victory and the other one obtains defeat. O bull among the gods! You should not exhibit such a temperament towards me. Do not think that you have become the lord by defeating all the beings with your valour and strength. O Shakra! This state is not because of anything we have done. O Shakra! Nor is it because of what you have done. O wielder of the vajra! This state is not because of you or because of us. You will become what I am now. You will become like us. Do not think that my state is because of my wicked deeds or because of what you have done. Progressively, a man en-

counters happiness and unhappiness. O Shakra! You have obtained the state of Shakra because of progression, not because of your deeds. As time elapsed, time conveyed me. It is time again that conveys you. Happiness does not come to a man because of serving the mother and the father, worshipping the gods, or because of following other good qualities. When a man is afflicted by time, learning, austerities, donations, friends and relatives are not capable of saving him. Even if one counters in one hundred different ways, calamities strike back. Men are incapable of fighting them back through intelligence and strength. One is afflicted through this progression and there is no one who is a saviour. O Shakra! This is a reason for sorrow only if you think of yourself as the doer. If the doer is actually the doer, then no one else would have made the doer do anything. However, because someone else makes the doer do things, that other entity is a lord over the apparent doer. I defeated you through the aid of time. It is through the aid of time that you have vanquished me. Time is the force behind all movement. Time drives all beings. O Indra! Your intelligence is ordinary and you do not comprehend the destruction. Some show you a great deal of reverence because of the superiority you have obtained through your own deeds. But there are those like us, who know the progress of the worlds. When we are afflicted by time, why should we grieve? Why should we be confused and frightened? Even when I am constantly afflicted by time and suffer a calamity, shall my intelligence, or that of someone like me, be destroyed, like a shattered boat? O Shakra! I, you, and all the future lords of the gods, will have to traverse the path followed by hundreds of Indras earlier. You are now extremely unassailable and are blazing in supreme prosperity. But when your time comes, time will destroy you, just as it has destroyed me. From one yuga to another yuga, there have been many thousands of Indras and daityas. They have been carried away by time. Time is extremely difficult to cross. Having obtained this state, you have an extremely high opinion of yourself, as if you are the eternal god Brahma, the creator of all beings. But this state is not immobile. Nor is this state eternal. However, because of your foolish intelligence, you think it to be thus. You trust something that should not be trusted. You think that something temporary is permanent. Because of your delusion, you think that the royal prosperity that you desire is yours. Know this to be a fact that this is not yours, nor ours, nor that of others. There are many others who have obtained this state. But they have all passed on. O Vasava! This fickle position will stay with you for some time. Like a cow abandoning one drinking spot for another, it will then go to someone else. There are so many kings who have passed through this world earlier, that I am not even interested in enumerating them. O Purandara! There will be many others after you too. This earth possesses trees, herbs, jewels, rivers and mountains. I no longer see those who have enjoyed it in earlier times. Prithu, Aila, Maya, Bhima, Naraka, Shambara, Asvagriva, Puloma, Svarbhanu, with an infinitely long standard, Prahlada, Namuchi, Daksha, Viprachitti, Virochana, Hrinishedha, Suhotra, Bhuriha, Pushpavan, Vrisha, Satyeshu, Rishabha, Rahu, Kapilashva, Virupaksha, Bana, Kartasvara, Vahni, Vishvadamshtra, Nairrita, Rittha, Ahuttha, Viratamra, Varahashva, Ruchi, Prabhu, Vishvajit, Agratishouri, Vrishanda, Vishkara, Madhu, Hiranyakashipu, the danava Kaitabha, the daitya Kalakhanja, with all the Nairritas—there were these Indras among daityas and Indras among danavas. These came earlier and even before that. We have heard their names and those of others. There were many Indras among daityas earlier. They have abandoned the earth and have gone. They have all been afflicted by time. Time is the strongest. O Shatakratu! All of them performed hundreds of sacrifices and rites. You are not the only one. All of them were devoted to dharma. All of them always performed sacrifices. All of them could roam around in the sky. All of them never showed their backs in the field of battle. All of them were capable of tolerating. All of them possessed arms like clubs. All of them could show one hundred different kinds of maya. All of them could go wherever they desired. We have not heard of any of them being defeated, once they embarked on a battle. All of them were devoted to the vow of truth. All of them could sport as they willed. All of them were devoted to the vows of the Vedas. All of them were extremely learned. All of them could withstand. All of them obtained riches and lordship. However, none of those great-souled ones who came earlier was proud because of his wealth. All of them were truly generous. All of them were devoid of malice. Each of them behaved towards all beings exactly as they should have. All of them were the sons of Dakshayani and Prajapati.<sup>204</sup> All of them were extremely strong. They blazed and scorched. But time carried them away. Once you have enjoyed the earth, you will again have to give it up. O Shakra! You will be incapable of restraining your grief then. Free yourself from this desire for objects of pleasure. Free yourself from this pride that comes from prosperity. If you do that, when your own kingdom is destroyed, you will be able to bear the sorrow. You should not sorrow when it is a time for grief. You should not be

delighted when it is a time for joy. Forget the past and the future and act in accordance with what has presented itself. Time never sleeps and it presented itself before me. O Indra! Pardon me. But it will also present itself before you. O Indra of the gods! You have spoken such words to me with the object of piercing and frightening me. Seeing that I am controlled, there is no doubt that you think extremely highly of me. Time struck me first and will follow you later. O Indra of the gods! Who are you roaring at? I have already been struck by time. When I used to rage in battle, who in this world was capable of standing before me? O Vasava! You are stationed here because time has proved to be more powerful. Those one thousand years meant for you will be completed.<sup>205</sup> You will then be dislodged from your state and be robbed of your energy, just as all my limbs are now. I am an Indra who has been dislodged from his status and you have naturally become an Indra in heaven. Because of the progress of time, you are now worshipped in this extremely wonderful world of the living. O Indra! But what is it exactly that you have done? And what have we done to be dislodged? Time is the doer and the undoer. There is nothing else that is the cause. Decay, destruction, riches, happiness, unhappiness, existence and non-existence—when a learned person confronts any of these, he is neither delighted, nor distressed. O Indra! You know us. O Vasava! We know you too. I have been disarmed and bound by time. Why are you then boasting before me? You know the manliness that I exhibited earlier. The valour that I exhibited in battle is sufficient proof. O lord of Shachi! The Adityas, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, together with the Vasus, and all the Maruts were vanquished by me. O Shakra! You also know what happened in the encounter between the gods and the asuras. All the assembled gods were swiftly shattered by me in the battle. In that terrible battle, I angrily struck you on the head with mountains, with their forests and those who lived in those forests. I struck with you with summits and peaks. What could I not have done then? But time is impossible to cross. That is the reason I am not interested in killing you, holding that vajra, with my fists. This is not the time for exhibiting valour. The time for showing forgiveness has arrived. O Shakra! That is the reason I am being tolerant, though I am less tolerant than you are. My time has matured and I have been cooked by the flames of time. O Shakra! I have been restrained and bound by the nooses of time and you are boasting before me. This is the dark being whom the worlds find impossible to cross.<sup>206</sup> This terrible one has bound me, like an animal with ropes, and is standing here. Gain, loss, happiness, unhappiness, desire, anger, existence, non-existence, slaughter, bondage, freedom—all of these are obtained because of time. I am not the doer. You are not the doer. The doer is always the one who is the lord. Time has cooked me, like a fruit that has appeared on a tree. Despite being yoked to time, there are things a man can do to obtain happiness. Despite being yoked to time, there are again things that can be done to obtain misery. When a person who knows about time has been touched by time, that person should not grieve. O Shakra! That is the reason I am not grieving. That is of no help at a time of sorrow. If one grieves at a time of sorrow, the hardship is not ameliorated. There is no capability in that grief. That is the reason I am not sorrowing now.' He spoke in this way to the thousand-eyed and illustrious chastiser of Paka.

“Having been thus addressed, Shatakratu controlled his anger and spoke these words. ‘You have seen my upraised arm with the vajra and Varuna’s nooses. Who with intelligence will not be distressed at this, including Death, the destroyer of everything? However, you are not distressed at this. Your intelligence is not fickle and you have seen the truth. O one with truth as his valour! You have spoken words to the effect that you are not distressed. On seeing that everything in this universe is transient, which embodied being in this world will be interested or capable of reposing his faith in anything that pertains to the body? I also know that everything in this world is temporary. Although it cannot be seen, everything is constantly being borne by time’s eternal and terrible fire. When one has been touched by time, there is no salvation. The subtlest and the greatest of beings are cooked. Without any master and without any distraction, it constantly cooks beings. The decay due to time cannot be withdrawn. Once one has attained it, there is no freedom. One may not realize this. But ever attentive, time is awake in beings. No one has earlier been seen to have made efforts and escaped it. It is the ancient and eternal dharma. It looks on all living beings in the same way. Time cannot be avoided and there is no exception to what it does. Like a money-lender computing interest, time calculates days, nights, months, *kshanas*, *kashthas*, *kalas* and *lavas* for us. There are those who say, “I will do this today. I will do that tomorrow.” Time approaches and bears them away, like a raft on the current of a river. “I saw him just now. How can he be dead?” While men are heard to lament in this way, time robs them. Riches, objects of pleasure, status and prosperity are all temporary and uncertain. It is extremely difficult to conduct oneself. Everything is brought down and so are existence and non-existence. But you are not

distressed by this. Your intelligence is not fickle and you have seen the truth. Even in your mind, you are not bothered about what you have been before. Time afflicts this world and being stronger, cooks it. It sweeps away, regardless of whether a person is young or old. Addicted to jealousy, pride, greed, desire, anger, fright, wishes, confusion and pride, people are deluded. But you know the truth about existence. You are learned in wisdom and austerities. You look at time extremely well, as if it was a myrobalan fruit in your hand. You know the truth about the character of time. You are accomplished in all the sacred texts. O son of Virochana! You have cleansed your soul. You are desired by those who know. I think that with your intelligence, you have comprehended all the worlds. You roam around, free in every way. You have not been tainted by anything. You have conquered your senses and the qualities of rajas and tamas do not touch you. You are without affection. You have destroyed all sorrow. You worship your atman alone. You are a well-wisher to all beings. You are without enmity. You are tranquil in your mind. On seeing you in this state, my mind turns to compassion. Because of the progress of time, you are bound in Varuna's noose and you will be freed from them, because of the evil conduct of subjects. O great asura! May you be safe. When daughters-in-law will engage aged mothers-in-law in work, when deluded sons will send their fathers to work, when *vrishalas* will make brahmanas wash their feet, when shudras will fearlessly serve brahmana wives, when men will release their seeds into vaginas that should be avoided, when sacrifices will be carried in brass vessels, those made out of mixed metal and other inferior vessels, when the four varnas will transgress all restraints, then, one by one, you will progressively be freed from these bonds. There will be no fear from me. Adhere to this agreement. Be safe and without any restraint. Be hale and healthy.' Having spoken these words, the illustrious Shatakratu departed, with that king among elephants as his mount. The lord of the gods had vanquished all the asuras. He was delighted and happy and was the single king. The maharshis chanted words of praise in the name of Vrishakapi, the lord of all mobile and immobile objects. The fire god bore all the oblations and the amrita that was offered to the lord. The supreme among brahmanas performed sacrifices in every way. The lord<sup>207</sup> lost all his rage and his mind was tranquil. Vasava blazed in his energy and cheerfully returned to his own abode in heaven and found pleasure there."

## Chapter 1549(221)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O king! O grandfather! Tell me about a man’s earlier form and his subsequent downfall.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O fortunate one! The mind indicates a man’s earlier form and what will happen and not happen to him in the future. On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Shri and Shakra. O Yudhishtira! Listen to this. As he wished, Narada roamed around in the three worlds. He was great in his austerities and could see this world and the supreme one. Though he was an ordinary rishi, he was the equal of those who resided in Brahma’s world. He was a great ascetic and was tranquil in his soul. His infinitely blazing energy was like that of Brahma himself. On one occasion, he arose in the morning and wished to purify himself with water. He went to where the Ganga emerges through the gate known as Dhruva.<sup>208</sup> The one with the thousand eyes, the wielder of the vajra and the slayer of Shambara and Paka, also happened to come to the spot where the devarshi was. Both of them were in control of their souls. Having performed their ablutions and meditations, they sat down together. They were seated on the banks of the river, with sand as fine as gold. The devarshi recounted stories of auspicious deeds, tales about good conduct. They were attentive and spoke to each other about these ancient accounts. The sun arose and its net of rays was spread before them. On seeing that full solar disc, they arose. They worshipped the supreme sun, whose task it was to dispel the darkness. At that time, on the further side of the sky, they saw a body of light arise and it blazed like the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They saw that it was approaching them. There was this unmatched radiance that illuminated the three worlds and it was astride Vishnu’s vehicle, with both Suparna<sup>209</sup> and the sun situated there. There was a divine form, attended by apsaras. She was like a gigantic sun or fire herself, with large rays radiating out. Her ornaments were like nakshatras and her garlands dazzled with stars. They saw the goddess Padma Shri herself, stationed on a lotus. The supreme lady descended from her celestial vehicle and approached Shakra, the lord of the three worlds, and rishi Narada. Followed by Narada, Maghavan approached. He joined his hands in salutation and offered himself to the goddess. The one

who knew about everything<sup>210</sup> also worshipped the supreme one. O king! The lord of the gods spoke these words to Shri. ‘O one with the beautiful smile! Who are you? For what purpose have you come here? O one with the excellent brows! O fortunate one! From where have you come and where are you going?’

“‘Shri said, ‘In the three worlds, all the mobile and immobile objects, those with supreme souls desire to be united with me and make efforts. I have been born from a lotus and awake at the rays of the sun. I bring prosperity to all beings. I am Padma Shri and I wear a garland of lotuses. O slayer of Bala! I am Lakshmi. I am Bhuti.<sup>211</sup> I am Shri. I am Shraddha and Medha.<sup>212</sup> I am Sannati, Vijiti and Sthiti.<sup>213</sup> I am Dhriti.<sup>214</sup> I am Siddhi.<sup>215</sup> I am Tvidbhuti.<sup>216</sup> I am Svaha and Svadha. I am Samstuti, Niyati and Kriti.<sup>217</sup> I station myself on the standards and at the forefront of the soldiers of victorious kings. I dwell in the abodes, material objects and cities of those who are devoted to dharma. O slayer of Bala! I always dwell with Indras among men, those brave ones who desire victory and do not retreat from the field of battle. There are those who are always devoted to dharma, extremely intelligent ones who are devoted to brahmanas and speak the truth. I always dwell with those who are modest and generous in their conduct. I earlier used to dwell with the asuras, when they were bound down by the dharma of truth. However, since their intelligence has turned perverse, it no longer pleases me to live with them.’

“‘Shakra asked, ‘O one with the beautiful face! What was the conduct of the daityas when you dwelt with them? What did you see that you abandoned the daityas and the danavas?’

“‘Shri replied, ‘There are those who based themselves on their own dharma. They are not dislodged from patience. They take delight in the paths that lead to heaven. I am always attached to those spirited ones. There are those who are engaged in donations, studying, sacrifices and the serving of seniors, gods, brahmanas and guests. I always dwell with them. They<sup>218</sup> kept their houses clean. Their women were under control and they offered oblations to the fire. They were self-controlled and served their superiors and brahmanas. They were truthful in speech. They were faithful and conquered their anger. They were generous and did not suffer from jealousy. They never wished to be intolerant towards each other. They were patient and were not tormented at the prosperity of others. They donated and accumulated. They were noble and compassionate. They were extremely content and upright. They were firm in their devotion and had conquered their senses. Their servants and advisers were satisfied. They were grateful and pleasant in speech. They did what should be done and did not cause any injury. They were modest and sought to ensure their vows. On auspicious occasions, they always bathed well, smeared themselves well and ornamented themselves. They were devoted to fasting and austerities. They were cheerful and knowledgeable about the brahman. They awoke before the sun arose. They did not sleep before it was night. In the night, they always avoided curds and pounded ground meal.<sup>219</sup> They were brahmacharis. At the right time, they looked at clarified butter and other auspicious objects. They worshipped the brahmanas. They always observed dharma and donated, and always received back in turn. They slept when it was midnight and never slept during the day. They always found delight in giving a share of their possessions to the distressed, those who were without protectors, the aged, the weak, the diseased and women. They always comforted those who were miserable, frightened, anxious, terrified, afflicted by disease, those who had been robbed and those who suffered from calamities. They followed what was dharma and did not injure each other. They undertook favourable tasks and served preceptors and the aged. As is appropriate, they worshipped the ancestors, the gods and guests. They ate leftovers and were always devoted to truth and austerities. No one ate alone. No one went to another person’s wife. They exhibited compassion towards every being, as if towards one’s own self. They never found delight in releasing semen into space, animals, forbidden vaginas, or on sacred days. They were always accomplished in donating and were always upright. They were enthusiastic, without arrogance, extremely affectionate and forgiving. O lord! Truthfulness, generosity, austerities, purity, compassion, gentle speech and lack of injury towards friends—they possessed all these. They were not penetrated by excessive sleep, procrastination, lack of affection, jealousy, rashness, discontent, sorrow and desire. In earlier times, the danavas possessed these qualities and I dwelt with them, since the time beings were created. But once the era changed, time turned adverse and they lost those qualities. I saw that they had lost dharma and that their selves had been taken over by desire and anger. There were aged advisers who spoke about what was right and the truth. But they repeatedly laughed at these aged ones, who were superior in all the qualities. When they were seated and the aged ones arrived, they did not stand up and greet and worship them, as they used to earlier. Sons displayed their own power in the presence of the fathers. Enemies became servants and shameless-



ly proclaimed this fact. They desired to obtain great riches through the performance of reprehensible deeds that were not in accordance with dharma. They spoke loudly in the night. The fire began to blaze downwards.<sup>220</sup> Sons prevailed over their fathers and wives over their husbands. Mothers, fathers, the aged, preceptors, guests and seniors were no longer respected because of their seniority. Children were no longer protected. Without giving away as alms and sacrifices and without apportioning shares for ancestors, gods, guests and seniors, people started to eat. The cooks no longer faithfully observed requirements of purity in minds, words or deeds. They ate what was not covered. Grain was scattered around and became food for crows and rats. Milk was left uncovered. They arose with unwashed hands and touched clarified butter.<sup>221</sup> Spades, plants, garments and brass vessels were scattered around and so were all the other objects and implements, with the housewives taking no notice of these. Walls and storehouses were destroyed and no care was taken to repair these. The tethered animals were not given grass and water. While the children and all the servants looked on, the danavas ate, and it was food that should not be eaten. They cooked *payasa*,<sup>222</sup> *krisara*,<sup>223</sup> meat and *shashkuli*<sup>224</sup> for themselves.<sup>225</sup> They cooked what should not be cooked and ate pointless flesh. All of them slept after the sun arose and before it was night. There were quarrels in every house, day and night. Though noble ones were seated there, the ignoble ones were worshipped. They deviated from the tasks of the ashramas and hated each other. There was a mixture<sup>226</sup> and no sorrow on account of this. No difference could be seen between brahmanas who knew about the Vedas and those who were unclear about the chants, those who deserved a great deal of respect and those who deserved no respect. No difference could be seen in behaviour, ornaments, attire, movement or status. There was enjoyment without service and the rites and conduct of bad people were followed. Women wore the attire of men. Men wore the attire of women. They obtained supreme delight in sporting, pleasure and roaming around. Earlier, the prosperous ones had only given to heirs who were deserving. But that was no longer the case. Those who were non-believers became powerful. In a time of difficulty, a friend sought the support of a friend. However, even if there was the slightest bit of selfish gain a friend could obtain, he acted against his friend. People were interested in obtaining the riches of others. Even the noble varnas were seen to take up the livelihood of traders. Shudras became rich in austerities. There were others who followed futile rules of studying, without observing any vows. Students no longer served their preceptors. Some preceptors became friends to their students. Fathers and mothers became exhausted from trying to earn a livelihood. The aged no longer had protectors and had to beg food from their sons. There were wise ones there, knowledgeable about the Vedas and as deep as the ocean. However, they resorted to agriculture and similar pursuits and ignorant ones started to eat at funeral ceremonies.<sup>227</sup> Every morning, students no longer went to preceptors and asked them excellent questions about the tasks that should be performed. Instead, the roles were reversed. In the presence of the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, daughters-in-law summoned, chastised and instructed their husbands, or having summoned them, conversed with them. Fathers had to take great care to ensure that their sons were kindly disposed. Having divided up the property, they dwelt there in great misery. On seeing that the riches of others were burnt by the fire, stolen by thieves and seized by kings, they laughed from a sense of enmity, even if those others happened to be well-wishers. All of them were ungrateful, non-believers, wicked and intolerant and had intercourse with the wives of their preceptors. They ate what should not be eaten. They were without restraints and violated pledges. They became distressed because of their conduct and walked the path of catastrophe. O Indra of the gods! It is my view that I will not dwell with the danavas. O lord of Shachi! I have myself come before you. Welcome me. O lord of the gods! If you worship me from the forefront, so will the other gods. Seven other goddesses exist wherever I am. They are devoted to me. They follow my instructions and have given themselves to me. There is an eighth, and these eight desire to dwell with me here — Asha, Shraddha, Dhriti, Kanti, Vijiti, Sannati and Kshama.<sup>228</sup> O chastiser of Paka! The eighth, Vritti,<sup>229</sup> is at their forefront. They and I have abandoned the asuras and come to your dominion. We will reside with the thirty gods, who possess steadfast dharma in their souls.”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been addressed by the goddess in these words, Narada, the rishi of the three worlds, and Vasava, the slayer of Vritra, delighted her by welcoming her. The wind, the friend of the fire, began to blow in the abodes of the gods. It bore auspicious fragrances and was pleasant to the touch, bringing happiness to all the senses. The thirty gods stationed themselves in that auspicious spot, desiring to worship her. They wished to see Maghavan seated with Lakshmi. The one with the thousand eyes obtained divinity. He was with Shri and with his well-wisher, the celestial rishi.<sup>230</sup> The bull among the gods arrived there, on a chariot that was yoked to tawny

horses and was immediately honoured by all the gods. The powerful Narada noticed the sign that the wielder of the vajra made, one that was mentally approved of by the goddess Shri. The immensely wise one praised the arrival of Shri there as an auspicious event. The firmament was radiant and showered down amrita on the abode of Svayambhu, the grandfather. Drums sounded, though they had not been struck. All the directions were pleasant. As was appropriate, Vasava showered down rain on the crops. No one deviated from the path of dharma. The earth was ornamented with many stores of jewels. Victorious sounds, voiced and unvoiced, resounded on earth and in heaven. Illustrious men found delight in the rites, performed auspicious deeds and remained established in the path of virtue. Illustrious men, immortals, kinnaras, yakshas and rakshasas were happy and prosperous. Even if there was a wind, flowers, not to speak of fruits, did not drop down from trees before it was the right time. Cows yielded tasty milk whenever it was desired. There was no one who ever spoke fierce words. Such were all the objects of desire that were brought to the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, by Shri. If a person reads this account at an assembly of brahmanas and worships it, desiring prosperity, he will obtain prosperity. O supreme among the Kurus! I was urged by you. These are the supreme indications of prosperity and adversity. I have recounted all of this to you. You should examine the truth about this and follow it.”

## Chapter 1550(222)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Through what behaviour, what conduct, what learning and what devotion can one obtain Brahma’s abode, which is certainly beyond nature?”<sup>231</sup>

‘Bhishma replied, “If one is engaged in the dharma of moksha, is controlled and limited in diet and controls his senses, then he obtains Brahma’s abode, which is certainly beyond nature. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Jaigishavya and Asita. Jaigishavya was immensely wise and knew about the path of dharma. Asita-Devala spoke to the great rishi, who was never enraged. ‘You are not delighted when you are praised. You are not angered when you are criticized. What is this wisdom and whence has it come? How have you found refuge in it?’ Having been thus addressed, the great ascetic replied. Those great and auspicious words left no doubt and were full of deep import. ‘O brahmana! You have asked me about the supreme objective, devotion, tranquility and the performance of auspicious deeds. I will tell you. O Devala! There are those who regard censure and praise equally. They hide their vows and good deeds. They do not hurt through words. Nor are they engaged in speaking anything injurious. They do not wish to strike back those who strike them. Such people are learned. They do not grieve over what is yet to come. They act in accordance with what has presented itself. They do not sorrow over what is past and do not even remember it. O Devala! For both kama and artha, they honour what has presented itself. They accomplish their vows and forcefully act in accordance with what has presented itself. Their learning is mature and they are immensely wise. They have conquered anger and have vanquished their senses. They never commit any crimes, in mind, deeds and words. They never desire harm or injury to anyone else. Those patient ones are not tormented at someone else being prosperous. They do not speak words of praise or censure about others. Nor do they ever react to words of praise or censure about their own selves. They are tranquil in every way and are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They are not angered or delighted. They do not cause injury to others. They have released themselves from all the bonds that bind the heart down and are happy. They have no friends. Nor are they friends to others. They have no enemies. Nor are they enemies to others. Mortal ones who act in this way always live happily. O supreme among brahmanas! They know about dharma and observe dharma. They are happy, but that is not true of those who have deviated from the path. I have resorted to that path. What else is there to say? Whether I am criticized or praised, that is no cause for any joy. Depending on what they desire, men advance along different paths. However, censure and praise cannot affect my growth or decay. A person who knows about the truth is content with this, as if it is amrita. An accomplished person will always regard the two<sup>232</sup> equally and treat them like poison. He will then be freed from all sins. If a person ignores this, he will be destroyed. There are some learned ones who desire the supreme objective. Those people, who seek refuge in this vow, obtain happiness. A person who has conquered his senses is regarded as having performed all the sacrifices. He obtains Brahma’s abode, which is certainly beyond nature.

Gods, gandharvas, pishachas and rakshasas are incapable of climbing up to that objective and obtaining that supreme end.’”

## Chapter 1551(223)

‘Yudhisthira asked, “On this earth, who is the man who is loved by all the worlds, is unblemished and possesses all the spirits and also has every kind of quality?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have asked me a question. In this connection, there was a conversation between Ugrasena and Keshava about Narada.<sup>233</sup>

““Ugrasena said, ‘Behold. All the worlds have resolved to praise Narada. I think that he possesses all the qualities. I am asking you. Tell me.’

““Vasudeva replied, ‘O lord of the Kukkuras! Listen to me and I will tell you what you have asked me. O lord of men! I will briefly tell you about Narada’s virtuous qualities. His character and conduct are such that he does not suffer from arrogance, destructive of the body. There is no gap in his learning and his character. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. The ascetic Narada is restrained in his speech and there is no exception to this. There is no desire and avarice in him. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He knows the truth about adhyatma. He is tranquil, capable and in control of his senses. He is upright and truthful. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is energetic and illustrious. He possesses intelligence, policy and humility. Because of his birth, austerities and age, he is worshipped everywhere. He is cheerful in his conduct. He is excellent in his pleasures and food. He is considerate and pure. He speaks excellent words, devoid of malice. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He firmly acts so as to ensure welfare. There is no sin in him. He is not pleased at the hardships of others. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He desires to hear the objectives of the Vedas, the sacred texts and the accounts, and tolerates those who are ignorant. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He behaves equally. There is no one he loves and no one he hates. He speaks what is pleasant to the mind. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is extremely learned and is colourful in his tales. He possesses knowledge. He is without laziness and without deceit. He is not distressed. He is without anger and without greed. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He has never engaged in any quarrels for the sake of artha, dharma or kama. He has severed all taints. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is firm in his devotion. His soul has no blemish. He is learned and is devoid of cruelty. He is free from all sins of delusion. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. Though he is seen to be attached, he is actually detached from all the things that cause attachment. His doubts do not last for a long time. He is eloquent. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. For the sake of accomplishing any object or obtaining respect, he never praises himself. He is not envious and is mild in his speech. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. There are many kinds of ordinary conduct in this world. He is accomplished and knows about these. He associates with these people, but does not censure them. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He does not hate any kind of knowledge and subsists on austerities. He does not allow himself to spend time fruitlessly. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He has conquered exhaustion. He is accomplished in his wisdom. He is not content with meditation. He resorts to the rituals, without any distraction. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. Because his policies are good, he is never shamed. He is engaged in the supreme objective. He does not reveal the secrets of others. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is not delighted at obtaining wealth. Nor is he distressed when nothing is obtained. He is firm in his intelligence and his soul is not attached. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is vested with all the qualities. He is skilful and ceaseless in the pursuit of the auspicious. He knows about time. He knows about policy. He knows about the people to whom good things should not be done.’”

## Chapter 1552(224)



‘Yudhishtira said, “O Kourava! I wish to hear about the origin and end of all beings. From one yuga to another yuga, what is the nature of meditation, deeds and time? What is the truth about all the worlds and beings, their coming and going? How do creation and destruction come about? O supreme among virtuous ones! I am asking you. If your intelligence is so disposed as to favour me, you should tell me. Earlier, I heard you recount the supreme words that Bhrigu spoke to the brahmana rishi Bharadvaja, supreme in his intelligence. Therefore, I have become supremely devoted to dharma and wish to find refuge in that celestial spot. Therefore, I am asking you again and you should tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the illustrious Vyasa being asked by his son. Vyasa’s son, Shuka, studied all the Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads and having become accomplished about the knowledge of dharma, wished to find out about virtuous deeds. Vyasa’s son thus asked Krishna Dvaipayana, so that his doubt and uncertainty about the purport of dharma might be dispelled. ‘Who is the creator of all the categories of beings? How is the classification of time determined? What are the tasks that brahmanas should perform? You should tell me.’ Having been thus asked by the son, the father told him about everything. He knew about everything and about all forms of dharma. He knew about the past and the future.

““Brahma is without a beginning and without an end.<sup>234</sup> He is without origin and divine. He is without decay. He is permanent and without transformation. He cannot be thought of. He cannot be known. Before everything else, Brahma was there. Fifteen *nimeshas*<sup>235</sup> make a *kashtha*. Thirty *kashthas* are reckoned as a *kala*. Thirty *kalas* and an additional one tenth of a *kala* make a *muhurta*. Thirty *muhurtas* make up one day and one night. This is the enumeration given by the sages. Thirty days and nights are said to be one month. Twelve months are said to constitute one year. Those who know about numbers say that there are two *ayanas* in a year, *uttara* and *dakshina*.<sup>236</sup> In the world of men, the sun separates day from night. Beings make efforts to undertake tasks during the day and sleep during the night. One such month<sup>237</sup> is again one day and one night for the ancestors. *Krishnapaksha* is their day and they undertake action then, while *shuklapaksha* is their night and they sleep then.<sup>238</sup> One year<sup>239</sup> is again one day and one night for the gods. *Uttarayana* is their day and *dakshinayana* is their night. I have already recounted day and night in the world of the gods. I will now tell you about the number of years for Brahma. In due order, I will tell you about the number of years in *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali yuga*. Four thousand years<sup>240</sup> is said to be the duration of *krita yuga*. There are another four hundred years as morning and four hundred as evening.<sup>241</sup> For the other three, the main is reduced by one fourth, or thousand, and the *sandhya* by hundred.<sup>242</sup> These measurements continuously hold up the eternal worlds. O son!<sup>243</sup> Those who know about Brahma also know the eternal brahman. In *krita yuga*, all the four parts of dharma and truth exist. This is supreme and nothing is followed that is against dharma. In each of the others, dharma is seen to progressively reduce by one-fourth. Theft, falsehood, deceit and *adharma* flourish. In *krita*, there is no disease. There is success in all pursuits and the life span is four hundred years. In *treta*, the life span is reduced by a quarter. We have heard that the following of the Vedas, life spans, benedictions and the fruits of the Vedas also progressively decrease. There are different kinds of dharma for *krita yuga*, *treta* and *dvapara*. Dharma is also different for *kali yuga*, when one acts according to one’s capacity. Austerities are supreme in *krita yuga* and knowledge is supreme in *treta*. Sacrifices are spoken of in *dvapara* and donations in *kali yuga*. Wise and learned ones say that twelve thousand years constitute a *yuga*.<sup>244</sup> A thousand of these<sup>245</sup> is said to be one of Brahma’s days. Brahma’s night is also like that. When it is day for the lord, the universe is created. When it is destroyed, he immerses himself in *adhyatma*.<sup>246</sup> At the end of the sleep, he awakes. People who know about night and day say that Brahma’s day is for one thousand *yugas* and his night is also for one thousand *yugas*.

““When the night is over, the unmanifest Brahma awakes. Though he is not manifest, he creates the great being that is his manifest mind. Brahma is the energetic seed and everything in the universe springs from that. From that single being, both mobile and immobile objects are created. When it is dawn, he awakes and creates the universe with his knowledge. At first, there is *Mahabhuta*.<sup>247</sup> This quickly becomes *Mana*,<sup>248</sup> the manifest form of the soul. Those overwhelming rays create those seven through mental powers.<sup>249</sup> *Mana* is far-reaching and flows in many different ways. There are determination and resolution to create and is done by transforming itself. *Akasha*<sup>250</sup> is generated and sound is held to be its quality. From *Akasha* is created the pure and powerful *Vayu*,<sup>251</sup> the bearer of all scents. Touch is held to be its quality. From *Vayu* is generated *Jyoti*,<sup>252</sup> the dispeller of darkness. Those rays are

created and their qualities are held to be form. From Jyoti is created Apa,<sup>253</sup> with taste as its attribute. From Apa results Bhumi,<sup>254</sup> with scent as its quality. This is said to be the original creation. One after another, they receive the qualities of the preceding one. They are said to not only possess their own quality, but also of the one from which they were created.<sup>255</sup> If one discerns scent in water and takes that to be its quality, the person is ignorant. Scent is known to belong to earth, though it may also find a refuge in water or wind. These seven different entities have different forms of energy and exist separately, so that beings may be destroyed. But for the sake of creation, they come together. Those great-souled ones assemble and unite with each other. When they resort to a body, it is then said to be Purusha. When they resort to the body, there are sixteen forms.<sup>256</sup> With all the deeds,<sup>257</sup> Mahat enters the body. For the sake of austerities, it resorts to all beings. This is Mahabhuta, the original creator, and is known as Prajapati. He creates beings and is the supreme Purusha. Brahma is without origin and generates gods, rishis, ancestors, humans, worlds, rivers, oceans, directions, mountains, trees, men,<sup>258</sup> kinnaras, rakshasas, birds, animals, wild animals,<sup>259</sup> serpents, unmanifest and manifest objects, both mobile and immobile. Each of those created obtains the legacy of its earlier deeds. Having obtained these, each is created again and again. Violence, non-violence, mildness, cruelty, dharma, adharma, truth, falsehood—the creator thinks of the qualities that had pleased the being earlier. Mahabhuta affixes the different senses to the bodies of beings and determines the constituent parts. Some learned ones speak of enterprise, others of earlier deeds. Some brahmanas think of destiny, others think of the natural traits of beings. Enterprise, deeds and destiny lead to fruits and this is helped by nature. Some say that thinking of these three as separate is not correct. Some say this is true. Others say that is true. Others speak of the uneven consequences of deeds. However, there are insightful ones who know about the being who created the universe and regard all these equally. Austerities bring the greatest benefit to beings and its foundations are self-control and tranquility. Through these, one obtains everything, all that one desires and wishes for. Through austerities, one obtains the being who created the universe. He is in all beings and is the lord who created beings. It is because of austerities that the rishis can study the Vedas, day and night. Svayambhu created those eternal words, which are without origin and are passed down. Though they go by the names of the rishis, he created the Vedas.<sup>260</sup> When it was the end of the night, he gave it to them. Nama, Bheda, Tapas, Karma, Yajna, Akhya, Loka-siddhi, Atma-siddhi and the ten kinds of techniques have been spoken of in the Vedas.<sup>261</sup> He<sup>262</sup> is mysterious and has been spoken about in the words of the Vedas. Those who have insight into the Vedas know this. He has also been spoken about at the end<sup>263</sup> and can be realized by practising the rites. A person who is devoid of yoga has a sense of separateness and duality and is born because of his deeds. However, a person who knows about Atma-siddhi can generally drive that sense forcefully away. There are two Brahmas who should be known, Shabda-Brahma and Para-Brahma.<sup>264</sup> Having understood Shabda-Brahma, one can go to Para-Brahma.

““Slaughter represents sacrifice for kshatriyas. Offerings<sup>265</sup> represent sacrifice for vaishyas. Servitude represents sacrifice for shudras. Austerities represent sacrifice for brahmanas. There was no need for sacrifices in krita yuga, but they were recommended in treta yuga. There was an uprooting of sacrifices in dvapara yuga and this is also true of kali yuga. Mortals have come to regard Rig, Sama and Yajur as standing for different kinds of dharma. They desire their own prosperity and look upon austerities and the object of austerities as distinct. In treta, they were regarded as the same and there were extremely powerful ones, who controlled all mobile and immobile objects. In treta, sacrifices and the varnas co-existed together. However, because lifespans were reduced, these went into a decline in dvapara yuga. Even if one looks, in kali yuga, all the Vedas cannot be seen. With sacrifices, which are the bridges of dharma, they have been destroyed. The dharma of krita yuga can only be seen to be vested in some brahmanas who have cleansed their souls and are learned and are also devoted to austerities. Depending on the dharma of one yuga and another yuga, people are associated with rites of adharma. Though they know what the Vedas have described as being appropriate for a certain yuga, they sell their own dharma. When it rains repeatedly during the monsoon, a large number of beings and immobile objects are generated. From one yuga to another, dharma<sup>266</sup> is created in that fashion. As the seasons progress, many different kinds of forms are seen. In that fashion, different signs can be seen in Brahma, Hara and the third.<sup>267</sup> This has been ordained by time and it has neither a beginning, nor an end. It has been spoken about earlier and it creates and devours subjects. It is the controller who uses its powers to establish and restrain them. Because of their nature, they are repeatedly seen to be addicted to opposite sentiments. O son! I have told you everything that you have asked about—creation, time, rituals, the

Vedas, doers, tasks, action and fruits. I will now tell you about how he<sup>268</sup> withdraws himself, when it is night and day is over. The subtle lord of the universe then immerses himself in adhyatma. In the firmament, the sun burns everything, with its seven crests of flames. Everything is pervaded by those rays and the entire universe starts to blaze.’”

## Chapter 1553(225)

““Vyasa said, ‘All beings on earth, mobile and immobile, are first destroyed and then merge into the earth. Everything, mobile and immobile, thus disappears. The ground is then seen to be without wood and without grass, like the back of a tortoise. Water then accepts the quality of the earth, that is, scent. Having been bereft of scent, the earth can then be thought of as having been destroyed. Water is then established, in the form of mighty waves that make giant roars. It pervades everything, staying still and moving around. O son! Light then accepts the quality of water. Having lost its own quality, water seeks refuge in light. The sun is stationed in the middle of the firmament. But crests of flames hide it. Everything is covered by those rays and the entire sky seems to be blazing. However, the wind then accepts the quality of light. Though light is pacified, a gigantic wind is whirled around. The wind creates itself, using its own foundation.<sup>269</sup> It moves upwards, downwards and diagonally, agitating the ten directions. Space then devours the wind’s quality of touch. The wind is pacified. But basing itself in the sky, it continues to roar. The quality of space, sound, is then accepted by Mana, the soul of everything that is manifest. Whatever is made manifest by Mana, is withdrawn by the unmanifest Brahma. With its qualities, Mana is then submerged into Chandrama.<sup>270</sup> Mana is immersed in adhyatma and bases itself in Chandrama. After a long period of time, Sankalpa<sup>271</sup> is brought under subjugation. Chitta<sup>272</sup> devours Sankalpa and this is the supreme knowledge. Time devours knowledge and the sacred texts say that time is devoured by Bala.<sup>273</sup> But Bala is devoured by Time and is in turn brought under subjugation by Vidya.<sup>274</sup> The unmanifest and supreme Brahma then roars in the sky and brings Vidya into his soul. He is eternal and the greatest. In this fashion, all the beings are drawn into Brahma. This has certainly been spoken about properly. This is what should be known. This is knowledge. This has been seen by yogis who are supreme in their souls. Thus, the unmanifest Brahma repeatedly extends and withdraws. Thus do Brahma’s night and day last for 1,000 yugas.’”

## Chapter 1554(226)

““Vyasa said, ‘I have recounted everything that you asked about, about how different categories of beings are appointed. I will now tell you about the tasks to be undertaken by brahmanas. There are *jatakarma* and other rituals, ending with *samavartana*.<sup>275</sup> These involve the payment of dakshina and require a preceptor who is knowledgeable about the Vedas. One must be engaged in serving the preceptor and study all the Vedas. Having repaid the preceptor’s debt,<sup>276</sup> one obtains knowledge about all the sacrifices, and graduates. Having taken the preceptor’s permission, one must then adopt one of the four ashramas and follow its prescribed ordinances, until one is freed from one’s body. One can accept a wife for generating offspring. Or one can adhere to brahmacharya. Or, with the preceptor, one can dwell in the forest. Or one can follow the dharma of a mendicant. The state of the householder is said to be the foundation for all four. Such a person, who is self-controlled and matures while he scrapes away,<sup>277</sup> is successful everywhere. Through offspring, studying and performing sacrifices, he is freed from the three divine debts.<sup>278</sup> Having purified himself through these deeds, he can then proceed to the other ashramas.<sup>279</sup> He must dwell in a place of learning that is the most sacred spot on earth. That will be the yardstick for his obtaining supreme fame. The fame of brahmanas increases through extremely great austerities, accomplishment in learning, performing sacrifices and donating. As long as his deeds and fame remain in this world, a man obtains eternal and sacred worlds in the hereafter. He must study and teach. He must officiate at a sacrifice and perform his own sacrifices. He must not receive or give without reason. Great riches can be obtained by officiating at

sacrifices, through pupils and through maidens.<sup>280</sup> Whatever has been obtained must not be enjoyed alone. For a person who is in the state of a householder, there is no option but to receive for the sake of gods, rishis, ancestors, preceptors, the aged, the diseased and the hungry.<sup>281</sup> For those who are afflicted and in disguise, one must give, including cooked food, to the best of one's capacity. One must indeed give in excess of one's capacity. To those who deserve to be given, there is nothing that cannot be given.

““The virtuous and learned must even be given Uchchaishrava.<sup>282</sup> Entreated by Kavya,<sup>283</sup> Satyasandha, great in his vows, gave up his own life for the sake of protecting a brahmana and went to heaven.<sup>284</sup> Samkriti's son, Rantideva, offered only lukewarm water to the great-souled Vasishtha and obtained greatness in the vault of heaven. Atri's son, Indradamana, was an intelligent lord of the earth. He gave many kinds of riches to deserving people and obtained worlds in the hereafter. Ushinara's son, Shibi, gave up his limbs and his beloved son for the sake of benefiting a brahmana and went to heaven.<sup>285</sup> Pratardana was the lord of Kashi and gave up his own eyes for the sake of a brahmana, obtaining unmatched fame here and in the hereafter. The extremely intelligent Devavidha gave away a celestial umbrella, with eight golden ribs, and went to heaven with his entire kingdom. The immensely energetic Samkriti, from Atri's lineage, instructed his pupils about Brahma, who is without qualities, and went to the supreme worlds. The powerful Ambarisha gave brahmanas eleven billion cows and went to heaven, with his entire kingdom. For the sake of brahmanas, Savitri gave away her earrings and Janamejaya gave away his body. Both of them went to the supreme worlds. Yuvanashva, the son of Vrishadarbha, gave away all his jewels, his beloved women and a beautiful residence, and obtained the supreme worlds. Nimi, the king of Videha, gave away his kingdom. Jamadagni's son<sup>286</sup> gave away the earth. Gaya gave away the earth, with its cities, to brahmanas. There was a time when it did not rain and Vasishtha sustained and kept all the beings alive, like Prajapati among the subjects. Karandhama's son was King Marutta. He gave away his daughter to Angiras and swiftly proceeded to heaven. King Brahmadatta of Panchala was supreme among intelligent ones. He gave away his treasure and a conch shell to the foremost among brahmanas and obtained the worlds.<sup>287</sup> King Mitrasaha gave away his beloved wife, Madayanti, to the great-souled Vasishtha and went to heaven with her. The immensely illustrious royal rishi, Sahasrajit, gave away his beloved life for the sake of a brahmana and went to the supreme worlds. The great king, Shatadyumna, gave Mudgala a golden residence that was full of all the objects of pleasure and went to heaven. The powerful king of Shalva was known by the name of Dyutiman. He gave his kingdom to Richika and went to the supreme worlds. The royal rishi, Madirashva, gave away his slender-waisted daughter to Hiranyahasta and went to worlds that the gods are content with. The lord and royal rishi, Lomapada, gave away his daughter Shanta to Rishyashringa and obtained all the great objects of desire. The immensely energetic King Prasenjit gave away one hundred thousand cows, with their calves, and went to the supreme worlds. There are many other such great-souled ones. They were virtuous in their souls and conquered their senses. Through their donations and austerities, they went to heaven. As long as the earth exists, their fame will remain established. They obtained heaven through donations, sacrifices and the generation of offspring.””

## Chapter 1555(227)

““Vyasa said, ‘The knowledge known as trayi, mentioned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, must be experienced.<sup>288</sup> There are varnas and aksharas in the Rig and in the Sama, and in the Yajur and in the Atharva.<sup>289</sup> There are spirited and immensely fortunate ones who are accomplished in what is recounted in the Vedas and skilled about adhyatma. They can see the beginning and the end. A person who acts in a virtuous way must observe the rites laid down by dharma. A brahmana must desire to conduct himself so that he does not suppress any other being. He must obtain knowledge from virtuous and good people who are skilled in the sacred texts. He must be devoted to the truth and undertake all the acts in the world that are in accordance with his own dharma. Dwelling as a householder, a brahmana must perform the six tasks.<sup>290</sup> He must always faithfully perform the five sacrifices.<sup>291</sup> He must be patient and should not be distracted. He must be self-controlled, in control over his soul and knowledgeable about dharma. A brahmana must be beyond joy, fear and anger and must not suffer from lassitude. Donations, studying, sacrifices, austerities, modesty, uprightness and self-control increase energy

and drive away sin. An intelligent person must cleanse his sins and be restrained in his diet. He must conquer his senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, he should seek to attain the brahman. He must worship the fire and brahmanas. He must bow down before the gods. He must discard hateful words and all violence that is not in accordance with dharma. This is the kind of conduct that has first been laid down for brahmanas. Later, when knowledge arrives, he must engage in tasks. It is tasks that bring success. An intelligent person will be able to cross the terrible river that is extremely difficult to traverse and is difficult to withstand. The five senses constitute the water. The banks are made out of greed. Intolerance constitutes the mud. It originates from desire and anger and always causes great delusion. The entire universe is always struck by that great force, ordained by destiny, and confused and whirled around by the flow of nature. Time is the single great river and the years are the eddy. The months are waves and the seasons are the current. The fortnights are moss and grass. The twinkling of the eyelids represents the foam. Day and night are the force. The terrible crocodiles are represented by desire. The Vedas and sacrifices are the rafts. For beings, dharma is like islands. Artha and kama are the springs. Truth represents the stairs along the banks. Non-violence represents the trees that flow along. The yugas are the pools in the middle of the course. This is as difficult to comprehend as the brahman. The creator creates beings and drags them along, towards Yama's abode. Those who are learned can cross it, using their wisdom and patience as rafts. But what can those of limited intelligence, those who possess no rafts, do? A wise person can cross it, but not an ordinary person. From a distance, the wise person sees everything, good and bad traits. However, a person with limited intelligence has doubt in his soul and desire in his soul. His senses are fickle. A person who is not wise cannot cross and cannot go to the further shore. He suffers from the great taint of not possessing a raft and advances towards delusion. There are also those who have knowledge, but are grasped by the crocodile of desire. They don't possess a raft either. Therefore, an accomplished person must make efforts so that he does not submerge. A person who is not submerged in this way is a brahmana. A person who speaks about the three,<sup>292</sup> is born in a noble lineage and is without doubt and performs the three acts<sup>293</sup> is thus not submerged and crosses with the help of wisdom. A person who has refined himself, is self-restrained and controlled and has cleansed his soul is wise and subsequently obtains success in this world and in the next. Following the conduct of a householder, he must be without anger and without envy. He must perform the five sacrifices and always eat the leftovers from sacrifices. He must observe virtuous conduct and act in accordance with righteous rites. He must follow a conduct that does not obstruct dharma. Greed is censured for him. He must know the truth about learning and knowledge. He must be accomplished in virtuous conduct. He must observe the tasks of his own dharma and not mix up tasks.<sup>294</sup> He must faithfully perform the rites. He must be generous, wise and devoid of jealousy. If he knows the difference between dharma and adharma, he will be able to cross everything, even if it is difficult to traverse. He must possess fortitude and not be distracted. He must be restrained, knowledgeable about dharma and immersed in his soul. He must be without delight, fear and anger. Such a brahmana does not suffer. This was the conduct that was laid down for brahmanas earlier. If he performs acts that bring him the wealth of knowledge, he is successful everywhere. Even if they desire dharma, those who are not accomplished observe adharma. Dharma becomes like adharma for him and he is made to grieve. Deciding to do dharma, he achieves adharma. Wishing to do adharma, he achieves dharma. Such a person is foolish and does not know these two kinds of acts. He adopts bodies and is born and dies.”<sup>295</sup>

## Chapter 1556(228)

“Vyasa said, ‘Therefore, if one does not wish to be confused in one’s mind, when one is immersed and submerged, one must resort to the raft of knowledge. Learned and patient ones use this raft, which is constructed out of wisdom, to cross over. Those who are not learned cannot save themselves, or others. Sages who are united with yoga sever themselves from the taints. They yoke themselves to the ten tasks that bring bliss and also to *anupaya* and *upaya*.<sup>296</sup> Those who are wise use their mental sight to control their eyes<sup>297</sup> and conduct. Those who desire supreme knowledge use their intelligence to control their speech and thoughts. Those who desire tranquility in the soul use their knowledge to control their souls. A man who follows this may be extremely terrible, knowledgeable about the Vedas or ignorant about hymns and meditation, an observer of dharma and performer of sacri-



fices or one who commits wicked deeds, a tiger among men or a follower of the practices of eunuchs. But as long as he follows this, he will be able to cross the ocean of old age and death, which is so difficult to traverse. That is the reason one must single-mindedly devote oneself to yoga. One who enquires in this way obtains Shabda-Brahma. Dharma is the *upastha*.<sup>298</sup> Upaya is the *varutha* and apaya is the *kubara*.<sup>299</sup> Apana is the *aksha*, prana is the *yuga*.<sup>300</sup> Wisdom represents the harnesses that are attached to the yoke. Consciousness is the *bandhura*.<sup>301</sup> Good conduct and the avoidance of bad conduct are the *nemi*.<sup>302</sup> Sight, touch, scent and hearing are the four mounts that bear it along. Wisdom is the *nabhi*.<sup>303</sup> All the sacred texts are the *pratoda*.<sup>304</sup> Knowledge is the charioteer. The patient kshetrajna is seated there and faith and self-control are at the front.<sup>305</sup> Renunciation follows at the rear, with tranquility. The path is of purification, and meditation is the objective. With the soul, the chariot then obtains radiance in the divine world of Brahma. There are means of yoking this chariot so that one speedily reaches Akshara<sup>306</sup> by observing mental ordinances. The chariot then travels fast. I will tell you about this. Altogether, there are seven kinds of dharana that a learned person practises.<sup>307</sup> There are dharanas to the rear, to the side and everywhere. Gradually, through these, he controls the earth, the wind, space, water, fire, ego and intelligence and obtains special powers.<sup>308</sup> He then gradually obtains power over the one who is not manifest. Those who are united with yoga obtain the power of conception. Those who are united with yoga obtain success and behold their own atmans. Instructed properly, he sees the subtlety of the atman. The firmament seems to be covered in a subtle substance, as if smoke has been mixed with dew. Initially, the soul seems to be freed from the body. When the smoke has disappeared, a second form can be seen. In the sky, he then sees his atman in the form of water. When the water has passed, the form of fire manifests itself. When that has disappeared, there is the manifestation of a form that has the complexion of gossamer and is dressed in yellow garments. The yellow then becomes white and there is a form that is as subtle as the wind. The consciousness becomes white and subtle and this is nothing but the unmanifest brahman. There are diverse kinds of fruits that result from all these. Listen. If he is able to conquer the earth, he becomes like Prajapati, undisturbed, and with powers over creation and destruction. He can create beings from his own body. If he is able to control the quality of the wind, it is said that he can make the earth tremble with only his toe or finger, or with his hands and feet. If he immerses himself in the quality of space, he assumes the quality of space and differences between him and space vanish and he can make himself vanish. If he obtains the quality of water, as he wills, he can drink up all waterbodies. When his form is like that of the fire, he is seen to have a form that cannot be pacified. When the sense of ego has been conquered, these five<sup>309</sup> come under subjugation. When these and the sixth aspect of the atman, intelligence, have been conquered, he obtains all the powers and has a form that is not blemished. The manifest merges with the unmanifest and the unmanifest can be grasped. Everything in the world emerges from that<sup>310</sup> and obtains the trait of manifestation. I will explain to you in detail about how things become manifest. Listen. What is manifest has been spoken about in sankhya.<sup>311</sup> Listen. In both yoga<sup>312</sup> and sankhya, twenty-five kinds of truth have been spoken about and treated equally.<sup>313</sup> There is no difference between them. Listen. It has been said that anything that is manifest has birth, growth, decay and death. These are its four attributes. That which is the reverse of this is said to be the unmanifest. It is the determination of the Vedas that there are two kinds of atman. One has those four traits<sup>314</sup> and the four objectives<sup>315</sup> are prescribed for the other. The manifest comes out of the unmanifest and may have intelligence or may not have intelligence. I have told you about sattva and kshetrajna, which we have been instructed about.<sup>316</sup> The Vedas have said that both these atmans get attached to material objects. Sankhya says that withdrawal from material objects is the characteristic of success. One must be free from a sense of ownership and free from ego. One must be free from opposite sentiments and dispel all doubt. One must never be angered, nor hate. One must never utter a falsehood. Even if one is censured or struck, one must be friendly and not act in an adverse way. One must restrain all three kinds of chastisement in the form of speech, deeds and thoughts. One must look upon all beings in the same way. Such a person obtains the brahman. A person should not have desire, or lack of desire. He must only establish himself in the journey. He must not be greedy. He must not be distressed. He must be controlled. He must perform tasks and be indifferent to appearance. His senses must be brought together in his mind. He must not deviate from his wishes. He must show lack of injury towards all beings. According to sankhya, this is the kind of person who is emancipated. This is also the path of emancipation through yoga. Listen to the reasons for this. If one can progress beyond the

powers obtained through yoga, one is freed. There is no doubt that I have spoken to you about different kinds of attributes of intelligence. If a person is free from opposite sentiments in this way, he attains the brahman.””

## Chapter 1557(229)

““Vyasa said, ‘In this way, a patient person accepts the raft of knowledge and accepts and bases himself on peace. He is immersed and submerged, but seeks refuge in knowledge.’

““Shuka asked, ‘What is that knowledge? What is the learning that restrains opposite sentiments? According to dharma, what are the characteristics of attachment and detachment?’

““Vyasa replied, ‘A person who thinks that everything is because of nature, without being established in any other foundation,<sup>317</sup> does not obtain the means of emancipation, because of his lack of wisdom. Those who hold the view that nature is the sole reason for existence are like sacred grass that has not been sprinkled. They obtain nothing. Foolish people who resort to either of these views<sup>318</sup> and regard nature as the cause do not get what is best for them. This belief in nature is an act that results from confusion in the mind and brings destruction. There are those who hold that things exist because of nature and others who hold that they flow from other entities.<sup>319</sup> Those who are full of learning engage in tasks like agriculture, accumulation of crops, generation of offspring, collection of means of transport, objects of pleasure, houses, seats and medicines. Those who speak about these are full of wisdom. Wisdom engages one in attaining objectives. Wisdom conveys one to what is most beneficial. Though kings are the equals of others in attributes, it is through wisdom that they enjoy kingdoms. It is because of learning that one can differentiate between superior and inferior beings. O son! Creation results from learning. Learning is the supreme objective. Four kinds of birth have been laid down for all beings—from wombs, from eggs, from sweat and plants. This can be discerned. Mobile entities are seen to be superior to the immobile. It is evident that enterprise is superior to material objects. It is said that there are two kinds of mobile entities, those with many legs and those with two legs, those with two legs being superior. Those with two legs are said to be of two kinds, those that live on land and those that do not.<sup>320</sup> Those that live on land are superior and enjoy many kinds of food. Bipeds who live on land are of two kinds, medium and superior. Those who are medium follow the dharma of *jatis* and are better.<sup>321</sup> Among those who are medium, there are said to be two kinds—those who know about dharma and those who do not. Those who know about dharma are superior because they undertake what should be done and do not undertake what should not be done. Those who know about dharma are said to be of two kinds, those who are learned about the Vedas and those who are not. Those who are learned about the Vedas are superior because the Vedas are vested in them.<sup>322</sup> Those who are learned about the Vedas are said to be of two kinds—those who expound on them and those who do not. Those who expound on them are superior, because they uphold all kinds of dharma. They know about the Vedas and all the rites that lead to the fruits of dharma. The sacrifices and all the Vedas flow from those who expound about them. Those who expound about the Vedas are said to be of two types—those who know about the atman and those who do not. Those who know about the atman are superior, because they have comprehension about birth and lack of birth.<sup>323</sup> He who knows about both kinds of dharma<sup>324</sup> knows everything about all kinds of dharma. He is detached and firm in his resolution to the truth. He is pure. He is the lord.<sup>325</sup> The gods know such a brahmana as someone who is established in knowledge about dharma. He is firm in his determination about Shabda-Brahma and the one who is superior to that.<sup>326</sup> Such people know the soul both inside and outside.<sup>327</sup> O son!<sup>328</sup> Such people are brahmanas. Such people are gods. The entire universe of beings and everything that is beneficial in the universe is based on them. There is nothing that is equal to their sentiments of greatness. They are beyond all deeds and beyond origin and destruction. They are like Svayambhu and the lords of the four kinds of beings.””

## Chapter 1558(230)

“Vyasa said, ‘This is the conduct for brahmanas, as laid down earlier. If a learned person performs these tasks, I am successful in everything. He has no doubt in determining what acts should be undertaken. What are tasks that are mandatory and what are tasks that lead to knowledge?’<sup>329</sup> For tasks that lead to knowledge in men, this is what I have deduced and experienced. I will describe this. Listen. Some say that tasks are undertaken by men because of enterprise. There are other people who praise natural destiny. There are also some who draw a distinction between the three—human enterprise, destiny and the natural fruits of conduct. Some pick on a single reason, others on their combination. In this way, people established in acts say that there is existence, or that there is non-existence, or that existence cannot be established, or that non-existence cannot be established, thus treating them differently. But there are those who know the truth and regard all these as equal.<sup>330</sup> Treta, dvapara and kali yugas are full of doubts. The ascetics of krita yuga were tranquil and knew the truth. They did not look upon all the Rig, Sama and Yajur hymns differently.<sup>331</sup> They examined desire and hatred and only worshipped austerities. They were engaged in the dharma of austerities. They were firm in their observance and always devoted to austerities. They obtained everything, all that they desired and wished for in their minds. Through austerities, one becomes like the one who created the universe. One becomes like the lord who is the creator of all beings. He<sup>332</sup> has been spoken about in the words of the Vedas. He is difficult to fathom, even by those who have the sight of the Vedas. He has again been spoken about in Vedanta. He can be discerned through the yoga of tasks. It has been said that slaughter represents sacrifice for kshatriyas and oblations for vaishyas.<sup>333</sup> Servitude represents sacrifice for shudras and meditation represents sacrifice for brahmanas. One becomes a brahmana by diligently performing the tasks and studying. However, whether one performs the tasks or does not perform the tasks, by exhibiting friendliness,<sup>334</sup> one is said to be a brahmana. At the beginning of treta, all the Vedas, sacrifices and varnashrama existed. But as lifespans decreased, they went into a decline in dvapara yuga. The Vedas suffered during dvapara. It was like that in kali yuga too. At the end of kali, though they could be seen, yet they could not be seen.<sup>335</sup> One’s own dharma went into a decline and dharma suffered. The juices disappeared from cows, the earth, water and herbs. Because of adharma, the Vedas vanished, and so did the dharma of the Vedas and the ashramas. All mobile and immobile objects deviated from their own dharma. Just as all the beings are sustained by the rain showering down on the ground, from one yuga to another, the Vedas and their *angas*<sup>336</sup> are created afresh. Time does this and it has no beginning and no end. I have recounted this to you earlier, about creation and destruction. Dhata is the creator of all beings and Yama controls them. Nature drives them into many kinds of opposite sentiments. O son!<sup>337</sup> Creation, time, the upholding of the Vedas, the doer, tasks, rites and fruits—I have told you about these. This is what you had asked me.’”

## Chapter 1559(231)

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, he<sup>338</sup> praised the supreme rishi and asked him about the pursuit of moksha dharma.

“Shuka asked, ‘There may be a learned brahmana who has had offspring. He has performed sacrifices and has become old. He is wise and devoid of jealousy. How can he obtain the brahman, which is so difficult for the mind to grasp? Is it through austerities, brahmacharya, renouncing everything, intelligence, sankhya or yoga? I am asking you this. Instruct me. How can a man bring about unwavering attention in the mind and in the senses? You should explain this to me.’

“Vyasa replied, ‘There is nothing other than learning and austerities. There is nothing other than the control of the senses. There is nothing other than renouncing everything. Success cannot be obtained through any other means. Svayambhu created all the great elements first. These were then placed in the bodies of the living beings. It is said that the bodies come from the earth, the essence from water and the eyes from light. Prana and apana have the wind as their refuge and the vacant spots in the bodies have space as their refuge. Vishnu is in their steps, Shakra is in their strength and Agni is in their bowels, desiring to eat. The directions are in the ears, with hearing. Sarasvati is in the tongue, with speech. The ears, the skin, the eyes and the nose as the fifth, are said to be the senses of sight and it is through using these that knowledge becomes successful. Sound, touch, form, taste and scent as



the fifth are separate from the senses. They should be thought of as objects of sight. Like horses are controlled, the senses must be yoked by the mind. The atman in the heart must control the mind. The mind is the lord of all the senses and their objects. The atman and the mind ensure their creation and destruction. The senses, the objects of the senses, nature, consciousness, mind, prana, apana and the soul always reside in the bodies of embodied beings. But attributes, sound<sup>339</sup> and consciousness are not the base for knowledge. Knowledge is generated through energy, never through the qualities. In this way, in the body, the seventeenth is surrounded by the sixteen qualities.<sup>340</sup> Using his mind, a learned brahmana sees the atman inside himself. It cannot be seen through the eye or comprehended through all the senses. The great atman manifests itself through the lamp of the mind. It is without sound, touch, form, taste and scent. It is without decay. It is in the body, but is without a body. It is beyond the senses, but can be seen. It is not manifest, but exists in the manifest body. It is immortal, but resorts to a mortal body. A person who beholds it obtains the brahman after death. A learned person looks upon a learned brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste<sup>341</sup> equally. The great atman pervades everything and dwells in all beings, mobile and immobile. The atman is in all beings and all beings are in the atman. A person who sees the atman in all beings obtains the brahman. The extent to which one knows the atman in one's own self is the extent to which one knows the atman in the paramatman.<sup>342</sup> A person who always knows this, obtains immortality. He regards all beings as his own self and is engaged in the welfare of all beings. He leaves no trail, like a bird in the sky or an aquatic creature in the water, and the gods themselves are confused in trying to follow his tracks. A person whose tracks cannot be seen is indeed extremely great-souled. Time cooks all beings, inside its own self. But that which cooks time<sup>343</sup> can never be known. It does not exist above, or diagonally, below, to the side, or in the middle. It does not exist anywhere. Nor has it come from anywhere. Everything in this world is inside it. There is nothing that is outside it. Even if one shoots one thousand arrows one after another, each endued with the speed of thought, even then one will not be able to obtain the extremities of that which is the cause of everything. It is subtler than the most subtle. It is larger than the largest. Its hands and feet extend in every direction. The eyes, heads and faces are everywhere. The ears are everywhere in the world. It is established, pervading everything. It is smaller than the smallest. It is larger than the largest. It is certainly seen to be established inside all beings. The atman has two attributes, indestructible and destructible. The destructible form is in all the beings. The indestructible form is divine and immortal. Having gone to the city with the nine gates,<sup>344</sup> Hamsa<sup>345</sup> restrains and controls it. It is the lord of all beings, mobile and immobile. Those who are accomplished speak of the truth—it resorts to the nine, subject to destruction and decay. But Hamsa is said to be without decay. It is mysterious and is Akshara.<sup>346</sup> The learned obtain Akshara and give up life and birth.”<sup>347</sup>

## Chapter 1560(232)

“Vyasa said, ‘O virtuous son! I was asked by you and have recounted the exact truth. I have recounted to you the philosophy of sankhya. I will now tell you everything about the tasks of yoga. Listen. The intelligence, the mind and all the senses must be united. O son! If one meditates on the atman, one will obtain supreme knowledge. One will obtain this through tranquility. One must be self-controlled and devote oneself to adhyatma. One must turn one's intelligence to finding pleasure in the atman. One must be pure in one's deeds. One will then know what should be known. The learned and the wise say that five taints associated with yoga must be severed. These are desire, anger, avarice, fear and sleep as the fifth. Anger is conquered through tranquility, desire by giving up all resolution. A patient person resorts to the truth and should give up all sleep. Through fortitude, the penis and the stomach must be controlled. The hands and the feet must be protected through the eyes. The eyes and the ears must be controlled through the mind, the mind through words and deeds. Fear can be conquered through attentiveness and greed by serving the wise. In this way, one must attentively conquer the taints associated with yoga. One must honour the fire and brahmanas and bow down before the gods. One must abandon hateful words, those that are full of violence and not pleasant to the mind. The brahman is the energetic seed and is the essence of everything. It is the single one in both kinds of beings, mobile and immobile. Meditation, studying, donations, truth, modesty, uprightness, forgiveness, purity in food, cleanliness and control of the senses—energy can be increased through these

and sins cleansed. One is then successful in all one's pursuits, and knowledge arrives. One must behave equally towards all beings and towards what has been obtained and what has not been obtained. One will be cleansed of all sins, energetic, restrained in diet and in control over the senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, one must desire to attain the objective of the brahman. One must be single-minded and controlled in restraining the mind and the senses. Just before night, or just after night, one must fix one's mind on the atman.<sup>348</sup> If a person cannot control a single one of the five senses, that is a weakness in the senses, and wisdom drains out, as if through a hole at the bottom. The mind must first be subdued, like a fisherman drawing in the fish. A person engaged in yoga must then control the ears, the eyes, the tongue and the nose. Having restrained them, they must be fixed in the mind. With all resolution having ebbed away from the mind, it must then be fixed on the atman. The five<sup>349</sup> must be controlled and placed in the mind. After this, the mind, as the sixth, must be placed in the atman. When this has been done, the brahman is pleased and manifests itself. It blazes, like flames without smoke, or like the resplendent sun. Like fire in lightning in the sky, one then beholds the atman inside one's own self. Everything is then seen in it and it is seen in everything. Learned brahmanas see the great atman. They are immensely wise and persevering and are engaged in the welfare of all beings. If a person is rigid in his vows and observes them for a limited period of time,<sup>350</sup> seated alone, he obtains identity with Akshara. Infatuation, hallucination, the whirling around of scent, hearing and sight, wonders of taste and touch, pleasant, cool and warm breezes, powers and other phenomena—all these are obtained through yoga.<sup>351</sup> Knowing the truth about these, he must ignore them and return them to his atman. A restrained sage must ignore them. At three times,<sup>352</sup> he must engage himself in yoga—on the summit of a mountain, at a place of worship, or at the foot of a tree. He must control all his senses, like cattle in a cow pen in a village. He must always be single-minded in his thoughts and turn his mind to nothing other than yoga. In every way possible, one must restrain the fickle mind. He must be engaged in this and must never deviate. Single-minded in attaining the objective, he must reside in deserted mountain caverns, temples to the gods or deserted houses. He should have no association with others, in words, deeds and thoughts. He must ignore everything and be restrained in his diet. He should look at what has been obtained and what has not been obtained as equal. He should not be delighted. Nor should he be distressed. Whether he is praised or whether he is reprimanded, he must look on both equally, and not desire good things for the former and bad things for the latter. He should not be delighted at obtaining something. He should not think about something that has not been obtained. He must behave equally towards all beings and must follow the dharma of the wind.<sup>353</sup> Such a virtuous person seeks everything in the atman and looks upon everything equally. If he is engaged in this way for six months, he obtains the Shabda-Brahma.<sup>354</sup> On seeing that subjects are afflicted by grief,<sup>355</sup> he must look upon a lump of earth and gold in the same way. He must withdraw from this path.<sup>356</sup> He must desist from it and be free of confusion. Even if one belongs to one of the inferior varnas and even if one happens to be a woman, as long as one desires dharma, one can resort to this path and obtain the supreme objective.<sup>357</sup> A man who controls his senses and is not fickle obtains the ancient and eternal one who is without birth and without decay. It is subtler than the most subtle. It is greater than the greatest. United with his own atman, he sees it inside himself. These are the words of the great-souled maharshis. They spoke about this and beheld it with their minds. In one's mind, one should follow the words that have been spoken and instructed. A learned person will then see the great being inside his own self, until the time comes for a living being to be destroyed.”

## Chapter 1561(233)

“S huka asked, ‘The words of the Vedas talk about undertaking tasks and also about renouncing them. Where do those who pursue knowledge go?’<sup>358</sup> Where do those who act go? I wish to hear about this. Please tell me about this. These two kinds of instructions seem to be similar and also contradictory.”

‘Bhishma said, “Thus addressed, Parashara’s son spoke these words to his son.<sup>359</sup> ‘I will tell you about the paths of tasks and knowledge and also about the destructible and the indestructible, about where those who pursue knowledge go, and about the destination of those who undertake rites. O son! Listen single-mindedly to the mysteries of one and the other. Listen to dharma, as stated by the believers, and also to what the non-believers say.<sup>360</sup>

Both sides may seem to be similar, but there are differences between them. There are two paths on which the Vedas are established. There is dharma with characteristics of pravritti, and nivritti is also well spoken of.<sup>361</sup> A being is bound down through deeds and is freed through knowledge. Therefore, those who are far-sighted do not undertake any tasks. After death, one is born again through deeds and adopts a form with the sixteen attributes. Through knowledge, one becomes part of the eternal and unmanifest one, the one without decay and transformation. Therefore, men who are limited in intelligence praise deeds alone. They find pleasure and worship this net of bodily entities. However, there are also those who are supreme in intelligence, accomplished in the sight of dharma. They do not praise deeds, just as a person who drinks water does not praise wells and rivers. Deeds lead to fruits, happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence. However, a person who obtains knowledge reaches the spot where there is no reason to grieve. Once one goes there, one does not die. Once one goes there, one is not born. Once one goes there, one does not decay. Once one goes there, one does not increase. That is the supreme brahman, eternal, unmanifest and without decay. It is without any obstructions. It is without any exertion. It is immortal. It is without destruction. Opposite sentiments do not bind down a person there, in thoughts or in deeds. He is equal and friendly towards everyone, engaged in the welfare of all beings. O son! There is a difference between a man who is full of knowledge and one who is full of deeds. Know that he<sup>362</sup> can be seen to be as subtle as the moon established in its *kala*.<sup>363</sup> The rishi<sup>364</sup> has spoken in detail about what has been inferred. A newborn moon can be seen in the firmament, like a bent sliver. O son! Know that a person is embodied with the qualities of his deeds and, with those eleven transformations in him, is endowed with the increase in kalas.<sup>365</sup> The kshetrajna is the divinity who finds refuge in the bodily form, like a drop of water on the petal of a lotus. A person who conquers his atman through renunciation always knows this. Know that all beings are united with the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. The jivatman has these qualities. But know the jivatman to be the paramatman. Consciousness is said to be the quality of living beings. It makes them endeavour in everything. Those who know speak about the supreme beyond the body. The seven worlds flow from that.’”<sup>366</sup>

## Chapter 1562(234)

““Shuka said, ‘I have understood that there is a creation that is destructible, one united with qualities and the senses. But there is another kind of auspicious and eternal creation that can be comprehended by meditating on the atman. However, I again wish to hear about the reasons for virtuous conduct in this world. That is what righteous ones have ordained. I desire to hear those described. The words of the Vedas say that tasks should be undertaken and also that they should be renounced. How will I know which is better? You should explain this to me. Once I have been purified through instructions from my preceptor, I will know the truth about conduct in the world. Using the intelligence to separate and delink my atman from my body, I will then obtain that which is without decay.’

“Vyasa replied, ‘In ancient times, Brahma himself laid down rules for conduct. The supreme and virtuous rishis followed this earlier. The supreme rishis conquered the worlds through brahmacharya. In their hearts, they placed their atmans in what was most beneficial. They placed their minds in their atmans. They dwelt in the forest and survived on roots and fruits. They tormented themselves through extremely great austerities. They dwelt in auspicious spots. They showed no injury towards living beings. At the right time, they went to seek alms from the abodes of those who were in the vanaprastha stage, when there was no smoke and when the pestles were silent.<sup>367</sup> They obtained the brahman. They did not praise. They did not bow down. They gave up both the good and the bad. They roamed around alone in the forest, surviving on whatever little was available.’

“Shuka said, ‘In the words of ordinary people, the words of the Vedas are contradictory. In matters of proof, when there is such a conflict, which is then the sacred text? I wish to hear about this. O illustrious one! Tell me about it. How should one act, so as not to violate any rites that have been laid down?’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, Gandhavati’s son<sup>368</sup> spoke to his son. The rishi honoured the words that his infinitely energetic son had spoken. ‘Whether a person is a householder, a brahmachari, in the vanaprastha stage or a mendicant, if he undertakes all the prescribed tasks, he attains the supreme objective. Even

if a person follows any one of these ashramas in the appropriate way and is free from desire and hatred, he will obtain greatness after death. These are four steps in a ladder that vests with the brahman. By resorting to this ladder, a person obtains greatness in Brahma's world. For one quarter of the life, a person should follow brahmacharya, without any malice. Learned about dharma and artha, he should dwell with his preceptor or with his preceptor's son. He must be compliant and must not censure anybody. Having performed all his tasks, he must study with his preceptor, but only when his preceptor has summoned him for a lesson. In his preceptor's house, he must eat and sleep after his preceptor, and awake before his preceptor does. A disciple must perform all the tasks that a servant would have. Having done all this, he must stand at the side. He must be like a servant who performs all tasks and is accomplished in all the duties. He must be pure and skilled. He must possess all the qualities. He must be limited and pleasant in speech. He must conquer his senses and must not look at his preceptor with fierce eyes. He must not eat before he has eaten. He must not drink before he has drunk. He must not be seated before he has sat down. He must not sleep before he has slept. He must gently touch his preceptor's feet with upturned palms and knead them, the right with the right and the left with the left. He must respectfully greet his preceptor and say, "O illustrious one! Instruct me. I have done this. O illustrious one! I will do whatever else you ask me to." Having told him all this, he must offer all his riches to the preceptor. He must again tell his preceptor about all the tasks that he has undertaken and ask about what needs to be done. There are some scents and tastes a brahmachari must refrain from. However, it is the determination of dharma that once he has graduated, he can use these again. These are the detailed rules that have been laid down for a brahmachari. Practising all these, he must remain near his preceptor. To the best of his strength, he must try to please his preceptor. Having done this, the disciple can move on from this ashrama to another ashrama and observe the duties of that. One quarter of his life will thus be spent on the vows of the Vedas and fasting. Having given the dakshina to the preceptor, following the prescribed ordinances, he will graduate. Desiring to accomplish dharma, he will follow dharma and ignite a fire,<sup>369</sup> accepting a wife. This is the state of a householder, in which, he spends the second quarter of his life.'"

## Chapter 1563(235)

“Vyasa said, ‘For the second quarter of his life, he will dwell in a house, in the state of a householder. Desiring to pursue dharma, he will follow good vows, ignite a fire and accept a wife. Wise and learned ones have laid down four kinds of conduct for a householder. The first of these is to maintain a store of grain, the second to maintain a pot of grain, the third is not to provide for tomorrow, while the last is to follow the conduct of pigeons.<sup>370</sup> If one desires to follow dharma and conquer the worlds, in progressive order, the succeeding one is superior to the preceding one.<sup>371</sup> A person who follows the first must undertake six tasks.<sup>372</sup> A person who follows the second must undertake three.<sup>373</sup> A person who follows the third must undertake two.<sup>374</sup> The fourth will only base himself on sacrifices to Brahma.<sup>375</sup> The dharma of a householder is said to be great. However, one must not cook only for one's own self. Nor should animals pointlessly be slaughtered.<sup>376</sup> If an animal or an inanimate being<sup>377</sup> is to be brought down, the ordinances of a sacrifice must be observed. He must not sleep during the day, or during the first part of the night and the last part. He must not eat in between.<sup>378</sup> When it is not her season, he must not summon his wife. In his house, there must never be a brahmana who is not fed or not worshipped. Guests who convey oblations at sacrifices, those who are learned in the Vedas and have bathed themselves in the vows, those who are accomplished and learned in the Vedas, those who are generous and live according to their own dharma, those who observe the rites and those who are ascetics must always be honoured. It is recommended that offerings meant for the gods and the ancestors are for people like these. It is instructed that a share should be given to all beings, even if they sport long nails and hair, even if they have been dislodged from dharma despite knowing it, even if they have deviated from *agnihotra* sacrifices and even if they have injured the old and the young. A person who is a householder must give food to all of them. The eating of leftovers is always like eating amrita. It is like eating the oblations that are left at the end of a sacrifice, like amrita. A person who eats after the servants have eaten is said to subsist on leftovers. He must be content with his own wife. He must be self-controlled. He must conquer his senses and be devoid of malice. He must not get into debates with officiating priests, priests, preceptors, maternal uncles,

guests, dependants, the aged, the young, the distressed, physicians, kin, matrimonial allies, relatives, mothers, fathers, daughters-in-law, brothers, sons, wives, daughters and the category of servants. Having been freed from such conversations, he is freed from all sins. If he can conquer this, there is no doubt that he wins all the worlds. The preceptor is the lord of Brahma's world, the father is the lord of Prajapati's world.<sup>379</sup> Guests are the lords of Indra's world, the officiating priest of the world of the gods. Daughters-in-law hold sway over the world of apsaras, kin over that of the Vishvadevas. Matrimonial allies and relatives control the directions and mothers and maternal uncles control the earth. The old, the young, the distressed and the weak hold sway over the sky and have a power like Vishnu. The elder brother is like a father. The wife and the son are like one's own body. The class of servants represents one's own shadow. The daughter is most loved. Therefore, one must always tolerate them, without any anxiety, and must never reprimand these. A person devoted to the dharma of a householder must be learned. He must always be devoted to dharma and must be free of exhaustion. He must perform any task because of considerations of artha. He must act in conformity with dharma. There are three kinds of conduct for a householder and in progressive order, each subsequent one is superior to the preceding one.<sup>380</sup> This is also said to be true of the four ashramas.<sup>381</sup> These are said to be the rules that ensure prosperity in all tasks. A kingdom prospers when those who dwell in it follow the conduct of those who store grain in pots, or glean them like pigeons from the ground.<sup>382</sup> If a person cheerfully follows the vows of a householder, ten generations of his ancestors and ten generations of his descendants attain the supreme objective. Acting in this way, he obtains worlds obtained by universal emperors. This is also the objective ordained for those who control their senses. The world of heaven is ordained for householders who are generous in their minds and engaged in welfare. That heaven is full of excellent blossoming flowers and has celestial vehicles. It has been spoken about in the Vedas. Householders who control their souls find a place in the world of heaven. The brahman is the ladder that frees them. By following this second mode,<sup>383</sup> one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. After this, there is the supremely great ashrama that is the third, spoken about for those who are ready to cast aside their bodies. Residing in the forest is superior to being a householder. They waste away their bodies there. Listen to this.'"

## Chapter 1564(236)

‘Bhishma said, “You have been told what learned ones have ordained about the conduct of householders. O Yudhishtira! Listen to what has been spoken about next. In due order, a person must proceed to the third stage, one that is characterized by supreme conduct. This is the ashrama of vanaprastha, followed by those who are not distressed from observing vows. O Partha! Listen to the conduct of those fortunate ones, who follow this everywhere in the world. They reside in auspicious regions and follow this conduct after having examined it first.

“Vyasa said, ‘When a householder sees wrinkles on his body and white hair, and when he sees the children of his children, he should then resort to the forest. The third quarter of the life should be spent dwelling in vanaprastha. He must tend to the fires he used to tend to.<sup>384</sup> He must worship the residents of heaven. He must be controlled and restrained in his diet. Without any distraction, he must only eat at the sixth time indicated for taking meals.<sup>385</sup> He must maintain cows and other things required for agnihotra sacrifices. He must survive on rice or barley that grows wild and has not been tilled. He must offer oblations at the five kinds of sacrifices.<sup>386</sup> Four kinds of conduct are recommended for those who are in the vanaprastha ashrama. Some only wash<sup>387</sup> what is needed immediately. Others store enough for a month. Some others store for a year and some others store for twelve years. To accomplish their objectives, they must perform the sacrifice of honouring guests. When it rains, they must only have the sky for a shelter. When it is autumn, they must find refuge in the water. When it is summer, they must torment themselves through the five austerities.<sup>388</sup> They must always be restrained in diet. Some roam around the earth. Others are seated or lie down on the bare ground. In the forest, some sprinkle their beds and seats with water. Some use their teeth as mortars for grinding grain. Others use stones for crushing grain. Some only drink a little bit of grain mixed with water during shuklapaksha. Some only drink<sup>389</sup> during krishnapaksha. Others eat what becomes available in the normal course of things. Some are rigid in their vows and subsist on roots, fruits and flowers. As is appropriate, they follow the mode revered by the Vaikhanasas.<sup>390</sup> That apart, there are many other

learned ones who have been consecrated. The fourth stage<sup>391</sup> is generally referred to as the dharma of the Upanishads. This follows after garhasthya and vanaprastha. O son! Even in this yuga, brahmanas who know the truth about everything have followed this—Agastya, the saptarshis,<sup>392</sup> Madhucchanda, Aghamarshana, Samkriti, Sudiva, Tandi, who lived on barley and conquered his exhaustion, Ahovirya, Kavya, Tandya, the wise Medhatithi, Shala, Vaka, Nirvaka and Shunyapala, who conquered his exhaustion. They were learned in this kind of dharma and went to heaven. O son! There were large numbers of Yayavara<sup>393</sup> rishis, fierce in their austerities and accomplished and far-sighted about dharma. They immediately obtained the fruits of this dharma. There were so many brahmanas who resorted to the forest that it is impossible to speak about them. There were the Vaikhanasas, the Valakhilyas and Sikatas. They performed difficult deeds. They were always devoted to dharma. They conquered their senses. All of them went to the forest and immediately obtained the fruits of their dharma. Those fearless ones may not have become *nakshatras*,<sup>394</sup> but can be seen in the large number of stellar bodies. When one is overcome by old age and afflicted by disease, in the fourth quarter of one's life, one should abandon the vanaprastha stage. One should perform the sacrifice that can be performed in a single day and offer up everything as dakshina. One must perform one's own funeral rites.<sup>395</sup> One must take pleasure in one's own self and must not depend on anyone else. One must regard one's own self as the sacrificial fire and give up all possessions. One must perform the sacrifice that can be performed in a single day, which is the sacrifice of all sacrifices. When one sacrifices one's own self, all other sacrifices and rites can cease. This sacrifice for the sake of emancipation is like making sacrifices to the three fires.<sup>396</sup> One should not find fault with the food and only eat five or six mouthfuls for the sake of the five breaths of life.<sup>397</sup> At the end of vanaprastha, a sage will cut his hair, beard and nails. Having cleansed himself, he will then proceed from this ashrama to the next sacred ashrama. Such a brahmana departs, offering freedom from fear to all beings. After death, he obtains the eternal and energetic worlds. He is excellent in conduct and all his sins have been cleansed. He doesn't act so as to desire anything in this world or in the next. He is without anger and without confusion. He is beyond friendship and enmity. Such a man is indifferent towards anything other than his own atman. He observes *yama* and that which follows.<sup>398</sup> He is not distressed at having to give up the principles, oblations and mantras of the sacred texts.<sup>399</sup> He is pursuing the objective of performing a sacrifice with his atman. He has conquered his senses and has no doubt about this supreme dharma. After the other three, this fourth ashrama is said to be supreme. It is the best and has all the good qualities. I will recount that supreme state to you. Listen.””

## Chapter 1565(237)

““Shuka said, ‘You have spoken to me about what should be done in vanaprastha. When one is engaged in this,<sup>400</sup> to the best of one's ability, how should one engage the atman, so that one attains the supreme objective?’

““Vyasa replied, ‘A person must cleanse himself in the two ashramas.<sup>401</sup> Having done this, he must then engage in tasks for the supreme objective. Listen attentively to this. Having eliminated all taints in the first three stages, he must then resort to the supreme state of renunciation. Renunciation is the best stage. Listen to the conduct that must be followed in that state. One should always roam around alone and seek to accomplish the objective without any help. A person who roams around alone sees that there is nothing to be shunned and there is nothing that decays. He is without a fire. He is without an abode. At best, he enters a village for the sake of food. It is recommended that he should save nothing for the next day. His sentiments must be like that of a sage. He must eat little, be restrained in his diet and eat only once a day. The signs of a mendicant are a skull,<sup>402</sup> shelter under trees, old garments as attire, lack of companions and indifference towards all beings. Words penetrate him like stones hurled into a well<sup>403</sup> and do not return to the original speaker. Such a person is fit to dwell in the ashrama of isolation. He does not see others. He does not hear others. He never speaks injurious words, especially about brahmanas. He always speaks words that are pleasant to brahmanas. He is silent when he is censured and finds treatment for this within his own self. Though he is always alone, he fills the entire sky.<sup>404</sup> To him, a deserted spot seems to be full of people. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He covers himself with anything. He eats anything. He



sleeps anywhere. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is afraid of company, as if they are serpents. He regards anything that satiates as hell.<sup>405</sup> He regards women as corpses.<sup>406</sup> The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is not angered or delighted, regardless of whether he is honoured or insulted. He does not cause any being to be frightened. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is not delighted at the prospect of death. Nor is he delighted at the prospect of remaining alive. He only waits for the time,<sup>407</sup> like a servant awaiting instructions. His consciousness has been cleansed. His food and words are clean. He is free from all sins. Since he is without enemies, what fear can he have? He has been freed and has no cause for fear from anything that possesses a body. The footsteps of any animal that follows get lost in the footsteps of an elephant. Everything is absorbed in the footprints of an elephant.<sup>408</sup> In that fashion, all dharma and artha are absorbed in lack of injury towards all beings. A person who practises non-violence always resides in what is immortal. He is non-violent and looks on everything equally. He is truthful. He has fortitude and controls his senses. He is the refuge of all beings. He attains the supreme objective. In this way, learned ones are content in their wisdom and are not frightened. He has gone beyond death and the attributes of death do not affect him. Such a sage is free from all attachments and seems to be established in the sky. He wanders alone and tranquil. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. His life is for the sake of dharma and his dharma is for the sake of others. His days and nights are for the sake of the auspicious. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is without desire. He is without exertion. He does not bow down his head. He is without praise.<sup>409</sup> He does not engage in any inferior deeds. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He takes delight in the happiness of all beings. He is extremely distressed at the misery of everyone. If they are frightened, he sorrows. He faithfully undertakes his own tasks. Granting beings freedom from fear is superior to all donations and dakshina. A person who first gives up all injury to the bodies of beings grants these subjects eternal freedom from fear. From the navel of the world, the face is raised upwards and oblations are offered into it.<sup>410</sup> The head and the upper limbs of the fire receive everything, the good and the bad. In the confines of his heart, he offers his own life up as a libation. All the worlds and the gods are satisfied with his offering up his atman as oblation in that agnihotra. It is divine and golden. It has three shells and three parts.<sup>411</sup> It is the supreme objective and is foremost among things to be known. It is greatest in all the worlds. The gods and accomplished people with good deeds walk along that path. It has been spoken of as the greatest objective, the essence of what is to be known in the Vedas and all the rites. He who knows it as the atman in his own body is always loved by the gods. It is not attached to the earth and is divine. It cannot be measured. It is golden. It was born from an egg and resides in the egg.<sup>412</sup> It is like a winged bird in the firmament. Blazing in its rays, it can be known inside the atman. It whirls around and has no decay. It rotates on six naves, with twelve spokes and excellent joints.<sup>413</sup> The wheel of time is deep and mysterious and everything in the universe heads towards its gaping mouth. It pervades the body of everything in the universe and all the worlds progress towards it. That is spoken of as something that satisfies the gods. When they are satisfied, they gratify that open mouth. The body is ancient and eternal and is full of energy. It is the end of all the worlds and offers freedom from fear. Beings are never frightened of him and he never causes fright to beings.<sup>414</sup> He is not censured. Nor does he censure anyone. A brahmana who sees the paramatman in his own atman is like that. He is humble and without confusion. He is beyond all sins. He desires nothing in this world, nor in the other world. He is without anger and without confusion. He regards a lump of clay and gold in the same way. He is devoid of sorrow and is beyond friendship and enmity. He is beyond censure and praise and beyond liking and disliking. He wanders around indifferent, as a mendicant.’”

## Chapter 1566(238)

“Vyasa said, ‘The kshetrajna has to experience the transformations of nature. These don’t know it,<sup>415</sup> but it knows them. It is made to undertake tasks because of the senses, with the mind as a sixth. Well-trained and excellent horses are firmly controlled.<sup>416</sup> The objects of the senses are superior to the senses and the mind is superior to these objects. Intelligence is superior to the mind and the mahat atman is superior to the mind. The unmanifest is superior to the mahat and the immortal<sup>417</sup> is superior to the unmanifest. There is nothing that is superior to the immortal. It is the highest limit and the supreme objective. The atman is hidden inside all beings and cannot be

seen. Only those who are sharp in their intelligence and can see the subtleties of the truth can fathom it. The intelligence must be used to collect all the senses, the many objects of the senses and the mind, as the sixth, into the atman. One must think about what should be thought about. Having used intelligence to goad the mind, one must meditate on the supreme. Realizing that he has no power, the person must seek to obtain the immortal objective through tranquility in his soul. But a person whose memory is fickle and whose self is under the subjugation of all the senses and who gives his atman up to them, is like a person who is dead and obtains nothing but death. Abandoning all resolution, the consciousness must be merged in the truth. When consciousness is vested in the truth, a person becomes like Kalanjara.<sup>418</sup> With the consciousness gratified, the sage goes beyond the good and the bad. He bases himself on the gratification of his atman and enjoys infinite happiness. A sign of that satisfaction is that he sleeps in contentment. He is like the flame of a lamp that is not stirred by the wind. In this way, at the beginning of the night and the end of the night,<sup>419</sup> he unites the atman with the atman.<sup>420</sup> He is virtuous in his diet and pure in his soul and beholds the atman in the atman.<sup>421</sup> This is the essence of all the Vedas and the sacred texts. O son! For realizing the atman, these are the instructions of the sacred texts. This is the essence of all dharma and all accounts about the truth. This amrita has been obtained by churning the ten thousand chants from the Rig Veda.<sup>422</sup> It is like wood and fire being used to churn butter from curds. O son! In that way, for you, I have given you the wisdom of the learned ones. O son! These are the words of the sacred texts, given as instructions to snatakas. These should not be given to people who are not tranquil, those who are not self-controlled and ascetics. Nor should they be given to those who are unacquainted with the words of the Vedas, or do not follow them. They should not be given to those who are malicious, not upright, those who are directionless in their tasks, those who slander and those who burn everything down in the science of argumentation. But they should be given to calm ascetics who are praised, or should be praised, and beloved sons and devoted disciples. The secrets of this dharma should be revealed to such people and not to anyone else. I think that even if a man is given the entire earth with all its treasures, this truth is superior to that gift. There is a greater and superhuman mystery about adhyatma. This was seen by the maharshis and sung about in Vedanta. You have asked me about it and I will tell you the truth about it.’”

## Chapter 1567(239)

““Shuka asked, ‘In detail, tell me about adhyatma again. O illustrious one! O supreme among the rishis! What is this adhyatma?’

“Vyasa replied, ‘O son! For men, there is something known as adhyatma. I will recount this to you. Listen to the explanation. Earth, water, fire, wind and space are the great elements in beings and are like the waves of the ocean.<sup>423</sup> A tortoise stretches out its limbs and draws them back again. Like that, the great elements extend and withdraw in beings. They pervade all the mobile and immobile objects. Creation and destruction are determined on the basis of these. The five great elements exist in all the beings that have been created. O son! But it is also seen that these exist unevenly in different beings.’

“Shuka asked, ‘How can one discern this in the bodies? What are senses? What are qualities? How can they be felt?’

“Vyasa replied, ‘I will accurately describe what has been comprehended about this. Listen attentively to the truth about how it occurs. Sound, hearing and space inside beings—these three originate in space. The breath of life, exertion and touch—these three are the qualities of the wind. Form, sight and digestion—these three are said to result from fire. Taste, tongue and juices—these three are the qualities of water. Scent, nose and the body—these three are the qualities of the earth. The five elements that I have described to you mix with the senses and undergo transformations. Touch is said to be associated with the wind, taste with water and form with fire. Sound is said to be created by space and smell is the attribute of the earth. The mind, intelligence and sentiments—these three are created by their own selves.<sup>424</sup> Though these are beyond the qualities, it is the view that they are not superior to the qualities. There are five senses in men and the mind is said to be the sixth. Intelligence is said to be the seventh and the kshetrajna is the eighth. Rajas, sattva and tamas—these three are created by their own selves. Those qualities are seen to exist equally in all beings. A tortoise extends its limbs and draws them back again. In that way, intelli-



gence extends the qualities and draws them back. A person who is supreme in intelligence acts so as to look for it<sup>425</sup> above the feet, the hands, the face and the head. Intelligence is controlled by the qualities, and the senses are controlled by intelligence. Among all of these, the mind is the sixth. If there is no intelligence, how can there be qualities? When a person is full of cheerfulness and is seen to be tranquil in his soul and pure, that is held up by sattva. When a person is full of torment in deeds and thoughts, rajas is always the originator and this confuses beings. When a person is confused about the unmanifest and finds this incomprehensible and impossible to know, this is driven by tamas. Delight, joy, bliss, peace and satisfaction in the consciousness, regardless of whether something unexpected occurs or does not occur—these are the qualities of sattva. Insolence, falsehood in words, greed, confusion, lack of forgiveness, whether there is a reason for this or whether there is no reason for this—are the signs of rajas. Delusion, distraction, lassitude, sleep and lack of exertion—whenever these are indulged in, that is known to be the quality of tamas.””

## Chapter 1568(240)

““Vyasa said, ‘The mind creates sentiments, and intelligence chooses between them. The heart differentiates between the pleasant and the unpleasant. Know that there are three kinds of urges behind action. The objects of the senses are superior to the senses and the mind is superior to the objects of the senses. Intelligence is superior to the mind and it is held that the atman is superior to intelligence. Intelligence is in the atman of men. Intelligence is in the atman that is inside. When it creates sentiments, it becomes the mind. Since the senses are different, the intelligence discriminates between them. When it hears, it becomes hearing. When it touches, it becomes touch. When it sees, it become sight. When it tastes, it becomes the tongue. When it smells, it becomes the nose. It is intelligence that creates a difference between these. What are called the senses in men are seen to be the three kinds of sentiments of the intelligence.<sup>426</sup> One is sometimes delighted. At other times, one grieves. There are times when a person is united with neither happiness, nor unhappiness. The ocean is the lord of the rivers and the giant shoreline withstands the waves. Like that, though driven by the three sentiments, it can transcend them.<sup>427</sup> Though thought of as existing separately, when it desires anything, intelligence is known as the mind. All the strong senses must be conquered. In due course, when each of these<sup>428</sup> overwhelms the intelligence, it exists in the mind. Rajas is excited and follows sattva. Just as the spokes are attached to the wheel of a chariot, those qualities are attached to those three.<sup>429</sup> A man must use his supreme intelligence like a lamp to control the senses and use yoga to be indifferent and immobilize desire. While qualities are natural, a learned person is not confused. He is always without sorrow and without delight and beyond jealousy. The senses pursue objects of desire and are incapable of seeing the atman. It is difficult for people with cleansed souls to see it in this way, not to speak of others. However, the mind can be used to control them,<sup>430</sup> as if through reins. The atman then manifests itself in all beings, like a lamp inside a pot, when the darkness has been overcome. An aquatic bird doesn’t become wet, even when it roams around in water. In that fashion, a person whose wisdom is accomplished is not tainted by material objects. Though he enjoys them, he is never attached to them. He has performed deeds earlier,<sup>431</sup> but only loves the atman now, which is inside all living beings. He has given up the path characterized by the qualities. For him, there are no qualities, other than those engendered by the sattva in his atman. The qualities are incapable of comprehending the atman, though it always knows them. It sees the qualities and is also their creator. Know that this is the subtle difference between understanding and the kshetrajna. One of them creates the qualities. But the qualities do not create that single one. They<sup>432</sup> are naturally different, but are always united. The fish that lives in water is different from the environment in which it lives. A gnat may be attached to a fig tree, but they are actually different. A blade of grass is also different from the clump of *munja* grass it is in. Like that, though they are united, they are actually established separately.””

## Chapter 1569(241)

““Vyasa said, ‘Understanding creates the qualities and the kshetragna is also established there. However, the lord<sup>433</sup> is indifferent towards all the qualities that have been created. All the qualities that have been created follow their own nature. This is like a spider creating strands that are the qualities. Despite pravritti, some are not felt, because they decay and are withdrawn. Others are destroyed because of nivritti.<sup>434</sup> One must think about both these possibilities and try to do what is best. Following either principle, one can obtain the womb of greatness. A man must always act so as to obtain the one without beginning and without end.<sup>435</sup> He must not be angry. Nor should he be delighted. He must always be devoid of jealousy. He must firmly sever the strands in his heart that are due to intelligence and thoughts. Having overcome them, he will be free from doubt. He will be devoid of sorrow and obtain happiness. A man who is dislodged from the ground and falls down and is submerged in a full river is tormented. Know this world to be also like that. However, a learned man who knows the truth acts accordingly and it is as if he is on land. A person who knows the atman realizes that the atman is only knowledge. Such a person understands the origin and destruction of all beings. He looks on both<sup>436</sup> equally and soon obtains excellent and supreme tranquility. In particular, because of birth, this comes naturally to brahmanas. Knowledge of the atman and tranquility are sufficient to lead to emancipation. Having known this, one becomes enlightened.<sup>437</sup> What other qualities can there be of learning? Having known this, learned people accomplish their objectives and are emancipated. Those without learning suffer from great fear. But those with learning have no such great fear. There is no objective that is superior to this, the eternal end obtained by learned people. There are people who are afflicted with jealousy because of material objects.<sup>438</sup> There are others who grieve at these and sorrow. However, an accomplished person looks at these and does not grieve at what has been obtained and what has not been obtained. Anything done without attachment destroys earlier deeds.<sup>439</sup> In this world, one must act so as to renounce<sup>440</sup> both the pleasant and the unpleasant.’”

## Chapter 1570(242)

““Shuka asked, ‘O illustrious one! Tell me about supreme dharma, to which nothing is superior. What is that special dharma?’ “Vyasa replied, ‘I will tell you about the dharma that was praised by the ancient rishis. This is special among all kinds of dharma. Listen single-mindedly to this. The senses cause agitation. One must carefully use one’s intelligence to restrain them. This is like a father controlling his foolish and wayward sons. The concentration of the mind and the senses is the greatest austerity. Since all dharmas flow from this, this is regarded as supreme dharma. The intelligence must be used to restrain all of them, with the mind as the sixth. Thinking a lot about what it is difficult to think about, one must be satisfied in the atman. Just as cows return from pasture and return to their houses, when one is immersed in the atman, one can see the supreme and the eternal. Like a flame that is without smoke, great-souled and learned brahmanas can see the great atman<sup>441</sup> in all atmans. A giant tree with many branches and full of flowers and fruit does not itself know which are its flowers and which are its fruit. In that way, the atman does not know where it has come from and where it is going.<sup>442</sup> However, there is an inner atman that sees everything.<sup>443</sup> With the blazing lamp of knowledge, see the atman inside your own self. Having seen the atman inside your own self, know everything and know that you are not the body. Be cleansed from all sin, like a snake that has cast off its skin. With that supreme intelligence, be free of sin and free from anxiety. This terrible river<sup>444</sup> has currents that flow in every direction in this world. The five senses are crocodiles and the mind and resolution are embankments. It is strewn with the grass of greed and confusion. Desire and anger are the reptiles. While truth constitutes the *tirthas*, falsehood constitutes the waves. Wrath is the mud in that supreme river. It arises from the unmanifest and flows swiftly. A person who has not cleansed his soul is incapable of crossing it. It is full of desire in the form of crocodiles. Use your intelligence to cross it. It flows towards the ocean of life and its womb is in the nether regions. It is difficult to cross. O son! It flows from one’s birth and in this world, its eddies are impossible to cross. Learned and persevering people, accomplished in wisdom, can cross it. Having crossed, you will be freed from everything. You will be pure and your soul will be cleansed. Having resorted to that superior intelligence, you will attain the brahman. After crossing, you will be free from all hardships. Your soul will be cheerful and devoid of sin. You will calmly look down on beings on this earth, as if from the top of a mountain. You will

not be enraged. You will not be delighted. You will not possess any violent designs. You will behold the creation and destruction of all beings. The learned think that this is the best among all kinds of dharma. Sages who know about the truth and are the best among the upholders of dharma, say that this is dharma. This knowledge about the atman should be made known and instructed to one's son. It should be spoken about to someone who is self-controlled and devoted and has welfare in mind. This knowledge about the atman is a mystery. It is the greatest among all mysterious things. O son! The omnipresent atman is itself a witness to what I have spoken about. The brahman is not female, male or neuter. It doesn't experience misery and joy. It is the past, the present and the future. If one knows this, irrespective of whether one is male or female, one does not have to be born again. This has been ordained for obtaining freedom from birth. O son! Just as I have spoken about this to you, there are many other views and perceptions. But I have expounded what is proper. You are my son. You are a virtuous son, with qualities. Therefore, I have affectionately told you this excellent account. You asked me about it and for the sake of your welfare, I have lovingly told you. O son! I have told you what you asked me about.'"

## Chapter 1571(243)

“Vyasa said, ‘One should not be enamoured of fragrances, food and other objects that bring happiness. Nor should one accept ornaments. One should not desire for honour, deeds and fame. A brahmana is known from such conduct. There may be a person who has served,<sup>445</sup> observed brahmacharya and studied all the Vedas—the Rig, the Sama and the Yajur. But this does not make him a brahmana. There may be a person who looks upon all beings as kin, who knows everything and knows all the Vedas. But until lack of desire is generated in him, he does not become a brahmana, free from birth and death. There may be a person who has performed many kinds of sacrifices and rites, giving away a lot of dakshina. But until he is compassionate and without greed, he does not obtain the status of a brahmana. When a person does not frighten others and is himself not terrified by others, when he does not desire anything or hate anything, he attains the brahman. When he does not have wicked sentiments towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and speech, he attains the brahman. Other than the single bondage of desire, there is no other bondage in this world. Someone who is free from the bondage of desire attains the brahman. Just as the moon is freed from misty clouds, he is freed from desire. Such a patient person is radiant and waits for his time<sup>446</sup> with fortitude. He is full, like waters flowing into the ocean. He is in a state that is not dislodged and is not overwhelmed by desire. He does not wish for any desires. In this body, he obtains the world of heaven. The Upanishads represent the truth of the Vedas. Self-control represents the truth of the Upanishads. Donations represent the self-control of the Upanishads. Austerities represent the donations of the Upanishads. Renunciation represents the austerities of the Upanishads. Happiness represents the renunciation of the Upanishads. Heaven represents the happiness of the Upanishads. Tranquility represents the heaven of the Upanishads. If you desire truth and contentment, their supreme signs are tranquility and the extinguishing of grief, sorrow in the mind, torment and thirst. Lack of sorrow, lack of ownership, tranquility, cheerfulness, immersion in the atman and lack of desire for riches—these again are said to be the six signs of completeness. The wise use these six qualities of sattva to become extremely learned. Those learned ones are established in the atman in this world and are also learned after death. It<sup>447</sup> has not been created, nor is it destroyed. It is natural and does not require cleansing. A wise person acts well, knows adhyatma and enjoys a happiness that is without decay. He restrains his mind from wandering around in every direction and fixes it.<sup>448</sup> Through this, he obtains a satisfaction that is incapable of being obtained through any other means. Through this, one is content without eating. Through this, one is content without riches. Through this, one is strong, despite lack of attachment. A person who knows this knows the Vedas. Such a person protects his atman and does not think about the various doors.<sup>449</sup> He is only devoted to the atman. Such a person is said to be a virtuous brahmana. Such a person is established, having extinguished his desire. He is controlled in the supreme truth. He is happy in every way, like the waxing moon. Because of his qualities, such a sage is honoured among beings as special. His happiness dispels sorrow, like the sun dispelling darkness. He transcends tamas. He transcends deeds. He transcends any decay in the qualities. He is not attached to material objects. He does not experience birth and death. He is free in every way and regards everything as equal. While still in his body, he transcends the

senses and the objects of the senses. He obtains the supreme cause and transcends the reason for action.<sup>450</sup> Having obtained the greatest of the great, there is no return<sup>451</sup> for him.””

## Chapter 1572(244)

““Vyasa said, ‘There may be a disciple with qualities, one who has been freed from opposite sentiments and having established himself in artha and dharma, is inquisitive. Such a person should be told, and made to hear, about this greatness. Space, wind, light, water and the earth as the fifth, existence, non-existence and time—these exist in all beings formed by the five elements. The gaps are space and the sense of hearing is formed by that. A person who knows about the ordinances of the sacred texts knows that sound is its quality. Movement and prana and apana are constituted by the wind. Know that the sense of touch and touch itself is its<sup>452</sup> essence. Heat and the light in the eyes are full of light. Know that its qualities are the warmth in the body. Liquid discharges, juices and fat are instructed as belonging to water. It is held that the sense of taste and the tongue represent qualities of water. Bones, teeth, nails, beard, body hair, hair, veins, arteries, skin and all solid objects are the essence of the earth. The nose is said to represent the sense of smell. The sense associated with scent is known to represent the essence of the earth. Each succeeding element possesses the qualities of the preceding one.<sup>453</sup> The sages know that everything flows from the aggregate of the five elements. The mind is the ninth and intelligence is said to be the tenth.<sup>454</sup> The eleventh is the atman inside and this is said to be superior to all the others. Intelligence tries to analyse the atman and the mind tries to explain the atman. Through deeds, it is possible to infer that the atman is inside the body.<sup>455</sup> All living beings are characterized by these<sup>456</sup> and time. But a wise person sees it<sup>457</sup> as untainted and does not suffer from confusion.’””

## Chapter 1573(245)

““Vyasa said, ‘It<sup>458</sup> is separate from the body and exists in a subtle form inside the body. Following the deeds mentioned in the sacred texts, those who are conscious of the secret texts, can see it. When the rays of the sun travel around, their coming and going cannot be seen. In that way, it is freed from the body and moves around, but it is beyond human powers to detect this.<sup>459</sup> However, the sun’s radiance can be seen in an image in the water. In that fashion, the image of the soul can be seen in the gross body. In its subtle form, it is freed from the body. Those who have controlled their senses and know about the truth can perceive this. Whether asleep or awake, they always think about the atman. Primarily, they are free from opposites and abandon all tasks connected with rajas. Day is like night to them and night is like day. These yogis always practice yoga and have their atmans under control.<sup>460</sup> It is eternal. But because of qualities, it is not eternal in living beings. It is without birth and without decay and roams around in subtle form, with those seven.<sup>461</sup> If a man has not been able to conquer his mind and his intelligence even in his sleep, he distinguishes between his body and someone else’s body and experiences happiness and unhappiness. That is the reason he obtains misery. That is also the reason he obtains joy. He experiences anger and greed and acting in accordance with these, faces calamities. In his dreams, he obtains great riches and performs auspicious deeds. But when he awakes, these cannot be seen. The extremely energetic atman is located in the hearts of all beings. However, because of being enveloped with tamas and rajas, it cannot be seen in the bodies. But there are those who are devoted to the sacred texts and yoga, searching for their own atmans. They look for that other form, which is as firm as a vajra. Different beings have been created, with the four ashramas and their tasks. But of these, yoga is the foremost and it takes one to the supreme brahman. Meditating, immersed in yoga and tranquil, Shandilya spoke about the seven subtle ones and the six strands of Maheshvara.’””<sup>462</sup>

## Chapter 1574(246)

“Vyasa said, ‘There is a colourful tree of desire in the heart. It is generated from the store of confusion. Anger and insolence constitute its gigantic trunk. The desire for knowledge is the source of its liberation. Ignorance is its root and delusion sprinkles it with water. Jealousy makes up the leaves. Earlier acts provide the fertilizer. Lack of judgement and lack of thought are the branches. Sorrow makes up the terrible smaller branches. The thirst that seduces are the creepers that surround it from all sides. Those who are extremely greedy, desiring the fruit, worship that giant tree. They seek those fruits, tied up in bonds of effort. As long as one is tied down by those bonds, the tree attracts a person. But if a person endeavours, he can go beyond misery and transcend them both.<sup>463</sup> A person whose wisdom is accomplished and bursts forth burns down the tree, like the poison in a person afflicted with disease being destroyed. Aversion becomes his foundation and forcibly destroys its foundation.<sup>464</sup> Distraction is severed through renunciation and by resorting to supreme tranquility. A person who knows that desire only attracts, can use the knowledge of desire to kill it and go beyond misery. The body is described as a city and intelligence as its lord. For intelligence, which is based in the body, the entity known by the name of the mind is the one that thinks of the objectives. The senses are the subjects in the city and it is for them that tasks with objectives are performed. It is there that two terrible taints exist, known as *tamas* and *rajas*. With the lords of the city,<sup>465</sup> the citizens remain alive for this. Serving those two taints, the ones without the gates<sup>466</sup> also serve those objectives. It is difficult for intelligence to be conquered.<sup>467</sup> Nevertheless, its *dharma* is said to be the same as that of the mind. The citizens<sup>468</sup> are agitated by the mind and lose their stability. The intelligence strives for objectives that are damaged and are not successful. But despite not being accomplished, they are separately remembered and torment the mind. Though the mind alone is important, the intelligence is also separately afflicted. One is then enveloped by emptiness and covered by *rajas*. The mind meets this *rajas* and has a friendship with it. It gathers up the citizens of the city and hands them over to *rajas*.’”

## Chapter 1575(247)

‘Bhishma said, “O son! Listen once again to an enumeration of the qualities in beings. O unblemished one! These are praiseworthy words, uttered from Dvaipayana’s mouth. The words spoken by the illustrious one are like a blazing fire, with flames that have no smoke. O son! I am recounting these examples to you yet again. The earth has qualities of stability, gravity, hardness, productiveness, smell, heaviness, capacity, accumulation, establishment and fortitude. The water has qualities of being cool, juices, moisture, liquidity, softness, tranquility, taste, flowing and wetness in earthy objects. The qualities of fire are difficulty of resisting, energy, heat, capacity to cook, radiance, purification, affection, lightness, sharpness and the ability to rise upwards, as the tenth. The qualities of the wind are control, touch, the location of speech, independence, strength, speed, confusion, effort and the performance of tasks. The qualities of space are sound, expanse, ability to pervade, the lack of a foundation, the lack of a refuge, not being manifest, not being transformed, the ability of not being resisted and the ability to cause transformations in beings. Created by the five elements, it is said to possess fifty qualities.<sup>469</sup> Fickleness, argumentation, expression, detachment, imagination, forgiveness, propensity towards good, propensity towards evil and lack of readiness—these are the nine qualities of the mind. Thinking good and evil, enterprise, concentration, doubt and observation—these are the five qualities of intelligence.’”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How can intelligence have five qualities? How can the senses possess qualities? O grandfather! Tell me everything about this subtle knowledge.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are said to be sixty qualities in beings.<sup>470</sup> Beings are always attached to those qualities. Beings, and what they are attached to, have been created by Akshara. O son! That is what has always been spoken about in this world. O son! Everything present in this world is said to have been thought in his mind and created. That is the truth about the origin of all beings and about the origin and destruction of beings. Therefore, obtain tranquility in your intelligence.’”

## Chapter 1576(248)

‘Yudhishtira said, “These lords of the earth are lying down on the surface of the ground. Those immensely strong ones have lost their lives in the midst of the armies. Each of them was terrible in strength, endowed with the might of ten thousand elephants. In the battle, they have been slain by men who were their equals in energy and strength. In earlier times, I have not seen any others who could have killed these people in battle. They were full of valour. They were full of energy and strength. O immensely wise one! Yet they are lying down here, bereft of their lives. When they have lost their lives, the word ‘dead’ is used about them. These dead kings were generally fierce in their valour. I have a doubt in this connection. Where do senses and death come from? Who dies?<sup>471</sup> Where does death come from? Why do subjects on earth confront death and are borne away by it? O one who is like the immortals! O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was a king named Avikampaka. With his mounts having been destroyed in a battle, he came under the subjugation of the enemy. His son was named Hari and he was Narayana’s equal in strength. However, with his army and his followers, he was slain in the battle by the enemy. Having come under the subjugation of the enemy, the king was overcome by sorrow, because of his son. Desiring peace, he roamed around on earth<sup>472</sup> and saw Narada. The lord of men told him everything that had happened, about his being captured in the battle by the enemy and about his son’s death. On hearing his words, Narada, the store of austerities, wished to dispel the sorrow on account of his son and told him an account. ‘O king!<sup>473</sup> Listen to this extremely detailed account. O lord of the earth! I heard this account earlier. Engaged in the creation of subjects, the immensely energetic grandfather<sup>474</sup> created a large number of subjects. They became extremely old, but did not die, and generated offspring. O unblemished one! There was not the slightest bit of space that was not covered with living beings. O king! The three worlds were covered with them and were unable to breathe. O lord of the earth! He<sup>475</sup> then began to think about how they might be destroyed. However, though he thought about it, he could not determine any reason for the destruction. O great king! From the fire of his rage, a fire arose out of his body. O king! The grandfather burnt down all the directions with this. O king! The fire that resulted from the illustrious one’s anger burnt down heaven, earth, the firmament and the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. When the great grandfather was enraged with the force of that great anger, living beings and immobile objects were certainly destroyed. Then the god Sthanu Shiva, the destroyer of enemy heroes and the lord of the Vedas, the one who has tawny and matted hair, wanted to ensure a refuge for the universe and went to Brahma. For the sake of the welfare of the subjects, Sthanu went to him. The blazing god, the granter of boons, spoke to Shiva. “It is my view that you should get a boon from me. What is your desire? I will accomplish it today. O Shambhu! I am the doer. I will ensure your pleasure and your growth.”””

## Chapter 1577(249)

“““Sthanu said, “O lord! Everything that I have done is for the sake of the subjects who have been created. O grandfather! Know that you should not be angry with the ones you have created. O god! In every direction, the subjects are being burnt because of the fierceness of your fire. On seeing this, I feel compassion. O lord of the universe! Do not be enraged with them.”

“““Prajapati replied, “I am not enraged. Nor is it my desire that these subjects should cease to exist. I desire the destruction for the sake of making the burden of the earth lighter. The goddess<sup>476</sup> has been afflicted by the burden and has constantly urged me for the destruction. O Mahadeva! Because of the burden, she seems to be submerging in the water. Despite using my intelligence to reflect on this, I have not been able to understand what to do. Anger entered me because I wished to destroy this growth.”

“““Sthanu said, “O lord of the thirty gods! Be pacified about this destruction and do not be enraged. Do not destroy the subjects and the mobile and immobile objects. There are four kinds of categories of beings—all the waterbodies, all the grass and herbs, mobile objects and immobile objects. The entire universe is being robbed of



these and all these created entities are being reduced to ashes. O illustrious one! Show your favours. O virtuous one! This is the boon that I seek from you. Once they are destroyed, these subjects will never return again. Therefore, let this infinite energy be countered with your own energy. With the welfare of the subjects in mind, think of some other means. O scorcher of enemies! Let all these living beings be able to return again. It is not desirable that all the created subjects should be destroyed, together with their offspring. O lord over lords of the worlds! I have been appointed by you as the one who presides over existence. O protector of the universe! All the mobile and immobile objects in the universe have sprung from you. O great god! With your favours, I desire that these subjects should return and find subsistence.”

“Narada said, ‘The god who was restrained in speech<sup>477</sup> heard Sthanu’s words. He then restrained the energy that had originated from within himself. The illustrious one, worshipped by the worlds, restrained the fire. The lord began to think about creation and destruction. He restrained the fire that had resulted from his anger. At that time, from within the great-souled creator of the universe, a lady manifested herself. She was dark and dressed in red garments. Her eyes and palms were red. She was adorned with celestial earrings and wore divine ornaments. Having emerged from within him, she stood on his right. Those two lords of the universe<sup>478</sup> saw that celestial maiden. O lord of the earth!<sup>479</sup> The original god of the worlds<sup>480</sup> addressed the goddess and said, “O Death! Slay the subjects. Using my intelligence and my rage, I have thought of you as the destroyer. Therefore, destroy all the subjects, whether they are dumb or learned. O beautiful one! Without any differentiation, destroy the subjects. You are thus appointed by me and you will obtain supreme prosperity.” The goddess Death wore a garland of lotuses. Hearing this, the maiden was tormented by grief and began to shed tears. O lord of men! She joined her hands in salutation and wept. To ensure the welfare of men, she again entreated him.”’

## Chapter 1578(250)

““Narada said, ‘The large-eyed lady controlled her grief. She bent like a creeper, joined her hands in salutation and said, “O supreme among those who grant boons! I have been created by you. How can you engage a lady like me in such a terrible deed, one that is fearful to all living beings? I am terrified that I will act in accordance with adharma. Instruct me about a task of dharma. O lord of everything auspicious! You can see with your eyes that I am terrified. There are living beings who are children, young and aged, who have done me no injury. How will I take them away? O lord of living beings! I am bowing down before you. Show me your favours. There will be beloved sons, friends, brothers, mothers and fathers. O god! If I make them die, I am terrified that I will commit a crime. The tearful sorrow and compassion of the survivors will burn me for an eternal period. I am frightened of their power. That is the reason I seek refuge with you. O god! The performers of wicked deeds will go to Yama’s abode. O granter of boons! O lord! Be pacified and show me your favours. O grandfather of the worlds! This is the desire that I wish you to satisfy. O lord of the gods! Through your favours, it is my wish that I should perform austerities.”’

“The grandfather replied, ‘O Death! I have thought of you for the sake of destroying subjects. Do not think about this. Go and destroy all the subjects. This will certainly happen. It cannot be otherwise. O one with the unblemished limbs! O unblemished one! Act in accordance with my words.’

“Narada said, ‘O mighty-armed one! O vanquisher of enemy cities! Having been thus addressed, she did not reply. She stood there, raising her eyes up at the illustrious one. Though he repeatedly spoke to her, the beautiful one seemed to be bereft of her senses. The god of the gods, the lord of the lords,<sup>481</sup> was himself silent. Brahma then resorted within himself and became pacified. The lord of the worlds smiled and looked at all the worlds. The illustrious and unvanquished one controlled his rage. We have heard that the lady then departed. Having promised to destroy subjects, she withdrew. O Indra among kings! Mrityu<sup>482</sup> swiftly went to the spot known as Dhenuka. The goddess performed supreme austerities there, ones that are very difficult to accomplish. Standing on one foot, she performed austerities for fifteen billion years.<sup>483</sup> There, she performed austerities that are extremely difficult to accomplish. After this, the immensely energetic Brahma again spoke these words to her. “O Death! Swiftly act in accordance with my instructions.” But she ignored this. O son!<sup>484</sup> O one who grants honours! She again performed

austerities for eighteen billion years. O son! She roamed with the deer and again performed austerities for ten thousand billion years. O king! She went again and observed an extraordinary vow of silence. O king! During this, she immersed herself in water for eight thousand years. O bull among the Bharata lineage!<sup>485</sup> The maiden then went to the river Koushiki. Subsisting on water and air, she practised the vows again. The immensely fortunate one then went to Ganga and Mount Meru. Desiring the welfare of living beings, she stood immobile there. She went to the summit of the Himalayas, where the gods had assembled. O Indra among kings! She stood on her toes for a billion years. She made careful efforts to pacify the grandfather. The creator of the worlds went and spoke to her there. “O daughter! Why are you acting in this way? Act in accordance with my words.” Death then again spoke to the illustrious grandfather. “O god! I cannot take away the subjects. I am again seeking your favours.” She was terrified because of the fear of adharma and again beseeched him. However, the god of the gods ignored her words and spoke to her. “O Death! There will be no adharma for you. O fortunate one! It is desirable that you should control the subjects. O fortunate one! The words that I have spoken can never be falsified. Eternal dharma will now penetrate you. I and all the gods will always be engaged in ensuring your welfare. I will also grant you the other wish you desire. Subjects will be afflicted by disease and no sin will accrue to you. You will be a man among men, a woman among women and the third sex among eunuchs.” O great king! Having been thus addressed, she joined her hands in salutation and again spoke to the great-souled and undecaying one, to the effect that she could not do this. But the lord of the gods told the goddess, “O Death! Destroy men. O auspicious one! I am decreeing that no adharma will attach to you. In front of me, I can see that tears are dropping from your eyes and that you are holding them in your hands. These will become diseases among men, terrible in form. O Death! At the appropriate time, they will afflict them. When their end comes, all living beings will be united with desire and anger. Since you will not discriminate in your conduct, you will follow dharma and no adharma will be attached to you. Protect the dharma that I have spoken about. You will not immerse yourself in adharma. Therefore, you should find this desire agreeable. Engage yourself in destroying living beings.” At this, Mrityu was frightened of his curse and agreed to follow the instructions. When the time of living beings was over, she started to dispatch desire and anger, so as to confound and destroy them. The tears that Mrityu had shed became diseases that afflicted the bodies of men. Therefore, one should not sorrow when the lives of living beings are extinguished. Instead, one should use one’s intelligence to understand this. When their lives are over, all gods among beings depart and return again.<sup>486</sup> O lion among kings! In that way, when their lives are over, all men go away, like the gods. The wind is terrible and immensely energetic. It emits a mighty roar and is the breath of life in all living beings, following different courses in the bodies, until they are separated from their bodies. That is the reason the wind is special and is known as the god of the gods. All the gods are characterized by traits of mortality. There are traits of divinity in all mortals. O lion among kings! Therefore, do not sorrow over your son. Your son has obtained heaven and delight there. This is the way Mrityu was created by the god, so that she could appropriately destroy beings when the time arrives. The diseases are the tears that she shed. At the right time, they destroy living beings.”

## Chapter 1579(251)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “All these men have doubts about dharma. What is dharma? Where does dharma come from? O grandfather! Tell me this. Is dharma for objectives in this world, or is it for objectives in the world hereafter? Or is dharma for both objectives? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Good conduct, the sacred texts and the Vedas—these are the three signs of dharma. The wise say that the objective is a fourth indication of dharma. On this, superior and inferior deeds have been spoken about. The rules of dharma have been laid down for conduct in this world. They ensure happiness, both in this world and in the next. A wicked person who engages in evil is incapable of obtaining the subtle aspects of dharma. Some say that those who perform wicked deeds can never be freed from their sins. However, a person who speaks about sin may act like one who follows dharma.<sup>487</sup> Devotion to dharma is evident in the conduct of those who resort to it, not by speaking about it. A thief may steal riches and spend those on dharma. When there is no king, a thief may find delight in stealing the property of others. However, when others steal what he has stolen, he then wishes for a king.



Even when his own property has been touched, he is not content with the riches that belong to him alone. Without any fear and without any uncertainty, he knocks at the king's doors, as if he is a pure person.<sup>488</sup> A person who is evil in conduct never thinks of himself in that way. Truthful words are virtuous and there is nothing that is superior to the truth. Truth holds everything up. Everything is established in truth. The perpetrators of wicked and terrible acts also separately have pledges of truth among themselves. They resort to the pledge of not acting violently towards each other. If they do not abide by these agreements, there is no doubt that they are destroyed. It is eternal dharma that the riches of others should not be stolen. Powerful ones think that this system has been instituted by the weak. However, when destiny makes them weak, they take pleasure in this system. Those who are extremely powerful are not necessarily happy. Therefore, never use your intelligence to embark on a task that is not upright. Then there is no reason for fear from wicked people, thieves, or kings. Since such a person has not done anything against anyone else, he is free from fear and dwells in purity. A thief is frightened of everything, like a deer that has come to a village. Having acted wickedly, he thinks that everyone's conduct is like that. A pure person is always delighted and is always fearless. Judging by his own self, he never sees any wicked conduct in others. Those who are engaged in the welfare of beings have said that donations represent dharma. Those who have riches think that this conduct has been laid down by those who are miserly. However, when destiny makes them poor, they find pleasure in this principle. However, those who are extremely rich aren't necessarily happy. A man should not act towards others in a way that he would not like to be acted against. Knowing what is not agreeable to himself, he should not act towards others in that way. If a person becomes the lover of someone else's wife, whom will he speak to? What does he deserve to say? Act towards others in ways that you are prepared to tolerate yourself. That is my view. If a person wishes to remain alive himself, how can he murder another? One should think about others on the basis of what one desires for one's own self. Extra objects of pleasure should be shared with others. That is the reason the Creator ordained the practice of moneylending. One must remain established in the pledges that have been made to the gods. When it is a time of gain, it is laudable to remain established in dharma. The learned have said that dharma is what is agreeable to everyone. O Yudhishtira! Behold. I have instructed you about the signs of dharma and adharma. This is what the Creator ordained in ancient times, for the sake of ensuring accumulation in the worlds. Virtuous people always pursue the subtle objectives of dharma and observe supreme conduct. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! I have recounted to you the signs of dharma. Therefore, never use your intelligence to embark on a task that is not upright.”

## Chapter 1580(252)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You have spoken about the subtle signs of dharma, which have been instructed by the virtuous. I have the power to differentiate between some of the things you have spoken about. There were several questions in my heart and you have answered them. O king! Without disputing what you have said, there is something else I want to say. But the beings that are created come and go. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is incapable of being understood by studying about dharma.<sup>489</sup> The dharma of those who flourish is of one kind. But it is different for those who face a hardship. In a time of adversity, how is a person capable of knowing through studies alone? It is the view that good conduct constitutes dharma. Conduct is the sign of the virtuous. But there is capability and there is incapability. How can good conduct then be taken to be a sign? It is seen that an ordinary person acts in accordance with adharma, though it is in the form of dharma. And an extraordinary person acts in accordance with dharma, though it is in the form of adharma. Those who are knowledgeable about the sacred texts have also laid down standards of proof. We have heard that the words of the Vedas decline from one yuga to another. There is one kind of dharma in krita yuga and another kind in treta and dvapara. There is another kind of dharma in kali yuga. So it seems to depend on capacity. The true words of the Vedas are for the sake of propagation of the worlds. The supreme words of the Vedas have extended in all the directions. They are said to constitute the proof, but the proof is not to be seen.<sup>490</sup> When one proof contradicts another proof, where does the sacred text come from? When dharma goes into a decline, evil-souled ones become powerful. Whatever they act against is destroyed and never obtains a foundation again. Whether we know it or not, whether we are capable of

knowing it or not, this<sup>491</sup> is finer than a razor's edge and larger than a mountain. At first, it seems to be as large as a city of the gandharvas. But then, when it is minutely scrutinized by the wise, it seems to become invisible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Cattle drink from small puddles in fields, which then dry up. Like that, when the eternal dharma of the sacred texts decays, it cannot be seen. There are some who follow desire. There are others who follow decay. There are others who follow other objectives. There are many others who are wicked and follow fruitless conduct. Even among virtuous people, dharma is seen to swiftly go into a decline. There are others who call it<sup>492</sup> madness and laugh at it. There are great ones who withdraw and follow the dharma of kings.<sup>493</sup> They are not seen to engage in conduct that ensures the welfare of everyone. Some become powerful through such conduct. Others are again seen to be constrained by it. There are others who do as they wish, but their status remains unchanged. Something increases the power of one person. But the same thing restrains another person. There are many kinds of conduct that are discerned among everyone, not always pursued single-mindedly. There are things that wise people have spoken about for a long time, as illustrative of eternal dharma. Their earlier conduct is the eternal foundation.”<sup>494</sup>

## Chapter 1581(253)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about words exchanged between Tuladhara and Jajali on dharma. There was a brahmana named Jajali. He lived in the forest, following the conduct of those who dwell in the forest. Once, the immensely ascetic one went to the region near the ocean and tormented himself through austerities there. He controlled himself and was restrained in diet. He was dressed in tattered garments and skins and his hair was matted. He was covered in dirt and mud. The intelligent sage spent many years there. O lord of the earth! The immensely energetic one dwelt in the water. Wishing to see the worlds, he travelled around, with the speed of thought.<sup>495</sup> He saw the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, with its forest and groves. Having done this, while he was inside the water, one day, the sage thought, ‘In this world, with its mobile and immobile objects, there is no one like me. Who else can dwell in the water and roam around with me in this way?’ While he said this in the water, the rakshasas noticed this. The pishachas said, ‘You should not speak in this fashion. There is the immensely illustrious Tuladhara in Varanasi and he follows the dharma of a trader. O supreme among brahmanas! Even he should not speak the words that you have.’ Having been thus addressed by the demons, Jajali, the great ascetic, replied, ‘I will go and see the wise and illustrious Tuladhara.’ When the rishi spoke in this way, the rakshasas arose from the ocean and said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! Go. Follow this road.’ Thus addressed by the demons, Jajali departed, with distress in his mind. He went to Varanasi, met Tuladhara and spoke these words to him.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O father!<sup>496</sup> What were the virtuous deeds that Jajali had performed earlier? How did he obtain supreme success? You should recount that to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “He performed extreme and terrible austerities. The great ascetic was devoted to performing ablutions in the morning and in the evening. He tended to the fire properly. The brahmana was devoted to studying. Jajali knew about the ordinances of vanaprastha and blazed in his radiance. He was engaged in truth and austerities, but was still not able to comprehend dharma. When it rained, he slept under the open sky. During autumn, he immersed himself in water. During summer, he exposed himself to the heat and the wind. But he still did not obtain dharma. He lay down on many uncomfortable beds and on the ground and changed these around. When it rained, the sage would stand under the open sky. Rain showered down on his head from the sky and he repeatedly received this. The lord's hair became matted and filthy and the strands were tangled. He always went to the forest, covered in filth and dirt. Sometimes, the immensely ascetic one did not eat. Sometimes, he survived on air. Sometimes, he stood like a wooden pillar and did not move at all. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! While he stood there, immobile like a pillar, two *kulinga* birds<sup>497</sup> built a nest on his head. However, the brahmana rishi was overcome with compassion for this couple. He allowed them to use grass to build a nest in his matted hair. The immensely ascetic one remained immobile, like a pillar. They<sup>498</sup> were reassured and lived there happily. The rains passed and autumn presented itself. Following Prajapati's rules, those carefree birds approached each other with

desire. O king! Those birds laid eggs on his head. The energetic brahmana, rigid in his vows, realized this. However, despite knowing this, the immensely energetic Jajali did not move. His mind was always firm on upholding dharma, and adharma did not appeal to him. He was not going to harm anyone. O lord! They were thus assured and happily lived on his head. The eggs were nurtured and young birds developed inside them. They began to grow. But even then, Jajali did not move. Careful in his vows, he protected the eggs and the birds. Therefore, the one with dharma in his soul did not move and meditated. In the course of time, the birds emerged and the sage realized when the young birds developed wings. Thus, one day, the one who was rigid in his vows saw the birds. The supreme among intelligent ones was extremely delighted. He was happy to see them grow. The birds and their offspring were fearless there. Once the wings had developed, he saw that they would fly out and return again. The birds would go out in the morning and return in the evening. The brahmana Jajali did not move. Sometimes, though the mother and the father were not present, they would return and then fly out again. Jajali did not move. O king! Then they began to go out and return again in the evening. The birds returned, to live there. After this, the birds went out for five days before they returned. Then it became six days. Jajali did not move. In the course of time, as they became strong, all the birds went out for many days at a time and did not return. Later, the birds did not return for a month. O king! Finally, when they did not return at all, Jajali left. Jajali was overcome with wonder at what had happened. He thought that he had obtained success, and pride penetrated him. The one who was careful in his vows saw that the birds, which had been born and reared on his head, finally left. He was full of delight. When the sun arose, the immensely ascetic one went to the river. He bathed there and offered oblations to the fire. Since those chataka birds had been born on his head, Jajali, supreme among ascetics, slapped his armpits and exclaimed, 'I have obtained dharma.' At this, Jajali heard an invisible voice speak in the sky. 'O Jajali! You are not Tuladhara's equal in dharma. The immensely wise Tuladhara lives in Varanasi. O brahmana! Though he deserves to, he does not speak the way you do.' On hearing these words, he became full of anger and wished to see Tuladhara. O king! The sage began to roam around the earth, without any fixed place of abode. After a long period of time, he reached the city of Varanasi and saw Tuladhara, selling his wares. On seeing the brahmana arrive, the one who earned a living from trading arose cheerfully and welcomed and honoured him. Tuladhara said, 'O brahmana! I knew for certain that you would come here. O supreme among brahmanas! Listen to the words that I tell you. You lived on the shores of the ocean and performed great austerities there. But earlier, you never had any sense of what was dharma. O brahmana! When you obtained success in your austerities, birds were soon born on your head and they were nurtured by you. When they developed wings, they flew around, here and there. O brahmana! Having given birth to those chatakas, you felt proud at having obtained dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! You then heard a voice in the sky and it spoke about me. At this, you felt anger and that is the reason you have come here. O supreme among brahmanas! What can I do to please you? Tell me.'"

## Chapter 1582(254)

‘**B**hishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the intelligent Tuladhara, the intelligent Jajali, supreme among ascetics, replied in these words. ‘O trader! You sell all the juices and all the scents, trees and herbs and their roots and fruits. How has this steadiness in intelligence come to you? From where has this knowledge come? O immensely wise one! Tell me everything about this.’ O king! Having been thus addressed by the illustrious brahmana, the vaishya Tuladhara, who knew about the true objectives of dharma and the subtleties of dharma, spoke to Jajali, who had performed difficult austerities, but was still not content with his knowledge. ‘O Jajali! I know eternal and ancient dharma, with all its mysteries. People who know say that it is nothing but friendliness and being engaged in the welfare of all beings. There should be no violence towards living beings, or limited violence. O Jajali! Such conduct is said to follow supreme dharma and that is the way I live. My house is built with wood and grass that has been cut by other people. O brahmana rishi! Lac, lotus roots, lotus filaments, scents, the agents for cleaning, superior and inferior, and the juices and many other objects, with the exception of liquor, are bought by me from other people. I sell them again, without any deceit. O Jajali! If there is a person who regards everyone as a well-wisher and is engaged in everyone’s welfare, in deeds, thoughts and words, he knows dharma. I do not praise

or censure the deeds of others. O brahmana rishi! I look upon these colourful people, the way I look at the sky. I do not obstruct or oppose. I do not hate or desire. O Jajali! I look upon all beings as equal. That is my vow. I have been freed from good and bad. I have cast aside love and hatred. O Jajali! I hold up my pair of scales equally towards everyone. O Jajali! O best among intelligent ones! That is the way I look at you and at all the other people. A lump of earth, a piece of iron and gold are the same to me. The blind, the deaf and the mad, despite being adversely affected by destiny, are always full of joy. That is the way I look at everything. Those who are old, those who suffer from disease and those who are emaciated are indifferent towards objects of pleasure. In that way, I have lost all interest in objects of desire and pleasure. When a person is not frightened and no one is terrified of him, when he does not desire and does not hate, then he obtains success and becomes a brahmana. A person who does not harbour wicked sentiments towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and words, attains the brahman. A person who grants fearlessness to all beings attains a state that is without fear. For him, there is no past and no future and no dharma. A person who agitates people through cruel words and harsh punishment, as if he is the face of death, suffers from great fear. Great-souled and aged ones observe the conduct of non-violence towards their sons and grandsons and I follow them. A person who knows, an ascetic or a powerful person can be deluded and from that confusion, eternal dharma and good conduct can be destroyed. However, if a wise person follows good conduct, he can swiftly obtain dharma. Such a virtuous person wanders around, self-controlled, without any violence in his consciousness. In a river, a piece of wood drifts along as it wishes and sometimes comes into contact with another piece of wood, which is also flowing along, as it wills. There are other pieces of wood that come together and then drift apart. Grass, wood and refuse are sometimes seen to come together. This is the nature of conduct, seen here and there. If there is a person who does not agitate any being and if he grants fearlessness to all beings, that person always attains the state of a sage. O learned one! There may also be a person who agitates all the people, like a wolf. Like an aquatic animal, he makes people shriek and climb onto the shore. A person who has aides is extremely fortunate and obtains riches, in this world and hereafter. That is what wise people have spoken about in the sacred texts. Some practise a little bit of what has been mentioned. Other accomplished ones follow it in entirety. All the fruits that are obtained through austerities, sacrifices, donations and wisdom can be obtained by ensuring fearlessness. In this world, a person who grants the dakshina of fearlessness to all beings accomplishes all the sacrifices and himself obtains the dakshina of fearlessness. There is no dharma that is the equal of non-violence towards beings. A person who never agitates beings and grants all beings fearlessness attains the state of a great sage. A person who agitates beings, like a snake that has arrived inside a house, does not obtain dharma, in this world or in the next. When a person looks on all beings as his own self and treats all beings equally, the gods themselves are confused when they try to follow his path and his footsteps. The donation of fearlessness to beings is the supreme among all donations. O Jajali! I am telling you the truth. Listen to it with devotion. A person who is fortunate is not born again. An unfortunate person is born again. Obsessed with their tasks, people are always seen to be asleep. There is nothing that is without a reason. O Jajali! Dharma is subtle. In the words of dharma, tasks have been ordained for the past and the future. There are subtleties and so many contradictions that one is incapable of knowing it. Some understand this internally. Others only comprehend conduct. There are those who kill bulls, making them bear heavy burdens, binding and restraining them, inserting rings in their noses. Why aren't these people killed? There are those who kill beings for eating them. Why are they not censured? Men make other men slaves and enjoy the results. They kill, bind and restrain them, making them work day and night. This is despite they themselves knowing the misery from killing and striking. The gods dwell in the five senses of all beings—Aditya, Chandrama, Vayu, Brahma, Prana, Kratu<sup>499</sup> and Yama. But there are those who kill and trade beings, without even thinking about it. O brahmana! I am not speaking about oil, clarified butter, honey, other objects and herbs.<sup>500</sup> There are many animals that are happily reared in regions where there are no gnats. Despite knowing that their mothers love them, many men oppress them. They take them to regions where there is a lot of mud, with many gnats. They make them mounts and beasts of burden. Others oppress them in other ways. I think that these deeds are no different from killing a foetus. Agriculture is regarded as a virtuous livelihood. But it is extremely terrible. Wooden implements with iron at the mouth injure the earth and kill beings that live in the ground. O Jajali! Look towards the bulls that have been yoked. Cows have been named as unslayable. How can this person then kill them? The person who kills a cow for the sake of gain commits a great offence. Many rishis and ascetics spoke to

Nahusha. “A cow is a mother. You have killed a bull, which is like Prajapati. O Nahusha! You have perpetrated a wicked deed and we are frightened on this account.” They divided it<sup>501</sup> into a hundred and one parts and inflicted it as diseases on all living beings. O Jajali! The immensely fortunate rishis passed this on to the subjects and told Nahusha, who had committed a sin like that of killing a foetus, “We will not be able to offer oblations at your sacrifices.” This is what those great-souled ones, who knew about the truth, said. However, the rishis and the ascetics got to know the truth and were quickly pacified.<sup>502</sup> O Jajali! These are the kinds of inauspicious and terrible conduct practised in this world. These are practised even by accomplished people who know, simply because these are norms of conduct. One should seek out the reasons behind dharma and not follow it because it is the conduct of the world. O Jajali! Listen to the conduct I follow towards those who hurt me or praise me. They are equal before me and I do not like or dislike either. This is the kind of dharma that is praised by the learned. This is full of reason and is practised by the ascetics. This is always seen among those who observe dharma in their conduct and are accomplished.’”

## Chapter 1583(255)

“Jajali said, ‘O Tuladhara! You have spoken about the dharma that has been laid down and about the supreme conduct that should be followed by beings to reach the gates of heaven. Crops result from agriculture and it is on the basis of those that you remain alive. O trader! It is with animals and herbs that mortal beings remain alive. Sacrifices flow from those. You speak like a non-believer. This world will not be sustained and nothing will be left if these doctrines are followed.’

“Tuladhara replied, ‘O Jajali! O brahmana! I will speak about sustenance. I am not a non-believer. I am not criticizing sacrifices. But a person who knows about sacrifices is extremely rare. I bow down before the sacrifices of brahmanas and before people who know about sacrifices. Having abandoned their own sacrifices, brahmanas have resorted to the sacrifices meant for kshatriyas. O brahmana! Greedy for the riches of others, it is the non-believers who have led to such practices. Though they know about the words of the Vedas, they have disguised falsehood behind apparent truth. “This should be given. That should be given.” There is no end to this kind of desire. O Jajali! Theft and undesirable acts result from this. An oblation obtained through good means is what satisfies the gods, such as bowing down, oblations, studying and herbs. The worship of gods should be in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. Through their sacrifices, wicked people give rise to wicked offspring. The greedy give birth to the greedy. The contented give birth to the contented. The resultant offspring are just like the performer of the sacrifice and the officiating priest. Through sacrifices, offspring who are like the unblemished sky can result. O brahmana! Oblations offered into the fire rise up into the sun. Rain results from the sun. Crops result from rain and offspring come through these. Therefore, earlier, people performed their own sacrifices and obtained all the objects of desire. The earth yielded crops without tilling. Herbs resulted because of the benedictions. No sacrifices were seen to be undertaken with a view to obtaining selfish fruits. However, there were some who undertook sacrifices, despite having doubts about the fruits of sacrifices. Consequently, the wicked, the cunning, the greedy and those who felt a need for riches were born. Those who have performed wicked deeds go to the worlds earmarked for those with inauspicious deeds. Using arguments to counter arguments, a man performs inauspicious deeds. O supreme among brahmanas! Such people are always evil-souled and unaccomplished in wisdom. O brahmana! They take deeds to be misdeeds and the reverse. They do not also follow the deeds that Brahma laid down for the worlds. We have also heard that if deeds without qualities are performed, they lead to no fruits. If these are not countered, they injure all beings. Truth is sacrifice. Self-control is sacrifice. So are lack of jealousy towards everyone, contentment with one’s own riches and lack of greed for riches. That is how a renouncer results. A person who knows the truth about kshetra and kshetrajna is engaged in his own sacrifice. He studies, wishing to know about the brahman, and is satisfied in his own self. All divinity is in the brahman. Everything finds a refuge in the brahman. O Jajali! When such a person is satisfied, the gods are satisfied. When he is not satisfied, they are not satisfied. If a person is satisfied with all the juices, he finds no delight in anything in particular. In that way, a person who is satisfied with wisdom is always satisfied and this gives rise to happiness. Dharma is comfort for him.

Dharma is happiness and everything is established on that. Such a person knows the truth about existence and searches for wisdom. There are others who know about jnana and vijnana and can cross over to the further shore, which is always extremely auspicious and is full of sacred people. Having gone there, one does not grieve. Nor is there distress of any kind. That is the place of the brahman and virtuous people attain it. That is not for those who desire heaven, or for those who sacrifice for fame and riches. It is a path followed by the virtuous and their strength is non-violence. They know about trees, herbs, fruits and roots.<sup>503</sup> Those who sacrifice, and their officiating priests, are not greedy and do not desire riches. There are also brahmanas who have accomplished all their tasks. Nevertheless, driven by compassion for other subjects, they perform their own sacrifices. Subjects obtain heaven by pursuing their own dharma. O Jajali! Thus, because of my intelligence, my conduct towards everyone is identical. O bull among brahmanas! O great sage! The wise ones always engage themselves in these kinds of sacrifices and through these, go along the path trodden by the gods. Some have to return.<sup>504</sup> But there is no return for the learned. O Jajali! However, both types go along the path trodden on by the gods. Using the resolution in their minds, they become successful, yoking their own selves and using their own selves as beasts of burden, and milking their own selves. They make their own selves the sacrificial altars and thus give away a lot of dakshina. A person who has cleansed himself in this fashion should not be greedy for cattle. O brahmana! He performs a sacrifice by bowing down, as if he was a herb. His intelligence places renunciation at the forefront. That is what I am describing to you. He is beyond desire and beyond starting anything. He is beyond honour and praise. His deeds have been extinguished, but he is without decay. The gods speak of such a person as a brahmana. A person who does not listen to the sacred texts, does not perform sacrifices and does not give to brahmanas is a person who follows common conduct. O Jajali! What end will he attain? By following this path, observed by the gods, it is as if he performs sacrifices.'

“Jajali said, ‘I have not heard this truth from the sages. O trader! I am therefore asking you about a difficulty. The rishis who came earlier did not consider this.’<sup>505</sup> Nor did those who came later establish this. O trader! If animals are capable of obtaining happiness by serving the tirtha of the atman, then why do they obtain misery because of their deeds? O immensely wise one! Instruct me about this. I have great faith in you.’

“Tuladhara replied, ‘There are some sacrifices that do not actually become sacrifices.’<sup>506</sup> They should not sacrifice. A cow can be used for all the oblations at a sacrifice, because of milk, curds, clarified butter, hair, horns, feet and everything that comes from the mouth.<sup>507</sup> It has been ordained that one should not embark on a sacrifice without a wife. The sacrificial cake has been spoken of as representing sacrifices of all animals. This is like all the rivers being akin to Sarasvati and all mountains being sacred. O Jajali! The atman is a tirtha and one does not have to become a guest at different places.’<sup>508</sup> O Jajali! If one follows this kind of dharma, without searching for reasons behind dharma, one will obtain the auspicious worlds.’”

‘Bhishma said, “This was the kind of dharma that was praised by Tuladhara. This is always full of reason and is followed by the virtuous.”’

## Chapter 1584(256)

““Tuladhara said, ‘Those who are virtuous live in this way. Those who are virtuous resort to this path. Look at the deeds performed by the virtuous and you will know the truth. There are many birds that roam around in every direction. There are some that were born on your head. There are also hawks and others of different species. O great brahmana! Here and there, they are seeking to enter.’<sup>509</sup> Behold. They have contracted their wings, feet and bodies everywhere. Summon them. Though they have been born through their father, they have also been generated from you. There is no doubt that you are their father. O Jajali! Therefore, summon your sons.’”

‘Bhishma said, “At this, Jajali summoned the birds. They replied in divine words, words that were full of dharma. ‘For this world and for the next, one must perform acts of non-violence. O brahmana! Desire destroys and with that, men are also destroyed. When faith declines in words and thoughts, no sacrifices can lead to salvation. In this connection, Brahma recited a song and it is chanted by those who know about the sacred accounts. The gods regard the sacrificial deeds of those who have purity, but lack faith, and those who have faith, but lack purity,



equally and ignore them both. The gods have also held that a miserly and learned brahmana and an eloquent and prosperous person are equal. However, Prajapati told them that they had erred in treating two unequal things equally. “Faith purifies a prosperous person. Lack of faith destroys him. Even if there is only one person in the world and he is without faith, the gods do not accept his oblations. Those learned about dharma also know that his food should not be eaten. Lack of faith is a supreme sin. Faith releases from all sin. A faithful person discards sin, like a snake casting off its skin.”<sup>510</sup> Renunciation with faith is superior to all sacred deeds. If a person refrains from all evil conduct and is faithful, he is purified. What need does he have of austerities, deeds or conduct? There can be a man with faith and there can be a man without faith. This is what virtuous and knowledgeable people who know about the purpose of dharma have said about dharma. We were curious and obtained this insight about dharma. O immensely wise one! If you conquer the urge to compete, you will obtain the supreme. The trader possesses faith and follows the dharma of faith. O Jajali! A person established in his own path is superior.<sup>511</sup> In this way, Tuladhara told him about many things and he obtained a complete realization of what has been spoken of as eternal dharma. O Kounteya! Having heard those famous and valorous words spoken by Tuladhara, the brahmana obtained tranquility. In a short while, he and Tuladhara, those two immensely wise ones, went to heaven and found delight in the happiness there. Having earned the fruits of their own deeds, they went to their respective places. A person who looks at everything equally, is faithful and controlled and possesses an excellent intelligence, performs sacrifices in this way. Without sacrifices, a person is not taken there. O king! Faith is the virtuous goddess Savitri, the daughter of the sun. She is the one who gives birth to faith in the world of the living. I have instructed you appropriately. What more do you wish to hear?”

## Chapter 1585(257)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what King Vichakhanna sung, driven by compassion for subjects. He saw the mangled body of a bull and heard the extremely piteous cries of cattle. The king saw a sacrificial enclosure where cows were being slaughtered. He said, ‘May there be safety to all the cattle in this world.’ When the violence had started, these words of benediction were heard. ‘Those who have deviated from the ordinances, those who are non-believers and confused, those who have doubts within themselves, are the men who applaud of violence. Manu, with dharma in his soul, said that there should be non-violence in all deeds. Driven by attachment to desire, men cause violence to animals outside the sacrificial enclosure.<sup>512</sup> Therefore, one should follow the instructions and know the subtle nature of dharma. It has been held that non-violence is superior to all kinds of dharma. They dwell near sacred places, but have abandoned the learning of the Vedas. These misers are driven by desire for the fruits and follow bad conduct, in the disguise of good conduct. Pointing to sacrifices, trees and sacrificial altars, men pointlessly eat flesh.<sup>513</sup> This kind of dharma is not praised. Flesh, *madhu*, *sura*, fish, *asava* and *krisara* have been thought of by cunning people.<sup>514</sup> They were not thought of in the Vedas. Desire, confusion and greed led to these temptations being introduced. The brahmanas note that Vishnu is present in all sacrifices. It has been said that, with an excellent mind, he should only be offered *payasa*.<sup>515</sup> In the Vedas, trees have been thought of as sacrificial offerings. These are the kinds of things that should properly be offered to the great god, with pure sentiments. All these deserve to be offered to that god.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “The body and various difficulties always quarrel and cause injury to each other. If one abstains from all work, how will it be possible to sustain the body?”

‘Bhishma replied, “One must act so that the body does not suffer and so that one does not come under the subjugation of death. According to capacity, one’s conduct should follow the norms of dharma.”

## Chapter 1586(258)

udhishthira asked, “O supreme teacher! In determining what task to pursue, should one decide quickly or take time over the decision? We are always confronted with extremely difficult tasks.”

‘Y’ Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about what happened earlier, concerning the conduct of Chirakara, born in the lineage of Angiras.<sup>516</sup> A person who acts after a long time is fortunate. A fortunate person is one who acts after a long time. A person who acts after a long time is intelligent and does not commit a sin in his acts. Goutama’s son acted after a long time and was immensely wise.<sup>517</sup> He took a long time to decide on all tasks. He thought about the objective for a long time. He remained awake for a long time. He slept for a long time. He completed tasks after a long time. Therefore, he was known as Chirakara. He was also spoken of as lazy and limited in intelligence. People said that he was foolish in intelligence and lacked far-sightedness. On one occasion, his father was angry at his mother’s promiscuous behaviour.<sup>518</sup> Ignoring the other sons, he told him, ‘Kill this mother of yours.’ Though he agreed when he was asked, as was his nature, Chirakara thought about this for a long time.<sup>519</sup> He was cautious and always thought for a long time about what should be done. ‘How will I follow the instructions of my father and yet not kill my mother? While apparently following dharma, how will I avoid being submerged, like a wicked person? Following the instructions of the father is supreme dharma. Yet, protecting my mother is my own dharma. Since a son is not independent, how can I avoid being afflicted? How can one be happy after killing a woman and a mother? How can one obtain status after ignoring a father’s orders? I cannot ignore what my father has said. I must nurture and protect my mother. How will I resist suffering on either score? How will I not cross either? The father’s own self enters the wife and is born, so that conduct, character, lineage and family can be sustained.<sup>520</sup> I am my father’s own self. But I am also my mother’s son. Since I know how I have been born, why should I not possess knowledge about this?’<sup>521</sup> My father spoke words at the time of my jatakarma and other minor rites. Those are sufficient to firmly establish the reverence that is due to my father. Because the father nurtures and instructs, it is supreme dharma to regard him as the foremost among instructors. That is dharma, conclusively determined in the Vedas. The only source of delight to the father is the son. The father is everything for the son. The body and everything else have been given by the father alone. Therefore, one must act in accordance with one’s father’s words and not think about it at all. If one acts in accordance with one’s father’s words, all one’s sins are cleansed. In sight of all the worlds, he provided fortune and objects of pleasure at the time of delivery. He was a party to the union and acknowledged this is the simantonnayana ceremony.<sup>522</sup> The father is heaven. The father is dharma. The father is the supreme of austerities. When the father is pleased, all the gods are pleased. Any benedictions pronounced by a father serve a man. When the father praises, there is cleansing of all sins. The flower is severed from the stalk. The fruit is also severed from the stalk. But even if the son’s affection decreases, the father’s affection remains.’ These were the son’s thoughts about the reverence that was due to the father. ‘The father does not occupy an inferior station. Let me now think about my mother. I have been born on earth as a compound of the five elements. But my mother was the origin, like the two pieces of wood used to create a fire. For the body of any man, the mother represents those sticks and saves him from all hardships. When she is there, there is no reason for sorrow. When she is not there, there is hardship. Even when a person is divested of riches, his mother is there in the house. Even if a person has many sons and grandsons, even if he is one hundred years old, when he approaches his mother, he behaves like a two-year-old. Whether a person is capable or incapable, whether a person is fat or thin, the mother protects the son. According to the ordinances, there is no one else who sustains in that way. When he is separated from his mother, he ages, he is distressed and the entire world seems to be empty. There is no shelter that is equal to a mother. There is no objective that is equal to a mother. There is no sanctuary equal to a mother. There is no protection equal to a mother. Because she bears him in her womb, she is known as Dhatri. Because she gives birth, she is known as Janani. Because she nurtures his limbs, she is known as Amba. Because she gives birth to a brave one, she is known as Virasu. Because she nurtures the child, she is known as Sushru. There is no difference between a mother and one’s own body. Unless his head is empty and he is devoid of his senses, which man will kill such a person? When a couple unites to bear life, there is resolution in both the mother and the father, but success in accomplishing that objective depends on the mother. The mother knows the gotra and the mother knows whom he has been born from.<sup>523</sup> The mother’s pleasure comes from nurturing alone. The father’s affection is from a desire to have offspring. If a man himself accepts a woman’s hand for the sake of following dharma together and then goes to another woman, he is not slain on those



grounds. A husband is known as Bharta because he sustains his wife. He is known as Pati because he protects his wife. When these two traits disappear, a husband is neither a Bharta nor a Pati. A woman cannot commit a crime. It is the man who commits the crime. While adultery is a great crime, it is the man who has committed the crime.<sup>524</sup> For the wife, it has been said that the husband is the greatest protector and the supreme god. She gave herself up to someone who was in the form of that supreme person.<sup>525</sup> In all acts that involve crimes, women never commit the crimes. We have been given the injunction that women are never satisfied with intercourse.<sup>526</sup> There is no doubt about this evident nature of dharma and it should be remembered. She is a woman and a mother and occupies a position of greatest reverence. Even brutish animals know that such a person should not be killed. It is known that the father is alone a collection of all the gods. But because of her affection, the mother is a collection of all mortal beings and the gods.’ In this way, because he took a long time to act, he reflected a lot.

“After a long period of time had elapsed, Goutama returned. After having engaged in austerities, the immensely wise Medhatithi Goutama returned. He had also thought about it for a long time and had decided that what he had proposed for his wife was improper. He was tormented by great grief and tears flowed from his eyes. Because of the effects of his learning, he was overcome with repentance. ‘Purandara, the lord of the three worlds, came to my hermitage. He was in the form of a brahmana, following the vow of being a guest. At that time, I comforted him with words. I welcomed and honoured him. As is proper, I gave him the gift due to a guest and water for washing the feet.<sup>527</sup> As is proper, I bowed down before him and spoke to him obediently. A woman belongs to an incompetent species and cannot be held to have committed a transgression. Thus I, my wife, or the lord of the thirty gods, did not commit a crime.<sup>528</sup> It is dharma’s fault that delusion led to the offence. Those who hold up their seeds have said that all hardships emanate from envy. It is because of jealousy<sup>529</sup> that I have been destroyed and flung into this ocean of great grief. I confront this hardship because I have had a virtuous and beloved woman killed. I should have protected my wife. Who will save me now? I acted hastily and commanded the intelligent Chirakara. But because he takes a long time to act, perhaps he can still save me from this sin. A person who takes a long time to act is fortunate. A fortunate person takes a long time to act. If you have taken a long time to act now, you will truly be Chirakara. Save me, your mother and all the austerities that I have accomplished. If you also save yourself from that sin, you will truly be Chirakarika. You naturally take a long time to act and this long time is indicative of your wisdom. Make the truth about your name successful today and be Chirakarika. Your mother expected you for a long time. She bore you in her womb for a long time. Make that long period of time you take also true today. Be Chirakarika. Is he taking a long time<sup>530</sup> because of repentance? Has he been delayed because he has slept for a long time? Perhaps Chirakarika is not showing himself because of the great torment it will cause to both of us.’ O king! In this fashion, maharshi Goutama was miserable at the time. Then he saw his son, Chirakarika, standing close to him. On seeing his father, Chirakarika was extremely miserable. He threw the weapon away and bowed his head down, to seek favours. Goutama saw that his son was prostrate before him on the ground, with his head bowing down. He was extremely delighted to see that his wife was without harm. The great-souled one had gone away alone, separating himself from his wife and his intelligent son in that hermitage. The son stood there humbly, with the weapon in his hand, expecting to be reprimanded.<sup>531</sup> He asked if he should complete the task that had been assigned to him. The father saw that the intelligent son was still prostrate at his feet. He was terrified and was seeking his pardon for at all having picked up the weapon. The father praised him for a long time and inhaled the fragrance of his head for a long time. He embraced him for a long time and said, ‘May you live for a long time.’ Because of his son, Goutama was thus filled with joy and delight.

“The immensely wise one praised him and spoke these words. ‘O fortunate one! O Chirakarika! For a long time, may you take a long time to act. Because of the long time you took, I have been saved from great misery for a long period of time.’ The learned one, supreme among sages, then sung this chant. ‘Patient people, should take a long time to act, because that course is full of qualities. One should take a long time before severing a friendship. One should act so as to discard him, only after a long period of time. One should take a long time before making a friend. But having done this, one should sustain him for a long time. Whether it is in anger, insolence, pride, hatred, wicked deeds or unpleasant tasks, a person who takes a long time is praised. When an accusation against a relative, a well-wisher, a servant or a woman has not been proved, a person who takes a long time is praised.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus was Goutama pleased with his son. O Kouravya! Therefore, on any task,

you should also take a long time. If a man thus thinks about every task for a long time and then makes up his mind, he will not be tormented for a long time. If a man holds his anger for a long time and if he embarks on action after a long time, he does not suffer repentance because of his deeds. The aged must be worshipped for a long time. One must sit near them for a long time. One must serve dharma for a long time. One must spend a long time in enquiry. One must serve the learned for a long time. One must attend to the virtuous for a long time. One must restrain one's atman for a long time. Then, one will be respected for a long time. When one is asked by others, one must spend a long time in replying, in words that are full of dharma. One must think for a long time before answering. Then, one will not be subjugated for a long time. The extremely great ascetic<sup>532</sup> performed a lot of worship in his hermitage for many years. With his son, the brahmana then went to heaven.”

## Chapter 1587(259)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Without oppressing even a little, how should a king protect? O best among virtuous ones! I am asking you. O grandfather! Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Dyumatsena and King Satyavat. We have heard that on the instructions of his father,<sup>533</sup> some men were to be executed and Satyavat spoke words, the likes of which, had never been spoken earlier. ‘Dharma becomes adharma and adharma seems to be dharma. Execution has assumed the form of dharma. But it should not be that way.’<sup>534</sup>

“Dyumatsena said, ‘If one does not execute in accordance with dharma, how will one be able to differentiate dharma? O Satyavat! These are bandits who should be killed. Otherwise, there will be a mixing up.’<sup>535</sup> If I do not act this way, I will bring about the advent of kali yuga. If you know how the world can progress without this, then tell me.’

“Satyavat replied, ‘It is the task of the brahmanas to keep the other three varnas under restraint. If they are bound in the noose of dharma, then there will be little deviation. The others look towards the conduct followed by brahmanas. When they do not listen, it is only then that the king should restrain them. He will differentiate according to the sacred texts, but there should not be any execution. In such action, one should follow the tasks appropriately laid down in the sacred texts of policy. By slaying a single bandit, the king kills those who are innocent. When that man is slain, his wife, mother, father and son are also killed. When a king has been injured, he must impose appropriate punishment. Sometimes, there may be a wicked person who imbibes good conduct from someone virtuous. From wicked subjects, virtuous offspring can be born. The roots should not be severed. That is not eternal dharma. They should be punished lightly and atonement is recommended. Such people can be imprisoned and disfigured. Their riches can be taken away. But the relatives should not be made to suffer through capital punishment. They may seek refuge with a priest and say, “O brahmana! I will not commit such a wicked act again.” O king! The instructions are that in such cases, they should be released. If a brahmana wears deerskin, holds a staff and has shaved his head, he should nevertheless be punished, if he commits a crime. A great person's crime should be considered against his greatness. However, unlike the first offence, if a person commits a crime repeatedly, he does not deserve to be released.’

“Dyumatsena said, ‘As long as subjects remain within the agreements, that is said to be dharma, but not when those boundaries are transgressed. If they are not killed, everything will break down. In earlier times, light punishments were sufficient to ensure good rule.’<sup>536</sup> They were mild and established in truth and their enmity was also light. In earlier times, shaming was sufficient chastisement. Later, harsh words and censure became punishment. Still later, seizure of property became punishment. Finally, chastisement through execution became common. Despite the threat of execution, there are people who are incapable of being restrained. Bandits pay no attention to the sacred texts of men, gods, gandharvas and ancestors. Such a person does not belong to anyone. Nor does anyone belong to him. He does not hesitate to steal ornaments from cremation grounds frequented by demons.’<sup>537</sup> A person who depends on an agreement with them is ignorant and is bereft of his senses.’

“Satyavat replied, ‘If there is no means of making them virtuous other than through violence, then act so that one can at least gain through a sacrifice.’<sup>538</sup>

“Dyumatsena said, ‘For the sake of the progress of the world, kings perform supreme austerities. When they<sup>539</sup> proliferate, everyone follows that kind of conduct. They must be terrified to ensure good conduct. Evildoers are not slain because of any other desire. Having ensured good deeds, a king can then rule his subjects. When he follows superior conduct, the better people also follow him. Men always follow the conduct of superior people. A person who controls himself is able to control others. However, if he is himself addicted to material objects and the senses, men laugh at him. If there is a person who acts against the king, driven by arrogance or delusion, he must be restrained through every possible means, so that he is checked from evil. He<sup>540</sup> must restrain himself, so that he can control evildoers. But he must also use the staff of severe punishment, even against those who are relatives and intimate. If a person who has committed a grave sin is not confronted with a great calamity, it is certain that wickedness will proliferate there and dharma go into a decline. A learned brahmana who possessed good conduct instructed me about this earlier. O son! I have also been instructed this by your grandfather. They were driven by great compassion and gave this assurance to virtuous people. In the first era of krita yuga, this is what was thought of for kings. During treta yuga, dharma diminished by one quarter. In the subsequent dvapara yuga, there was another decrease by one quarter and only two quarters were left. When kali yuga set in, kings became wicked in conduct. With the progress of time, only one-sixteenth of dharma’s kalas remains.<sup>541</sup> O Satyavat! If one follows the norms of the first era, there will be confusion. It has been instructed that punishments should be in proportion to lifespans,<sup>542</sup> strength and era. Out of compassion for beings, Svayambhu Manu said that for the sake of emancipation, there are great fruits from following dharma.’”

## Chapter 1588(260)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have already told me about lack of injury and renunciation among beings, those that have the six characteristics.<sup>543</sup> Tell me about the two kinds of dharma now, the dharma of the householder and the dharma of a person who renounces. O grandfather! For those who wish to travel a long distance, which of these two is superior?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Both kinds of dharma lead to great fortune and both are extremely difficult to follow. O son! Both lead to great fruits and both are followed by the virtuous. I will tell you about the proofs that have been cited for both. O Partha! Listen single-mindedly, so that your doubts about dharma can be severed. O Yudhishtira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Kapila and a cow is recounted. Listen to it. We have heard that when Tvashtri<sup>544</sup> came to visit Nahusha in earlier times, he saw that he<sup>545</sup> was following the certain and ancient practice of the sacred texts and was about to kill a cow. Kapila was cheerful in spirit and was engaged in the pledges of truth. He was learned and restrained in diet. He possessed the supreme intelligence of faith. When he saw this, he said, ‘I remember the truth of the Vedas, which have become lax now.’ At that time, a rishi and mendicant named Syumarashmi penetrated the cow’s body and said, ‘What is this? If it is the view that the Vedas constitute dharma, how can there be a different kind of view?’<sup>546</sup> Patient ascetics use the knowledge of the sacred texts to obtain insight. All of them know about the atman and are regarded as rishis. They are devoid of thirst and without anxiety. They desire nothing. All of them have no resolutions. This is what the Vedas have proclaimed.’

“Kapila replied, ‘I am not censuring the Vedas, or saying anything against them. We have heard that for the same objective different kinds of duties have been laid down for different ashramas. The renouncer<sup>547</sup> goes there. The one who is in vanaprastha goes there. The ones who are in garhasthya or brahmacharya also go there. It has been the eternal view that all the four modes represent paths followed by the gods. Their superiority and inferiority, strength and weakness, have been spoken about in terms of the fruits obtained. Knowing this, the Vedas have advocated tasks to accomplish all the objectives. But elsewhere, we have faithfully heard the sacred texts to state that there need be no tasks at all. There seem to be taints with beginning tasks. But there also seem to be great taints with not beginning tasks. This being the state of the sacred texts, it is difficult to comprehend strengths and weaknesses. With the exception of these sacred texts, if you see any view that holds something to be superior to non-violence, tell me about it. What do you see?’

“Syumarashmi said, ‘We have always heard the sacred texts say that sacrifices must be performed for the sake of heaven. One first thinks of the fruits and then embarks on a sacrifice. The sacred texts have said that goats, horses, sheep, cows, different kinds of birds, wild and domesticated, and herbs are meant for sustaining life.<sup>548</sup> Every day, food must be eaten in the morning and in the evening. The sacred texts have said that animals and grain are the limbs of a sacrifice. Prajapati created them and sacrifices together. The lord Prajapati made the gods and others perform sacrifices with their help. All animals have been divided into seven categories each and a succeeding one is inferior to a preceding one.<sup>549</sup> The entire universe has been spoken of as a supreme sacrificial altar. From earlier times, this is what has progressively been followed. According to his strength, which learned man doesn’t choose a living form for a sacrifice? Animals, humans, trees and herbs also desire to go to heaven and with the exception of sacrifices, there is no means of reaching heaven. Oblations like herbs, animals, trees, creepers, clarified butter, milk, curds, the earth,<sup>550</sup> the directions, faith and the time—these are the twelve components.<sup>551</sup> When the hymns of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Veda and the person performing the sacrifice are added, there is a total of sixteen. The fire that burns in the household is said to be the seventeenth. These are said to be the limbs of a sacrifice and the foundations of the sacrifice. Clarified butter, milk, curds mixed with sugar, skin, hair,<sup>552</sup> horns and hooves—a cow can provide everything for a sacrifice. Each of these is a recommended object. With officiating priests and dakshina, they can sustain sacrifices. People collect all of these and perform sacrifices. It has been heard in the sacred texts that they<sup>553</sup> have been created for sacrifices. Since ancient times, this is how men have progressively conducted themselves. However, there are some who do not wish to cause any injury or lead to any violence. They perform sacrifices because of conviction and not because they desire the fruits of sacrifices. There is no doubt that what have been stated constitute the limbs of a sacrifice. Following the ordinances, they must be appropriately used and support each other. I see the sacred texts of the rishis and the Vedas are established in them. Those learned ones see the instructions that have been laid down by the Brahmanas.<sup>554</sup> Sacrifices have been created by the Brahmanas and they are based on the Brahmanas. The entire universe is based on sacrifices and sacrifices are based on the universe. The learned say that if a person has sacrificed to the best of his capacity and has uttered the words “Om”, the womb of the brahman, “Namah”, “Svaha”, “Svadha” and “Vashat”, he has nothing to fear in the three worlds and in the world hereafter. The Vedas, the Siddhas and the supreme rishis say this. A person in whom all the hymns of the Rig, the Yajur and the Sama are vested, invoked in the proper way, is truly a brahmana. O brahmana! You know the results of an agnihotra and soma sacrifice. O illustrious one! You also know the consequences of the other great sacrifices. O brahmana! Therefore, you should not think at all about sacrifices or about officiating at them. Sacrifices performed properly lead to heaven and after death, lead to great fruits in heaven. It is certain that those who do not perform sacrifices do not obtain any worlds here, or in the hereafter. Those who know about the words of the Vedas know that there are proofs about both.’”<sup>555</sup>

## Chapter 1589(261)

“Kapila said, ‘Ascetics see these are the outcomes and there is nothing in the three worlds that can obstruct them.<sup>556</sup> Those learned ones are without opposite sentiments. They do not bow down. They are not bound down by any hopes. They are free from all kinds of sins. They roam around, pure and unblemished. They are firm in their resolution that renunciation represents emancipation. They base themselves in the brahman. They are full of the brahman. They have made the brahman their abode. They are devoid of sorrow and have destroyed rajas. They obtain the eternal worlds. They obtain the supreme objective. Why do they need garhasthya?’<sup>557</sup>

“Syumarashmi said, ‘Even for those with supreme faith, even for those who seek the supreme objective, there is no option but to resort to garhasthya. All other ashramas depend on it. All living beings sustain themselves by depending on their mothers. In that way, all the other ashramas are possible because they are based on garhasthya. The householder performs sacrifices. The householder observes austerities. Any dharma that one wishes to pursue has garhasthya as its foundation. O sage! Everything that has life is engaged in procreation. It is not possible to generate offspring in any other mode. O brahmana! All grass and grain, in plains and mountains, depend on this mode. And life is sustained on those grass and grain. Therefore, how can any eloquent person say that there can be

emancipation without the householder stage? Those who are without faith, those who are without wisdom, those who are devoid of subtle insight, those who are without hope, those who are lazy and exhausted and those who are tormented because of their own deeds—even though they may be regarded as learned—these are the only ones who regard renunciation as the supreme ashrama. The firm and eternal injunctions are for the sake of the three worlds. That is the reason an illustrious brahmana is worshipped from the time of his birth.<sup>558</sup> Even before the ceremony of conception has been performed, mantras exist in brahmanas and enable them to perform, without any uncertainty, direct and indirect acts. In cremations, renewed attachment,<sup>559</sup> using vessels for food, donating cattle and other animals and immersing funeral cakes in water, these<sup>560</sup> become necessary. There are three kinds of ancestors—archishmats, barhishads and kravyads.<sup>561</sup> After death, they grant permission for mantras to be chanted. Mantras are thus the reason.<sup>562</sup> When this has been pronounced in the Vedas, how can mortals obtain emancipation without repaying their debts to ancestors, gods and brahmanas? There are indeed the speculations of some learned people. But they are lazy and devoid of prosperity. They may say that they know about the words of the Vedas. But they speak lies in the guise of truth.<sup>563</sup> If a brahmana performs sacrifices in accordance with the sacred texts of the Vedas, he is never afflicted by sin. With his sacrifices, the animals that have been killed and his dharma, he ascends upwards. He satisfies his desires and satisfies them.<sup>564</sup> A man cannot obtain greatness by ignoring the Vedas, deceit or illusion. The brahman is obtained through the practices of brahmanas.’

“Kapila said, ‘There are *darsha*, *pournamasa*, *agnihotra* and *chaturmasya*.<sup>565</sup> These are eternal sacrifices for intelligent people. There are those who no longer have any resolutions and are extremely firm in their fortitude. They are pure and have sought refuge in the brahman. They desire immortality and through the brahman, can satisfy the gods and the ancestors. They see their own selves in all beings and all beings in their own selves.<sup>566</sup> The gods are themselves confused when they try to follow in their footsteps. The being inside has four gates and four faces. Therefore, censure can also come from four directions. The gatekeeper has those four gates of the two arms, the organ of speech, the stomach and the genital organ.<sup>567</sup> One should not gamble with dice and take the riches that belong to others. One should not accept cooked food from those who have not been born in a womb.<sup>568</sup> An intelligent person will not come under the influence of anger and strike others with hands and feet, thus protecting these well. He will not loudly indulge in verbal abuse, nor will he indulge in slander and rumour. He will be devoted to the truth and restrained in speech. He will not be distracted. Thus, he will protect the gate that is the organ of speech extremely well. He will not refrain from food. But nor will he eat a lot. He will not be greedy and solicit the companionship of the virtuous. He will eat just enough to sustain the progress of life. Thus will he protect the gate that is the stomach. When there is a brave wife, he will not have intercourse with another woman. Nor will he summon a woman when it is not her season. He will devote himself to the vow of serving his wife. The gate of the genital organ will be protected in this way. The learned brahmanas protect all the gates of the genital organs, the stomach, the arms and the organ of speech, as the fourth, extremely well. If all these gates are not guarded, there will be failure. What will such a person obtain through austerities? What will be accomplished through sacrifices or his atman? If a person casts aside his upper garment, if he sleeps on the bare ground, using his arm as a pillow and if he is tranquil, the gods know such a person to be a brahmana. Such a sage finds pleasure alone and is comfortable with all the opposite sentiments. He does not think about others. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He knows everything about nature and its transformations. He knows about the objectives of all beings. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He grants fearlessness to all beings and is engaged in being free of fear from everyone. He sees himself inside all beings. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana.<sup>569</sup> He is not concerned with the Vedas and the fruits of rites. However, following the sanctions of all these, he takes delight in the absence of fruits. But it is certain that his tasks bring the rewards of fruits. They are seen to be without qualities and are obtained alone and in private. Those qualities are extremely difficult to comprehend and extremely difficult to obtain. But the fruits of rites come to an end. That is what you should see.’

“Syumarashmi said, ‘The Vedas provide support for both renunciation and fruits.<sup>570</sup> Both those paths are evident. O illustrious one! Tell me about this.’

“Kapila replied, ‘You should see it as evident that you should resort to the path of the virtuous. What is evident about the one that you wish to follow?’<sup>571</sup>



“Syumarashmi replied, ‘I am Syumarashmi. I have come here to ask you about the brahman. I desire what is beneficial for me. That is the reason, in an upright way, I started this conversation. My intention wasn’t a debate. O illustrious one! It is just that I have this terrible doubt. Explain it to me. You have said that, for those who resort to virtuous paths, the benefits can directly be seen. For the path that you follow, what can be directly seen? There are sacred texts about argumentation and there are the other sacred texts. Avoiding the sacred texts about argumentation, I have studied the other sacred texts, which bring success. Those sacred texts are the words of the Vedas. It can be seen that those sacred texts have determined that the signs of success are directly manifest. This is like a boat that has been tethered, so that it cannot be borne along by the tide. O brahmana! How can we be dragged away? If we possess wicked intelligence, how can we cross it?<sup>572</sup> O illustrious one! Tell me about this. I have resorted to you. Instruct me. There is no one who has completely renounced, is completely content, is completely without sorrow and disease, and is completely free from desire, resolution and action. You indulge in joy and misery, just as we do. You are no different from all the other animals in serving the objects of the senses. Conduct has accordingly been laid down for the four varnas and ashramas and they follow this. How does one determine what brings happiness?’

“Kapila replied, ‘If one acts according to the sacred texts and follows all the injunctions and rites, there will always be happiness. For a person who pursues knowledge, knowledge saves from everything. Any conduct that deviates from knowledge destroys subjects. That is the reason learned people are always happy in every way. Sometimes, one obtains the sense of complete unity.<sup>573</sup> Without understanding the truth about the sacred texts, some weak people come under the subjugation of desire and anger and are overwhelmed by arrogance. They do not know the truth about the sacred texts. They are like bandits who rob the sacred texts. Their intelligence has not ripened and they are inauspicious. They do not seek to attain the brahman. They see the lack of qualities. Their bodies are based on the qualities of tamas and they are devoted to tamas. Any being follows the inherent traits of his natural characteristics. Because of the qualities that are always generated by their nature, they are overcome by hatred, desire, wrath, insolence, falsehood and arrogance. However, there are those who use their intelligence and abandon both the good and the bad. They desire the supreme objective and endeavour to remain engaged in self-restraint.’

“Syumarashmi said, ‘O brahmana! Everything that I have said has been recounted in the sacred texts. If one does not understand the true purport of the sacred texts, one engages in rites. It has been heard that learning is that which is in conformity with the sacred texts. It has also been determined that not following the rites is against the sacred texts. The words of the Vedas represent the learning of the sacred texts. However, it is seen that many insolent people act against the sacred texts. For both this world and for the next, they see faults in the sacred texts. Ignorance destroys their wisdom and with wisdom in decay, they become enveloped in tamas. A person who resorts to this and roams around in every direction, basing himself on the words of the Vedas, is alone capable of being emancipated and being successful in every possible way. He is said to be liberated. This is an extremely difficult task for someone who lives in a household. Even if he indulges in donations, studying, sacrifices, generating offspring and uprightness, he is not capable of being freed. Shame on the doer and the tasks and on the futile exertions. However, if one turns one’s back on the rites of the Vedas, one becomes a non-believer. O illustrious one! This is what I quickly wish to hear about. O brahmana! Tell me about this. I have sought refuge with you. Instruct me. I wish to learn everything that is known to you about emancipation.’”

## Chapter 1590(262)

“Kapila said, ‘People regard the Vedas as proof and one should not turn one’s back on the rites in the Vedas. Know that there are two brahmans, Shabda-Brahma and Para-Brahma. Having attained Shabda-Brahma, one can then proceed towards Para-Brahma. Having created the body, he follows the Vedas and creates the body.<sup>574</sup> When the body has thus been purified, that vessel becomes a brahmana. After this, other tasks must be undertaken and I will tell you about them. Only the person can directly know whether there has been detachment in the mind. Other people cannot bear witness to this fact. Dharma is followed by those who sacrifice without any desires. They

are those who renounce and are not greedy. They are devoid of sentiments of compassion or envy. Even when they are engaged in the path of riches, they use it for visiting places of pilgrimage. They never indulge in wicked deeds and resort to the rites prescribed by birth. They are firm in their minds and resolutions. They have decided to pursue pure wisdom. They are not enraged. They do not suffer from malice. They have no sense of ego and do not indulge in jealousy. They faithfully pursue unsullied knowledge. They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. There were many such householders, following their own tasks. There were kings and brahmanas who practised the indicated rites. For a long time, they followed uprightness. They were content, firm in their pursuit of knowledge. Those faithful and pure people clearly followed dharma, both Para and the other kind.<sup>575</sup> They first cleaned their souls and then acted in accordance with the vows. They acted according to that dharma, even when it was very difficult to follow and involved hardships. Earlier, they followed that dharma collectively and earned happiness. Since they had no doubts, they did not have to perform atonements. They truly depended on dharma. Their minds were such that they could not be dislodged. They did not transgress the norms and showed no deceit in the practice of dharma. Collectively, those initial ones followed such conduct and because of this, they had no need of atonements. The sacred texts say that atonements became necessary when the souls became weak. In earlier times, there were many brahmanas like this. They performed sacrifices. They possessed the wisdom of the three.<sup>576</sup> They were pure, good in conduct and illustrious. Those learned ones continuously performed sacrifices, but without being tied down by the bonds of desire. Their sacrifices and rites from the Vedas were in conformity with the sacred texts, appropriate for the time, appropriate for their resolutions and appropriate for their vows. They had overcome desire and anger and were naturally firm in their souls. They were upright and always tranquil. They were engaged in their own tasks. In every way, they followed what we have come to know as the eternal sacred texts. They were cheerful in their spirits. They performed tasks that were extremely difficult to accomplish. They were engaged in their own tasks and performed terrible austerities. That ancient and eternal conduct was certainly extraordinary. They acted without any uncertainty in their intelligence, clear about the signs of dharma. They were safe in the practice of dharma. They were not distracted and not vanquished. All the varnas were engaged in this way and there was no exception to this. Those bulls among men followed that single dharma which has four quarters. Having followed it in the proper way, those virtuous ones went to the supreme objective. They left their houses and resorted to the forest. There were others who remained in their houses and became brahmacharis. Learned brahmanas know that dharma consists of four ashramas. Those who attain the brahman's eternal abode are certainly brahmanas. There were thus many ancient brahmanas who followed dharma. Those brahmanas can be seen in the firmament, shining as stellar bodies. Some are nakshatras and many are large numbers of stars. Following the Vedas, they are content and have obtained the infinite. If they happen to be reborn in this cycle of life, since they are not tainted by wicked deeds, they rarely perform tasks that require births in wombs. Such people are brahmanas. How else can one be a brahmana? It is good and evil acts that enable the determination. We have learnt in the sacred texts that all of them obtain the infinite in this way and that their wisdom has been ripened. They have auspicious souls and only thirst for emancipation. The four kinds of dharma in the Upanishads is generally said to apply to everyone.<sup>577</sup> Those brahmanas who control their souls are Siddhas and are always successful. They are said to base themselves on knowledge, with contentment as the foundation. They possess renunciation in their souls. This eternal search for the brahman has always been the dharma of mendicants. Sometimes others also pursue this, but only according to capacity. Whether one reaches that objective, or whether one only moves towards it because one is weak, the brahman is the auspicious object of desire and frees a person from the cycle of life.'

“Syumarashmi said, ‘There are those who enjoy, donate, perform sacrifices, study and resort to a life of renunciation, after having pursued the dharma of serving the senses. Among these, when they die, who attains supreme heaven? O brahmana! I am asking you about this. Tell me the exact truth.’

“Kapila replied, ‘All those auspicious ones who enjoy have all the qualities.’<sup>578</sup> However, they do not obtain the bliss that comes through renunciation. You can see this.’

“Syumarashmi said, ‘You based yourself on knowledge. Householders have determined to perform acts. However, it has been stated that the objective of all the ashramas is the same. No difference is seen between them, singly or collectively. Which is superior or inferior? O illustrious one! Tell me this.’

“Kapila replied, ‘Acts clean the body, but knowledge is the ultimate objective. When sins have been thrown out and one has tasted knowledge, non-violence, forgiveness, peace, lack of injury, truth, uprightness, lack of enmity, lack of pride, modesty, renunciation and tranquility result. Through this path, one obtains the supreme objective of the brahman. A learned person knows this in his mind and determines to act accordingly. There are brahmanas who are always tranquil, pure, firm in the pursuit of knowledge and content. They are said to progress towards the supreme objective. Those who know what it is to be known in the Vedas and also the contexts are said to know the Vedas. The others are like bellows.<sup>579</sup> Since everything is established in the Vedas, a person who knows the Vedas knows everything. All the faith is established in the Vedas and everything that exists and does not exist.<sup>580</sup> All the faith exists in this and everything that exists and does not exist.<sup>581</sup> Those who realize know that it is the end and the middle and everything that is true and everything that is false.<sup>582</sup> When everything has been renounced, there is tranquility and peace. There is contentment, and auspicious emancipation is based on this. There is lack of falsehood in this. There is truth in this. This is everything that is to be known. This<sup>583</sup> is inside all mobile and immobile objects. The unmanifest brahman does not decay and is the source of creation. This gives all kinds of happiness and is the supreme objective. Energy, forgiveness and unadulterated and auspicious tranquility—these are certainly the eternal reasons for bliss. If the sight of knowledge is used, one reaches Shabda-Brahma. For the sake of the brahman, I bow down in obeisance before Brahma.’”

## Chapter 1591(263)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Vedas praise dharma, artha and kama. But which gain is special? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what Kundadhara had affectionately done for someone who had done him a good turn earlier. There was a brahmana who did not possess any riches. But he desired to pursue dharma and use the wealth for the purpose of conducting sacrifices. He tormented himself through fierce austerities. Having made up his mind, he worshipped the gods. But though he worshipped the gods with devotion, he failed to obtain riches. He then began to think, ‘Which is the god who has not so far been worshipped by men, who can be speedily pleased?’ He then saw a follower of the gods, Kundadhara, standing near him, with a tranquil form that was in the form of the cloud. On seeing that great-souled one, devotion was generated in him. ‘This one, with a body like this, will bring prosperity for me. He lives near the gods and has not been worshipped by men earlier. He will quickly grant me a lot of riches.’ The brahmana then used incense, fragrances, superior garlands and many kinds of offerings to worship him. The cloud was pleased within a short period of time. Wishing to benefit him, he spoke these words to the one who had controlled himself. ‘The virtuous ones have decreed methods of salvation for those who kill brahmanas, those who are drunkards, those who are thieves and those who have broken their vows. But there is no salvation for those who are ungrateful. Desire has a son named adharma. Anger is said to be the son of jealousy. Greed is the son of deceit. But ungratefulness has no offspring.’ The brahmana lay down on a bed of kusha grass. Kundadhara’s energy penetrated him and he saw all the beings in a dream. He was tranquil and he had cleansed himself with austerities and devotion. The brahmana’s atman was pure and in the night, he saw these signs. O Yudhishtira! He saw the immensely radiant and great-souled Manibhadra standing amongst the gods, issuing instructions. The gods were granting kingdoms and riches to those who performed good deeds and were taking them away in the case of bad deeds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the midst of the yakshas, he saw Kundadhara prostrate himself on the ground before the gods. Instructed by the words of the gods, the immensely illustrious Manibhadra asked, ‘Why is Kundadhara prostrate on the ground? What does he want?’

“Kundadhara said, ‘That brahmana is devoted to me. If the gods are pleased with me, I desire that favours should be shown to him, so that he can obtain happiness.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Instructed by the words of the gods, Manibhadra again spoke these words to the immensely radiant Kundadhara. ‘O fortunate one! Arise. You have been successful. Be happy. Whatever riches are desired by this brahmana, your friend, on the instructions of the gods, I will give those riches to him, because of your friend-



ship with him.’ But Kundadhara thought that the sentiments of men were certainly fickle. Therefore, the illustrious one thought that he should turn the brahmana’s mind towards austerities.

“Kundadhara said, ‘O granter of riches! I am not seeking riches for the brahmana. For this devotee, I desire that you should act so as to show him another favour. For this devotee, I do not desire the earth, full of riches, or a great store of wealth. Instead, let him follow dharma. Let him find delight in dharma. Let his intelligence be such that he earns a living through dharma. Let dharma be the most important thing for him. It is my view that this should be the favour shown.’

“Manibhadra replied, ‘The fruits of dharma are many kinds of kingdoms and happiness. Let him enjoy those fruits and let him be free of all physical hardships.’”

‘Bhishma said, “However, the immensely illustrious Kundadhara repeatedly entreated that he should only be driven to practise dharma. At this, the gods were satisfied.

“Manibhadra replied, ‘The gods are pleased with you and with this brahmana. He will have dharma in his soul and his mind will turn towards dharma.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! The cloud was delighted at having been successful. He had obtained the boon that he desired in his mind, one that was extremely difficult to get. The supreme among brahmanas saw that many fine pieces of cloth were scattered around near him. But he was indifferent towards them.

“The brahmana said, ‘Since he has not paid any attention to my good deeds, no one else will.’<sup>584</sup> I will therefore go to the forest and live a life of supreme dharma.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The supreme among brahmanas was indifferent and the gods had also shown him their favours. He entered the forest and started great austerities. The brahmana subsisted on whatever fruits and roots were left after serving the gods and the guests. O great king! There was great love in his mind for dharma. The brahmana then discarded all roots and fruits and subsisted only on leaves. The supreme among brahmanas gave up leaves and subsisted on water. Thereafter, he subsisted for a large number of years on air alone. Despite this, it was extraordinary that the breath of his life did not fade. He was faithful towards dharma and performed fierce austerities. After a long period of time, he obtained divine sight. He thought, ‘If I am pleased with someone and my mind turns towards giving him great riches, my words will never be false.’<sup>585</sup> Cheerfully, he continued with more austerities. Having been successful, he again thought about what would come next. ‘If I am satisfied with someone and wish to grant him a kingdom, he will become a king and my words will not be false.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, Kundadhara showed himself before him, both because of his friendship and because the brahmana had been successful in his yoga of austerities. O king! The brahmana was surprised to see Kundadhara, but met him and honoured him according to the prescribed rites. Kundadhara said, ‘O brahmana! Use your divine and supreme sight to see the ends that kings come to and also use your sight to look at the worlds.’ With his divine sight, the brahmana could see a long distance away and saw that thousands of kings were submerged in hell.

“Kundadhara said, ‘If after worshipping me faithfully you had only obtained misery, what would I have given you and how would I have shown you favours?’<sup>586</sup> Look and look again at what happens to the desire that men possess. In particular, the gate of heaven is barred to men.’”

‘Bhishma said, “He saw<sup>587</sup> men stationed there, enveloped in desire, anger, greed, fear, intoxication, sleep, laziness and procrastination.

“Kundadhara said, ‘People are bound by these. Gods are frightened of men because they always act contrary to the words of the gods, in every way. Without the permission of the gods, no one can follow dharma. Through the strength of austerities, you can bestow kingdoms and riches.’”

‘Bhishma said, “At this, the brahmana bowed his head down before that store of water. The great-souled one said, ‘You have shown me a great favour. Earlier, I was bound down by desire and avarice and did not realize your affection for me. Therefore, you should pardon me.’ Kundadhara told the bull among brahmanas, ‘I have forgiven you.’ He embraced him with his arms and disappeared from there. In ancient time, thus did the brahmana roam through all the worlds, having been united with austerities through Kundadhara’s favours. Through the strength of dharma and yoga, one attains the supreme objective. One can roam around as one wishes and obtain success in all one’s desires. A person who follows dharma is worshipped by gods, brahmanas, virtuous people, yakshas, men and *charanas*.<sup>588</sup> But this is not true of those who desire riches and other things. If a person’s mind is such that loves

dharma and practises it, the gods are extremely pleased with him. The happiness obtained through riches lasts for a short time. Dharma brings supreme happiness.”

## Chapter 1592(264)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! There are many sacrifices and austerities, all with a single objective. Which of these sacrifices is recommended for dharma and not for the sake of happiness alone?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, Narada recounted the ancient account of a brahmana. For the sake of performing sacrifices, he resorted to unchhavritti.<sup>589</sup> The brahmana lived in Vidarbha, best among kingdoms in the practice of dharma. Surviving on unchhavritti, that rishi worshipped Vishnu. He ate shyamaka, *suryapatni* and *suvarchala*.<sup>590</sup> But because of his austerities, those bitter and tasteless herbs also tasted succulent. Having gone to the forest, he refrained from injury towards all beings on earth. O scorcher of enemies! Desiring to go to heaven, he offered roots and fruits in those sacrifices. His wife’s name was Pushkaracharini and she was pure and thin through the practising of vows. Satya<sup>591</sup> instructed her to join him in the sacrifice as a wife. Though she did not approve of this, she was terrified of his curse and her nature was also to follow.<sup>592</sup> Her garments consisted of feathers that peacocks had cast aside. Though she was unwilling, she was summoned to the sacrifice by the officiating priest.<sup>593</sup> In that forest, not very far away, dwelt a person who was descended from Shukra’s lineage. He was in the form of a deer. He was also jealous and a follower of adharma.<sup>594</sup> He spoke these words to Satya. ‘You are trying to perform an extremely difficult task. If a sacrifice is devoid of its mantras and other limbs, it will be performed improperly. Therefore, fling me there as an oblation and without any distractions, go to heaven.’ At this, Savitri herself manifested at the sacrifice and counselled him to do this. But though invited, he replied, ‘I will not slay my neighbour.’ Having been restrained, she<sup>595</sup> entered the flames of the sacrifice. She did not wish to see a sacrifice that was improperly performed and wished to enter the nether worlds. However, the deer again joined its hands in salutation and entreated Satya. But Satya embraced it and asked it to go away. The deer departed. But having gone eight steps, it returned and said, ‘O Satya! If you slay me, you will perform a good deed. Slay me and attain a virtuous end. I am granting you divine sight. Look at those apsaras. Look at those wonderful vimanas and the great-souled gandharvas.’ With that sight, he glanced at those extremely beautiful worlds and he was touched by desire. He looked at the deer and thought that he was capable of dwelling in heaven through violence. It was Dharma himself who had spent many years in the forest in the form of a deer. Wishing to ensure his salvation, he said, ‘In your mind, you should not think of a sacrifice that involves the killing of a deer. Your great austerities will thereby be destroyed. Sacrifices should not involve any violence.’ The illustrious Dharma himself accepted an officiating role at that sacrifice. He obtained the state of meditation and supreme austerities that his wife had already obtained. All dharma involves non-violence. Violence does not bring success in a sacrifice. This is the truth that Dharma spoke to Satya and I have told you about it.”

## Chapter 1593(265)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How does a man become wicked? How does he follow dharma? How does he obtain emancipation and where does he go?”

‘Bhishma replied, “You know everything about dharma. You are only asking to confirm your belief. Hear about emancipation and renunciation and the foundations of wickedness and dharma. On knowing about the five,<sup>596</sup> wishes first run after them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained these, desire and anger are generated. To accomplish these, he then takes delight in performing tasks. Form, taste and the others attract as desirable objectives. From this, attachment results and aversion follows after that. Greed follows and confusion comes after that. When one is overcome with greed, confusion, attachment and aversion, no dharma is generated. The intelligence turns to acts of adharma. One uses deceit to practise dharma. One finds delight in using deceit to pursue

artha. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Through deceit, one tries to be successful in obtaining riches. The intelligence turns to this and wickedness becomes attractive. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is despite well-wishers and learned people trying to restrain him. He replies to them in words that seem to be full of reason, supported by the ordinances. Because of attachment and confusion, three kinds of adharma increase. He thinks of sin, speaks of it and does it. When he thus engages in adharma, the virtuous perceive his taints. But those who have similar dispositions become his friends and serve the evildoer. He does not obtain happiness here, not to speak of the hereafter. This is how one has evil in his soul. Now hear about the person who has dharma in his soul. He is accomplished in dharma and obtains benefits. Because of his wisdom, he can see the sins in advance. He is skilled in ascertaining happiness and unhappiness and serves virtuous people. Because he consorts with those who are righteous, his proclivity towards such conduct also increases. He finds delight in wisdom and dharma. He sustains himself through dharma. Even if his mind turns towards obtaining riches, he does this only through dharma. He sprinkles his foundations only with those things where there are qualities. He has dharma in his soul and obtains friends who are good. Having obtained friends and riches, he finds delight in this world and in the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The learned know that as the fruits of dharma, a living being obtains lordship over sound, touch, form, taste and scent.<sup>597</sup> O Yudhishtira! However, having obtained the fruits of dharma, he is not satisfied. Through the sight of learning, he is not content until he has renounced. Through the sight of wisdom, he sees sins in desire. He no longer finds delight in desire, and dharma liberates him. On seeing that everything in the world is destroyed, he strives to give up everything.<sup>598</sup> He uses every means possible for emancipation and avoids those that are against it. He quickly resorts to renunciation and abandons all wicked deeds. He has dharma in his soul and obtains supreme emancipation. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have told you what you asked me about—sin, dharma, emancipation and renunciation. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, in every situation, you must practise dharma. O Kounteya! If you base yourself in dharma, you will obtain eternal success.”

## Chapter 1594(266)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have said that emancipation can be obtained through some means and not by others. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear what those appropriate means are.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely wise one! What you have asked requires accomplished sight. O unblemished one! You must always seek to hunt out the appropriate means in everything. O unblemished one! When one turns one’s intelligence towards fashioning a pot, once the pot has been done, it vanishes.<sup>599</sup> In that way, the reasons for pursuing dharma are no longer there once one has obtained dharma.<sup>600</sup> The road that goes to the eastern ocean doesn’t go to the western one. There is only one path for emancipation. Listen to that in detail. One should practise forgiveness, eliminate anger and abandon all desire and resolution. One must patiently follow sattva and conquer sleep. By being attentive, one must protect oneself against fear. The atman must be used to control the breath. Patience must be used to restrain wishes, hatred and desire. Practice must be used to control errors and the whirl of confusion. Through practice of knowledge, one must ascertain the truth about important and unimportant things. Through restrained diet, one must ward off digestive disorders and disease. Contentment and knowledge of the truth must be used to control greed, confusion and hatred. Through the dharma of compassion, one should conquer the adharma of indifference. Through tranquility and abandoning of attachment, one must control the desire to obtain things. Through yoga, a learned person realizes that affection and hunger are temporary. Compassion and contentment are used to control pride and thirst. Enterprise is used to conquer lassitude. Certainty is used to conquer doubt. Loquaciousness is conquered through silence and fear through valour. Words and thoughts are controlled through intelligence and intelligence through the sight of knowledge. Knowledge about the great paramatman is used to control the jivatman.<sup>601</sup> Finally, that<sup>602</sup> can be known by those who are tranquil and pure in deeds. The wise know how to control the five taints associated with yoga. These are desire, anger, greed, fear and laziness as the fifth. These must be discarded and yoga must be practised. Meditation, studying, donations, truthfulness, modesty, uprightness, forgiveness, purity in intake of food and control over the senses—these are the means used to increase energy and dispel sins. Thus, resolution becomes successful and knowledge is obtained. Such a person is energetic

and has cleansed his sins. He is restrained in diet and has conquered his senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, he attains the state of the brahman. He is without folly and without attachment. He has cast aside desire and anger. He bases himself on lack of distress, lack of insolence and lack of anxiety. He is cheerful, unblemished and pure. This is the path of emancipation. He controls his words and thoughts and all desire.”<sup>603</sup>

## Chapter 1595(267)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and Asita-Devala. The aged Devala, supreme among intelligent ones, was seated. Narada asked him about the creation and destruction of beings. ‘O brahmana! Where was this universe, with its mobile and immobile objects, created from? Where do they go at the time of destruction? Tell me about this.’

“Asita replied, ‘It is said that when the time comes, the creator of all beings thinks about existence and brings into being the five great elements. Time urges itself to create beings from these. There is no doubt that those who say that there is anything else<sup>604</sup> utter a falsehood. O Narada! Know that these five are eternal, indestructible and fixed. These naturally possess great energy and time is the sixth. Water, space, earth, wind and fire are the elements. Do not entertain the doubt that there is anything superior to these. There are no texts or arguments to substantiate that doubt. Know that the accumulation or withdrawal of these six leads to everything. These five, time, the eight strands are the only eternal reason behind the creation and destruction of all beings.<sup>605</sup> When beings are destroyed, it is into these that merger takes place. When beings are created, they emerge from these. When a creature is destroyed, it is divided into five parts, and is also created from these. The body comes from earth, hearing from space. The eyes come from fire, life from the wind and blood from water. The eyes, the nose, the ears, the skin and the tongue as the fifth are the senses of knowledge and the wise know that these are for attaining the objects of the senses. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste are known to be the qualities of the senses. There are five senses, five qualities and five connections. Form, scent, taste, touch and sound are the qualities that are obtained through the senses. There are five each of senses, qualities and connections. The senses don’t actually comprehend the qualities of form, scent, taste, touch and sound. These are actually understood by the kshetrajna. Consciousness is superior to the accumulation of the senses. The mind is superior to consciousness. Intelligence is superior to the mind. The kshetrajna is superior to intelligence. Initially, creatures consider all material objects through separate senses. Subsequently, the mind reflects and resorts to intelligence. One then comprehends the truth about all the objects perceived by the senses. Consciousness and mind interact with the accumulation of the senses, and intelligence is the eighth. Those who have thought about adhyatma and have thought about it know these eight to be the organs of knowledge. Know that the hands, the feet, the anus, the penis and the mouth as the fifth are the organs of action. The mouth is said to be the organ that is used for speaking and eating. The feet are the organs for moving and the hand are the organs for doing something. The anus and the penis are similar in action and are both organs for discharge. One is for the discharge of excrement, while the other is for discharge at the time of sexual desire. However, it has rightly been said that there is a sixth organ of action and that is strength. I have spoken to you about all the senses of knowledge, organs of action and their attributes. When the organs are exhausted, they cannot perform their own tasks. Since the action of the organs is suspended, a man sleeps. However, though the senses are under suspension, if the mind is awake and concerns itself with material objects, this is known as a state of dreaming. There are three attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas. When engaged in action, the state of sattva is praised. Joy, success in tasks, power and the supreme objective are said to be the signs of those who have resorted to sattva. The sentiments that any creature properly resorts to and the sentiments that it aspires for, are always evident in its coming and going.<sup>606</sup> It is said that there are seventeen characteristics of the qualities and the senses.<sup>607</sup> The eighteenth one<sup>608</sup> that dwells in the body is eternal. All those qualities adhere to the one who assumes a body and dwells in the body. When he no longer dwells in the body, they are also disassociated from the body. The body is reduced to the five elements. There are eighteen qualities in the body.<sup>609</sup> Heat is the twentieth and all this comes about through an interaction between the five elements. Together with the breath of life, mahat sustains these in the body. That is the reason for creation and destruction of the body. When those good and bad deeds are exhausted,

the body is reduced to the five elements. In due course of time, depending on the good and bad deeds that have been performed, another body is entered. Through a process of death and rebirth, he repeatedly gives up one body and resorts to another body. He is urged on by time, like a person abandoning a dilapidated house for a new house. Those who are wise and firm in their resolution are not tormented because of this. Foolish people, those who are proud of relationships, are the only ones who grieve on account of this. There is no one to whom he belongs. There is no one who belongs to him. He is always alone, enjoying joy and misery in the body. Some creatures are born again. There are others who are not reborn. Some are freed from their bodies and attain the supreme objective. Having abandoned the body, the store of good and bad deeds, when the body is destroyed, such people attain the brahman. Knowledge of sankhya is recommended for the destruction of good and bad deeds. Once those are destroyed, learned ones can see that the state of the brahman is the supreme objective.”

## Chapter 1596(268)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Brothers, fathers, sons, relatives and well-wishers have been slain for the sake of accomplishing objectives. We have been driven by wicked resolutions and have been cruel. O grandfather! How can this thirst for riches be removed? Following that thirst, we have perpetrated wicked deeds.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a song sung by the king of Videha, when he was asked by Mandavya. ‘I possess nothing, but I live my life in great happiness. Though Mithila<sup>610</sup> is blazing, nothing that belongs to me is burning. Riches indeed bring prosperity. But those who know, regard these as misery. Objects that bring little prosperity always confuse those who are not accomplished. Whatever happiness satisfaction brings in this world and whatever great happiness is obtained in heaven are not even one-sixteenth of the happiness that comes about from the extinguishment of thirst. With the progress of time, a cow grows and so does its horns. In that way, with more and more riches, the thirst also increases. If one has a sense of ownership in anything, then, when that object is destroyed, one suffers from torment. One should not be driven by desire. Attachment to desire brings misery. When desired riches have been obtained, they should be used for dharma. But even then, desire must be shunned. A learned person regards all beings as equal, as equal as a tiger and a lump of flesh.<sup>611</sup> Having been successful in purifying his soul, he renounces everything. He discards both truth and falsehood, sorrow and joy, the pleasant and the unpleasant, fear and freedom from fear. Having abandoned everything, he is tranquil and healthy. This<sup>612</sup> is difficult to be given up by those who are evil in their intelligence. Even when the body decays, it does not decrease. It is like a disease that destroys life. The casting aside of thirst brings happiness. A person who has dharma in his soul beholds his own atman, like the sparkling and unblemished moon. He obtains happiness in this world and fame in the hereafter.’ On hearing the king’s words, the brahmana was pleased. Mandavya, who had earlier been confused, honoured those words.”

## Chapter 1597(269)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What kind of conduct, what kind of behaviour, what kind of knowledge and what kind of faith enable one to obtain the state of the brahman, which is permanent and is beyond nature?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A person who is devoted to the dharma of moksha must be restrained in diet and must conquer his senses. He will then obtain the supreme state, which is permanent and is beyond nature. The sage will depart from his home and regard gain and loss as equal. He will be indifferent to objects of desire, even when they present themselves. He will become a mendicant. He will not hurt anyone through sight, thoughts or words. He will not display any harsh conduct, whether the person is present or absent. He will not cause injury to any being. He will roam around like the sun.<sup>613</sup> He should lead a life so that he does not commit an act of injury. He must tolerate harsh words and never be arrogant. Even when he is enraged, he will speak pleasant words. When he is censured, he will reply agreeably. When he roams around in the midst of a village, he should not show either exces-

sive friendship or enmity. When searching for alms, he should not go to a house that he has visited earlier. Even when he is reviled, he must protect himself well and not speak unpleasant words in reply. He must be mild and not injure someone who has injured him. He must control fear and rage. The sage should desire alms when the smoke has gone out, when the pestle has been laid down, when the fire has been extinguished, when food has been eaten and when the vessels are no longer laid out.<sup>614</sup> He should only accept what is required for subsistence and ignore anything in excess. He should not be distressed at not getting something. Nor should he be delighted at getting something. He should not desire what ordinary people want. He should not eat when he is respectfully invited.<sup>615</sup> In a similar way, he should refuse anything that is offered as a mark of honour. He must not find fault with the food that has been offered, nor should he praise its qualities. He must always refuse a bed or a seat offered as a mark of honour. He should reside in an empty house, at the foot of a tree, in a forest or in a cave. His conduct should not be known to others. If others come there, he should go somewhere else.<sup>616</sup> He should treat requests and obstructions equally. He will be certain and fixed. He will not be bound down by either good deeds or bad ones. He will control the force of words, his mind and the force of anger. He will control the urge to know and the force of the stomach and the penis. The ascetic will control these urges. No censure will be allowed to afflict his heart. He will be neutral, regarding praise and censure as equal. This is the supremely sacred ashrama of a mendicant. He is great in soul and excellent in his vows. He is controlled and is detached in every way. He doesn't go to earlier places.<sup>617</sup> He is tranquil. He is without an abode. He is controlled. He does not consort with those who are in vanaprastha or garhasthya stages. He should not unwittingly fall prey to desire. Nor should he succumb to delight. Know that this is the ashrama of moksha, known to those who are learned. Everything about moksha was spoken about by the learned Harita. If a person departs from his house and grants fearlessness to all beings, he obtains worlds that are full of energy.”

## Chapter 1598(270)

‘Yudhishtira said, “All the people speak of ourselves as being blessed. However, there is no man who is more miserable than we are. O supreme among the Kurus! O grandfather! We have been born as men, but have been born from the gods. The worlds honour us, but we have obtained misery. When will we resort to sannyasa and destroy this sorrow? O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Taking life in these bodies is a matter of sorrow. We will free ourselves of the seventeen attributes<sup>618</sup> and merge with the five elements. O great grandfather! We will also free ourselves from the eight objects of the senses and the qualities.<sup>619</sup> The sages, who are firm in their vows, are not born again. O scorcher of enemies! When will we be in a position to abandon the kingdom?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! Everything can be counted and everything has an end. The number of rebirths can also be counted.<sup>620</sup> Nothing in this world is fixed. O king! In connection with what we are talking about, no sin has been associated with you. O one who knows about dharma! Endeavour and in the course of time, you will follow that path. O king! In this body, the atman is the lord of good and bad deeds. But the rising darkness obstructs the vision. The wind has no dust or colour in it. But when it is tinged with a pigment, that colour penetrates it and this is also seen to colour the directions. In that way, because of the fruits of deeds, the atman is tinged and enveloped in darkness. It fades, adopts that colour and circles around amidst bodies. In any creature, knowledge destroys the ignorance that causes darkness. When that is dispelled, the eternal brahman manifests itself. The sages say that this cannot be accomplished through acts. Those who have been liberated should be worshipped, even by the worlds of the immortals. The large numbers of maharshis are also not content.<sup>621</sup> In this connection, there is an ancient song. O king! Listen to it attentively. The daitya Vritra was dislodged from his prosperity and sung this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was vanquished and was without aides. His kingdom was lost. However, despite being in the midst of enemies, he resorted to his intelligence alone and did not grieve. In those ancient times, Vritra lost his riches and Ushanas<sup>622</sup> spoke to him. ‘O danava! Now that you have been defeated, are you distressed?’

“Vritra said, ‘Because of truth and austerities, I know about destruction. I do not sorrow or rejoice at the creation and destruction of beings. Goaded by time, beings are subjugated and submerged in hell. Some say that all



the learned ones go to heaven. Goaded by time, they spend the computed durations of time there. However, when that duration is over, they are born again and again. They are born as thousands of inferior species and go to hell. Bound by the nooses of time, beings are helpless and go there. I have seen that creatures circle around in this way. The sacred texts have said that gains are commensurate with deeds. Creatures are born as inferior species, men and gods and go to hell. After that unhappiness and happiness and misery and joy is over, they return to their earlier conduct.<sup>623</sup> All the worlds are bound down by the injunctions of Yama. All beings are travellers along a path that has been travelled before.’”

‘Bhishma said, “He knew about time and its enumeration, about what cannot be enumerated and about creation and stability. When he spoke in this way, the illustrious Ushanas replied, ‘O son!’<sup>624</sup> Why are you speaking these terrible, wicked and insane words?’”

“‘Vritra said, ‘You and the other learned ones have directly seen the great austerities I tormented myself with in earlier times and the sacrifices that I performed out of greed. I brought fragrances, beings and diverse kinds of scents. I grew in my energy and transcended the three worlds. I roamed around with my companions, showering garlands of rays. I could not be defeated by any being and I was never frightened of anyone. However, the prosperity that I earned through my austerities was destroyed through my own deeds. O illustrious one! But resorting to my fortitude, I am not sorrowing over that. In earlier times, when I was fighting with the great-souled and great Indra, I saw the illustrious lord, Hari Narayana. He is Vaikuntha, Purusha, Vishnu, Shukla, Ananta, Sanatana, Munjakesha, Harishmashru and the grandfather of all beings.<sup>625</sup> There is no doubt that a little bit of those austerities are still left for me.<sup>626</sup> Therefore, I wish to ask you about the fruits of deeds. For which varna has Brahma decreed the greatest prosperity? Why is that supreme prosperity lost? How are beings created? How do they live? Who makes them act? What are the supreme fruits obtained by living for an eternal period? What can be achieved through deeds and what can be achieved through knowledge? What fruits are obtained? O brahmana rishi! You should explain this to me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O lion among kings! Having been thus addressed, the sage replied. O bull among men! Together with your brothers, listen attentively to what he said.’”

## Chapter 1599(271)

“‘Ushanas said, ‘I bow before the illustrious and powerful god Vishnu. O son! He holds up the surface of the earth and the sky in his hands. O supreme among danavas! His head is the eternal region. I will tell you about Vishnu’s supreme greatness.’”

‘Bhishma said, “While they were conversing in this way, the great sage Sanatkumara, with dharma in his soul, arrived there, to dispel their doubts. The Indra among the asuras and the sage Ushanas worshipped him. O king! The bull among sages then sat down on an expensive seat. When the immensely wise one was seated, Ushanas spoke these words to him. ‘For the sake of the Indra among the danavas, tell him about Vishnu’s supreme greatness.’ On hearing this, Sanatkumara spoke words that were full of grave import. He told the intelligent Indra among the danavas about Vishnu’s greatness. ‘O daitya! Listen to everything about Vishnu’s supreme greatness. O scorcher of enemies! Know that everything in the universe is established in Vishnu. O mighty-armed one! He is the one who creates all beings, mobile and immobile. In the course of time, it is he who withdraws them back and creates them again when the time arises. At the time of destruction, everything enters him. Everything is created from him. Danavas are incapable of obtaining him through austerities or through sacrifices. One is capable of obtaining him by restraining the senses. Both internal and external acts must be based in the mind.<sup>627</sup> If they are purified through intelligence, one can obtain eternity. This is like a goldsmith purifying gold in the fire, using a great deal of different efforts. A being may purify himself through one hundred births. But through limited deeds and a great effort, another being may purify himself in a single birth. If the filth on the body is cleansed before it has become thick, it requires only a little effort. In that way, one must make a great deal of effort to remove the taints. If a few garlands are mixed with sesamum seeds, they do not shed their scent and become fragrant. This is the subtlety of knowledge. A large number of garlands must repeatedly be mixed. Then the scent<sup>628</sup> goes away and the fragrance

of the garlands is established. Through hundreds of lives, one must seek for the qualities. One must use one's intelligence to restrain the taints and endeavour and practise. O danava! Listen to the reasons behind deeds, whereby creatures become addicted to, or detached from, the consequences of those deeds. O lord! Listen with single-minded attention. In due course, I will explain how creatures engage in action and refrain from it. The illustrious lord, Hari Narayana, is without a beginning and without an end. He creates all the beings, mobile and immobile. He is in all beings that are mutable and immutable. He uses his rays to drink up the universe through his eleven transformations.<sup>629</sup> Know that his feet are the earth and the firmament is his head. O daitya! His arms are the directions and his ears are the sky. His energy is the sun and his mind is established in the moon. His intelligence is always in knowledge and his juices are in the water. O supreme among the danavas! The planets are in the midst of his eyebrows. O danava! The nakshatras are his eyes and the earth constitutes his feet. Know that rajas, tamas and sattva are Narayana's soul. O son! Know that the ashramas and the fruits of all deeds are his face. The supreme and undecaying one is also the fruit of not performing deeds. The metres are his body hair and the syllables are his speech. The different kinds of modes and the various aspects of dharma are based in his heart. He is the brahman. He is supreme dharma. He is austerities. He is the truth. He is *shruti* and the sacred texts.<sup>630</sup> He constitutes the vessels used in sacrifices, sacrifices and the sixteen officiating priests.<sup>631</sup> He is the grandfather. He is Vishnu. He is the Ashvins. He is Purandara. He is Mitra. He is Varuna. He is Yama. He is the lord of riches.<sup>632</sup> Though he is seen as separate, he is known as one. Know that this entire universe is under the control of that single god. O Indra among the daityas! In all beings, he is spoken of as the single one. When a creature perceives this through his knowledge, truth is manifested before him. Between creation and destruction, beings exist for one thousand crore and this is also true of the others.<sup>633</sup> O daitya! The measure of the duration of the creation of beings is in terms of many thousands of lakes. Each lake is one *yojana* in width, one *krosha* in depth and five hundred yojanas in length. The distance between one lake and another is one yojana. Let water be taken away from one of these lakes, using a single hair and not a second one, with this being done only once a day. Know that the time it takes for all the lakes to be dried up is the period of creation of beings, and destruction is of the same duration. There is supreme evidence that creatures have six complexions—dark, smoky, blue in the middle, red, which is easier to tolerate, yellow, which is extremely pleasant, and white.<sup>634</sup> White is supreme. O Indra among danavas! It is unblemished and without sorrow. It is bereft of exhaustion and brings success. O daitya! A creature goes through birth in thousands of wombs before it obtains success. Indra of the gods considered all the possible ends and also examined what the auspicious sacred texts had said about the ends. The gods then decided that the ends of creatures were determined by their colour and that their colour was determined by time. O daitya! A creature has to pass through fourteen hundred thousand existences<sup>635</sup> and the number isn't unlimited.<sup>636</sup> Know that depending on deeds, a creature can ascend, stay in the same place or descend. The end obtained by a dark complexion is the worst. Such a person is submerged in hell and is cooked there. It is said that the creature has to undergo hardships in that state for many thousands of kalpas. After having been there for hundreds and thousands of years, the creature obtains a smoky complexion. The creature dwells there helplessly, until the end of the yuga, with its atman enveloped in tamas. But when the creature is united with the qualities of sattva, it uses its own intelligence to dispel the darkness. It may then obtain a red complexion. However, if it is stuck with the blue, it circles around in the world of men.<sup>637</sup> Bound down by its own deeds, it is then afflicted by death and rebirth. However, when it attains a yellow complexion, though it is beyond immediate destruction, it still has to return.<sup>638</sup> With that yellow complexion, it roams around for thousands of kalpas. O daitya! But it has still not been emancipated and has to spend time in hell for a thousand and ten years. There are still ends determined by nineteen thousand cycles of deeds.<sup>639</sup> Know that one is freed from hell and every other form of birth only through emancipation. A creature may roam around in the world of the gods. But when the merits decay, it is dislodged and becomes human again. After having remained a mortal for one hundred and eight kalpas, it can become immortal again. However, if in that state,<sup>640</sup> it deviates because of destiny, it obtains the status of a dark complexion and suffers from every kind of hardship. O brave one among the asuras! I will now tell you about how a creature in the world of the living can obtain success, if it so desires. Through seven hundred different kinds of acts, a creature progresses from red to yellow and white.<sup>641</sup> Having finally united with white, it obtains and roams around in the supreme eight worlds.<sup>642</sup> These eight, or sixty, or hundreds, are extremely radiant. But they are created by the mind.<sup>643</sup> The white complexion is the supreme objective and its greatness is more than



that of the other three.<sup>644</sup> Even if one transcends the kalpas, one dwells cheerlessly in the eight worlds or in the other four.<sup>645</sup> The sixth complexion<sup>646</sup> attains the supreme objective. Such a distinguished person obtains success and is devoid of exhaustion. One can dwell cheerlessly in the seven superior worlds<sup>647</sup> for hundreds of kalpas. When this ends, one is born in the world of men, although one obtains greatness there. In due course of time, one transcends these and moves up in the hierarchy of creatures. For several kalpas, one dwells seven times in those superior worlds. If one can escape from destruction and misfortune there, it is possible that one might reach the world of success. Those regions without decay are infinite and belong to Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Shesha, Nara, unadulterated consciousness and Para-Brahma. At the time of destruction, though their bodies are burnt, such subjects approach the brahman. All the various categories of gods also endeavour to obtain immortality in Brahma's world. When it is time for creation after the period of destruction is over, all beings move to their designated regions. But once the fruits are over, those regions terminate. So do those ends and they become like men. However, for those who are progressively dislodged from the world of success,<sup>648</sup> their end remains what it used to be earlier. When there is creation after destruction, all superior beings obtain forms that are in conformity with their destinies. However, creatures who have obtained success retain their white complexion and both kinds of knowledge.<sup>649</sup> Their sentiments are pure and controlled and they see everything, as if with their own five senses.<sup>650</sup> Their ends are pure. Their objectives are supreme. In their minds, they always think of what is auspicious. They obtain Brahma's world, which is without decay. It is eternal and is difficult to obtain. O spirited one! I have thus recounted to you everything about Narayana's powers.'

"Vritra said, 'Since this is the case, there is nothing for me to grieve. I can clearly see the truth in your words. O one with a cheerful spirit! On hearing your words, I have become cleansed of all evil and sin. O illustrious one! O maharshi! O immensely radiant one! The immensely energetic wheel<sup>651</sup> is moving. The infinite and eternal Vishnu is the spot from which all creation originates. He is the great-souled Purushottama. Everything in the universe is established in him.'"

'Bhishma said, "O Kounteya! Having said this, Vritra gave up his life. He united his atman and obtained the supreme region."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! In ancient times, Sanatkumara spoke to Vritra about an illustrious god. Is Janardana that same person?"

'Bhishma replied, "With his own infinite energy, the illustrious one is the foundation. From there, the immensely ascetic one creates many kinds of beings. Know that Keshava is not dislodged from his richness of turiya. The intelligent one creates the three worlds from his richness of turiya. Stationed at one end, at the end of a kalpa, he transforms himself. The immensely strong and illustrious lord lies down on the water. From there, the one with the cheerful soul roams around the eternal worlds. The great-souled one is not obstructed in his creation. Everything in this wonderful universe is established in him."

'Yudhishthira said, "O one who knows about the supreme truth! I think that Vritra himself knew his end was going to be auspicious. O grandfather! That is the reason he was happy and did not grieve. O unblemished one! A person who is white in complexion, a person who belongs to the white category and a person who is successful does not return.<sup>652</sup> O grandfather! Such a person is freed from hell and from birth as inferior species. O king! But a person who has a yellow or red complexion has deeds that are enveloped by tamas and is seen to be born as inferior species. We are extremely afflicted. We are addicted to things that take us to the mouth of hardships and unhappiness. What ends will we obtain, blue or dark, the worst of them all?"

'Bhishma replied, "You are Pandavas and you have been born in a pure lineage. You are rigid in your vows. Having obtained pleasure in the world of gods, you will again be born as men. Having enjoyed happiness as long as creation lasts, you will return to the gods and enjoy bliss. In joy, you will be counted among the Siddhas. Do not entertain any fear on this account. All of you will be unblemished."

udhishthira said, “O father!<sup>653</sup> It is evident that the infinitely energetic Vritra was devoted to dharma. His knowledge was unequalled and so was his devotion to Vishnu. O father! Vishnu’s infinite energy is difficult to comprehend. O tiger among kings! How was Vritra capable of understanding that state? O one without decay! You have spoken about him and I have heard faithfully. But there is something that I still do not understand. Hence, I am asking you again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! How could Vritra be slain by Shakra? He was devoted to dharma and faithful to Vishnu. He knew about the true state. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have a doubt on this account and am asking you. O tiger among kings! How was Vritra vanquished by Shakra? O grandfather! Tell me how this extraordinary thing happened. O mighty-armed one! I have supreme curiosity. Tell me in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In ancient times, Indra had left on a chariot, with large numbers of gods with him. He saw Vritra stationed before him, like a mountain. O scorcher of enemies! He was five hundred yojanas tall and three hundred yojanas in circumference. On seeing that form of Vritra’s, which was difficult for the three worlds to vanquish, the gods were terrified and could not obtain any peace. O king! At that time, on suddenly seeing Vritra’s supreme form, Shakra was frightened and his thighs were paralysed. Having presented themselves at that battle, the gods and the asuras roared and sounded musical instruments. O Kouravya! However, on seeing Shakra present himself, Vritra was not scared or terrified and made no efforts. An encounter, frightful for the three worlds, ensued between Shakra, Indra of the gods, and the great-souled Vritra. There was the great sound of swords, battleaxes, tridents, javelins, spikes, clubs, many kinds of stones, bows, diverse kinds of divine weapons, fire and flaming torches. All the soldiers of the gods and the asuras clashed against each other. With the grandfather at the forefront, all the numerous gods, and the immensely fortunate rishis came on their celestial vehicles to witness the battle. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were the siddhas too. Gandharvas came on their celestial vehicles and so did the apsaras. Vritra, supreme among those who upheld dharma, covered the sky and showered down boulders, which were as large as mountains, on the Indra among the gods. The large numbers of gods were enraged at this. In that battle, in every direction, they used their weapons to counter the boulders that had been showered down by Vritra. O tiger among the Kurus! Vritra was gigantic in form and extremely strong. He resorted to fighting with maya,<sup>654</sup> and in every way, confounded the Indra among the gods. Shatakratu was overcome with confusion and afflicted by Vritra.”

““However, Vasishtha addressed him in a rathantara.<sup>655</sup> Vasishtha said, ‘O Indra among the gods! You are chief among the gods. O destroyer of the enemies of the gods! O Shakra! You possess the strength of the three worlds. Why are you distressed? O Shakra! Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, the lord of the universe, the illustrious god, Soma, and all the supreme rishis are looking towards you. O Shakra! Do not fall prey to lassitude, like an inferior god. O noble one! Make up your mind to fight. O lord of the gods! Slay the enemy. The three-eyed one,<sup>656</sup> the preceptor of the worlds and worshipped by all the worlds, is looking at you. O illustrious one! O lord of the gods! Discard this confusion. O Shakra! These brahmarshis, with Brihaspati at the forefront, are using divine chants to praise you, so that you may be victorious.’ The great-souled Vasishtha addressed Vasava in this way and ignited and extended his strength and energy. The illustrious chastiser of Paka used his intelligence to resort to great yoga and dispelled the maya.

““The illustrious son of Angiras<sup>657</sup> and the other supreme rishis witnessed Vritra’s valour and went to Maheshvara. They worshipped him for the welfare of the worlds and for Vritra’s destruction. The illustrious lord of the universe then assumed the form of a fever and in this extremely terrible form, penetrated the body of Vritra, supreme among the daityas. The illustrious god Vishnu, revered by all the worlds, was engaged in the protection of the worlds and entered Indra’s vajra. The intelligent Brihaspati, the immensely energetic Vasishtha and the other supreme rishis approached Shatakratu. They worshipped Vasava, the granter of boons and worshipped by the worlds, and said, ‘O lord! Slay Vritra with single-minded attention.’ Maheshvara said, ‘O Shakra! This gigantic Vritra is surrounded by a great army. He is the soul of the universe. He can go everywhere. He possesses great powers of maya and is learned. Therefore, this best of asuras is incapable of being vanquished by the three worlds. O lord of the gods! Resort to a state of yoga and then slay him. O lord of the immortals! To obtain strength, he has tormented himself with austerities for sixty thousand years. Thus, Brahma gave him boons—the greatness that yogis possess, great powers of maya, immense strength and fierce energy. O lord of the gods! O Vasava! My energy

has permeated into this danava.<sup>658</sup> You are capable of slaying Vritra with your vajra.’ Shakra replied, ‘O illustrious one! This son of Diti is extremely difficult to assail, but I will do it with your favours. O bull among the gods! While you look on, I will slay him with the vajra.’ The daitya, the great asura, was permeated by that fever and the gods and the rishis uttered loud roars of delight. Thousands of drums, conch shells, kettledrums and tambourines were loudly sounded. All the asuras lost their memories and their great wisdom and strength disappeared in an instant. On realizing that tamas had penetrated them, the rishis and the gods praised Shakra and Ishana and urged them. At the time of the battle, the great-souled Shakra was stationed on his chariot and his form was extremely difficult to look at. He was praised by the rishis.”

## Chapter 1601(273)

‘**B**hishma said, “O great king! In every way, that fever penetrated Vritra. Listen to the signs that then manifested themselves on his body. His mouth flamed and assumed a terrible form. He became extremely pale. His body trembled mightily and he began to breathe heavily. His body hair stood up and turned fierce. O great king! He sighed deeply. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His memory assumed the form of an extremely terrible, fearful and inauspicious jackal, emerged from his mouth and fell down. Blazing and flaming meteors descended along his flanks. Vultures, herons and cranes emitted extremely hideous shrieks and happily circled around above Vritra. Stationed on his chariot in the battle, the god Shakra glanced towards Vritra and prepared to use the vajra. The great asura released a superhuman roar. O Indra among kings! Overwhelmed by that fierce fever, he yawned. While he was thus yawning, Shakra released the vajra. That extremely energetic vajra was like the fire of destruction. It swiftly brought down the giant form of the daitya Vritra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Vritra had been slain, the gods again roared in every direction. Having slain the danava, Vritra, the illustrious and immensely famous one<sup>659</sup> entered heaven with the vajra, which was permeated by Vishnu.

“O Kouravya! At this, the sin of having killed a brahmana<sup>660</sup> emerged from Vritra’s body. She was extremely terrible and horrible and caused fear to the worlds. Her teeth were fearsome. She was hideous and malformed, dark and tawny. Her hair stood up and her eyes were awful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! She was thin and wore a garland of skulls. O one who knows about dharma! She was attired in tattered rags and bark that were wet with blood. O Indra among kings! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That terrible form emerged and searched for the wielder of the vajra. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After some time, with the welfare of the worlds in mind, Vritra’s slayer was headed in the direction of heaven. On seeing that the immensely energetic Shakra was advancing, she seized Indra of the gods by the throat and adhered to him. The sin of having killed a brahmana generated great fear in him. He therefore entered the stalk of a lotus and spent many years there. O Kouravya! But the sin of having killed a brahmana still sought to pursue him. Grasped by her, he lost all his enterprise. Though Shakra made great efforts to rid himself of the sin of having killed a brahmana, Indra of the gods wasn’t able to shake her off. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Indra of the gods was seized by her. He went to the grandfather and bowed his head down before him. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On knowing that Shakra had been seized by the sin of having killed a brahmana, Brahma began to think.

“O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a reassuring and gentle voice, the grandfather spoke to the sin of having killed a brahmana. ‘O beautiful one! Do what is agreeable to me and free this Indra of the thirty gods. Tell me what I can do for you now. What is your desire?’

“The sin of having killed a brahmana replied, ‘O god! You are worshipped by the three worlds. You are the creator of the three worlds and you are pleased with me. You have thus done everything that I wish for. But decree an abode for me. It was for the sake of protecting the worlds that you laid down this rule.<sup>661</sup> O god! This extremely great ordinance was laid down by you. O one who knows about dharma! O lord and master of all the worlds! Since you are pleased with me, I will leave Shakra. But decree an abode for me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “At this, the grandfather spoke to the sin of having killed a brahmana. He thought of a means so that the sin of having killed a brahmana might be removed from Shakra. Svayambhu thought of the great-souled

Agni. He presented himself before Brahma and spoke these words. ‘O illustrious god! O scorcher of enemies! I have presented myself before you. O god! You should tell me about the task that I have to accomplish.’

“Brahma said, ‘I will divide the sin of having killed a brahmana into many parts. For the sake of saving Shakra, accept one-fourth of it from me.’

“Agni replied, ‘O Brahma! O lord! But think of a means whereby I shall also be saved. O one who is revered by the worlds! I wish to know the truth about how that will come about.’

“Brahma said, ‘There will be people who will be enveloped by tamas. When they approach your blazing form, they will not offer seeds, herbs and juices into the fire. O bearer of oblations! The sin of having killed a brahmana will then swiftly leave you and enter into them. Let your mental anxiety be dispelled.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the grandfather, the illustrious lord who was the devourer of oblations<sup>662</sup> accepted this. The grandfather summoned trees, herbs and grass. O great king! To accomplish the objective, he spoke to them along similar lines.<sup>663</sup> O king! But the trees, herbs and grass were just as distressed as Agni and spoke to Brahma along similar lines. ‘O grandfather of the worlds! If we accept the sin of having killed a brahmana, what will become of us? We are naturally afflicted and you are oppressing us again. O god! We always have to endure heat, cold, rain and wind, not to speak of the cutting down and chopping that we are subjected to. On your command, we will accept the sin of having killed a brahmana. O lord of the three worlds! But while we accept it, please think of a means so that we may be saved.’

“Brahma said, ‘If there is a man who is confounded by tamas and indulges in cutting down and chopping on auspicious days, then it<sup>664</sup> shall penetrate him.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Thus addressed by the great-souled Brahma, the trees, herbs and grass worshipped him. They quickly went to wherever they had come from. The god who was the grandfather of the worlds then summoned the apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He reassured them and spoke to them in gentle words. ‘O ones with supreme limbs! Indra has been overcome by the sin of having killed a brahmana. Instructed by me, accept one-fourth of that.’

“The apsaras replied, ‘O lord of the gods! On your instructions, we will make up our minds to accept it. O grandfather! But let us have an agreement. Think of a means to save us.’

“Brahma said, ‘Do not have any mental anxiety. If a person has intercourse with a woman who is menstruating, it will leave you and quickly go to him.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The large numbers of apsaras became cheerful at these words. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They went to their respective regions and pleased there. The immensely ascetic god who was the creator of the three worlds then thought of the waters. When he thought of them and summoned them, all the waters appeared before the infinitely energetic Brahma. O king! They bowed down before the grandfather and spoke these words. ‘O god! O scorcher of enemies! On your instructions, we have thus arrived before you. O lord of the gods! O lord! Command us.’

“Brahma said, ‘Puruhuta<sup>665</sup> is suffering from this great fear on Vritra’s account. Accept one-fourth of the disquiet that has come about because of killing a brahmana.’

“The waters replied, ‘O lord of the worlds! O master! It shall be as you say. But let us have an agreement that you will think of a means for saving us. You are the lord of the gods. You are the supreme preceptor of the entire universe. Who else can grant us favours? Therefore, free us of the hardship.’

“Brahma said, ‘There will be a man with limited intelligence and confused understanding. He will release phlegm, urine and excrement into the water. It<sup>666</sup> will then swiftly leave you and begin to reside in him. You will be freed in this way. I am telling you this truthfully.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! Thus Indra of the gods was freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana. On the instructions of the god,<sup>667</sup> it left him and went to the designated spots. O lord of men! In this way, Shakra was afflicted with the sin of having killed a brahmana. With the grandfather’s permission, he decided to perform a horse sacrifice. O great king! It has been heard that Vasava was tainted by the sin of having killed a brahmana, but obtained purification through performing the horse sacrifice. The god regained his prosperity and slew thousands of enemies. O lord of the earth! Vasava obtained a great deal of delight. O Partha! Khurvundas<sup>668</sup> were born from Vritra’s blood. That is the reason brahmanas and ascetics who have consecrated themselves do not eat these. In

every situation, you must act so as to bring pleasure to brahmanas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! They are said to be gods on earth. O Kouravya! In this way, Shakra used his subtle intelligence to decide in advance about means so that the infinitely energetic and great asura, Vritra, might be killed. O Kouravya! You will also be unvanquished on earth and be like the god Shatakrtu, the slayer of enemies. If a person reads this divine account about Shakra, in the midst of brahmanas and on auspicious occasions, he will never be tainted by sin. This is the great and extraordinary account about Vritra's encounter with Shakra. O son! I have recounted that deed to you. What else do you desire to hear now?"

## Chapter 1602(274)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! You are accomplished in all the sacred texts. From this account about the slaying of Vritra, a question has arisen in my mind. O lord of men! You have said that Vritra was confused by a fever. O unblemished one! He was then slain by Vasava with the vajra. O immensely wise one! Where did this fever manifest itself from? O lord! I wish to hear the details about the origin of this fever.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen to the origins of this fever. It is an account that is famous in the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you in detail about how this came about. O great king! In ancient times, there was a summit in Meru that was famous in the three worlds. It was named Savitra. It was resplendent and was decorated with every kind of jewel. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was immeasurable and no one in the worlds could approach it. There was a bed on the slope of that mountain, adorned with gold and minerals. The dazzling god<sup>669</sup> was seated there. The shining daughter of the king of the mountains<sup>670</sup> was always seated by his side. The great-souled and immensely energetic gods, the Vasus, were also there and so were the great-souled Ashvins, supreme among physicians. King Vaishravana<sup>671</sup> was also there, served by the *guhyakas*.<sup>672</sup> He was the prosperous master and lord of the yakshas and Kailasa was his abode. There were the devarshis, with Angiras as the foremost. The gandharva Vishvavasu was there and Narada and Parvata. A large number of apsaras gathered there. An auspicious, sacred and pleasant breeze blew there, with many kinds of scents. In every direction, there were giant and blossoming trees. There were *vidyadharas* and ascetics who were stores of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them worshipped Mahadeva Pashupati. O great king! There were many kinds of creatures, with diverse forms. There were extremely terrible rakshasas and immensely powerful pishachas. They were cheerful, with many kinds of forms, and they wielded diverse kinds of weapons. There were the companions of the god there, like the fire in their forms. The illustrious Nandi was there, ready to follow the instructions of the god. He wielded a flaming and blazing spear, resplendent in its own energy. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Ganga, supreme among rivers, was there, the source of all the waters in the tirthas. In that form, she worshipped the god. Thus worshipped by the gods and the rishis, the illustrious and extremely fortunate god, Mahadeva, was established there.

“After some time passed, Prajapati Daksha<sup>673</sup> followed the ancient rites and decided to perform a sacrifice. All the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, made up their minds to go to the sacrifice. Those great-souled ones ascended blazing celestial vehicles that were like the fire in complexion. It has been heard that they took the god's permission and went to Gangadvara.<sup>674</sup> On seeing that the gods had left, the virtuous daughter of the Himalayas spoke these words to her husband, the god Pashupati. ‘O illustrious one! Where are the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, going? O one who knows about the truth! Tell me the truth about this. I have a great doubt on this account.’

“Maheshvara replied, ‘O immensely fortunate one! Daksha is the supreme lord of beings. He is performing a horse sacrifice and the residents of heaven are going there.’

“Uma asked, ‘O immensely fortunate one! Why are you not going to the sacrifice? Is there any reason preventing you from going there?’

“Maheshvara replied, ‘O immensely fortunate one! All the gods determined that I should not have a share in any of the sacrifices. O supreme among beautiful ones! That is the method that they had decided on earlier. And following that dharma, the gods do not give me a share in sacrifices.’



“Uma said, ‘O illustrious one! Among all beings, you are the supreme in qualities. In your energy, fame and prosperity, you cannot be vanquished and cannot be assailed. O immensely fortunate one! I am extremely miserable at this obstruction to you obtaining a share. O unblemished one! I am trembling.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the goddess, the god Pashupati, her husband, was silent. O king! His senses began to burn. He realized what was in the mind of the goddess and the desire of her heart. He summoned Nandi and asked him to wait there. The lord of all the lords of yoga resorted to the strength of his yoga. The god of the gods, the wielder of Pinaka, went to the sacrifice with his extremely energetic and terrible followers and destroyed it. Some of them<sup>675</sup> roared, others laughed. O king! Others extinguished the fire with blood. Some, with malformed faces, uprooted the sacrificial stakes and whirled them around. There were others who devoured the attendants with their mouths. O king! In every direction, the sacrifice was destroyed. It assumed the form of a deer and fled through the sky. But realizing that the sacrifice was running away in that form, the lord seized a bow and arrow and pursued it. The infinitely energetic lord of the gods was overcome by rage and a terrible drop of sweat manifested itself on his forehead and fell down on the ground. From that, an extremely large fire resulted and it was like the fire of destruction. O bull among men! A man was born from that. He was short and his eyes were extremely red. He was dreadful and his beard was green. His hair stood up. He was covered with hair, like a hawk or an owl. He was horrible and dark in complexion. He was attired in red garments. That greatly spirited being destroyed the sacrifice, like a fire consuming deadwood. All the gods were terrified and fled in the ten directions. O lord of the earth! That man began to roam around everywhere on earth. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Woes of lamentation, frightful to the worlds, arose. The grandfather manifested himself before Mahadeva and said, ‘O lord! From now on, all the gods will give you a share in the sacrifices. O lord of all the gods! Withdraw the destruction that you have wrought. O scorcher of enemies! O Mahadeva! Because of your rage, all the gods and the rishis are finding it impossible to obtain peace. O supreme among gods! There is this man who has been born from your sweat. O one who knows about dharma! In the form of fever, let him wander around the worlds. O lord! If all of this energy is concentrated, the entire earth will not be able to bear it. Let it be divided into fragments and let there be safety.’ The god was thus addressed by Brahma, who also decreed shares for him. He agreed to what the illustrious and infinitely energetic Brahma had said. The wielder of Pinaka was filled with great delight and smiled. Bhava accepted the share that Brahma had spoken about.

“For the sake of peace for all beings, the one who knew about all forms of dharma divided the fever into many parts. O son! Listen to how he did this. O one who knows about dharma! The heat that is in the heads of elephants, in the bitumen in mountains, in the hornwort plants that float around in the water, in the cast-off skins of snakes, in diseases in the hooves of cattle, in sterile spots on the surface of the earth, in the dullness of sight of animals, in diseases that are in the throats of horses, in the crests of peacocks and in the eye diseases of cuckoos—the great-souled one decreed all these to be fever. We have heard all this and about the diseases that goats have in their livers and the hiccups that parrots suffer from. All of these are said to be fever. O one who knows about dharma! The exhaustion in tigers is said to be fever. O one who knows about dharma! There is also something known as fever among men. It penetrates men at the time of birth, death, and in the middle. This is Maheshvara’s energy, known as extremely terrible fever. The lord of all beings must be worshipped and revered. When Vritra yawned, it is he who penetrated that supreme among the upholders of dharma. It was thus that Shakra could release his vajra at him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The vajra penetrated Vritra and shattered him. The great asura and great yogi was splintered by the vajra. He went to the infinitely energetic Vishnu’s supreme region. Earlier, it was because of his devotion to Vishnu that he obtained the entire universe. Having been slain in the battle, he obtained Vishnu’s region. O son! I have told you in detail about the great fever that Vritra was overwhelmed by. What else do you wish me to tell you? A man who is extremely controlled and reads this account about the origin of the fever with a cheerful mind, is freed from all disease. He is happy and full of delight. He obtains all the desires that are there in his mind.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! Creatures are always terrified of sorrow and misery and death. O grandfather! Tell me how both of these can be prevented.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Narada and Samanga.

“Narada said, ‘You bow down with your chest and cross with your arms.’<sup>676</sup> You are always cheerful and are seen to be without sorrow. One cannot discern the slightest bit of anxiety in you. You are always content and satisfied and seem to be like a child in your endeavours.’

“Samanga replied, ‘O one who grants honours! I know the truth about the past, the present and the future. Since I know the truth about these, I am never distressed. I also know about how exertions result and their fruits. There are many different kinds of fruits. Therefore, I am never distressed. O Narada! Behold. Those who are unfathomable in destitution, those who are not healthy and those who are blind and dumb are also alive. They are seen to live. It has been ordained that the residents of heaven should have no disease in their limbs. The strong and the weak are also thus created.’<sup>677</sup> A person who rules over thousands is alive. A person who rules over hundreds is also alive. There are others who sustain themselves only on vegetables. Behold. I am also alive. O Narada! I do not grieve. What use do I have for dharma or deeds? One comes under the control of happiness that results from deeds and it is only misery that grows. When a person realizes that wisdom is actually the foundation of all the gratification of the senses, such a man is said to be wise. The senses cause confusion and sorrow. If a person is confounded because of the senses, such a person cannot obtain wisdom. A foolish person also suffers from pride and delusion. There is no world here, or in the hereafter, for a foolish person. Misery does not last forever. Any happiness obtained is also not eternal. Since I know that everything created is always changeable, a person like me never suffers from fever. I do not care for objects of desire or the happiness that results from possessions. Nor do I think about any unhappiness that may befall. I am controlled and do not desire the possessions of others. I do not bother about what has not been obtained. Nor do I find delight in what has been obtained. I am not delighted at obtaining a great deal of riches. Nor am I distressed if riches are destroyed. Relatives, riches, noble birth, learning, mantras and valour are incapable of saving one from miseries and they have to be tolerated. Good conduct alone can bring peace in the world hereafter. If a person does not possess intelligence or yoga, he cannot obtain happiness. There cannot be any happiness without both fortitude and the abandoning of misery. Anything that brings delight is pleasant. But delight also increases pride. Pride leads to hell. That is the reason I have discarded these. Sorrow and fear cause delusion and so do pleasure and pain. I may move around in my body. But I look upon all these as an indifferent witness. I have abandoned all desire for riches. I am bereft of sorrow and bereft of fever. I roam around the entire earth, having discarded thirst and confusion. There is no death. There is no adharma. Where will greed come from? I have drunk amrita. I have no fear in this world and in the next. Because of the great and undecaying austerities that I have performed, I have got to know the brahman. O Narada! Having obtained that, there is no grief that can constrain me.’”

## Chapter 1604(276)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! There may be a person who does not know the truth about the sacred texts. He may always have doubts in his mind. He may not be accomplished in his conduct. What is best for him? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The worship of seniors, serving the aged and listening to the learned and the superior—these are said to be the best. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversion between Galava and devarshi Narada. That brahmana was free from confusion and fatigue. He was content in his knowledge and had conquered his senses. Having conquered his atman, but desiring to know what was best for himself, Galava spoke to Narada. ‘There are qualities that are revered among men. I can see all those qualities, in undecaying form, in you. There are several doubts in those like us. Therefore, you should sever them. We are foolish and will always remain stupid. We do not know the truth about the worlds. Should there be an inclination towards knowledge and the renunciation of acts? How does one know which acts to undertake? What are the tasks one should not under-

take? You should speak about these to us. O illustrious one! All the ashramas indicate different kinds of conduct. Some say, this is superior. Others say, that is superior. We are driven in different directions. Therefore, it is seen that even those who resort to the sacred texts do not take delight in all the sacred texts. They are satisfied with their own sacred texts and do not necessarily realize what is superior. Had all the sacred texts been unified, the best would have manifested itself. But because there are many kinds of sacred texts, what is best is immersed in a mystery. That is the reason why the superior appears to me in a confused form. O illustrious one! I have resorted to you. You should instruct me.'

“Narada replied, ‘O son!<sup>678</sup> There are four ashramas and they were thought of in separate ways.<sup>679</sup> O Galava! Examine all of them and then choose the one you wish to resort to. Those ashramas differ from each other. They speak of many different kinds of qualities and instructions. These are not only distinct, they are also contradictory. But if one considers them, free from doubt, one sees that all of them convey to what is appropriate. Behold. All the ashramas lead straight to the appropriate and supreme objective. There can be no doubt in one’s mind about what is appropriate and beneficial—favour to friends, suppression of enemies and accumulation for pursuing the three objectives.<sup>680</sup> The learned ones have said that these are beneficial. One must always abstain from wicked deeds and be auspicious in conduct. One must exhibit good conduct towards those who are virtuous. There is no doubt that these are beneficial. Mildness towards all beings, uprightness in conduct and pleasantness in speech—there is no doubt that these have been said to be beneficial. Giving the appropriate shares to gods, ancestors, guests and not depriving servants—there is no doubt that these are beneficial. Truthfulness in speech is beneficial. But ascertaining true knowledge is extremely difficult. I am telling you the truth when I say that one must ensure welfare towards all beings. The renouncing of pride, the suppression of attachment, contentment and following one’s own conduct—the wise say that these are beneficial. Following dharma and studying the Vedas and the Vedangas and inquisitiveness for the sake of knowledge—there is no doubt that these are beneficial. O scorcher of enemies! A person who seeks excellence must not enjoy sound, form, taste, touch and scent for their sake alone, without some other objective in mind. A person who seeks excellence must give up roaming around in the night, sleep during the day, idleness, calumny, pride, excessive indulgence and complete abstinence.<sup>681</sup> One must not seek to establish that one’s own deeds and path are superior by deprecating others. Through one’s own qualities, one will be able to establish that the path followed is superior and different from that followed by other people. There are many men who are devoid of qualities, but are full of self-pride. They find faults in those who possess qualities. They inflict their own undecaying qualities on others. When they are not restrained, they think of themselves as great people. Thinking their own qualities to be superior, they are full of insolence and pride. They are learned people who possess qualities and they obtain great fame, but without speaking censorious words about others, or describing the honour that is due to their own selves. Pure ones with excellent minds are like fragrant flowers. They do not have to speak about their own selves. The sparkling sun, with dispersing rays in the sky, is also like that. In this way, there are others who renounce, using their intelligence. Nevertheless, their fame blazes in the world and is not reduced. A foolish person cannot blaze in the world through his self-praise alone. However, a person who is accomplished in his learning manifests himself, even if he is hidden in a hole. Wicked words, even if spoken loudly, are soon pacified. But excellent words, even if spoken gently, illuminate the worlds. Foolish ones, who are full of their own insolence, speak many futile words. However, the sun in heaven displays its own inner self. That is the reason one searches for different kinds of wisdom. It seems to me that the obtaining of wisdom is the supreme objective for creatures. One should not speak until one is asked. Nor should one speak if asked improperly. In this world, a person who is learned and intelligent behaves like one who is dumb. One must scrutinize and dwell with virtuous people who are always devoted to dharma. They are generous men who are devoted to their own dharma. A person who desires benefit must never dwell with the four varnas when they act contrary to the dharma. In this world, one should abstain from embarking on any action, but should subsist on whatever has been obtained. Dwelling among the meritorious, one will obtain sparkling merits. But dwelling among the wicked, one will obtain sin. One can comprehend the touch of the water, the fire, or the rays of the moon. In that way, one can discern the touch of both the wicked and the virtuous. There may be those who do not look towards enjoying material objects and eat only leftovers. However, if a person is still concerned with the flavours of the food, know that he is still bound by material objects and deeds. A brahmana may be asked and may discourse about dharma, when asked. But if he has not



been asked reverentially, one must abandon that spot. Instead, there may be a spot where there is a controlled discourse, following the sacred texts, between disciples and a preceptor. Who will abandon that spot? Without any foundation, there may be ignorant people who wish to earn respect for themselves, who speak about taints, though none exists. Which learned person will dwell there? There may often be greedy people, who try to agitate the boundaries of dharma, like setting fire at the extremities of a mountain. Who will not abandon such a spot? One should dwell and roam among virtuous people who are auspicious in their conduct. Dharma is followed there, without any doubt and without any malice. One should not dwell in places where men pursue dharma only for the sake of artha. Those are people who are wicked in their conduct. One must swiftly flee from places where wicked deeds are performed with a desire to ensuring sustenance, as if from a room where there is a snake. Right from the beginning, one must act with a desire to realize one's own atman. One must not engage in tasks that make one stretch out on a bed.<sup>682</sup> Where the king, royal officers and those who are in charge of the frontier regions eat before their relatives, a person who is in control of his atman must abandon that kingdom. One must dwell in a kingdom where learned brahmanas, who are always devoted to eternal dharma and are engaged in performing sacrifices and studying, are fed first. Without any reflection, one must dwell in a place where svaha, svadha and *vashatkara* are properly uttered numerous times. Where brahmanas are seen to be engaged in inauspicious acts, one must swiftly abandon that kingdom, as if it is a piece of poisoned meat. Where men cheerfully give before they have been asked, a person who has accomplished his tasks and is based on his own atman, must dwell there. One must roam and dwell among virtuous people, those who are righteous in their conduct, where there is punishment for those who are wicked and reverence for those who are cleansed in their souls. In those places, those who are not generous, those who are wicked and evil in conduct and those who are unruly and greedy are afflicted with extremely severe chastisement. Those are places where the king and the kingdom always serve dharma, desiring purity and without falling prey to desire. Without any reflection, those are places one should dwell in. When the king displays such conduct, everyone enjoys prosperity. Benefit is swiftly obtained and welfare presents itself. O son! You asked me and I have thus told you about what is beneficial. But I am incapable of enumerating what is most important, what brings benefit to the atman. There is conduct that has been ordained for the benefit of the atman. It is evident that there are many kinds of austerities that will bring about that benefit.'"

## Chapter 1605(277)

‘Yudhisthira asked, “How should a king who has been emancipated move around on earth? What qualities should he always possess, so that he is freed from the noose of attachment?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, there is an ancient history about what Arishtanemi spoke when Sagara asked him.”

“Sagara asked, ‘O brahmana! What is supremely beneficial? What action enables one to obtain happiness? How does one avoid grief and agitation? I wish to know about this.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Tarkshya<sup>683</sup> was knowledgeable about all the sacred texts. He also knew that the person who was before him deserved to hear virtuous words. Having been asked, he said, ‘The real happiness in the world is the happiness that comes from emancipation. People do not understand this, because they are attached to sons and animals and anxious about riches and grain. If the intelligence is full of attachment and if the atman is not tranquil, treatment is impossible. A stupid person who is tied to the bonds of affection cannot be free. I will tell you about the bonds that result from affection. Listen to them. Using the ears and the head, one is capable of knowing and severing them. At the right time, one must have offspring. When they attain youth, after ascertaining that they are capable of earning a living, one should be cheerful and roam around free. When one's wife has had a son that she is devoted to, when she is aged and is affectionately attended to by that son, know that this is the time to depart and search for a superior objective. However, whether one has obtained offspring or one has not obtained offspring, the senses and the objects of the senses have been pursued in the proper way. Therefore, one should be cheerful and roam free. One has performed one's tasks. One should be inquisitive and cheerful, roaming freely. One must be equal vis-à-vis what has been gained and the reasons that do not lead to any gain. I have recounted this briefly to

you. I will again tell you in detail about the objective of emancipation. Listen. A free man roams around happily in this world, bereft of fear. There is no doubt that a man who has sentiments of attachment is destroyed, just like insects and ants engaged in the accumulation of food. Those who are detached are happy in this world. Those with attachments are destroyed. A person whose intelligence has turned towards emancipation has no business to think about his relatives, such as, “How will these people survive without me?” A creature is born on its own. A creature grows on its own. A creature advances towards happiness, unhappiness and death on its own. In this world, people do not obtain anything because of anything that they have done, or because of the food and garments that have been stored up by their mother and father. It is all because of what they have done earlier. On earth, the one who ordain has laid down food for all living beings. Though people run after it, this has actually been determined by their own acts. A man is himself like a lump of clay. He is always under someone else’s control. What is the reason behind sustaining one’s relatives? Instead, one should be firm in protecting one’s atman. While you look on, your relatives will be slain by death, even if you make great efforts. Therefore, know your own atman. While they are still alive and you are engaged in sustaining and protecting them, you may have to give it up incomplete, since you end up dying. In that way, when your relatives die, you will never know whether they are happy or miserable. Therefore, you should know your own atman. While you are alive, these people die or are freed because of their own deeds. Therefore, one should turn one’s intelligence towards ensuring welfare for the atman. In this world, since one knows this, how does one determine who belongs to whom? Therefore, fix your mind on emancipation. I am entreating you again. A man who has conquered hunger and thirst and similar sentiments, and also anger, greed and confusion, such a spirited person is indeed free. If a man is not distracted by gambling, drinking, women and hunting and is not confused, such a person is free. If a man is only anxious about what he will enjoy from one day to another day and from one night to another night, his intelligence is said to be tainted. A person who always realizes that his birth is due to nothing but attachment for women, such a person is free. In this world, a person who knows the truth about the birth, destruction and exertion of beings is indeed free. A person who sees no difference between a handful of corn and thousands of crores of carts loaded with it, or a person who sees no difference between a palace and a clump of bamboos is free. The world suffers from death and is afflicted by disease and oppressed by famine. A person who sees this is free. A person who sees it in this way is happy and content. A person who does not see this, is destroyed. If a person is satisfied with only a trifle, he is free in this world. A person who sees that everything is destroyed, as if by fire, and is not touched by sentiments on account of this, is free. If a person regards a bed and the bare earth, or *shali* rice and awful food, as equal, he is free. If a person regards linen and grass or rags, silk and bark, sheepskin and ordinary leather, as equal, such a person is free. A person who sees that everything in this world results from the five elements and having seen this, acts in accordance with this, is free. If a person regards happiness and unhappiness, gain and lack of gain, victory and defeat, like and dislike, fear and anxiety<sup>684</sup> as equal, he is always free. The body is full of many taints, it is a store of imperfections like blood, urine and excrement. A person who sees it in this way is free. It is subject to decay, wrinkles, emaciation, paleness, bending down and old age. One who sees it in this way is free. In the course of time, there is impotence, weakness of sight, deafness and a slowdown in the life force. One who sees it in this way is free. The rishis, the gods and the asuras have gone from this world to other superior worlds. One who sees it in this way is free. There are thousands of powerful lords of the earth who have had to leave the earth and depart. A person who knows this is free. In this world, the accumulation of riches is extremely difficult. Hardship is extremely easy. There is misery on account of relatives. A person who sees this is free. There are offspring without qualities. There are people without qualities. If a person repeatedly sees this in the world, why should he not hanker after emancipation? There may be a man who sees everything in the world on the basis of the intelligence of the sacred texts. He sees that everything human is without substance. Such a person is free in every way. Having heard these words of mine, you should always roam around as if you are free. Whether you pursue garhasthya or whether you pursue emancipation, act so that your intelligence is not clouded.’ On hearing these words attentively, the lord of the earth<sup>685</sup> protected the subjects, acquiring qualities that are conducive to emancipation.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O father! There has always been a curiosity in my heart. O grandfather of the Kuru lineage! I wish to hear the truth about this from you. Devarshi Ushanas<sup>686</sup> was always engaged in what was agreeable to the asuras and unpleasant for the gods. Why was he then called the immensely intelligent Kavya? Why did the infinitely energetic one always increase their energy?<sup>687</sup> Why were the danavas always engaged in enmity with the supreme among the gods? How did Ushanas, as radiant as an immortal, become Shukra? How did he obtain prosperity? Tell me everything about this. Though he possesses energy, why can he never go to the middle of the sky?<sup>688</sup> O grandfather! I wish to know everything about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! With undivided attention, listen to what exactly transpired. O unblemished one! I will tell you what I have heard earlier, as I have understood it. This sage, heir of the Bhargava lineage,<sup>689</sup> was truthful and firm in his vows. Because of the compassion in his soul, he became engaged in ensuring what was pleasant for the asuras. The lord of riches,<sup>690</sup> the king of the yakshas and the rakshasas, was entrusted with superintendence of the treasure house of Indra, the lord of the universe. The great sage<sup>691</sup> was accomplished in yoga. He used yoga to enter the lord of riches and bind up that god. He robbed him of his riches. On seeing that his riches had been seized, the lord of riches could find no peace. Anxious and filled with rage, he approached the infinitely energetic Shiva, supreme among the gods, and told him everything. This was the foremost among the gods, who possessed many forms, terrible and amiable. Kubera said, ‘Using his yoga, Ushanas bound me and stole my riches. The immensely ascetic one entered my body through yoga and has thereafter left.’ On hearing this, the great yogi, Maheshvara, became angry. O king! His eyes were red and he stood there, with his spear. Having grasped that supreme weapon, he asked, ‘Where is he? Where is he?’ However, from a distance, Ushanas got to know what he<sup>692</sup> desired. The great-souled one got to know about the great yogi’s rage. The lord did not know whether he should run away, advance,<sup>693</sup> or stay in the same spot. He used his fierce austerities to think about the great-souled Maheshvara. Ushanas was accomplished in the use of yoga. He next used this to place himself at the tip of the spear. The archer<sup>694</sup> comprehended that the one who had obtained success in austerities had assumed that form. The lord of the gods therefore bent the bow with his hand. The infinitely energetic lord used his hand to bend the spear down and the terrible weapon that was the spear came to be known as Pinaka.<sup>695</sup> Thus, Uma’s consort saw that Bhargava had now been brought into the palm of his hand. Kakudi<sup>696</sup> opened his mouth and used his hand to swiftly fling him inside. The lord Ushanas entered Maheshvara’s stomach. The great-souled descendant of the Bhrgu lineage began to wander around there.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O king! How could the intelligent Ushanas roam around inside the stomach of the god of the gods? What did the immensely resplendent rishi do there?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! In that ancient time, the one who was great in his vows<sup>697</sup> entered the water and remained there, immobile like a pillar, for a million years. He performed extremely difficult austerities in that great lake and then arose. Brahma, the first god among the gods, approached and asked him whether he was hale and well and whether his austerities had prospered. The one with the bull on the banner<sup>698</sup> replied that the austerities had proceeded well. Shankara was immensely intelligent and is impossible to fathom. He is always devoted to the dharma of truth. Through yoga, he saw the growth inside.<sup>699</sup> The great yogi<sup>700</sup> was prosperous because of austerities and riches. O great king! The one who was valiant in the three worlds was roaming around inside. At this, the wielder of Pinaka, with yoga in his atman, entered the yoga of meditation. The extremely anxious Ushanas continued to wander around inside the stomach. But though located there, the great yogi<sup>701</sup> tried to please the god from there. He desired to emerge and craved that the energy might be withdrawn. From inside the stomach, the great sage, Ushanas, said, ‘Show me your favours.’ O scorcher of enemies! He said this repeatedly. Mahadeva replied, ‘Go. Free yourself through my penis.’ Earlier, the bull among the thirty gods had closed all the other outlets. On seeing that the doors had been closed on every side, the sage roamed around here and there, being burnt by the energy. He finally emerged through the penis and came to be known as Shukra.<sup>702</sup> That is the reason he is never able to go to the middle of the firmament. On seeing him emerge, flaming in energy, Bhava was filled with rage and stood there, with the spear in his hand. However, the goddess restrained her angry husband, Pashupati. When Shankara was restrained by the goddess in this way, he came to be regarded as her son.<sup>703</sup>

“The goddess said, ‘You should not cause any injury to him. He has become your son and my son. O god! Someone who has emerged from your stomach does not deserve to be destroyed.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Bhava was pleased by these words of the goddess. O king! He smiled and repeatedly spoke these words. ‘Let him go wherever he wishes.’ He bowed down before the god who is the granter of boons and also the goddess Uma. The intelligent and great sage, Ushanas, went to his desired destination. O son! O best among the Bharata lineage! I have thus spoken to you about the great-souled Bhargava and his conduct. That is what you had asked me about.”’

## Chapter 1607(279)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O mighty-armed one! After this, tell me what is best for me. O grandfather! I am not satisfied with your words, which are like amrita. O supreme among men! What are the auspicious acts a man can perform, so that he obtains supreme benefit in this world and in the world after death? Tell me that.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, I will tell you what the immensely illustrious King Janaka asked the great-souled Parashara in ancient times. ‘What is best for all beings here and in the hereafter, so that one can obtain prosperity? Tell me about this.’ The sage was full of austerities and knew about the ordinances associated with all kinds of dharma. To show favours to the king, he spoke these words. ‘Deeds of dharma bring benefit in this world and in the next. The learned ones have said that there is nothing that is superior to this. Through such dharma, a man obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O supreme among kings! For all beings, the rites and ordinances that have been laid down represent the essence of dharma. That is the reason virtuous people perform their respective acts in their respective ashramas. O son!’<sup>704</sup> Four kinds of modes have been laid down for progress in this world.<sup>705</sup> When mortals follow these, they obtain what they desire. They perform good and bad deeds and attain their respective ends. In different ways, creatures are divided into five elements. Just as a golden or silver vessel reflects the sheen of the metal, creatures are bound down by the acts that they have performed earlier. Nothing is generated without a seed. Without acting for it, happiness cannot be obtained. When the body is destroyed, a man obtains happiness because of the good deeds he has performed. O son! I do not see any destiny in this, nor any action on the part of the gods. Gods, gandharvas and danavas become what they are because of their natures. After death, people never remember what they have done in their earlier lives. But they obtain the consequences of the four kinds of acts that they have performed.<sup>706</sup> For progress in the world, the words of the Vedas have described the deeds that one must resort to. O son! That is what brings peace to the mind, not merely the instructions of the elders. There are four kinds of action one can perform with the eye, the mind, words and deeds. Whatever the nature of the action, the consequence is like that. O king! Often, one obtains mixed consequences as a result of a deed. However, whether it is good or bad, deeds are never destroyed. O son! Sometimes, the consequences of good deeds remain concealed and submerged in the cycle of life, one is not freed from misery. However, once the misery has been exhausted, the results of good deeds will become evident. O lord of men! Know that when good deeds have been exhausted, the results of bad deeds will become evident. Self-control, forgiveness, fortitude, energy, contentment, truthfulness, modesty, lack of injury, not indulging in vices and skilfulness—these are the things that yield happiness. For no creature are the effects of good deeds and bad deeds eternal. That is the reason an accomplished person always tries to fix his mind. One does not face the consequences of the good or bad deeds performed by another person. The consequences one reaps are commensurate with the deeds that one has performed. Along one path,<sup>707</sup> a man can give up both happiness and unhappiness. O king! But there are many other people who are always prone to attachment. A man must never undertake an act that he censures in someone else. If he does something like this, he will be laughed at. A king who is a coward, a brahmana who eats everything, a vaishya without exertion, an inferior varna<sup>708</sup> who is lazy, a learned person who lacks good conduct, a noble person who is without a means of sustenance, a brahmana who has deviated from the truth, a wayward woman, a ‘free’ person who is still attached, a person who cooks only for himself, a foolish person who is eloquent, a kingdom without a king and a king who has no affection for his subjects—all these are reasons for grief.”’

## Chapter 1608(280)

““Parashara said, ‘A person who drives the chariot<sup>709</sup> in accordance with his wishes, controlling the horses that are the objects of the senses with the reins of knowledge, is intelligent. A person who serves these with his mind, even if he does not possess a means of sustenance, is praised. A brahmana and a person who has refrained from action are not equal to each other.<sup>710</sup> O lord of the earth! Having obtained a designated span of life, one should not diminish it. A man must strive for auspicious deeds, so that he can improve himself. A person who has been dislodged from his varna deserves to be censured. A person who has obtained the consequences of good deeds must not perform deeds associated with rajas. A man obtains a superior varna through auspicious deeds. However, having obtained what is difficult to obtain, one destroys it because one is overcome with tamas and performs wicked deeds. Wicked deeds perpetrated due to ignorance can be destroyed through the practice of austerities. But a wicked deed that is perpetrated knowingly leads to evil consequences. Therefore, one must never perform wicked deeds. They lead to miserable consequences. An intelligent person will never be bound down by wicked deeds, even if they lead to great fruits, just as an auspicious person will not touch water that has been tainted. As the fruits of wicked deeds, I see great hardships. Though virtue and the atman are evident, one acts perversely and contrary to this. If a foolish person does not turn back, he is like a person who is dead and faces great wickedness. A garment that is not dyed can be cleaned, but not one that has been dyed black. O Indra among men! Listen to me. That is also the case with sinful efforts. If a man knowingly performs wicked deeds and then performs good ones in atonement, he will separately obtain the fruits of both.<sup>711</sup> Brahmanas who know about the brahman mention the instructions of the sacred texts. If an act of injury is committed in ignorance, an act of non-injury can correct it. However, if an act of violence is committed knowingly, brahmanas who are accomplished in the Vedas and versed in the sacred texts, say that this is an act of adharma. I see that all the acts that are performed, good or evil ones, lead to manifestations of their qualities. All deeds that are performed, using the intelligence and the mind, lead to corresponding fruits, gross or subtle. O one who knows about dharma! But acts that are done involuntarily lead to smaller fruits. Fierce deeds performed knowingly always lead to strong consequences. There may be acts that are performed by gods and sages.<sup>712</sup> If a person with dharma in his soul hears about these, he should not censure them. But nor should he practise them. O king! One should use one’s mind to reflect on one’s own capacity. A person who performs auspicious deeds sees what is fortunate. If a vessel is new,<sup>713</sup> water placed into it gradually becomes less and less. But that is not the case if the vessel has been baked. One obtains happiness through such sentiments. When water is poured into a vessel that already has water, the quantity of the water is increased. Intelligence is also increased in that way. O lord of the earth! That is the way one should perform deeds on earth, using one’s intelligence. One’s store of merits is then not diminished, but added to. A king’s proper duty is to protect the subjects, raising his weapons to subjugate those who are unruly. He must kindle many fires and perform sacrifices. Then, in middle or old ages, he must resort to the forest. Self-controlled and with dharma in conduct, a man must look upon all beings as one’s own self. One must worship those who are superior and disabled. O Indra among men! Through truthfulness and good conduct, one obtains happiness.’”

## Chapter 1609(281)

““Parashara said, ‘No one does a favour to another. No one gives anything to another. In every way, all creatures only act for their own selves. When there is a lack of affection, one’s own uterine brothers are proudly discarded. What should one say about unrelated people? Giving gifts to superior people and receiving gifts from superior people are equal. But among these, the gift given to a brahmana is more sacred. With the objectives of dharma and artha in mind, each of the varnas must endeavour to protect riches earned through fair means, and increase them. For the sake of dharma and artha, one should not undertake tasks that seek to obtain wealth through injurious means. One must remember the virtuous and perform all tasks according to one’s capacity. According to one’s capacity, if one gives cool water or that heated through a fire to a guest, one obtains fruits that are like those



got by giving food to someone hungry. The great-souled Rantideva obtained success in the world. But all he did was to worship hermits with fruits, leaves and roots. Shaibya, lord of the earth, satisfied Mathara<sup>714</sup> with fruits and leaves and obtained a supreme region. Through being born, mortal people incur debts to gods, guests, servants, ancestors and their own selves and one must act so as to repay these debts. There is studying for maharshis, sacrifices and rites for gods, funeral sacrifices and donations for ancestors and honouring for men.<sup>715</sup> Debts to one's own self are repaid through words,<sup>716</sup> eating leftovers and protecting one's own self. If one is interested in following dharma, right from the beginning, one should discharge debts to the various categories of servants. Even if one is devoid of riches, one can make efforts to obtain success. Hermits offered oblations of clarified butter into the fire and obtained success. Vishvamitra's son went to Richika's son.<sup>717</sup> The mighty-armed one worshipped the gods who have shares in sacrifices with hymns from the Rig Veda. Through the favours of the god of the gods,<sup>718</sup> Ushanas became Shukra. Through praising the goddess, he was surrounded by energy and found pleasure in the sky.<sup>719</sup> Asita-Devala, Narada and Parvata, Kakshivat, Jamadagni's son Rama, Tandya, Anshuman, Vasishtha, Jamadagni, Vishvamitra, Atri, Bharadvaja, Harishmashru, Kundadhara, Shrutashrava—these maharshis controlled themselves and praised Vishnu, using hymns from the Rig Veda. Through the favours of that intelligent one, they obtained success in their austerities. By praising him, even those who are undeserving have become deserving and virtuous. One should not desire to perform acts that increase one's prosperity in this world. Riches obtained through dharma are true riches. Shame on those obtained through adharma. Dharma is eternal in this world and must not be abandoned for the sake of riches. A person who has dharma in his soul and makes offerings to the fire is supreme among the performers of auspicious deeds. O Indra among kings! O lord! All the Vedas are established on the three fires.<sup>720</sup> If a brahmana possesses the sacred fire, his deeds are never diminished. However, if one does not perform the rites of agnihotra, it is better to give up the sacred fire. O tiger among men! The sacred fire, the mother, the father who has provided the seed and the preceptor must be served in the proper way. If a man abandons pride and serves the aged, if he is learned, if he behaves as if he is impotent,<sup>721</sup> if he looks upon everything with affection, if he is accomplished and if he is non-violent—even if he does not possess wealth, he is worshipped in this world as a virtuous and noble person.'”

## Chapter 1610(282)

“Parashara said, ‘It is appropriate that the inferior varna<sup>722</sup> should earn a living by serving the other three. If this designated service is rendered affectionately, that person always remains devoted to dharma. Even if the ancestors of the shudra were not engaged in such an occupation, it is certain that he should not engage himself in any means of sustenance other than servitude. It is my view that under all circumstances, it is proper that they<sup>723</sup> should always associate with virtuous people who know about dharma, not with those who are wicked. When they are close to Mount Udaya,<sup>724</sup> objects blaze. Similarly, an inferior varna blazes when it is associated with the virtuous. A white garment assumes the colour with which it is dyed. They assume their appearances in the same way. Therefore, one should rejoice because of qualities and never because of taints. The lifespan of mortals, whether mobile or immobile, is temporary. If an accomplished person only acts in accordance with good policy, whether he faces joy or misery, he faces fortune in this world. An intelligent person does not deviate from virtue, even if that act of deviation from dharma yields great fruits. If a king steals thousands of unprotected cattle and then gives them away as a gift, he only obtains the fruits that the sound of that action makes. He is actually a thief. Right at the beginning, Svayambhu created Dhata, revered in the worlds. Dhata created a son who is engaged in sustaining beings.<sup>725</sup> It is through worshipping him that vaishyas earn wealth and prosperity. The kings must think of means to protect brahmanas. Shudras should, honestly, faithfully and without anger, clean the objects used to offer havya and kavya. Through such acts, dharma is not destroyed. If dharma is not destroyed, subjects are happy. O Indra among kings! Through their happiness, the gods in heaven are delighted. A king who follows dharma and protects is revered. So are brahmanas who study, vaishyas who are engaged in the welfare of people and shudras who serve, always in control of their senses. O Indra among men! If they act in any other way, they deviate from their own dharma. Not to speak of thousands, even if a few kakinis<sup>726</sup> are earned lawfully and donated, without causing grief

to one's life, that leads to great fruits. If a lord of men honours brahmanas and always donates to them, he earns fruits that are commensurate. If one seeks out the donee and satisfies him, that is said to be the best. When one gives when asked, the learned say that this is medium. Sages who are truthful in speech say that gifts given indifferently and disrespectfully are the worst. Through transgressions, men are always submerged in different ways. Therefore, one should make efforts so that one is freed from one's doubts. A brahmana is always radiant through self-control, a kshatriya through victory, a vaishya through riches and a shudra through skill.''''

## Chapter 1611(283)

“Parashara said, ‘Whatever little riches a brahmana obtains through receiving gifts, a kshatriya through conquest by weapons, a vaishya through lawful means and a shudra through servitude, are praised. When spent for dharma, these yield great fruits. It is said that the shudra must always serve the three varnas. But if a brahmana doesn't have means of sustenance and follows the dharma of kshatriyas or the dharma of vaishyas, he suffers no downfall. But if a brahmana follows the dharma of shudras, then he does face a downfall. When a shudra does not possess a means of sustenance, then trade, animal husbandry and subsistence on the basis of artisanship are recommended for him. If a person has not engaged in such occupations earlier, then descending in an arena,<sup>727</sup> earning a living through one's beauty and earning a living through the sales of liquor, flesh, iron and leather are not recommended. These are censured in the world. It has been heard that if one has been engaged in such tasks and has then given them up, this leads to great dharma. In this world, it is said that if a successful man is overcome by arrogance in his mind and acts wickedly, that cannot be accepted. It has been heard in the ancient accounts that subjects used to be self-controlled and placed dharma at the forefront, following the fair policy of dharma. Shaming them through words was sufficient chastisement. O king! At that time, dharma alone was praised among men. Men on earth served and extended the qualities of dharma. O son! O lord of men! But the asuras could not tolerate this. They increased themselves and gradually penetrated the subjects. Because of this, insolence was generated among subjects and this destroyed dharma. Resulting from insolence, anger was again generated within them. Having been overcome with anger, their conduct became shameful. O king! When they were overcome with lack of modesty, confusion was generated in them. Having become overcome with confusion, they no longer looked at things the way they had done earlier. They cheerfully conducted themselves and crushed each other. Shaming them through words was no longer sufficient chastisement then. They served their senses and no longer showed respect towards gods and brahmanas. At this time, the gods sought refuge with Shiva, supreme among the gods, the brave one with many forms and the lord of the ganas. With the combined energy of the gods, with a single arrow, he brought down the three cities from the sky onto the ground.<sup>728</sup> Their lord was terrible and fearsome in valour, frightful to the gods. But he was slain by the wielder of the trident. When he was slain, men regained their own nature. As was the case earlier, the Vedas and the sacred texts were revived. The saptarshis instated Vasava in the kingdom of the gods in heaven and he was given the task of wielding the staff of chastisement over men. After the saptarshis, there were the king named Viprithu and several other kshatriyas who became kings over separate categories. However, even when they were born in great lineages, there were some who continued to follow the earlier conduct. Their hearts were full of sentiments like that of the asuras. Because of those sentiments, those kings, terrible in valour, continued to be attached to deeds that were like those of the asuras. Men who are exceedingly foolish continue to be devoted to such acts, revere them and establish them. O king! That is the reason I am telling you that you must reflect about the sacred texts. You must discard all notions of violence within you and act so as to obtain success. An accomplished person does not think of obtaining riches by mixing up the means. For the sake of dharma or artha, he does not abandon what is proper. That is not said to be the way towards welfare. It is recommended that a kshatriya should be self-controlled, affectionate towards relatives and protect subjects, servants and sons in accordance with his own dharma. Because of prosperity and adversity, there can be enmity and affection. One is born and circles around in thousands of lives in many ways. Find delight in the qualities and never in sins. Even if a person is evil-minded and devoid of qualities, he realizes this internally. O great king! Dharma and adharma are prevalent among men. Other than men, these notions are not seen to exist in other creatures. Whether a man is con-

cerned with this life or is not concerned with this life, he must be learned and must follow dharma in conduct. He must cause injury and must always regard everyone like his own self. When there is no longer any desire in the mind, there is no longer any falsehood and one desires what is beneficial.’”

## Chapter 1612(284)

“Parashara said, ‘O son! I have told you about the dharma that is recommended for householders. I will now tell you about the techniques for austerities. Listen attentively. O best among men! It is often seen that because of being overcome with *tamas* and *rajas*, householders suffer from attachment and have a sense of ownership. Since they resort to homes, men acquire cattle, fields, riches, wives, sons and servants. In their conduct, they are always seen to look towards these. Their attachment and aversion are always seen to increase. Overcome by attachment and aversion, a man comes under the control of material objects. O lord of men! When confusion has been generated, the object known as desire is generated. Seeking to obtain objects of pleasure, he becomes addicted to desire. He does not see anything beyond the gains from ordinary pleasure and desire. Having become overwhelmed by greed, attachment is increased in people. Men become interested in sustaining these objects. Even if he knows, a man performs acts that should not be undertaken, for the sake of objects. Because he is overcome with affection for the children, he is tormented at the prospect of these<sup>729</sup> being destroyed. He is full of pride and seeks to protect himself against all defeat. He acts so as to enjoy pleasure and is thereby destroyed. It is known that those who have seen the brahman are full of intelligence and engage in austerities. Such men seek auspicious deeds and give up happiness.<sup>730</sup> O king! They obtain indifference towards loss of affection and riches and physical and mental hardships. That indifference leads to knowledge of the *atman* and knowledge of what the sacred texts have said. O king! Having seen the purport of the sacred texts, they see the importance of austerities. O Indra among men! A man who realizes what is essential and what is damaging is extremely rare. Realizing that all beloved happiness decays, he resorts to austerities. O son! Austerities are everything. They are recommended even for those who are inferior. A person who has conquered his senses and is self-controlled is on the road to heaven. O king! Earlier, the lord Prajapati created subjects through austerities, sometimes resorting to different kinds of vows. O son! The Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, Agni, the Ashvins, the Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, the ancestors, the large numbers of Maruts,<sup>731</sup> the yakshas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the siddhas, the other residents of heaven and all other celestial ones obtained success through austerities. In the beginning, Brahma created brahmanas. Earlier, through their austerities, they prospered the earth and also roamed around in heaven. In the world of mortals, kings and other householders who are seen to have been born in great lineages have all obtained the fruits of their austerities.<sup>732</sup> The silken garments, the radiant ornaments, the mounts, the seats and the vehicles—all these are the fruits of austerities. Thousands of beautiful women who follow them and the dwelling in palaces—all these are the fruits of austerities. The best of beds, many kinds of objects of pleasure and all that is—these are the outcomes of past deeds. O scorcher of enemies! There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be obtained through austerities. The renunciation of objects of pleasure also represents the fruits of earlier deeds. Whether he is happy or miserable, a man must abandon greed. O supreme among kings! He must use his mind and intelligence to look towards the sacred texts. Discontent leads to misery. Greed leads to confusion of the senses. Wisdom is then destroyed and knowledge is not accompanied by practice. When wisdom is destroyed, one does not see what is proper. Therefore, even when happiness has been destroyed, a man must resort to fierce austerities. Whatever is beneficial represents happiness. Whatever is hated is said to represent misery. Behold. These are the fruits of austerities that have been performed and have not been performed. If one performs unblemished austerities, one goes to what is best. One always faces the fortunate and enjoys the objects of pleasure. However, a person who gives up the virtuous path and goes after the fruits<sup>733</sup> obtains the unpleasant and faces many kinds of misery, despite obtaining objects of pleasure. Dharma, austerities and donations are desirable. But because desire is generated, one performs wicked deeds and obtains hell. O supreme among men! But whether he faces joy or misery, if a man does not deviate from his own conduct, he possesses the sight of the sacred texts. O lord of the earth! It is said that the pleasure from touch, taste, sight, scent and hearing only lasts for as long as it takes for an arrow to fall down on the ground.



When these are over, a fierce pain again takes over. That is the reason the learned praise emancipation, productive of supreme bliss. Those who follow that obtain fruits with superior qualities. For those who always have a conduct in accordance with dharma, kama and artha do not diminish them. Householders must never make efforts to serve objects of pleasure. But it is my view that they must always make efforts to follow their own dharma. Those who are revered and are born in noble families always have the sight of the sacred texts. However, those who have separated themselves from acts of dharma are incapable of controlling their atmans. All other deeds that are performed by men are destroyed. These should be ignored in this world and nothing other than deeds of austerities followed. However, there may be householders who have made up their minds to perform deeds. O king! They should skilfully observe their own dharma and offer havya and kavya. All the male and female rivers flow to the ocean and find their refuge there. In that way, all the other ashramas are based on that of the householder.’”

## Chapter 1613(285)

““Janaka asked, ‘O maharshi! How were the different complexions generated among the varnas? O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to hear about this. Tell me. The sacred texts say that one’s offspring are nothing but one’s own self. In particular, having been generated from brahmanas, how has there been decay?’

“Parashara replied, ‘O great king! It is indeed that way. The offspring are generated from one’s own self. But because of the deviation from austerities, this decay into jatis has set in.’<sup>734</sup> When the field is good and the seed is good, an auspicious crop results. However, if these are inferior, an inferior crop results. Those who are learned about dharma know that when Prajapati created the worlds, some were created from his mouth, some from his arms, some from his thighs and some from his feet. O son! The brahmanas were born from the mouth and the kshatriyas and their relatives from the arms. O king! The rich ones<sup>735</sup> were born from the thighs. The attendants<sup>736</sup> were born from the feet. O bull among men! These were the only four varnas that were created. The sacred texts say that all the others that were created, over and above these, were the result of a mixture. Among those that resulted from the kshatriya jati were Atirathas, Ambashthas, Ugras, Vaidehakas, Shvapakas, Pulkasas, Stenas, Nishadas, Sutas and Magadhas. O lord of men! The Ayogas, Karanas, Vratyas and Chandalas were born from an intermingling between the four varnas.’

“Janaka asked, ‘How did brahmanas with different gotras<sup>737</sup> result? O supreme among sages! There are many gotras in the world. How can those born from different wombs, those born from shudra wombs and those born from inferior wombs become sages?’

“Parashara replied, ‘O king! Though these are not brahmanas by virtue of their inferior birth, these great-souled ones can resort to austerities and cleanse their souls. O king! Here and there, the sages had sons. However, because of their<sup>738</sup> own austerities, they again succeeded in becoming rishis. O king! O ruler of Videha! Earlier, my grandfather,<sup>739</sup> Rishyashringa, Kashyapa, Vata, Tandya, Kripa, Kakshivat, Kamatha and the others, Yavakrita, Drona, supreme among eloquent ones, Ayu, Matanga, Datta, Drupada and Matsya obtained their own natural states by resorting to austerities. They were knowledgeable about the Vedas and were established in self-control and austerities. O king! Initially, only four gotras were born—Angiras, Kashyapa, Vasishtha and Bhrigu. O king! But because of their deeds, other gotras were generated. Their names resulted from the austerities that those virtuous ones resorted to.’

“Janaka asked, ‘O illustrious one! Tell me about the specific dharma of different varnas. What is the general template of dharma that leads to welfare everywhere?’

“Parashara replied, ‘O king! Receiving gifts, officiating at sacrifices and studying represent the specific dharma for brahmanas. Kshatriyas are radiant when they protect. The vaishyas must engage in agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. O lord of men! The task of shudras is to serve the other three varnas.’<sup>740</sup> O king! I have described to you the specific dharma of the varnas. O son! Now listen to the details about general dharma. O king! Non-violence, lack of injury, lack of distraction, giving proper shares, performing funeral rites, attending to guests, truthfulness, lack of anger, contentment with one’s own wife, purity, constant lack of malice, knowledge of the atman and endurance—these represent general dharma. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas are the three varnas that are

*dvijas*.<sup>741</sup> O supreme among bipeds! These are the ones who have rights to such dharma. O king! If these three varnas resort to perverse deeds, then that leads to their downfall. They are elevated if they stick to their own deeds, just as the righteous ones do. No downfall has been determined for a shudra, nor is there any means of his cleansing himself from such a downfall. He cannot follow the conduct of dharma laid down in the sacred texts. However, he should not act against such dharma. O ruler of Videha! O great king! Learned ones say that shudras are like brahmanas. O Indra among men! I see such a person as the god Vishnu, the foremost one in the universe.<sup>742</sup> Even an inferior person can desire to uplift himself by resorting to the conduct of the virtuous. They are not censured if they perform any of the rites that lead to nourishment. But they must avoid mantras. Whenever inferior people resort to the conduct of the virtuous, they obtain happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter.’

“Janaka asked, ‘O great sage! What taints a person? Is it his deeds or his jati? A doubt has arisen in my mind. You should explain this to me.’

“Parashara replied, ‘O great king! There is no doubt that both can give rise to taints. But listen specifically to how both deeds and jati can be countered. Regardless of birth and deeds,<sup>743</sup> a person may perform wicked acts. However, even if the birth is tainted, if a person does not act wickedly, he is truly a man. If a man of superior birth performs wicked deeds, he is censured. Those acts taint him. Therefore, such deeds are not appropriate.’

“Janaka asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! In this world, which are the acts of dharma? Which are the acts that never lead to injury to beings?’

“Parashara replied, ‘O great king! Listen to what you have asked me. These are acts of non-injury that always save a man. Those who renounce and worship the fire can see that their anxiety is dispelled. They are the ones who resort to the beneficial path of dharma and ascend progressively. They are devoted and humble. They are always self-controlled and restrained. They abandon all kinds of action and go to the spot that is without decay. O king! All the varnas should perform the deeds of dharma properly and speak truthful words. In the world of the living, they must give up terrible adharma. They will go to heaven. There is no need to reflect on this.’”

## Chapter 1614(286)

““Parashara said, ‘Fathers, friends, preceptors and women belonging to those who are devoid of qualities bring them no status in the world. O king! Even if one is devoted to them, speaks pleasantly to them, ensures their welfare and is obedient, that brings no gains. For men, the father is the supreme god. The father is said to be superior to the mother. Knowledge is said to be the supreme gain. By controlling the objects of the senses, one obtains the supreme. If the son of a king faces the flames of arrows in the field of battle and is consumed by them and killed, he goes to the immortal worlds that are extremely difficult to obtain. As he pleases, he obtains the fruits of heaven there. O king! One should not strike the exhausted, the terrified, those who have lost their weapons, the weeping, those who are not willing to fight, those who have been deprived of their mounts, those who are not exerting themselves, those who are ill, those who are seeking refuge, those who are very young and those who are aged. One should fight someone who is mounted, properly equipped, ready to fight and one’s equal. In a battle, a king should engage against the son of a kshatriya. It is certain that it is best to be killed by someone who is an equal or superior. Kings who are slain by inferiors and cowards are censured. O lord of men! It is said that if one is slain by a wicked person who resorts to evil conduct, or is inferior, that is wicked and certainly leads to hell. O king! If a person’s fortune is over and he has come under subjugation,<sup>744</sup> then no one can save him. But if the lifespan is left, no one can assail him. If a person has attained one hundred years of age or he is senior in age, one must gently restrain him from performing any injurious acts. O son! When a householder suspects that his end is near, it is appropriate that his death should occur near a river or at a sacred place. When the lifespan is over, one merges into the five elements. This can happen without reason and can also occur with reason.<sup>745</sup> Having obtained a body, if a person gives it up in a mishap, after losing the body, he follows the same kind of course.<sup>746</sup> This is like a man going from one house to another house. There is no second reason for a person to obtain a similar kind of body. That is the way he pursues the goal of emancipation. The body consists of a mass of arteries, sinews and bones. It is terrible and impure. It is a mixture of the elements, the senses and the qualities. This body is then cov-

ered by a skin. Learned ones who have thought about adhyatma say this. When the qualities decay, the body becomes mortal. The body is abandoned and becomes immobile and senseless. The elements return to their natural states and the body merges with the ground. Driven by the urge to act, the body is born, here and there. O ruler of Videha! Whatever be the state in which the body dies, driven by the deeds it has performed, its next birth is seen to be determined by that nature. O king! But the atman in the creature is not born again immediately. Like a giant cloud, it roams around in the sky. O king! It is born again only after it has obtained a new receptacle. O king! The atman is superior to the mind. The mind is superior to the senses. O king! Of the two kinds of creations, the mobile are superior.<sup>747</sup> It is held that bipeds are supreme among mobile ones. Among bipeds, dvijas are held to be superior. O Indra among kings! Among dvijas, the wise are held to be superior. Among the wise, those who know about the atman are superior and among those who know about the atman, the ones who are humble. It is certain that men who are born must die. Because of the qualities,<sup>748</sup> subjects undertake tasks that also come to an end. O king! A man who dies when the sun is in its northern solstice<sup>749</sup> and when the nakshatras and muhurtas are auspicious, is a person who performs auspicious deeds. A person must undertake tasks to the best of his capacity. He must cleanse himself of all wicked deeds and without causing hardship to people, face the natural course of death. Poison, hanging, burning, being slain by bandits and being bitten to death by animals are said to be inferior kinds of death. Those who are the performers of auspicious deeds do not confront these and many other inferior kinds of death. O king! The life forces of virtuous ones ascend upwards, those who are middling in merit remain towards the middle and the perpetrators of wicked deeds head downwards. O king! For any man, there is only one foe and no second enemy, and that happens to be ignorance. It is because he is enveloped by this that he is goaded to perform extremely terrible and loathsome deeds. For the sake of realization, one must serve the aged and follow the dharma of the sacred texts. O prince! One must make efforts for success. That enemy can only be brought down through the arrow of wisdom. One must study the Vedas, perform austerities and be a brahmachari. To the best of one's capacity, one must perform the five sacrifices.<sup>750</sup> With a desire to obtain dharma, a man must then go to the forest. He must control himself and seek to obtain what is best. However, he must not emaciate himself by giving up all material objects. O son! Birth as a human is extremely difficult to obtain, even as a *chandala*.<sup>751</sup> O lord of the earth! This is the first kind of birth, because one can seek to save the atman by performing auspicious deeds. O lord! Who will destroy such a life once it has been obtained? Using the sacred texts as a yardstick, men perform acts of dharma. But though the status as a human may be very difficult to obtain in this world, there may be a man who ignores dharma. He is overcome by desire and thereby deceives himself. O son! A person who looks at all beings with eyes of affection is not destroyed, like the flames of a lamp that have been protected. He comforts everyone and speaks pleasantly to them. He is impartial towards delight and misery. He obtains greatness in the hereafter. Donations, renunciation, making the appearance pleasant and amiable, repeated purification of the body through bathing and austerities—these must be undertaken near the Sarasvati, in Naimisha, in Pushkara, or in other sacred spots on earth. For those who die in houses, it is recommended that their dead bodies should be taken out from there and taken to cremation grounds in vehicles. Cremation must be performed in accordance with the rites of purification. Rites, beneficial sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices, donations and efforts to undertake auspicious deeds according to one's capacity—these have been recommended for the sake of the departed ancestors. A man also undertakes these for his own self. O lord of men! The sacred texts, the Vedas and the six Vedangas have been laid down for the benefit of men who perform unblemished deeds.”

‘Bhishma said, “O lord of men! The extremely great-souled sage related all this and, in those ancient times, spoke to the king of Videha for his benefit.”’

## Chapter 1615(287)

‘Bhishma said, “For the sake of determining supreme dharma, Janaka, the lord of Mithila, again asked the great-souled Parashara. ‘O brahmana! What is the supreme objective? Which deeds are never destroyed? Which is the spot, from which, one does not have to return? O great sage! Tell me that.’

“Parashara replied, ‘Detachment is the best foundation of knowledge. Knowledge represents the best path. Austerities are never destroyed. Seeds sown in a field are not destroyed. If a person severs the noose of adharma and takes pleasure in dharma, if he grants the gift of fearlessness, then he obtains success. A person who gives away thousands of cattle and hundreds of horses and grants fearlessness to all beings, he is the one who truly gives. One may dwell in the midst of material objects. However, if one is intelligent, one does not really dwell amidst them. It is only the evil-minded person who dwells amidst trifling material objects. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, a wise person is not stained by adharma. Sin attaches more to an ignorant person, just as lac and wood attach to each other. Adharma can only be extinguished after the fruits have been felt and do not let go of the doer. At the right time, the doer will have to endure all of these. But they do not afflict those who have clean souls and have seen the atman. An ignorant person is distracted by his intelligence and the organs of action. Attached to good and bad deeds, he suffers from great fear. Even when he is in the midst of objects, a person who is devoid of attachment and has properly conquered his anger, is never united with sin. When there is a dam, the store of water swells up. In that way, someone with the dam of dharma does not suffer. The gem purifies itself by attracting the rays of the sun.<sup>752</sup> O tiger among kings! A person who practices yoga receives in that way. When sesamum seeds are separately mingled with flowers, they imbibe those pleasant qualities. By resorting to the quality of sattva, men on earth can improve themselves by associating with those who have clean souls. When a man makes up his mind about heaven, he abandons his wife, his riches, his excellent horses, his vehicles and all kinds of rites. His intelligence is then delinked from material objects. If a man’s intelligence is addicted to material objects, he can never comprehend what brings welfare to his atman. O king! His consciousness is attracted by all these sentiments, like fish after a bait of meat. All mortal beings in this world encounter each other and depend on each other. But like a plantain tree, this lacks essence. They sink like a boat in the ocean. No time has been designated for a man to follow dharma. Death does not wait for any man. It is appropriate that one should always practise the rites of dharma, since a man is always headed towards the jaws of death. Through practice, a blind man can roam around in his own house. In that way, by concentrating the mind, a wise person can follow the desired path. It has been said that everything that is born must die. Birth is associated with death. A person who is ignorant about the dharma of emancipation is bound and is whirled around in that cycle. The stalk of a lotus can swiftly free itself from the mire. In that way, a man’s atman can free itself of the mind. It is the mind that initially brings the atman to yoga. Engaged in one’s own acts, one tends to ignore the supreme objective. By being addicted to the objects of the senses, one falls away from one’s true acts. Though heaven is the supreme objective, one obtains birth as inferior species. Through his own deeds, a wise person’s atman obtains the supreme benefit. When an earthen vessel has been baked, the liquid kept there does not escape and diminish. Even if one is in the midst of material objects, it is the same with a person who has tormented his body through austerities. There is no doubt that a person who discards material objects can obtain emancipation, delinking his atman from objects of pleasure. But there are others who base themselves on objects of pleasure. A person attached to his penis and stomach is shrouded in mist. His soul is enveloped, like a person who has been born blind and does not understand. Merchants who go out to sea obtain riches that are proportionate to the capital invested. Know that in the world of mortals, creatures obtain ends that are proportionate to their deeds. In this world, made up of days and nights, death roams around in the form of old age and devours creatures, like a snake devouring the air. A creature obtains a birth that is determined by the deeds that he has himself performed. There is nothing, pleasant or unpleasant, that is obtained but is not dependent on earlier acts. Whether he is lying down, moving around or is seated, or is in the midst of material objects, a man always obtains the fruits of good and bad deeds. But it is seen that someone who has obtained the furthest shore,<sup>753</sup> which is so difficult to reach in this great ocean, does not return again. When a burden is to be carried, boats are lowered into the great ocean through ropes.<sup>754</sup> That is the way the mind uses yoga to uplift the body. Rivers head towards the ocean and unite with it. In that way, yoga always makes one unite with prakriti. The minds of men are attached to many kinds of bonds of affection. Their nature is destroyed, like houses of sand by the water. The being must realize that the body is like a house and that it has to be purified through sacred waters. If one advances along the path of intelligence, one obtains happiness in this world and in the next. There are many things that lead to hardship, but there are only a few that bring happiness. The learned say that among the many things that lead to benefit in the hereafter, renunciation is the best. There are large numbers of friends who have their own intentions. There are rela-

tives who follow their own reasons. There are wives, servants and sons. All of them wish to enjoy one's riches for their own reasons. A mother or a father cannot bring about anything in the hereafter. Donations are the medication and a creature reaps the fruits of his own deeds. Mothers, sons, fathers, brothers, wives and friends are only like etchings of gold against the real stuff.<sup>755</sup> All the deeds that have been done earlier, good and bad, follow a creature's atman. Knowing that the fruits of deeds present themselves, one should turn one's intelligence towards the inner atman. One should resort to one's conduct, using others as aides. One who has begun his acts in this way, never suffers. One must have no doubt in one's mind. One must be brave, patient and learned. Prosperity will never abandon such a person, just as the rays don't leave the sun. If a person believes and uses means to engage in such conduct, without any wonder and without any doubt, and if he controls himself, then his atman does not suffer and he does not deviate from the objective. All the deeds that a creature himself performed, good and bad, control him from the moment he obtains a womb. Both types of earlier deeds restrain him. Death cannot be countered and time severs everything, like a saw scattering dust from wood. In the end, the fruits of deeds are obtained. Through the acts that he has himself performed earlier, good and bad, a man obtains everything—his appearance, birth, material objects, prosperity and other stores.”

‘Bhishma said, “O king! The learned one thus spoke about the truth to Janaka. Having heard, the best among those who were knowledgeable about dharma, obtained great delight.”’

## Chapter 1616(288)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! Learned men in this world praise truthfulness, forgiveness, self-control and wisdom. What is your view?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between the Sadhyas and a swan. Once upon a time, the eternal Prajapati assumed the form of a golden swan. In this form, he travelled through the three worlds and came upon the Sadhyas.

“‘The Sadhyas said, ‘O bird! We are the gods who are known as the Sadhyas. You are the one who truly knows about moksha and we wish to ask you about the dharma of moksha. We have heard that you are learned, patient and eloquent. O bird! Virtuous words are heard from you. O bird! What do you think is the best? O great-souled one! Where does the mind find delight? O supreme among birds! It should be your task to instruct us. O Indra among birds! What do you think is the best among deeds, so that one can be swiftly emancipated?’

“‘The swan replied, ‘O ones who have fed on amrita! I have heard that one must resort to these tasks—austerities, self-control, truthfulness and the protection of the atman. All the strands of the heart must be loosened and the pleasant and the unpleasant must be brought under one's control. One must not hurt others and be harsh in speech. One must not receive anything good from those who are inferior. One must not excite others through speech. One must not speak words that make them go to wicked worlds. Spoken words descend like arrows. Struck by those, one grieves day and night. A learned person will not make these descend towards the vitals of others. He will not release these at other people. If one is severely struck with arrows of extreme words released by others, it is one's task to pacify them. If a person replies angrily, all his good merits from the hereafter are taken away. A person should control his blazing anger, pacify his pride and counter the futile humiliation. He should be cheerful and free from malice. He then takes away the good merits that the evil-minded person has earned in the hereafter. I do not speak anything when I am censured. Even when I am incessantly assailed, I ignore it. Noble ones say that forgiveness, truthfulness, uprightness and non-violence are the best. Truth is the foundation of the Vedas. Self-control is the foundation of truth. Emancipation is the foundation of self-control. These are all the various instructions. I think that a person who can control the force of words, the force of anger in the mind, the force of knowledge,<sup>756</sup> the forces of the stomach and the genitals and all the other forces that consume and destroy, is a brahmana and a sage. Lack of anger is superior to anger. Patience is superior to the lack of patience. A human is superior to those who are not human. In that way, knowledge is superior to ignorance. One who is not enraged is superior to one who is angered. One must be patient when one is raged against. In that event, the assailant is burnt<sup>757</sup> and one obtains all his good merits. In such a case, if a person does not say anything, harsh or pleasant, in reply, if when

struck, a person is patient and does not strike back, if when assailed, he does not desire anything wicked in retaliation, such a person is always desired by the gods. A wicked person must be forgiven, as if he is equal to a superior person, even if one has been dishonoured, assailed and censured. That is the way to obtain success. I no longer possess any thirst. Nor is there any rage in me. In private, I always serve noble ones. I do not desire anything that belongs to others and I do not seek any of their possessions. When I am cursed, I do not curse back. I know that this is the door towards immortality. I am telling you the secret about the brahman. There is nothing superior for men. They will then be freed from sin, like the moon from the clouds. Such a patient person will obtain success through his patience and be radiant while he waits for the right time to come.<sup>758</sup> He deserves to be worshipped by everyone and is like a pillar that holds everything up. Words of great praise are spoken about him. Such a person has control over his atman and goes to the gods. Revilers who are full of anger do not wish to speak about his lack of qualities, because there is nothing like that. His words and mind have been protected and controlled in the appropriate way. Through the Vedas, austerities and renunciation, he has obtained everything. Such a learned person does not react to the censure and disrespect shown by ignorant people. Nor does he cause injury to his own self by extolling others.<sup>759</sup> Like one who is content with amrita, he ignores this. Such a person is a brahmana. He sleeps happily and disrespect does not destroy him. If there is rage when sacrifices are performed, gifts given, austerities performed or oblations offered, Vaivasvata<sup>760</sup> takes all these away. The efforts of a person who is enraged are futile. O supreme among the immortals! If a person protects the four gates—the genitals, the stomach, the hands and speech as the fourth—well, he knows about dharma. Truthfulness, self-control, modesty, uprightness, non-violence, fortitude, patience, renunciation, constant studying, lack of desire towards the possessions of others—if a person has the good conduct to practise these single-mindedly, he will rise upwards. Like a calf sucking at the four udders of the cow, these are all the things that one should follow. There is nothing that is purer than the truth. I have seen men and have travelled around among gods. Truth is the ladder to heaven, like a boat on an ocean. One becomes like the people one dwells and associates with. Whoever a person advances towards, he becomes like that. If one associates with the virtuous, one becomes virtuous. The same is the case with ascetics or thieves. This is like a garment being dyed with the colour it has been immersed in. In that way, one comes under their subjugation. The gods always converse with the virtuous. They are not seen to be interested in human objects. A person should know that material objects come and go, like the moon and the wind.<sup>761</sup> If the being inside the heart has not been stained and walks along the path of the righteous, the gods are pleased with him. From a distance, the gods avoid those who are always addicted to their penis and stomach, men who are thieves and always harsh in speech, even if one knows that they have tried to atone for those sins. The gods are not satisfied with those who are inferior in spirit, those who eat everything and those who are the perpetrators of wicked deeds. They honour men who are truthful in their vows, grateful and devoted to dharma. It is said that silence is superior to speech. The second course is that of speaking the truth. The third course is to speak words of dharma. The fourth course is of speaking pleasant words.<sup>762</sup>

“The Sadhyas asked, ‘What is the world covered by? Why does it not shine? Why are friends cast away? What are the reasons for not reaching heaven?’

“The swan replied, ‘The world is enveloped in ignorance. Malice leads to a lack of shining. Friends are abandoned because of greed. Because of attachment, one does not go to heaven.’

“The Sadhyas asked, ‘Among the brahmanas, who is the single one who is always happy? Who is the single one who is silent amidst the many? Who is the single one, who though weak, is strong? Who is the single one who does not quarrel?’

“The swan replied, ‘Among the brahmanas, the wise one is the single one who is always delighted. The wise one is the single one who is silent amidst many. The wise one is the single one who is strong, though weak. The wise one is the one who does not quarrel.’

“The Sadhyas asked, ‘What is divinity among brahmanas? What is said to be their virtue? What is wicked among them? What is held to constitute their humanity?’

“The swan replied, ‘Studying represents their divinity. Vows are said to be their virtue. Censuring others is their wickedness. Mortality constitutes their humanity.’”



‘Bhishma said, “I have recounted the excellent conversation concerning the Sadhyas. The body is the womb for deeds and a virtuous existence is said to be the truth.”’

## Chapter 1617(289)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O father! You should explain to me the difference between sankhya and yoga. O one who knows about everything! O supreme among the Kuru lineage! You know everything about this.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “Brahmanas who follow sankhya praise sankhya and those who follow yoga praise yoga. Driven by reasons and sentiments, they proclaim the superiority of their own school. O afflicter of enemies! Learned ones who follow yoga have appropriately given reasons for their superiority. How can someone who does not believe in an Ishvara be emancipated? But those brahmanas who follow sankhya also speak about appropriate reasons. By knowing the progress of everything, one becomes detached from material objects. When one ascends upwards from the body, it is evident that this can be nothing other than emancipation. This is said by the immensely wise ones who are conversant with the emancipation set out in sankhya. Whichever school one follows, one should accept those reasons. One will then be capable of ensuring benefit with those words. The views of the virtuous must be accepted and there are virtuous and revered people on both sides. The reasons behind yoga can be experienced. Those for sankhya are determined on the basis of the sacred texts. O son! O Yudhishtira! It is my view that both sides represent the truth. O king! It is my view that both sides represent knowledge and are revered by the virtuous. If one follows the sacred texts and practises them, both will convey to the supreme objective. O unblemished one! Both are equal in recommending purification and compassion towards beings. Both are comparable in the vows that have been laid down. They are only unequal in their philosophy.”’

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! They are comparable in vows, purification and compassion. O grandfather! In that case, why is it that they are not equal in their philosophy? Tell me.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “Attachment, confusion, affection, desire and anger—by resorting to yoga, one severs these five sins and obtains success. Large fish break through nets and regain the water. In that way, through yoga, one transcends sins and attains the objective. O king! Greed and other bonds are powerful. Having severed these, the yogi treads along the supreme path, sparkling and auspicious. O king! There is no doubt that weak animals are enmeshed in nets and later destroyed. This is also true of those who do not possess the strength of yoga. O Kounteya! Weak ones are like fish caught in a net. O Indra among kings! Those yogis who are extremely weak also meet their end in the same way. O destroyer of enemies! This is like birds caught in fine nets. They can free themselves from that hardship, but only if they are strong. O scorcher of enemies! There are yogis who are bound down by the bonds of action. They are weak and are destroyed, while the powerful ones escape. O king! A small and weak fire is pacified when a large quantity of kindling is placed atop it. O lord! It is the same with yogis who are weak. O king! However, if that fire obtains its strength back again, it can swiftly burn down the entire earth, fanned by the wind. When strength has been generated in him, a yogi blazes in his energy and is immensely strong. He is like the sun that has arisen at the time of destruction and can dry up the entire universe. O king! A weak man is borne away by the current. A weak yogi is helpless and is borne away by the objects of the senses. However, an elephant is capable of withstanding the same strong current. Having obtained the strength of yoga, one can discard many objects of the senses. O Partha! Through the strength of yoga, a yogi can bring under his control and penetrate Prajapatis, rishis, the great elements and the Ishvaras. O king! Yama, the enraged destroyer, and Death, terrible in valour, cannot afflict the yogi, who is infinite in his energy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through the power of yoga, he can create many thousand who are like him and wander around the entire earth in these forms. Through practising fierce austerities, he can also obtain the objects of desire. O Partha! He can then fling them away again, like the sun discarding its qualities of energy. O king! There is no doubt that with the strength of yoga, and having freed himself from the bonds, a person can obtain Vishnu’s powers and free himself. O lord of the earth! I have spoken to you about the power of yoga. I will now again tell you about the subtle signs. O lord! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The indications of dharana and samadhi in the atman are subtle.<sup>763</sup> Listen to them. An archer who is controlled and not distracted can strike the target. There is no doubt that a yogi who is properly focused in this way

can obtain emancipation. A man ascending a flight of stairs with a liquid in a vessel, concentrates his mind.<sup>764</sup> The mind has to be withdrawn and rendered immobile in that way. O king! Uniting it with the atman in yoga, he becomes completely immobile. He cleanses his atman and makes it as resplendent as the sun. O Kounteya! O king! When a boat is tossed around on the mighty ocean, it is like a boatman taking control and swiftly steering the boat. In that way, a yogi who knows the truth unites his atman in samadhi. O king! Having gone to a desolate spot, he then gives up the body. O bull among men! A charioteer can yoke well-trained horses, control them and swiftly take the archer to the designated region. O king! That is the way a yogi is concentrated in dharana. He swiftly reaches the supreme spot, like a released arrow hitting the target. A yogi makes his self penetrate the atman and remains motionless. He destroys his sins and obtains the spot that is without decay. O infinitely valorous one! O lord of the earth! In his navel, in his throat, in his head, in his heart, in his chest, along his flanks, in his eyes, in his touch and in his nose, and in the spot that he has resorted to, the yogi controls himself in that great vow and merges his self with the subtle atman. Cleansed in his wisdom, he quickly burns all his deeds, auspicious and inauspicious. Resorting to that excellent yoga, he frees himself as he wills.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How does a yogi obtain strength? What should he eat and what should he conquer? You should tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A yogi obtains strength by eating grain, by eating oilcakes and avoiding fatty products. O destroyer of enemies! A yogi obtains strength by being pure in soul and eating only once a day and subsisting for a long period of time on rough barley.<sup>765</sup> A yogi obtains strength by only drinking water mixed with milk once a fortnight, once a month, once in two months, and finally, once a year. O lord of men! A yogi obtains strength and purifies his soul properly by always avoiding meat. O king! O supreme among kings! He conquers desire, anger, cold, rain, fear, sleep, breath, the penis, material objects, hatred, which is so difficult to conquer, terrible thirst, touch and all the other senses and sleep, which is so difficult to defeat. The great-souled ones blaze and find their own subtle selves in their atmans. Those immensely wise ones are devoid of attachment. Their riches are meditation and studying. It is the view that the path followed by learned brahmanas is extremely difficult to traverse. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one who is disturbed can walk along this. It is like a fearful forest full of terrible serpents and reptiles, covered with pits and without water, dense with many thorns and difficult to travel in. It is like a path frequented by bandits, with nothing to eat and no trees, as if the large trees have been burnt down in a forest conflagration. Young people do not find safety along it. Since the path of yoga is like this, very few brahmanas can travel along it. But it is said that the other paths, which have safety, have many taints. O lord of the earth! Those who can sustain yoga can safely walk along it, though it is as sharp as a razor’s edge. But those who have not cleansed their souls find it difficult to remain there. O son! However, if dharana is disturbed, it takes one to an inauspicious end. O king! This is like a blind man steering a boat on the ocean. O Kounteya! But if one is based in dharana in the proper way, one can free oneself from death, birth, unhappiness and happiness. All this has been stated in different sacred texts on yoga. This entire and supreme yoga is certainly seen among brahmanas. The great brahman is supreme. Those great-souled ones can enter the lord Brahma, Vishnu, the granter of boons, Bhava, Dharma, the six-faced one,<sup>766</sup> the six great sons of Brahma,<sup>767</sup> tamas, which makes one face such a great deal of difficulty, the pure sattva, supreme prakriti, the goddess Siddhi, Varuna’s wife, all energy, great patience, the sparkling lord of the stars and all the stars, the Vishvadevas and the ancestors, their followers, all the mountains and the terrible oceans, all the rivers, the forests, the clouds, serpents, mountains, the large numbers of yakshas, the directions and the groups of gandharvas, male and female. Those great-souled ones and these great ones attain each other. The yogi becomes perpetually free. O king! This auspicious account is about the immensely valorous god. The great-souled yogi has Narayana in his soul and overcomes everything that is mortal.”’

## Chapter 1618(290)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O king! You have properly described to me the path of yoga, which is approved by the virtuous. You have explained it, as if to a disciple whose benefit you desire. I am now asking you about all the principles of sankhya. You know all the knowledge that is to be known in the three worlds.”’



‘Bhishma replied, “Listen to the pure principles of sankhya. Intelligent ascetics who know about the atman have laid them down, Kapila and the other lords being the first. O bull among men! No errors can be seen in those doctrines. They have many qualities and no taints. O king! Through knowledge, one can enumerate that all objects have faults. Men and pishachas are associated with objects that are extremely difficult to conquer. The rakshasas and yakshas are associated with objects. The serpents and the gandharvas are associated with objects. O king! The ancestors, who roam diagonally above, are associated with objects. The Suparnas<sup>768</sup> and the Maruts are associated with objects. The rajarshis and the brahmarshis are associated with objects. The asuras and the Vishvadevas are associated with objects. The devarshis and the lords of yoga are associated with objects. The lords of subjects and Brahma are associated with objects. O supreme among eloquent ones! Knowing about all these and knowing the truth about the ultimate lifespans and time in this world, they find happiness in the supreme truth. At the right time, those who search for objects descend into hardships. Some find misery as inferior species, others descend into hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are all the qualities and all the demerits of heaven. There are taints and qualities in the words of the Vedas and in those who speak about the Vedas. O king! There are taints and qualities in jnana yoga and in yoga itself. O king! There are also taints and qualities in the knowledge of sankhya. There are ten qualities in sattva, nine qualities in rajas, eight qualities in tamas, seven qualities in intelligence, six qualities in the sky, five qualities in the mind, four qualities in intelligence and yet again, three great qualities in tamas, two qualities in rajas and one single quality in sattva.<sup>769</sup> One gets to know all this. One gets to know and obtains insight about the path of destruction. Having become full of jnana and vijnana and learnt the auspicious reasons behind everything, one obtains sacred emancipation, as subtle as the ultimate parts of the sky. Sight is attached to form, just as the nose is attached to the quality of smell. Sound is attached to hearing, the tongue to the quality of taste and touch to the skin. The wind finds refuge in the sky. Confusion is attached to tamas and has greed for riches as its foundation. Vishnu is attached to motion, Shakra to strength and Agni to the stomach. Water is attached to the goddess<sup>770</sup> and water has the fire as its foundation. Fire is attached to the wind and the wind has space for its foundation. Space is attached to Mahat and Mahat has intelligence for its foundation. Intelligence is attached to tamas and tamas has rajas for its foundation. Rajas is attached to sattva and sattva is attached to the atman. The atman is attached to the lord and god, Narayana. That god is attached to emancipation and emancipation has no foundation. One knows that sattva is attached to this body, surrounded by the sixteen qualities<sup>771</sup> and that natural consciousness has the body as a foundation. O king! One knows that the single atman is in the middle and that sin cannot attach to it and that the second element is acts committed in pursuit of the objects of the senses. All the senses and the objects of the senses have their foundation in the atman. There is also the truth about prana, apana, samana, vyana and udana. One knows about the two breaths of life that flow upwards and downwards. These seven breaths of life also possess their determined roles. O scorcher of enemies! One knows about Prajapatis, the rishis, the many different supreme paths and the large number of saptarshis and rajarshis. There are the great celestial rishis and the maharshis, as resplendent as the sun. O king! One knows that in the great course of time, they are also dislodged from their prosperity. O king! One learns that the large number of great creatures are destroyed. O king! One knows the outcome of inauspicious acts and evildoers. When Yama brings about destruction, there are hardships undergone by those who fall into Vaitarani.<sup>772</sup> There are many kinds of inauspicious wombs in the cycle of life. There is residence in inauspicious wombs, feeding on blood, water, phlegm, urine and excrement, terrible in smell. Bodies result from the union of semen and blood and have marrow and sinews. In that inauspicious city with the nine gates,<sup>773</sup> there are hundreds of veins and arteries. O king! One learns about the many kinds of yoga that bring welfare to the atman and about tamas, which envelopes the beautiful atmans of creatures. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is sattva among creatures, but also the abhorrent and censured one<sup>774</sup> from the perspective of greatness. Those who know about sankhya know about the atman. They see the terrible devouring of the energy of the moon,<sup>775</sup> the fall of the stars and the deviation of the nakshatras. O king! They see the piteous coming together and separation of creatures and the unholy ways in which they eat each other. They know the delusion of childhood and the inauspicious destruction of bodies and because of attachment and confusion, the rare resort to sattva. Among thousands of men, only one possesses intelligence that turns to moksha. They know what the sacred texts have said earlier, that emancipation is extremely difficult to obtain. O king! They know of the great importance that is given to things that have not been obtained and the limited importance to those that have been obtained,

since the objects of the senses are overwhelming. O Kounteya! When life has departed, they see that the bodies are unholy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They know that in the midst of homes and families, creatures are in misery. They know of the extremely terrible ends faced by those who are the killers of brahmanas and evil-souled brahmanas who are addicted to drinking. O Yudhishtira! They know the unholy ends that come to those who have intercourse with the wives of their preceptors, to those who do not show proper respect to their mothers and men in this world who do not revere the gods. They have the knowledge to know what happens to the perpetrators of wicked deeds and they are also conversant with the different kinds of birth as inferior species that takes place. They know about the colourful words of the Vedas, the progress of the seasons and the fading of the years and the months. They see the decay of the fortnights and the decay of the days. They can directly see the waxing and waning of the moon, the ebb and the flow in the oceans and the destruction of riches and their subsequent increase. In particular, they see the coming together and separation of the yugas, the destruction of mountains and the destruction of rivers. They see the decay and repeated destruction of varnas. They see old age, death, birth and hardships. They know the truth about the taints of bodies and their miseries. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are conversant with the frailties of bodies. They know about the faults in their own atmans and those that all atmans are prone to. They know about the inauspicious scents that arise from their own bodies.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O immensely valorous one! What are the faults that you see in your own body? I have a doubt about this. You should explain in detail the truth about this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord! The learned have said that there are five faults in the body. Those who know about the paths propagated in Kapila’s sankhya have spoken about this. O destroyer of enemies! Listen. There are desire, anger, fear, sleep and the fifth is said to be the breath. These faults are seen in all those who possess bodies. Anger can be severed through forgiveness and desire through the abandoning of resolution. In that way, sattva and good conduct can be used against sleep and lack of distraction against fear. O king! The fifth one of breath can be severed through a restrained diet. The qualities can be comprehended through hundreds of other qualities, the faults through hundreds of faults. One can understand the truth about colourful reasons through hundreds of diverse reasons. The world is surrounded by one hundred of Vishnu’s maya and is like foam in the water. It has the appearance of something that has been painted and its essence is as futile as that of a reed. One sees that it is like a dark pit and the years are like bubbles. It is about to be destroyed and is without happiness, with the characteristics of inevitable destruction. It is submerged in rajas and tamas and is as immobile as an elephant stuck in mud. O king! The immensely wise ones who know about sankhya generate offspring and then discard their bodies. O king! They use the great and pervasive knowledge of sankhya. O king! As instructed, they use the auspicious scent of sattva to dispel all the inauspicious scents of rajas and tamas, all the sense of touch that resides in the body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They quickly sever these through the weapon of knowledge and the rod of austerities. The waters of the ocean<sup>776</sup> are terrible misery. Anxiety and sorrow are its large lakes. Disease and death are the giant crocodiles. The great fears are the giant serpents. Tamas is the tortoises and rajas is the fish. One can cross over with the use of wisdom. Affection is the mud. O scorcher of enemies! Old age represents the impenetrable fortifications and touch is like the islands. Deeds are the great depth, truth represents the banks. O king! One has to base oneself on one’s vows. Injury represents the swift and strong current. The many kinds of tastes are like large mines. The different kinds of gratification are the gems. Grief and fever are the breeze. Sorrow and thirst are the giant whirlpools. Fierce diseases are the large elephants. O destroyer of enemies! Bones are like flights of stairs and phlegm is foam. Donations provide the pearls. Lakes of blood are the coral. Loud laughter constitutes the roar. The different kinds of knowledge<sup>777</sup> make it extremely difficult to cross. Tears are the salt. One should resort to the refuge of abandoning attachment. O king! Sons are the large number of leeches. Relatives are the inhabitations. Lack of injury and truthfulness set boundaries to this. The giving up of life is the giant wave. Vedanta is an island one advances towards and all creatures can use it as pots<sup>778</sup> for support. Emanicipation is an object that is extremely difficult to obtain, but that is the reason one is heading to the ocean, with subterranean fire that is like a mare’s head. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through using the yoga of knowledge, sages can successfully cross it. Having been born and having crossed what is extremely difficult to cross, they enter into the sparkling sky. From there, the sun uses its rays to bear those who practise sankhya, the performers of virtuous deeds. O king! This is like the stalk of a lotus bearing the water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The breeze that blows there re-

ceives them. Those stores of austerities are devoid of attachment. They are full of valour and successful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The breeze is subtle, cool, fragrant and pleasant to the touch. Those best of the seven Maruts convey them to an auspicious world. O Kounteya! It takes them to the ultimate end of space. O lord of men! Space conveys them to the ultimate end of rajas. O Indra among kings! Rajas conveys them to the ultimate end of sattva. O one who is pure in soul! Sattva conveys them to the supreme lord, Narayana. The lord bears those pure-souled ones and makes them part of the paramatman. O lord! They attain immortality there and never return. O Partha! Those great-souled ones are beyond opposites and attain the supreme objective.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O illustrious one! Those who are firm in their vows obtain that supreme region. O unblemished one! Do they remember anything about their birth and death? You should tell me the truth about this. O Kourava! Other than you, there is no man I should ask this. I find this taint in the description about the greatness of moksha. Having reached and obtained success there, do the rishis retain consciousness and continue to endeavour for something else? O king! In that case, I see that the dharma of pravritti<sup>779</sup> is supreme. Once one is immersed in supreme knowledge, what can be more miserable than that?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! The question that you have asked is proper, but it is extremely difficult. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such is this question that even the learned have been confounded. Listen properly to the supreme truth on this. The great-souled ones who follow Kapila have supreme intelligence. O king! Embodied beings have senses in their bodies so that they can perceive. But these are instruments and the subtle atman uses them to perceive. Without the atman, they are like lumps of wood. They will no doubt be destroyed, like foam in the giant ocean. O scorcher of enemies! When the senses sleep, the subtle atman roams around everywhere, like the wind in space. O lord! It sees what can be seen and touches what can be touched. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It comprehends everything, just as in a state of being awake. All the senses continue to be there, in their respective places. But because they are without their lord,<sup>780</sup> they are extinguished and are like snakes with their poison missing. There is no doubt that the subtle atman roams around, goes to the respective places of the senses and performs their tasks then. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O one with dharma in your soul! O Partha! O Yudhishthira! All the qualities of sattva, all the qualities of rajas, all the qualities of tamas, all the qualities of intelligence, all the qualities of the mind, all the qualities of space, all the qualities of wind, all the qualities of energy, all the qualities of water, all the qualities of earth and all the qualities of the atman are in the atman. It is the atman which makes the atman perform good and bad acts. O lord! The senses wait on the great atman, like disciples. The undecaying atman transcends prakriti and proceeds. It goes to the supreme atman, Narayana, who is beyond opposites and is beyond prakriti. Free from taint and emancipated from good deeds and evil ones, it<sup>781</sup> enters the paramatman and does not return from the qualities there. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But the mind and the senses remain. At the right time, on the instructions of the preceptor, they have to return.<sup>782</sup> If a person desires peace and the qualities, he is capable of obtaining it within a short period of time. O Kounteya! United with knowledge in this way, they can find emancipation. O king! The immensely wise ones, who know about sankhya, go to that supreme objective. O Kounteya! There is no knowledge that is equal to this knowledge. Do not have any doubt about this. The views of sankhya represent supreme knowledge. They are without decay and certain and were earlier revealed by eternal Brahma, who is the creator without a beginning, a middle and an end, beyond opposites and everlasting. Those who have tranquility in their souls say that he is deep and eternal. All the acts of creation and destruction flow from him. This has been praised in the sacred texts and spoken about by the supreme rishis. For all the brahmanas, gods and people who know about the sacred texts, the eternal and undecaying brahman is the supreme god and there is nothing superior to him. The brahmanas pray to him and the learned speak about his qualities. This is the view of the far-sighted ones who properly practise yoga and sankhya. O Kounteya! The sacred texts of sankhya are a manifestation of the one who is without form.<sup>783</sup> O bull among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason these views have been regarded as his signs. O lord of the earth! There are two kinds of creatures on earth, mobile and immobile, and the mobile are superior. O king! This knowledge, which is the greatest of the great, is in the Vedas, in sankhya and in yoga. O Indra among men! Whatever is seen in the various Puranas can be found in sankhya. O king! Whatever is seen in the great accounts of history, in the sacred texts about artha, as prescribed by the virtuous, and all the knowledge that exists in the world, can be found in sankhya. It is the greatest of the great. O king! Tranquility, supreme strength, the subtle knowledge that has been spoken about,

subtle austerities and happiness can be found in sankhya. O Partha! Even when they suffer, the practitioners of sankhya always go to the gods and enjoy happiness there. Having followed it and having become successful in their objectives, in cases of a downfall,<sup>784</sup> they become brahmanas and ascetics. O Partha! Those who practise sankhya give up their bodies, join the residents of heaven in the firmament and find emancipation. O lord of the earth! The excellent knowledge of sankhya is the best and is revered by all virtuous brahmanas. O king! If a brahmana knows about this and is devoted to this knowledge, he is not seen to be born as inferior species, or reach the abodes that are meant for the perpetrators of wicked deeds. O king! Sankhya is large, supreme and ancient. It is like a giant, sparkling, infinite and generous ocean. A great-souled person who follows all of sankhya sustains the immeasurable Narayana. O god among men! I have now told you the truth about the ancient Narayana, who is everywhere in the universe. At the time of creation, he causes creation. He is the one who again withdraws at the time of destruction.”

## Chapter 1619(291)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is said to be without decay and something from which one does not return? What is said to be the one with decay and something from which one has to return? O slayer of enemies! I wish to know the difference between that which is without decay and that which is with decay. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I wish to realize the truth about this. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas speak of you as an ocean of knowledge. So do the immensely fortunate rishis and the great-souled ascetics. There are only a few days left for the sun in dakshinayana. When the illustrious sun turns, you will go to your supreme objective. When you have departed, where will we hear what is best for us? You have been like a lamp for the lineage of the Kurus and have always illuminated with your knowledge. O extender of the Kuru lineage! That is the reason I wish to hear the truth about this. O Indra among kings! I am not satisfied with hearing amrita like this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, there is an ancient history, about a conversation between Vasishtha and Karala, of Janaka’s lineage. Vasishtha, best among the rishis and with the resplendence of the sun, was seated. King Janaka asked him about the knowledge that was supremely beneficial. Maitravaruni<sup>785</sup> was seated. He was accomplished about the knowledge of supreme adhyatma and had determined the progress of adhyatma. In ancient times, King Karala, of Janaka’s lineage, greeted him. Joining his hands in salutation, he asked the supreme of rishis in words that were articulated well, humble, sweet and devoid of arguments. ‘O illustrious one! I wish to hear about the supreme and eternal brahman, on obtaining whom, learned ones do not return. What is that which decays, into which the universe is itself destroyed? What is said to be without decay, auspicious, beneficial and without any taint?’

“Vasishtha said, ‘O lord of the earth! Listen to how this universe is destroyed and about that which has not been destroyed earlier and will never be destroyed. Know that twelve thousand years constitute a yuga and four such, taken one thousand times, are said to make up a kalpa, one of Brahma’s days.<sup>786</sup> O king! Understand that Brahma’s night is of the same duration. When he is destroyed, Svayambhu Shambhu, the performer of infinite deeds, creates a great being, who is the first among creatures.<sup>787</sup> This has form, though he<sup>788</sup> is without form. This is Ishana and he is resplendent and without decay. Anima and laghima are in him.<sup>789</sup> The extremities of his hands and feet extend in all the directions. His eyes, head and mouth are everywhere. His ears are everywhere in the world and he is stationed, enveloping everything. This illustrious Hiranyagarbha<sup>790</sup> is said to be intelligence. In the texts of yoga, he is known as Mahat and Virincha. He is addressed by many different names in the sacred texts of sankhya. He has many different forms and he is the soul of the universe. He is known as Ekakshara.<sup>791</sup> The three worlds have been created by him and he pervades everything with his atman. He is also known as Bahurupa and Vishvarupa.<sup>792</sup> Through transformations, he creates himself from his own atman. The immensely energetic one creates consciousness<sup>793</sup> and Prajapati is created from that consciousness. The manifest<sup>794</sup> is created from the unmanifest and this is said to be the creation of knowledge. Mahat and Ahamkara also represent the creation of ignorance. Those who have thought about, and know the purport of the sacred texts, have said that knowledge and ignorance came about through these contrivances.<sup>795</sup> O king! Know that the elements are created from consciousness as the third.<sup>796</sup>

Know that transformations lead to a fourth kind, ego in creatures and wind, light, space, water and earth and their attributes of sound, touch, form, taste and scent. There is no doubt that the ten categories were created in this way. O Indra among kings! Know that there is a fifth kind of creation that resulted from the elements—the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, the nose as the fifth, speech, the two hands, the two feet, the anus and the genitals. These are the senses of knowledge and the organs of action. O king! They were created at the same time as the mind. It is the truth that these twenty-four exist in all creatures.<sup>797</sup> A brahmana who knows and has seen the truth about this does not sorrow. These are said to be in the bodies of everything in the three worlds. O best among men! Know that they exist in gods, men, danavas, yakshas, demons, gandharvas, kinnaras, giant serpents, charanas, pishachas, devarshis, travellers in the night,<sup>798</sup> gnats, insects, mosquitoes, filthy worms, rats, dogs, *svapachas*, *vaineyas*,<sup>799</sup> chandalas, *pulkasas*, elephants, horses, mules, tigers, trees and cattle. These manifestations are seen in everything that has form, in the water, on earth and in the sky. We have heard that it has been determined that these are the only regions where those with bodies exist. O son!<sup>800</sup> Everything that has the sign of manifestation is destroyed. It has been said that, from one day to another, all creatures are destroyed. It has been said there is Akshara and there is the universe, which is destroyed. The universe has signs of the manifest and the unmanifest, but is enveloped in illusion. Mahat, the one who was created first, is also always referred to as an example of one who is destroyed. O great king! I have told you what you asked me. However, there is also a twenty-fifth. This is Vishnu. He is the truth and his manifestations are the truth. The learned ones have said that it is true that he is the refuge of all truth. Everything that is manifest and has form is based on that which has no form. Those twenty-four are manifest. However, the twenty-fifth has no form. He is in the heart of all beings and his form is established in his own atman. Consciousness and lack of consciousness always exist in all bodies that have form. They follow the characteristics of creation and destruction, but he<sup>801</sup> is without creation and without destruction. Although he is without qualities, he can always be perceived and is the one who invests qualities. Those who know about creation and destruction have said that this is the way that the intelligent Mahat acts, having united with Prakriti. In that womb, he is united with tamas, sattva and rajas. He dwells in the atmans of creatures and does not think that there is anything else. Though he possesses knowledge, because of loss of memory, he is conveyed into ignorance. Restrained by the qualities, he says, “I am this,” or “I am that.” Having been enveloped by the darkness of tamas, he is overcome by sentiments of ignorance. In that way, rajas and sattva lead to the sentiments of rajas and sattva. There are the three complexions of white, red and black.<sup>802</sup> Know that prakriti gets associated with these three complexions. Tamas conveys to hell and rajas to the status of humanity. With sattva, one enjoys happiness and goes to the world of the gods. If one is helpless and indulges in wicked deeds, one obtains birth as inferior species. Men have both good and wicked deeds, gods have good ones only. The learned ones have spoken about these objects as those that are destructible. But it is the twenty-fifth that those with knowledge follow.””

## Chapter 1620(292)

““Yasishtha said, ‘Because of forgetfulness, he<sup>803</sup> follows ignorance and has to go through thousands of lives in bodies. Depending on the qualities and the strengths of those qualities, he is born thousands of times as inferior species, and sometimes, also as gods. From the status of humanity, he goes to heaven. From heaven, he obtains the status of humanity. From humanity, for an infinitely long time, he sinks into hell. This is like an insect weaving a sheath around itself,<sup>804</sup> using thread as strands. In that way, the qualities are always like threads woven around the atman. Though he should be beyond opposite sentiments, it is thus that creatures succumb to opposite sentiments. Because of this headaches, eye diseases, toothaches, throat problems, dropsy, haemorrhoid, diseases like enlargement of glands, cholera, white leprosy, leprosy, *agnidaha*,<sup>805</sup> *sidhma*,<sup>806</sup> epilepsy and many other kinds of opposites are naturally seen in bodies. He sees himself to be afflicted by these and other ailments. Because of arrogance, he thinks that he enjoys the fruits of good deeds. He attires himself in a single garment or in torn garments.<sup>807</sup> He always lies down in inferior places. He lies down like a frog, or seats himself in virasana.<sup>808</sup> He clothes himself in rags and lies down under the sky. Or he lies down on bricks and stones, or thorns and stones. He lies down on ashes or bare stones. Or he smears himself and lies down on the ground. He sleeps in places meant



for heroes, in mud and on stakes. Searching for many kinds of fruits, he futilely uses these different kinds of beds. He attires himself in girdles of munja grass or is naked. Or he wears silk and the skin of black antelopes. He attires himself in hemp or hair, or is dressed in tiger skin, lion skin, woven silk, those woven by insects and torn rags. Dressed in many other kinds of attire, he thinks himself to be intelligent. There are many kinds of food and many kinds of ornaments. He sometimes wears a single piece of cloth and eats only once a day. Alternatively, he eats at every fourth hour or every sixth hour, or once every six days or eight days. He eats once every seven days, or once every twelve days. He fasts for a month, or eats only roots and fruits. He subsists on air or water, or only eats oil-cakes. He drinks only cow's urine, or vegetables and flowers. He eats moss and only drinks water from the palm of the hand. He subsists on leaves that have fallen down, or fruit that has fallen down. In a desire for happiness, he undergoes many other kinds of hardship. There are many types and many kinds of chandrayana.<sup>809</sup> There are the modes of the four ashramas. One can follow those ashramas, or deviate from those ashramas. Resorting to mountainous caverns, the good and the wicked practise them. They are solitary under the shades of mountains, or near fountains. There are many different kinds of meditation and diverse kinds of vows. There are colourful rituals and many kinds of austerities. There are different kinds of sacrifices and diverse ordinances. There are many kinds of donations for merchants, brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, decreed for the miserable, the blind and the helpless. Instigated by the three qualities, he is full of ignorance. He pursues sattva, rajas and tamas and dharma, artha and kama. With Prakriti influencing the atman, he engages in all these. He performs rites, to the words of svadha, vashat and svaha. He officiates at sacrifices, teaches, gives donations, receives, performs sacrifices, studies and does many other things. For birth, death, disputes, causing death and everything connected with the good and the bad, it has been said that there is the path of rituals. But it is the goddess Prakriti who actually does everything. At the time of the great destruction, at the end of the day,<sup>810</sup> all those qualities are withdrawn, like the sun withdrawing its net of rays at the time of setting. In this way, she<sup>811</sup> can be thought of, as repeatedly sporting with everything. Depending on the atman, there are many kinds of qualities that bring pleasure to the heart. But this is the way, the originator of creation and destruction works. There are rituals along the path of rituals. Those who are attached to the three qualities follow those three qualities. Driven by those, a person follows rituals along a path of rituals. He<sup>812</sup> has a sense of ownership and it is that sense of ownership that binds him down. O lord of men! It is because of ignorance that he thinks that all these can be transcended through good deeds. "These objects of pleasure will be enjoyed by me. I will enjoy the fruits of good and bad deeds in the world and then go to the world of the gods. It is my task to ensure happiness and through these good deeds, happiness will be mine. I will obtain happiness till the end of this life and also ensure it when I am born and born again. But because of what I do, till the end of my life, I may also confront misery. There is great misery for humans and the prospect of submerging in hell. From hell, it will take a long period of time before I become human again. From humanity, I may obtain divinity. From divinity, I may again obtain humanity. From humanity, I may also progressively have to descend into hell." Those who always think in this way are those whose atmans are covered by the qualities and therefore, it is as if they are without an atman. From that state of divinity or humanity, they obtain hell. They are enveloped by a sense of ownership and always circle around there. At the end of death, they have to go through millions of births. If a person acts in this way, with a desire for good and bad fruits in mind, he obtains the fruit of having to assume a body in the three worlds. But it is actually Prakriti who enjoys that desire in the three worlds. Inferior species, humanity and the world of the gods—all those three regions should be known as belonging to Prakriti. Prakriti has no attributes. But she is said to possess attributes in this world. In that way, Purusha is also thought of as possessing attributes. Prakriti is without attributes or taints, but she enters inside something<sup>813</sup> that possesses attributes. Therefore, one thinks that she is established in those attributes and undertakes action. The ear and the other senses, the five organs of action and speech and the others unite with the qualities and become engaged. Because of the senses, he thinks, "I am the one who is acting." He<sup>814</sup> is actually devoid of the senses. He is without attributes. But he thinks that he is with attributes. He is beyond signs, but thinks himself to have signs. He is beyond time, but thinks himself to be subject to time. He is beyond understanding, but thinks himself to be understanding. He is beyond truth, but thinks himself to be truth. He is immortal, but thinks himself to be mortal. He is motionless, but thinks himself to possess motion. He is without a field,<sup>815</sup> but thinks himself to possess a field. He is beyond creation, but thinks himself to be created. He is beyond austerities, but thinks himself to be made up of austerities. He is beyond

all objectives, but thinks himself to possess an objective. He is beyond sentiments, but thinks himself to possess sentiments. He is beyond fear, but finds himself to be touched by fear. He is beyond decay. But because of ignorance, he thinks himself to be subject to decay.’”

## Chapter 1621(293)

““Vasishtha said, ‘Thus, because of his ignorance and because of association with those who are ignorant, he faces downfall and goes through millions of births. He goes through thousands of abodes, but each of those ends in death. He is born as inferior species, as human, or in the world of the gods. Like the encasement of the moon, he waxes and wanes thousands of times. It is known that the moon always has kalas.<sup>816</sup> Fifteen of these increase and decrease, but the sixteenth is always there. That is the way with the atman too, with abodes increasing and decreasing. But like the moon, the sixteenth is always subtle and sustained.<sup>817</sup> It is not united with anything. Nor is it used up in the course of anything that happens. O supreme among kings! These<sup>818</sup> are the ones which are destroyed and take birth again. These are seen as Prakriti and their destruction is said to be emancipation. The sixteenth kala in the body is not manifest. But because of the sense of ownership, it circles around. One is ignorant about the twenty-fifth<sup>819</sup> that is there in the atman. It is sparkling and pure and is fanned by an auspicious breeze. O king! Though the atman is pure, because of the taint, it is rendered impure. Though one knows, one serves ignorance and roams around, like an ignorant person. O supreme among kings! That is the one who should be known. However, because of serving the three qualities of Prakriti, one is rendered ordinary.’

““Karalajanaka said, ‘O illustrious one! It is said that the relationship between that which is not destroyed and that which is destroyed is like the relationship between a woman and a man. Without a man, a woman can never conceive. Without a woman, a man can also not create a form.<sup>820</sup> They have a relationship with each other and depend on the qualities of each other. That is the way forms are created among all kinds of beings. For the sake of desire, they have intercourse with each other at the right season and resort to each other’s qualities. That is the way forms result. Let me tell you about these signs. There are qualities for a man and there are qualities for a mother. O brahmana! We know that bones, sinews and marrow come from the father. We have heard that skin, flesh and blood comes from the mother. O best among brahmanas! This is what has been laid down in the sacred texts of the Vedas. Since it has been laid down in the Vedas and in the sacred texts, it can be taken as proof. The proofs of the Vedas and the sacred texts represent eternal proof. This is the eternal relationship between Prakriti and Purusha. O illustrious one! But I cannot see any signs about the dharma of emancipation. I can see no signs of this inside me. Therefore, if there is anything evident about the truth, please tell me about it. I desire emancipation. I desire that which grants freedom from fear. It<sup>821</sup> is without a body. It is without decay. It is divine and is beyond the senses. It is the ultimate lord.’

““Vasishtha replied, ‘What you have said about the proofs of the Vedas and the sacred texts is indeed true and you have accepted them. O lord of men! O one who knows about the truth! But though you have accepted both those types of books, the Vedas and the sacred texts, you have not grasped the truth that is there in those two sets of books. If a person is eager to accept books like the Vedas and the sacred texts, but does not know the truth about the purport of those books, his acceptance is fruitless. A person who does not understand the purport of those books only bears a burden. If a person does not understand the truth about the purport of a book, his study of that book is fruitless. If a person is asked about the purport of a book, he should explain what he has grasped by studying the truth carefully. If a person is gross in his intelligence and cannot explain the meaning of a book in an assembly, it is evident that his knowledge is limited and he cannot speak about its meaning. A person whose soul is imperfect cannot speak about the truth. He is laughed at. This is also true of those who know about the atman. O Indra among kings! Therefore, listen to what has been instructed by the great-souled ones who know about sankhya and yoga. What is seen by those who practise yoga is exactly that which is followed by those who practise sankhya. A person who sees that sankhya and yoga are identical is intelligent. O son! Skin, flesh, fat, bile, marrow and sinews—these belong to the senses and you have spoken to me about them. Objects result from objects and senses from the senses. Like seeds from seeds, bodies originate from bodies. The atman is beyond senses, without

seed and without objects. How can that great-souled one, who possesses no qualities, give rise to qualities? Qualities result from qualities and are destroyed. They are born from Prakriti and do not exist otherwise. Skin, flesh, blood, fat, bile, marrow, bones and sinews—know that these eight are created from the seed and Prakriti. Male and non-male—these three<sup>822</sup> genders are said to result from Prakriti. Those that are not male are said to be non-male genders. Prakriti has no gender. But her offspring obtain gender and form. For example, flowers and fruit have form, though they result from what is formless. It is inferred that gender is obtained in this way. O son! It is the twenty-fifth one who determines the gender of the atman. He is without beginning and without end. He is infinite. He sees everything. He is without disease. It is because of ego that qualities are said to result from qualities. Qualities can result in qualities. How can qualities result from one who possesses no qualities? People who have insight about qualities know this. That is the reason all those qualities are seen to originate with Prakriti. A person who goes beyond the qualities, sees the supreme. All those who are intelligent in the schools of sankhya and yoga speak about the supreme. Those immensely wise ones are intelligent and have abandoned ignorance. Those who are ignorant speak of a manifest Ishvara who possesses qualities. Ishvara is always established as someone who is devoid of qualities. Those who are accomplished in sankhya and yoga understand about the supreme. They know about a twenty-fifth who is beyond Prakriti's qualities. Those who know about the unmanifest can overcome the fear of birth. Those who know go there, just as the intelligent ones do.<sup>823</sup> O scorcher of enemies! These are the indications that have been properly instructed, though the paths of those who are intelligent and those who know are separate. They respectively speak about the signs of what is destroyed and what is not destroyed. There is a single one who is not destroyed and everything else is said to be subject to destruction. When a person has studied the twenty-five attributes properly, he realizes that all philosophy leads to the single one and many kinds of philosophy are irrelevant. There is a truth that is over and above individual indications. In the twenty-five categories that are created, the learned speak of this as the truth. The supreme truth is said to be what is beyond the twenty-five. There are categories and there is conduct according to the categories. While this is true, the eternal truth is above this.'”

## Chapter 1622(294)

““K aralajanaka asked, ‘O supreme among rishis! You have spoken about the characteristics of the many and the one.<sup>824</sup> But I still detect some doubt about the signs of the two. O unblemished one! This is comprehended by both those who are knowledgeable and those who are ignorant.<sup>825</sup> However, because my intelligence is gross, I still have some doubt about the truth of this. You have spoken about the causes behind that which is destructible and that which is not destructible. O unblemished one! However, because my intelligence is fickle, I have forgotten about all of that. That is the reason I wish to know how one can be seen in many. How does a knowledgeable or ignorant person comprehend the truth about this? O illustrious one! Tell me, completely and separately, what sankhya and yoga say on knowledge and ignorance and on the indestructible and the destructible?’”

““Vasishtha replied, ‘I will tell you what you have asked me about. O great king! Hear separately from me about the practice of yoga. For yogis who practice yoga, meditation is the supreme strength. Those who know about the Vedas say that there are two kinds of meditation—concentration of the mind and pranayama. Pranayama possesses qualities, while concentration of the mind is without qualities.<sup>826</sup> O lord of men! With the exception of three times—passing urine, releasing excrement and eating—at all other times, the mind should be devoted to the supreme. A sage uses his mind to withdraw from the senses and the objects of the senses and should engage in the twenty-two and the supreme twenty-four.<sup>827</sup> The intelligent person uses these to direct the atman. Learned ones have said that this is the undecaying entity that resides in the body. It has been instructed that the atman must always be known. It has been determined that this is for someone whose mind has been delinked from objects and not for others. He must be free from all attachments. He must be restrained in diet and conquer the senses. During the early and later part of the night, the mind must be fixed on the atman. O lord of Mithila! All the senses must be stilled by the mind. The mind must be stilled with intelligence. Having done this, one should be as motionless as stone. He must be as motionless as a pillar. Like a mountain, he must not move. When learned ones, who know about the techniques, are like this, they are said to be united in yoga. He does not hear. He does not inhale. He does not taste. He



does not see. He does not know any touch and there is no resolution in his mind. He does not pay attention to anything, or understand anything. He is like a piece of wood. The learned say that such a person is then united with Prakriti. One is seen to blaze like a lamp in a place where there is no wind. He does not move and is immobile. Such a person ascends upwards and doesn't descend into inferior species. Then he sees what is to be seen. Having seen, he does not speak. People like us say that the heart of the knower and what is to be known, the atman, have become one. He is like a smokeless fire with the seven flames.<sup>828</sup> He is like the sun with its rays. He is like the fiery lightning in the sky. He sees the atman in his own self. Great-souled and intelligent and learned brahmanas see it in this way. This is the brahman, who has not been born. This is immortality that exists in the atman. It is said that this is more subtle than what is most subtle and greater than what is greatest. Though it is inside all beings, it is certain that it cannot be seen. The creator of the world can be seen through the wealth of intelligence and the lamp of the mind. It is the greatness that is beyond darkness. It is located beyond darkness. Those who know about the truth of the Vedas say that it is the dispeller of darkness. It is sparkling. It is beyond darkness. It is without attributes. It has the characteristic of being without traits. Yogis say that this is yoga. I think that these are the signs of yoga. This is the way they see the supreme and undecaying one in their own atmans. I have thus told you the truth about the philosophy of yoga.

““I will now tell you about the knowledge of sankhya, where one progressively destroys the errors. Those who know about Prakriti say that the unmanifest Prakriti is the supreme. O supreme among kings! From this, the second entity, known as Mahat, is generated. We have heard that the third entity, consciousness, results from Mahat. Those who have the insight of sankhya say that the five elements are created from consciousness. These eight are Prakriti.<sup>829</sup> There are sixteen transformations of these. In particular, there are the five senses and the five organs of action.<sup>830</sup> Learned ones who know about sankhya say that this is the truth. They know about the ordinances of sankhya and are always established along the path of sankhya. Whatever is generated from the cause, is also destroyed within it. As they have been created from inside that atman, they are destroyed in reverse order. They are created in the proper order, but are destroyed in the reverse order.<sup>831</sup> O supreme among kings! The qualities are always like waves in an ocean. This is the way the creation and destruction of Prakriti also take place. When there is destruction, the single one<sup>832</sup> alone remains and many are subsequently created from it. O Indra among kings! This is what has been determined by those who have reflected on it. It is evident that the presider<sup>833</sup> is not manifest. It is both one and many and so is the case with Prakriti. There is a single one at the time of destruction and many at the time of creation. Prakriti generates from its womb and the atman makes it many.<sup>834</sup> The great-souled one is established over the twenty-five that constitute the field.<sup>835</sup> O Indra among kings! That is the reason the best among ascetics say that it<sup>836</sup> is the presider. We have heard that it is the presider and it presides over the field.<sup>837</sup> Because it knows the kshetra, the unmanifest one is known as kshetrajna. Since the unmanifest one lay down in earlier times, it is known as Purusha.<sup>838</sup> Those that are known as kshetra and kshetrajna are distinct. While kshetra is also not manifest, it becomes discernible because of the twenty-fifth. Knowledge and the object of knowledge are said to be distinct. Knowledge is not manifest, but becomes known because of the twenty-fifth. The kshetra is not manifest and neither are intelligence and Ishvara. The lack of Ishvara isn't truth. Truth is known because of the twenty-fifth. These are the principles of sankhya philosophy. Those who believe in the philosophy of sankhya say that, in accordance with sankhya, it is Prakriti that acts. They enumerate and ascertain the truth about the twenty-four elements. Those who believe in sankhya talk about Prakriti and the twenty-fifth, which is devoid of qualities. It is said that if a person has got to know the twenty-fifth, he is the one who knows. A person who knows this realizes that it is the atman alone that exists. I have properly spoken to you about the true nature of sankhya philosophy. A person who knows this obtains tranquility. Prakriti is manifest to such a person, as something that is directly seen. It is the one with qualities and there is also the entity without qualities. When they no longer exist,<sup>839</sup> they do not have to return again. They obtain sentiments that are without decay and also obtain the supreme and unmanifest one. But there are also those who do not see properly and do not see everything as one. O destroyer of enemies! They do not reach the unmanifest and have to return again and again. They have not understood everything and have not comprehended. They are born in manifest forms and are under the subjugation of the manifest. Everything that is manifest results from the unmanifest and the twenty-fifth. A person who knows this does not suffer from any fear.””

## Chapter 1623(295)

““Vasishtha said, ‘O supreme among kings! I have spoken to you about the philosophy of sankhya. Now listen to me as I describe knowledge and ignorance to you progressively. The manifest, which is subject to the rule of creation and destruction, is said to be ignorance. The twenty-fifth, freed from creation and destruction, is knowledge. Listen to what has, in due course, been described as knowledge. O son! Rishis who have the sight of sankhya have laid this down. Among the senses and the organs of action, the senses are said to represent knowledge. Among the senses, we have heard that intelligence is superior. The learned ones have said that the mind is superior to the senses and represents knowledge. Compared to the mind, the five elements are said to represent knowledge. There is no doubt that consciousness is superior to the five elements. O lord of men! Compared to consciousness, understanding represents knowledge. Compared to understanding, the unmanifest Prakriti, expressive of the truth about the supreme lord, is superior. O best among men! Among the different kinds of knowledge that are to be known, the ordinances are said to be the supreme. The unmanifest and twenty-fifth is said to be the supreme form of knowledge. O king! Among everything that can be known, this is said to be the supreme kind of knowledge. The twenty-fifth is the object of knowledge and knowledge about this is said to be unmanifest. A person who knows about the twenty-fifth knows about what is unmanifest. I have told you the difference between knowledge and ignorance. I will now tell you what has been said about the destructible and the indestructible. Listen. Both<sup>840</sup> have been said to be destructible and perishable. I will tell you truthfully the reasons that have been cited in support of this. There is the view that both are imperishable and both are without a beginning and without an end. Those who have thought about knowledge have said that both are truly nothing but principles. Though it leads to the principles of creation and destruction, the unmanifest<sup>841</sup> is said to be indestructible. It is through its qualities that it repeatedly creates. Mahat and the other qualities are respectively generated. It is said to be the truth that the twenty-fifth presides over the field. The unmanifest that is the twenty-fifth withdraws the net of qualities and the qualities merge into it. The qualities merge into its quality and the single one that remains is Prakriti. O son! Kshetrajna then merges into kshetra.<sup>842</sup> Prakriti, characterized by its qualities, then goes towards destruction. O king of Videha! With the qualities withdrawn, it no longer possesses any qualities. In this way, kshetrajna’s knowledge of kshetra is also destroyed. We have heard that Prakriti is then devoid of qualities. The one with qualities then becomes destructible. He<sup>843</sup> realizes that just like himself, Prakriti is devoid of qualities. Discarding Prakriti, he then becomes pure. The intelligent one realizes himself to be distinct.<sup>844</sup> O Indra among kings! When he gives up that combination, he exists separately and Prakriti is also seen to be distinct from that combination. When he no longer desires Prakriti and that net of qualities, he can behold the supreme.

““Having seen the supreme, he is free from all anxiety. “What have I done? I have been like a person overtaken by destiny. Because of my ignorance, I have been like a fish entangled in a net. Because of my delusion, I have moved from one body to another body. My conduct has been like that of an ignorant fish, moving from one body of water to another body of water and thinking in its ignorance that the water is everything. In that fashion, because of my ignorance, I have not known my own atman. Shame on my ignorance that I have been repeatedly submerged thus. Because of my confusion, I have followed the course from one body to another body. This<sup>845</sup> is alone my friend and my emancipation is with it. I am capable of being united with it. I am just as it is. I see myself as equal to it. I am like it. It is without blemish. It is evident that I am just like it. I have been ignorant and deluded. Because of ignorance and delusion, I have been properly entangled. Though without attachments, I have spent a long period of time being attached. For a long period of time, I have been controlled by others, but did not realize it. There are different kinds of states—high, medium and low.<sup>846</sup> How can I be like that? How can I dwell with her<sup>847</sup> as an equal? Because of my ignorance, I went to her earlier. I will still myself now. I will not dwell with her and be deceived for a long period of time. I am without transformations. However, I have been deceived by the one who possesses transformations.<sup>848</sup> That is not her crime. It is my crime. It is because of my sentiments that I became attached and withdrew from what had presented itself.<sup>849</sup> That is the reason I assumed many forms and moved from one body to another body. Despite being one without a body, I have assumed the form of a body and have been assailed, because of that sense of ownership. Prakriti has accordingly conveyed me into those wombs. I am without a form. Thanks to the sense of ownership, what acts have I performed in those forms? She is in those

wombs and destroys sense and consciousness. I do not possess any sense of ownership. But goaded by ego, I have performed acts. She divided my atman into many parts and repeatedly engaged me. However, now, I have no sense of ownership and no ego. I have acted so as to discard the sense of ownership and have always removed a sense of ego from myself. Having escaped from all that, I have resorted to what is beneficial. I will go to that tranquility and not unite with what is without consciousness. That kind of union is beneficial. I have no similarity with her.” He thus realizes the supreme relationship with the twenty-fifth. He abandons what is destructible and not beneficial and is conveyed to the indestructible. This is unmanifest. But because of the nature of becoming manifest, one without qualities is vested with qualities. O one from Mithila! Having seen the original one who is without qualities, he becomes like it. I have spoken to you about the indications of what is indestructible and destructible, according to the knowledge that I have obtained and according to what the sacred texts have instructed. I will now again tell you about what I have heard. This is knowledge that is sparkling, without any doubt, and subtle. I have told you what the sacred texts of sankhya and yoga instruct. This has been stated in the sacred texts of sankhya and the philosophy of yoga. O lord of the forests! The knowledge of sankhya can awake people and for the welfare of disciples, this has been clearly enunciated. Accomplished people say that those sacred texts are extensive. The yogis also accept these sacred texts. O lord of men! Those who follow sankhya do not see the truth about a supreme twenty-fifth. What they regard as supreme has already been described.<sup>850</sup> Those who cite indications from yoga talk about the truth of awakening, knowledge, that which is to be known and the one who knows.”<sup>851</sup>

## Chapter 1624(296)

““Vasishtha said, ‘Hear about awakening and the unmanifest one, from whom all qualities are created. He sustains these qualities and creates and withdraws them. O lord of men! For the sake of sport, he<sup>852</sup> divides his own self into many parts and collects them again. The one who can understand this action<sup>853</sup> does not understand. Because he is capable of understanding the one who is not manifest, he is spoken of as *budhyamana*.<sup>854</sup> Nevertheless, he cannot understand the one who is not manifest, whether it is with qualities or without qualities. Therefore, rare is the case when he is awakened. The learned texts have said that whenever budhyamana gets to know the unmanifest and twenty-fifth one, he becomes united with it. That is the reason the one who is not manifest is spoken of as ignorant.<sup>855</sup> Budhyamana is spoken of as being both unmanifest and ignorant. Nothing with life can comprehend the great-souled and twenty-fifth. The twenty-sixth is sparkling, immeasurable and eternal and it can understand.<sup>856</sup> It can always understand the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth. The immensely radiant one<sup>857</sup> follows her nature, vis-a-vis both what is seen and is not seen. O son! Those who truly understand can not only see the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth, but also the unmanifest brahman. When a person knows the atman, he thinks himself to be it.<sup>858</sup> He uses that sight to look at prakriti and the unmanifest. With that pure and unsullied knowledge, he comprehends the supreme. O tiger among kings! He is then established in knowledge about the twenty-sixth. He then casts aside the unmanifest,<sup>859</sup> which is subject to the rules of creation and destruction. Though because of consciousness, prakriti is invested with qualities, he knows the one without qualities. Having seen the unmanifest, he is only full of dharma. Having approached the whole, he is freed and obtains the atman. This is said to have form and also not have form.<sup>860</sup> It is immortal and without decay. O one who grants honours! Though it resorts to what has form, it has no form. The learned ones talk about twenty five principles. O son! But the intelligent one<sup>861</sup> has no form and is beyond these principles. The swift freeing from principles is a sign of intelligence. A wise person knows himself to be the twenty-sixth and accepts himself to be the immortal one, without decay. Through the strength of the absolute, he has no doubt that he is identical to it.<sup>862</sup> However, though awakened by the intelligent twenty-sixth, there is still ignorance. The sacred texts of sankhya have spoken about the signs of this. When one is united with consciousness and the twenty-fifth,<sup>863</sup> because of that consciousness, one does not comprehend the sense of unity. O lord of Mithila! O lord of men! Because of the rules of attachment, one is not awakened. However, when one is awakened and loses attachment, one realizes unity. Without any sense of attachment, a learned person approaches the twenty-sixth. Abandoning the unmanifest,<sup>864</sup> he obtains powers and comprehends the truth. With knowledge about the twenty-sixth awakened, he realizes that the twenty four are valueless. As indicated in

the sacred texts of sankhya, I have spoken to you about the true nature of knowledge. It is with the sight of the sacred texts that one must consider the many and the one. One must understand the difference between the gnat and the fig,<sup>865</sup> the fish and the water and this and that.<sup>866</sup> That is the one one must approach the one and the many. When one has knowledge about ignorance and the unmanifest, that is said to be emancipation. This twenty-fifth resides in bodies and is said to be freed through comprehension about the unmanifest. It has been determined that this is the only method for emancipation and there is no other. Because it<sup>867</sup> dwells in the body, it conveys the impression of being different. By uniting with purity, one becomes pure. By uniting with intelligence, one becomes intelligent. O bull among men! By uniting with the dharma of emancipation, one becomes emancipated. By following the dharma of becoming engaged in this way, the atman becomes engaged. By striving for emancipation, one unites with emancipation. By performing pure deeds, one becomes pure and resplendent. By uniting with the unblemished atman, one's own atman becomes unblemished.<sup>868</sup> By uniting with the absolute, one obtains the absolute in one's atman. By uniting with the one who is free, one uses that freedom to obtain freedom.

““O great king! I have told you the truth. I have accurately described the exact truth to you. This is about the eternal, pure and original brahman, and accept the purport of this. O king! You can pass on this supreme knowledge to a person who does not follow the Vedas, as long as that person is free of malice. But he must seek this knowledge, which leads to an awakening. As long as he bows down and follows instructions, you can pass this on, for the sake of his awakening. However, it should not be passed on to a person who has falsehood in his soul, or is deceitful, impotent or fraudulent in his intelligence. Nor must the knowledge be given to learned men who are jealous. Listen to the ones to whom it can be given. A person who is faithful, possesses qualities, one who always abstains from censuring others, one who performs pure yoga for the sake of knowledge, a forgiving person who performs rites for the sake of welfare, one who can discriminate about good conduct, a person who loves the rituals, one who is extremely learned and does not engage in quarrels, one who is knowledgeable and forgives those who cause injury, one who possesses strength and self-control—these are the people to whom it can be given. It is said that this pure and supreme knowledge of the brahman should not be given to those who are devoid of these qualities. Those who know about dharma have said that no benefits or fruits accrue from giving it to undeserving people. If a person does not observe the vows, it should not be given to him, even if one obtains the earth, full of riches, in exchange. O Indra among men! But there is no doubt that this supreme knowledge can be communicated to a person who has conquered his senses. O Karala! Having heard about the supreme brahman now, you should not have the slightest reason for fear. I have spoken about the pure and the supreme, the dispeller of sorrow, and without a beginning, a middle and an end. O king! This is deep and without birth and death. It is auspicious and free from disease and fear. Having seen it, abandon all your delusion now. Know that this is the true nature of knowledge. O lord of men! In ancient times, I gratified the eternal Hiranyagarbha and obtained it from him. I made efforts to please the one who is fierce in his energy. Having obtained knowledge about the supreme brahman, I have now passed it on to you. O Indra among men! Asked by you, I have now told you exactly what I learned. O Indra among men! This is what I obtained from Brahma. This is great knowledge, the ancient wisdom about emancipation.””

‘Bhishma said, “O great king! I have told you about the instructions of the supreme rishi. I have spoken to you about the twenty-fifth, the supreme brahman from whom one does not return. If one does not comprehend this supreme knowledge, one has to return again. But if one knows the truth, there is no decay and no death. O son! O king! I heard about this supreme and beneficial knowledge from the devarshi<sup>869</sup> and have recounted it to you. The great-souled Vasishtha obtained it from Hiranyagarbha. Narada obtained it from Vasishtha, tiger among rishis. I got to know about the great and eternal brahman from Narada. O Indra among Kouravas! Do not grieve. You have heard about this supreme objective. A person who knows about the destructible and the indestructible has no reason to fear. O lord of the earth! A person who does not know about it has reason to fear. Because of ignorance and being foolish in the soul, a person has to repeatedly return. After death, he is born thousands of times and dies again. He is sometimes born in the world of the gods, but is also born as inferior species. However, if he is purified over time, he can cross that ocean of ignorance. That ocean of ignorance is terrible. It is said to be unmanifest and fathomless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Day after day, beings are submerged in it. O lord of the earth!

But you have crossed that eternal, unmanifest and fathomless ocean of ignorance. Therefore, you have been freed from rajas and from tamas.”

## Chapter 1625(297)

‘**B**hishma said, “Once, Janaka’s son was roaming around in a desolate forest. In the course of the hunt, he saw a brahmana rishi who was Bhrigu’s descendant. Vasuman bowed his head down before the seated sage and also sat down. Having taken his permission, he then asked him a question. ‘O illustrious one! What brings the greatest benefit, in this world and in the next, to a man who possesses a temporary body, but is overcome by desire?’ Having been honoured and asked, the great-souled and great ascetic was gratified and spoke these beneficial words. ‘If your mind desires what is positive in this world and in the next, then you must control your senses and restrain yourself from causing injury to beings. Dharma brings benefit to those who are virtuous. Dharma is the refuge of those who are virtuous. O son! It is from dharma that the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects, are generated. You wish for the taste of desire. Why have you not become satiated with these? O evil-minded one! You see the honey, but not the downfall.’<sup>870</sup> A person who seeks the fruits of knowledge must pursue it. Like that, a person who seeks the fruits of dharma must pursue it. If a wicked person desires dharma, it will be extremely difficult for him to perform pure deeds. However, if a virtuous person desires dharma, it is extremely easy for him to perform those difficult deeds. If one dwells in the forest but pursues what would bring happiness in a village, then one is just like a villager. Similarly, if one dwells in a village but pursues what would bring happiness in the forest, then one is just like a forest dweller. Controlling yourself faithfully, observe dharma in thoughts, words and deeds. Examine the good and the bad aspects of attachment and detachment. Without any malice, always donate a lot to virtuous people who ask for it, but bearing the time and the place in mind and honouring them with vows and purification. One should earn through auspicious means and then give it away. When giving, one must discard anger and not be tormented at having given. Nor should one boast about it. Non-violent, pure, self-controlled, truthful in words, upright, pure in birth and deeds and learned in the Vedas—such a brahmana is a worthy recipient. He must have been born from a virtuous mother who has had only one husband. He must know about Rig, Sama and Yajur and must perform the six tasks.<sup>871</sup> Such a recipient is said to be a deserving one. If one does not consider the time and the place and performs the act of giving to an undeserving person, a man acts in a contrary way and dharma becomes adharma. A man can clean a little dirt on the body easily. More requires greater effort. In that way, much effort needs to be made to dispel great sin. After easing oneself, clarified butter is a good medication. In that way, once one has cleansed the sins and follows dharma, this brings happiness in the hereafter. There is good and evil in the minds of all beings. One must withdraw from the evil and use the good to cross. One must be attached to one’s own dharma and desire that dharma. You do not possess patience. Cultivate patience. You do not possess intelligence. Cultivate intelligence. You do not possess tranquility. Cultivate tranquility. You do not possess wisdom. Cultivate wisdom. If one associates with the right people, one is capable of using one’s energy to obtain what is beneficial in this world and in the next. Fortitude is the foundation for this. Because of lack of fortitude, rajarshi Mahabhishta fell down from heaven. Yayati obtained the worlds through his fortitude, but fell down when his merits were exhausted. Serve ascetics who are devoted to dharma and are learned. You will then obtain great intelligence and the welfare that you desire.’ His<sup>872</sup> natural disposition was good and he heard the words spoken by the sage. He withdrew his mind from desire and turned his intelligence towards dharma.”

## Chapter 1626(298)

“**Y**udhishtira said, “There is adharma. There is dharma, which brings emancipation and freedom from all foundations. It frees from birth and death and also frees from good and evil deeds. It is always auspicious and



grants freedom from fear. It is always eternal and without decay. It is pure and always brings comfort. You should speak to me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is the ancient history of a conversation between Yajnavalkya and Janaka. Yajnavalkya was the best among rishis and was supreme among those who knew the answers to all questions. The immensely illustrious King Daivarati, from Janaka’s lineage, asked him this question. ‘O brahmana rishi! How many senses are there? How many kinds of prakriti are there said to be? What is the unmanifest and supreme brahman? What is superior to even that? What is creation and destruction? What is the measurement of time? O Indra among brahmanas! You should tell me about this. I desire to obtain your favours. You are a store of knowledge. I am ignorant and am asking you. On all these doubts, I wish to hear from you.’ Yajnavalkya replied, ‘O protector of the earth! Listen to what you have asked. This is the supreme knowledge of yoga and in particular, that of sankhya. None of this is unknown to you. Nevertheless, you have asked me. It is eternal dharma that one must answer when one has been asked. It is said that there are eight kinds of prakriti and sixteen kinds of transformations. Those who have thought about adhyatma have said that there are seven kinds of the manifest. There are the unmanifest, Mahat, ego, earth, wind, space, water and light as the eight.<sup>873</sup> These eight are known as prakriti. Listen to the transformations. These are the ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue, the nose as the fifth, sound, touch, form, taste, scent, speech, the two hands, the two feet, the anus and the penis.<sup>874</sup> O Indra among kings! O one from Mithila! Those that originate in the five great elements<sup>875</sup> are known as Vishesha and the senses of knowledge are known as Savishesha. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that the mind is the sixteenth. You, and other intelligent ones who know the truth, also hold the same view. O king! The Mahat atman is generated from the unmanifest. The learned say that this is the first and most important creation. O lord of men! Ego<sup>876</sup> is created from Mahat. Those who know about adhyatma say that this second creation is that of intelligence. The mind is generated from consciousness and this creates qualities in beings. This is said to be third creation, which results from consciousness. O lord of men! The five great elements are generated from the mind. I say that this fourth creation is from the mind. Those who know about the elements say that sound, touch, form, taste and scent are the fifth creation and concern the elements. The ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue and the nose as the fifth, are said to be sixth creation by those who have thought a lot about the atman. O lord of men! Those that are created after the ear and the other senses are said to be the seventh creation, concerning the senses.<sup>877</sup> O lord of men! There are the flows that rise upwards and move diagonally and the learned know these as the eighth and straight creation.<sup>878</sup> O lord of men! There are also flows that move directly and diagonally downwards. The learned call these the ninth and straight creation. O lord of men! This is the truth about the nine different kinds of creation. The learned texts speak of these as possessing twenty-four signs. O great king! After this truth about the qualities, the great-souled ones have spoken about the measurement of time. Listen to this.’”

## Chapter 1627(299)

“Yajnavalkya said, ‘O best among men! I will tell you about the measurement of time for the unmanifest. Ten thousand kalpas make up a single day for him. O lord of men! His night is said to be of the same duration. When night is over, he awakes and first creates the herbs, which provide sustenance to all living beings. He then creates Brahma, who arises from the golden egg. It has been heard by us that his form is there in all<sup>879</sup> living beings. Having dwelt for one year inside the egg, the great sage Prajapati emerged and created the entire earth, heaven above it, and all that is below. O king! Those who have studied the Vedas know that the sky is between earth and heaven. The lord created the sky to lie between them. Those who are learned about the Vedas and the Vedangas say that the duration of his day is seven thousand and five hundred kalpas. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that his night is of an equal duration. From his divine self, he creates Mahat and consciousness. Before creating any other beings, the great rishi created four sons.<sup>880</sup> O supreme among kings! We have heard that these were the ancestors of the fathers. O best among men! We have heard that the gods, the ancestors, all those who surround the world of the gods and mobile and immobile objects were their sons. Parameshthi, the consciousness, then created the five elements—the earth, the wind, the sky, the water and the light, as the fifth. This conscious-

ness, which led to the third creation, is said to have five thousand kalpas as his night and his day is said to possess an equal duration. O lord of the earth! Sound, touch, form, taste and scent, as the fifth, are known as Vishesha and adhere to the five great elements. Because they are enveloped by these, beings kill each other. They respect each other, but also rival each other. Overcome by those undecaying qualities, they slaughter each other. They whirl around in this world and are born as inferior species. O lord of men! Their<sup>881</sup> day is said to last for three thousand kalpas. Their night is of the same duration and this is also the case with the mind. O Indra among kings! Instigated by the senses, the mind circulates among all of them. The senses do not see anything. It is the mind that sees. The eye perceives form only when it is driven by the mind. The eye doesn't do this alone. When the mind is distracted, the eye may seem to see, but does not actually see. It is said that all the senses perceive. O king! But this is incorrect. When the mind does not act, the senses do not act either. The mind does not cease to act because the senses cease to act. The mind is the foremost and influences the senses. The mind is said to be the lord of all the senses. O immensely illustrious one! These penetrate all creatures.'""

## Chapter 1628(300)

““Yajnavalkya said, ‘I have enumerated the truth about the different types of creation and about the measurement of time. I have progressively described them. Now hear about destruction. Beings are repeatedly created and destroyed. The eternal and undecaying Brahma, without a beginning and without an end, does this. When his day is over and he realizes that it is night, he makes up his mind to sleep. The illustrious and unmanifest one urges the creation of a being from his consciousness and this manifests itself as a sun with a hundred thousand rays. It then divides itself into twelve suns that blaze like fire. O lord of men! With this energy, the four kinds of beings are swiftly consumed—those born from wombs, those born from eggs, those born from sweat<sup>882</sup> and herbs. In a short instant, all mobile and immobile objects are destroyed and, in every direction, the earth becomes as plain as the back of a tortoise. When everything in the universe has been destroyed with this great force, in every direction, it is filled up with the great force of water. At this, the fire of destruction dries up the water. O Indra among kings! When the water has been destroyed, a great fire begins to rage. An immeasurable and extremely powerful fire continues to blaze. The energy of those seven flames is infused with the heat from all creatures. But it is devoured by an extremely powerful wind that has its own inner strength. This courses upwards, downwards and diagonally. However, that extremely strong and terrible wind is devoured by space. But mind cheerfully and swiftly swallows up space. Consciousness, the Prajapati and the atman of everything, devours mind. Consciousness is devoured by the soul of Mahat, who knows about the past, the present and the future. The soul of the universe, Shambhu Prajapati, swallows up Mahat. This is the radiant and undecaying Ishana, with the properties of anima, laghima and prapti. His hands and feet extend in every direction. His eyes, head and face are everywhere. His ears are everywhere. He is established, enveloping all the worlds. He is in the heart of all creatures and his size is only that of a thumb. The infinite and great-souled lord of the universe devours everything. With everything swallowed, what is left is the immutable and the undecaying. This is the unblemished one, the creator of the past and the future of humans. O Indra among kings! I have thus described all this to you accurately. Now I will make you hear about adhyatma, *adbibhuta* and *adhidaiva*.’””

## Chapter 1629(301)

““Yajnavalkya said, ‘Brahmanas who have seen the truth speak of the two feet as adhyatma, the act of motion as adhibhuta and Vishnu as adhidaiva. Those who have seen the truth exactly say that the anus is adhyatma, the releasing is adhibhuta and Mitra is adhidaiva.<sup>883</sup> Those who know the indications of yoga say that the penis is adhyatma, its pleasure is adhibhuta and Prajapati is adhidaiva. Those who know the indications of sankhya say that the hands are adhyatma, tasks are adhibhuta and Indra is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the

sacred texts say that speech is adhyatma, what is spoken is adhibhuta and Agni is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the eyes are adhyatma, form is adhibhuta and Surya is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the ears are adhyatma, sound is adhibhuta and the directions are adhidaiva there. Those who know the truth correctly say that the tongue is adhyatma, taste is adhibhuta and water is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the nose is adhyatma, smell is adhibhuta and the earth is adhidaiva there. Those who are accomplished in their learning say that the skin is adhyatma, touch is adhibhuta and the wind is adhidaiva. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts say that the mind is adhyatma, the object of the mind is adhibhuta and the moon is adhidaiva. Those who know the true indications say that consciousness is adhyatma, pride is adhibhuta and Bhava is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the Vedas correctly say that intelligence is adhyatma, what is understood is adhibhuta and the kshetrajna is adhidaiva. O king! O one who knows about the truth! I have thus described to you the power of the manifest and the truth about the beginning, the middle and the end. O great king! As if in sport and easily according to her desire, Prakriti brings about hundreds and thousands of transformations in her qualities. It is like a man lighting thousands of lamps from a single lamp. In that way, Prakriti creates many qualities in Purusha. Spirit, joy, prosperity, contentment, radiance, happiness, purity, lack of disease, satisfaction, devotion, generosity, lack of hatred, forgiveness, fortitude, lack of injury, equanimity, truthfulness, repayment of debts, mildness, humility, lack of fickleness, cleanliness, uprightness, observance of conduct, lack of passion, lack of fear in the heart, indifference at separation from good and bad things, lack of boasting about acts performed, receiving when given, lack of desire for riches, the welfare of others and compassion towards all beings—these are said to be the qualities of sattva. The qualities of rajas are manifested in quarrels over beauty and prosperity, lack of generosity, lack of compassion, the enjoyment of happiness and unhappiness, attachment towards speaking ill of others, fondness for disputes, insolence, thoughts that show no respect, the practice of enmity, repentance, seizing the property of others, lack of humility, lack of uprightness, strife, harshness, desire, anger, intoxication, pride, hatred and excessive speech. These are said to be the qualities of rajas. I will now tell you about the accumulations that tamas leads to—delusion, lack of radiance, darkness and darkness that makes one blind. Darkness is said to be anger and darkness that makes one blind is death. The signs of tamas are gluttony in eating, lack of satisfaction even though one has enough to eat and drink, attachment towards fragrances, garments, sporting, beds, seats, sleeping during the day, quarrels and distraction, taking pleasure in singing, music and dancing, ignorance, lack of faith and hatred of dharma. In particular, these are the qualities of tamas.””

## Chapter 1630(302)

““Yajnavalkya said, ‘O supreme among men! These are the foremost signs of the three qualities. They always attach themselves to everything in the universe and are established there. He<sup>884</sup> divides himself into hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands and crores of different selves. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that sattva has a superior spot, rajas a medium one and tamas an inferior one. Through auspicious deeds alone, one heads towards an upwards destination. As a result of both good and wicked deeds, one becomes human. Through adharma, one obtains a destination that is downwards.<sup>885</sup> There is also the truth about what happens if two or three of the qualities are mixed. Sattva may exist with rajas or tamas. Listen to me. Sattva can be seen with rajas and rajas with tamas. Sattva can exist with tamas and sattva may exist with the unmanifest.<sup>886</sup> When sattva is united with the unmanifest, one obtains the world of the gods. When rajas is united with sattva, one becomes human. When rajas is united with tamas, one is born as inferior species. When rajas, tamas and sattva are united, one becomes human. It is said that learned ones obtain a region that is separated from both good deeds and wicked ones. It is eternal and immutable. It is without decay and there is no fear there. Learned ones obtain births in that best of places, without faults and without decay. They go beyond the senses. That does not lead to any generation and is beyond birth and death. O lord of men! You asked me about the supreme and the unmanifest.<sup>887</sup> He is established in his own nature. O lord of the earth! It is the view that he resides in Prakriti, without any consciousness. She can create and destroy only when she is presided over by him.’



“Janaka replied, ‘O great sage! Both of them are without beginning and without end. They are without form and without change. They are without blemish and without decay. O tiger among rishis! They cannot be comprehended. How can one of them be without consciousness? How can one have consciousness? Why is one called kshetrajna? O Indra among brahmanas! You are the one who has practised everything about the dharma of emancipation. It is my resolution that I wish to hear the truth about the dharma of emancipation, about the existence of the absolute and about non-existence, about the regions that creatures progressively go to and about their separation from those. With the progress of time, what regions do they obtain? O brahmana! Tell me this. Tell me the truth about the knowledge of sankhya and separately about yoga. O supreme one! You should also tell me the truth about misfortune. You know everything about these, like a myrobalan that is held in your hand.’”

## Chapter 1631(303)<sup>888</sup>

“Yajnavalkya said, ‘O son! O lord of the earth! One cannot describe something without qualities by ascribing qualities to it. I will tell you the truth about what possesses qualities and what doesn’t have qualities. Listen to me. The great-souled sages who have seen the truth have spoken about the qualities obtained by the one with qualities and the qualities not obtained by the one without qualities. The unmanifest one<sup>889</sup> naturally has qualities and cannot surpass those qualities. Because she is united with those, she naturally lacks knowledge. The unmanifest Purusha is naturally the one who knows and always thinks, “There is nothing superior to me.” It is because of this reason that this unmanifest one is without consciousness. He is always spoken of as indestructible. But it is also true that he combines with the destructible.<sup>890</sup> It is because of the repeated association with various categories of qualities that one becomes ignorant. When he does not know his own atman, he is spoken of as the manifest. When he assumes lordship over those principles,<sup>891</sup> he is said to follow the dharma of those attributes. Because he has lordship over wombs, he is said to follow the dharma of wombs. Because he has lordship over Prakriti, he is said to follow the dharma of Prakriti. Because he has lordship over seeds, he is said to follow the dharma of seeds. Because he is associated with birth, he observes the dharma of birth.<sup>892</sup> Because he has lordship over destruction, he follows the dharma of destruction. Because of association with Prakriti, he follows creation and destruction. This is despite the absolute knowing that he is indifferent and distinct. Ascetics who are pure, devoid of anxiety and knowledgeable about adhyatma, think of him in this way. We have heard of him as permanent and unmanifest, but also as unstable.<sup>893</sup> However, those who depend only on knowledge and are compassionate towards all beings say that the unmanifest is one and Purusha is many.<sup>894</sup> There are others who hold that the unmanifest Purusha, even though apparently unstable, has all the signs of stability. He is distinct, just as a blade of grass is different from its sheath. The gnat that is inside a fig should be known of as distinct. Despite being associated with the fig, the gnat doesn’t get attached to it. The fish is said to be different from the water it is in. Though the fish is touched by the water, it isn’t in any way attached to it. The fire in a boiler is always known to be distinct. Though the fire touches the boiler, it isn’t attached to it. A lotus is said to be different from the water. Though it touches the water, the lotus isn’t attached to it. In this way, there is always separation, even when one dwells together. This can never be understood by people who are always ordinary. Those who cannot see it in this way, do not see properly. It is evident that they will repeatedly be submerged in a terrible hell. I have enumerated the supreme philosophy of sankhya. Enumerating it in this way, those who follow sankhya obtain the absolute. I have also told you about the others who are accomplished and know the truth about the manifestations. I will now tell you about the philosophy of yoga.’”

## Chapter 1632(304)

“Yajnavalkya said, ‘I have already spoken to you about the knowledge of sankhya. Now hear about the knowledge of yoga. O supreme among kings! This is the truth about what I have learnt and what I have

seen. There is no knowledge that is equal to sankhya. There is no strength that is equal to yoga. They prescribe similar practices and both are said to lead to prosperity. However, men who possess limited intelligence perceive them as distinct. O king! We see them as identical and have arrived at this determination. Whatever is seen through yoga is exactly the same as whatever is seen through sankhya. A person who sees yoga and sankhya as identical actually sees the truth. O scorcher of enemies! Know that restraining the breath<sup>895</sup> is the foremost and supreme aspect of yoga. Through this, they wander around in the ten directions in their bodies.<sup>896</sup> O son! O unblemished one! When the body is destroyed, one cheerfully abandons it and, in subtle form, uses the eight qualities of yoga<sup>897</sup> to roam around in the worlds. Those who are learned about yoga speak of these eight qualities. O supreme among kings! They also speak about the eight other subtle qualities.<sup>898</sup> The practice of yoga has been said to be excellent and these are the two kinds of qualities that are practised in yoga. The sacred texts have given indications about how this is to be done, with qualities and without qualities.<sup>899</sup> O lord of the earth! Together with pranayama, there has to be dharana in the mind. Pranayama can be with qualities. Without qualities, dharana occurs in the mind. O supreme among those from Mithila! The breath of life is seen to be released. However, one should not act so as to have an excess of the breath.<sup>900</sup> In the first quarter of the night, twelve principles of breathing have been prescribed. Having slept in the middle, in the last quarter of the night, there are another twelve principles of breathing. One must practise these, self-controlled and satisfied with one's own self. One must turn one's intelligence towards finding pleasure in one's own atman. There is no doubt that one must join oneself with the atman.<sup>901</sup> The five taints associated with the five senses—sound, touch, form, taste and scent—must be flung away. O lord of Mithila! One must withdraw from thoughts of what can be obtained through action. All the objects of the senses must be immersed in the mind. O lord of men! The mind must be established in the consciousness, consciousness in intelligence and intelligence in prakriti. Having merged in this way, one must meditate on the absolute. He is radiant and without blemish. He is eternal and infinite. He is pure and without decay. He is the purusha of sattva, beyond mortality and destruction. He is eternal and unmanifest. He is Ishana and the unmanifest Brahma. O great king! Listen to the signs of someone who has been united in this fashion. The signs are of satisfaction, contentment and cheerful sleep. He is like a lamp ignited with oil, but burning in a place where there is no wind, with straight flames rising upwards. The learned speak of him in this way. He is like a rock that does not move, even when it has been struck by the rain. He is incapable of being moved in any way. Those are the signs of a person who is united. The sounds of conch shells, drums and many kinds of singing and the playing of musical instruments do not make him tremble. These are the signs of a person who is united. It is like a man who climbs a flight of steps with a full vessel of oil in his hand, not spilling any, even if he is frightened. A person who has controlled his atman is like that, not spilling a drop from the vessel, though scared. He ascends, single-minded. He calms his senses and is immobile. These are the signs of a sage who has been united in this way. Having been united in this way, he sees the supreme and unmanifest Brahma, blazing, as if located in the midst of a great darkness. O great king! The eternal sacred texts say that, after a long period of time, he is like a witness and abandons this body, advancing to the absolute. This is the yoga of yogis. What other signs can there be of yoga? Knowing this, the learned ones think themselves to have been successful.”

## Chapter 1633(305)

“Yajnavalkya said, ‘O king! Now listen attentively to the places that they go to. If it<sup>902</sup> emerges through the feet, the person is said to go to Vishnu's region. If it emerges through the calves, we have heard that he obtains the gods known as the Vasus. If it emerges through the knees, he obtains the immensely fortunate gods known as the Sadhyas. If it emerges through the anus, he obtains Mitra's region. If it emerges through the loins, it is the earth's region.<sup>903</sup> If it is through the thighs, it is Prajapati's. Through the flanks, it is the gods Maruts. Through the nose, it is the region of the moon. Through the arms, it is Indra's. Through the chest, it is Rudra's. Through the neck, he obtains the supreme region of the best of rishis, Nara. Through the mouth, he obtains the Vishvadevas and through the ears, the directions. Through the nose, he obtains the wind god and through the eyes, Surya. Through the brows, it is the region of the gods, the Ashvins. Through the forehead, it is the ancestors.

Through the crown of the head, it is the region of the lord Brahma, the foremost among the gods. O lord of Mithila! I have thus told you about the different places that can be obtained through emerging. I will now tell you about the signs described by learned ones, signifying that an embodied being only has one year of lifespan left. If a person fails to see Arundhati, although he has seen it earlier, or if it is the same with Dhruva, or if the moon appears like a lamp, with the radiance broken towards the south, it is said that he only has one year of lifespan left.<sup>904</sup> O lord of the earth! Those who can no longer see their own selves reflected in the eyes of others only have one year of lifespan left. If a person has been extremely radiant, but loses that radiance, or if a person has been extremely wise, but loses that wisdom, or if there are changes in his inner or outer nature, those are signs that he will die within six months. If a person disrespects the gods, if he acts against brahmanas, if his dark complexion turns pale—those are signs that he will die within six months. If the lunar disc is seen to have holes, like a spider’s web, or if this is the case with the one with one thousand rays<sup>905</sup>—such a person will confront death within seven nights. If the fragrant scents in temples of the gods appear to a man to be like the putrid scent from corpses, he will confront death within six nights. A depression in the ears or the nose, a discolouring of the teeth or the eye, the loss of consciousness and the loss of heat from the body—these are the signs of imminent death. O lord of men! If there is a sudden flow of tears from the left eye, or if vapour rises from the crown of the head—these are the signs of imminent death. Knowing these signs, a man with a cleansed atman should spend day and night in uniting the atman with the paramatman. That is the way he should spend his time, until the time for setting arrives. Even if he doesn’t wish to die, he should establish himself in all the rites. He should control himself and discard all fragrances and tastes. By fixing his atman on the supreme, he can conquer death. O bull among men! He knows the practice of those who follow sankhya. By using yoga to fix his atman on the supreme, he can conquer death. He goes to the place that is completely indestructible, without birth and death. It is auspicious and without decay. It is the eternal and immutable region, difficult for those with unclean souls to obtain.””

## Chapter 1634(306)

““Yajnavalkya said, ‘O lord of men! You asked me about the supreme, established in the unmanifest. This question is about a great secret. O king! Listen attentively. O lord of Mithila! Having conducted myself in accordance with the precepts of the rishis, I obtained the *yajus* from Aditya.<sup>906</sup> I gratified the god of heat through great austerities. O unblemished one! Pleased with me, the lord Surya said, “O brahmana rishi! Ask for the boon you desire, even if it is very difficult to obtain. I am pleased and will give it to you. It is extremely difficult to obtain my favours.” I bowed my head down before that supreme of heat-givers and said, “I do not know the *yajus*. I wish to know them quickly.” The illustrious one replied, “O brahmana! I will give it to you. Sarasvati, speech personified, will enter your body.” The illustrious one then asked me to open my mouth. When I opened my mouth, Sarasvati entered through the mouth. O unblemished one! When she entered, I began to burn and plunged into the water. Not understanding what the great-souled Bhaskara<sup>907</sup> intended, I became angry. However, while I was burning, the illustrious Ravi told me, “Tolerate this burning for an instant. You will be cooled down.” When he saw that I had cooled down, the illustrious Bhaskara said, “O brahmana! All the Vedas and Vedanta will be established in you. O bull among brahmanas! You will compile all the Shatapathas.<sup>908</sup> When that has been done, your intelligence will turn towards the question of rebirth. You will obtain the objective desired by those who practise sankhya and yoga.” Having said this, the illustrious one disappeared. On hearing these words and on seeing that the god Vibhasu had departed, I happily returned home and thought of Sarasvati. The auspicious goddess Sarasvati instantly appeared. She was adorned with the vowels and the consonants and she gave me the syllable “Om”. As is prescribed, I offered Sarasvati an arghya and another to the best of heat-givers,<sup>909</sup> the refuge of the distressed. To my great delight, all the Shatapathas, with their mysteries, compilations and appendices, appeared before me. I taught them to one hundred supreme disciples and caused displeasure to my maternal uncle and his disciples.<sup>910</sup> O great king! With my disciples, like the sun with its rays, I was engaged in performing a sacrifice for your great-souled father. There was a dispute about who should get the dakshina. In Devala’s presence, I took half of the dakshina

and gave the other half to my maternal uncle. Sumantu, Paila, Jaimini, your father and the other sages agreed to this. O unblemished one! I thus obtained fifty yajus. I then studied the Puranas from Lomaharshana.<sup>911</sup>

““O lord of men! Placing the original mantra<sup>912</sup> and the goddess Sarasvati at the forefront, and with the resolution obtained from Surya, I comprehended and compiled the Shatapatha, not done by anyone earlier. I thus accomplished the path I wished to follow. I instructed that entire and complete compilation to my disciples. All those disciples were purified and became supremely delighted. The knowledge instructed by Bhaskara had fifty branches<sup>913</sup> and I established it. As I desired, I then began to think about knowledge. O king! The gandharva Vishvvasu was accomplished in the knowledge of Vedanta. While I was contemplating, he came there and asked me, “What is the immortal brahman? What is supreme knowledge?” O lord of the earth! He thus asked me twenty-four questions about knowledge. He then asked me a twenty-fifth question about metaphysics. What is the universe? What is the negation of the universe? What is Ashva and what is the negation of Ashva?<sup>914</sup> What is Mitra? What is Varuna? What is knowledge? What is the object of knowledge? Who is ignorant? Who is not ignorant? Who possesses heat? Who is without heat? Who devours Surya? Who is Surya? What is knowledge? What is ignorance? O king! What exists? What does not exist? What is mobile? What is immobile? What has no beginning? What is without destruction? What can be destroyed? O king! These were the excellent questions that the supreme king of the gandharvas asked me. One after another, he asked me these questions, which were full of meaning. I told him to wait for an instant, while I thought about it. When I had restrained him in this way, the gandharva was silent and remained there. In my mind, I thought again about the goddess Sarasvati and the answers to the questions arose, like clarified butter from curds. O lord of the earth! O son! I churned the Upanishads and their annexures in my mind and saw the supreme objective of metaphysics. O tiger among kings! This is the fourth kind of knowledge, concerning the next world.<sup>915</sup> I have already spoken to you about this, which is based on the twenty-fifth. O king! I spoke about it to King Vishvvasu then. I told him, “O illustrious one! I have heard the questions that you asked me. O gandharva! You asked me, ‘What is the universe and what is the negation of the universe?’ Know that the supreme and unmanifest one<sup>916</sup> is the universe. She has the terrible aspects of creation and destruction. She possesses the three qualities<sup>917</sup> and invests everything with these. The one without these is said to be the negation of the universe.<sup>918</sup> In that way, Ashva and the negation of Ashva are said to be the couple.<sup>919</sup> The unmanifest is said to be prakriti and the one without qualities is purusha. Mitra is purusha and Varuna is prakriti. Knowledge is said to be prakriti and the object of knowledge is purusha. The ignorant and the not ignorant are said to be purusha, since both are without qualities. The one with heat is prakriti and the one without heat is said to be purusha. In that way, ignorance is the unmanifest one<sup>920</sup> and knowledge is said to be purusha. You asked me about the mobile and the immobile. Listen to me. Prakriti is said to be mobile. It undertakes transformations and is the reason behind creation and destruction. The immobile one, who has lordship, but does not undertake transformations for creation and destruction, is said to be purusha. Those who have determined the nature of adhyatma speak of both of them as without beginning, without sentiments, without offspring, without destruction, without decay, without creation and eternal.<sup>921</sup> Though it<sup>922</sup> leads to creation, it is said to be without decay, without beginning and without change. Purusha is said to be without destruction. There is no decay in it. The learned say that the qualities created by prakriti are destructible, but not she herself. This is the fourth knowledge of metaphysics, that concerning the next world. O Vishvvasu! It has been said that one’s duty is to obtain riches through knowledge and always perform the ordained tasks, studying all the Vedas attentively. O supreme among gandharvas! This<sup>923</sup> is not dislodged. Everything is born from it and merges into it after death. Those who do not understand this purport of the Vedas know nothing. Even if they study the five Vedas,<sup>924</sup> with the Vedangas and the subsequent branches, they do not understand the knowledge of the Vedas. The Vedas are like a burden to such a person. O supreme among gandharvas! This is like a person who desires clarified butter by churning the milk of a she-ass. He only sees the excrement there. There is no cream from the milk, nor any clarified butter. In that way, despite studying the Vedas, one does not obtain the knowledge in the Vedas. Such a person is said to be foolish in his intelligence and only bears a burden. In one’s atman, one must always single-mindedly think about the supreme objective, so that one does not have to repeatedly go through birth and death. One must abandon what is indestructible in this world and resort to the dharma of the indestructible. O Kashyapa!<sup>925</sup> Day and night, if one only contemplates the absolute, then one sees oneself as devoid of qualities, united with the absolute. Those virtuous ones see the two as one.<sup>926</sup> They get to know the unde-

caying nature of the twenty-fifth. Desiring the supreme, those practitioners of sankhya are beyond birth, death, fear and enterprise.”

“Vishvasu replied, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! O illustrious one! You have spoken about the twenty-fifth. But this is not easy to comprehend and you should explain it. I have heard about this earlier from Jaigishavya, Asita, Devala, the brahmana rishi Parashara, the intelligent Varshaganya, Bhikshu, Panchashikha, Kapila, Shuka, Goutama, Arishtishena, the great-souled Garga, Narada, Asuri, the intelligent Pulastya, Sanatkumara, the great-souled Shukra and my father, Kashyapa. Later, I heard about this from Rudra and the intelligent Vishvarupa, and also the gods, the ancestors and the daityas. I have obtained the knowledge that they always speak about. O brahmana! However, using my intelligence, I wish to hear about this from you. O illustrious one! You are foremost among those who know the sacred texts. You are eloquent and extremely intelligent. There is nothing that is not known to you. O brahmana! In the world of the gods and in the world of the ancestors, you are said to be an ocean of learning. The great rishis who dwell in Brahma’s abode say that Aditya, the eternal lord of all those who give heat, taught you about this. O brahmana! O Yajnavalkya! You have obtained the entire knowledge of sankhya and in particular, the knowledge of yoga. There is no doubt that you are learned and know about the mobile and the immobile. I wish to hear about that knowledge, which is like clarified butter inside cream.’

“Yajnavalkya said, ‘O supreme among gandharvas! I think that you are capable of bearing all of it. O king! You have asked me. Listen to what I have learned. Prakriti cannot be comprehended, but can be realized by the twenty-fifth.<sup>927</sup> O gandharva! But the twenty-fifth cannot be comprehended by prakriti. Because it cannot be realized in this way, those who know the truth about sankhya and yoga and about the instructions of the sacred texts refer to it as Pradhana.<sup>928</sup> But though it cannot be seen, it can see itself. It can see the twenty-fourth, the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth.<sup>929</sup> Even when it does not see,<sup>930</sup> it is capable of seeing. The twenty-fifth thinks that there is nothing superior to itself. The twenty-fourth is incapable of being grasped by those who do not possess the sight of knowledge. The fish dwells in water. But though they are together, they are distinct. Like the fish, those who are learned know that it is different.<sup>931</sup> There is always consciousness from the attachment that results from dwelling together. However, those who do not understand the unity<sup>932</sup> are submerged in time. Enveloped by a sense of ego, they are submerged in time. A person who thinks that he is no different from the other one is a true brahmana. He becomes one with the absolute and sees the twenty-sixth. O king! The other one and the twenty-fifth are perceived to be different. But those who see them as one are virtuous. They do not find delight in the indestructible twenty-fifth alone. O Kashyapa! Those practitioners of sankhya and yoga are terrified because of their fear of birth and death. They are devoted to purity and see the twenty-sixth. They are learned in every way and do not enjoy rebirth. O unblemished one! I have thus told you about what is to be known. Following the indications of the sacred texts, I have told you about true knowledge. O Kashyapa! I have told you about what is seen and what is not seen, about seeing what is indestructible, about what is absolute and what is not absolute and about what is superior to the twenty-fifth.’

“Vishvasu replied, ‘O lord! You have spoken auspicious words to me and told me properly about what is indestructible and is the origin of divinity. May you always be fortunate and without decay. I bow down before you. May you always be vested with intelligence.’

“Yajnavalkya said,<sup>933</sup> ‘Having said this, he left for heaven, radiant in his handsome appearance. Having been satisfied, the great-souled one circumambulated me first and I was exceedingly pleased with him. O Indra among men! He passed on the knowledge that he obtained from me to those who live in Brahma’s world and those who dwell in the sky and on earth and they appropriately chose the path that leads to the indestructible. Those who follow sankhya are devoted to the dharma of sankhya. Those who follow yoga are devoted to the dharma of yoga. There are other men who desire emancipation. To all those who desire insight, this brings knowledge. Among men, emancipation results from knowledge. O Indra among men! It is said that it cannot be obtained through ignorance. Therefore, one must search for the truth about knowledge, so that one can free oneself from birth and death. With faith and devotion, one must always obtain knowledge from a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya or even a shudra who is of low birth. A person who has faith is not assailed by birth and death. Since they are born from Brahma, all the varnas are brahmanas. All of them always speak about Brahma. I have spoken to you the truth about the sacred texts and about knowledge of Brahma. The entire universe is completely pervaded by Brahma. Brahmanas were



generated from Brahma's mouth. Kshatriyas were generated from his arms. Vaishyas were generated from his navel and shudras from his feet. All the varnas should not be thought of in any other way. O king! It is because of ignorance that one suffers from birth and deeds and the pangs of existence. Devoid of knowledge, all the varnas fall down in this way. They are immersed in terrible ignorance and enveloped in prakriti's net of birth. Therefore, one must seek every means to stick to the path of knowledge. I have spoken to you about this. A person who is established in the supreme brahman is always said to obtain emancipation and is an Indra among brahmanas. I have instructed you about what you had asked me. I have told you the truth. Be bereft of grief. O king! Cross over to the other side. You have spoken properly. May you always be fortunate.”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus instructed by the intelligent Yajnavalkya, the king, the lord of Mithila, was delighted. He circumambulated the supreme of sages and departed. Daivarati, the lord of men, obtained knowledge about emancipation. He seated himself and touching one crore cattle, gold and an accumulation of jewels, gave them away to brahmanas. He instated his son in the kingdom of Videha. The lord of Mithila then resorted to the dharma of mendicants. He studied the entire knowledge of sankhya and the sacred texts of yoga. O Indra among kings! He abandoned the ordinary practices of dharma and adharma. He always thought of himself as the infinite and the absolute. O Indra among kings! O lord of men! He no longer thought of ordinary things like birth and death, but always devoted himself to tasks associated with the unmanifest brahman. The practitioners of yoga and sankhya, accomplished about the indications of their own sacred texts, see that the brahman is supreme and is superior to good and evil. Those learned ones always speak of it as pure. You should also become pure. O best among men! The giver, the receiver, what is intended as a gift, what is given, what is received, what is instructed to be given, what is instructed to be received—all these are aspects of the unmanifest. The atman is the only thing that belongs to the atman and there is nothing that is superior to this. Always regard it in this way and do not think otherwise. A person who does not know the unmanifest, with qualities and without qualities,<sup>934</sup> always goes to places of pilgrimage and performs sacrifices. He is ignorant. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! One cannot realize the state of the unmanifest through studying, austerities or sacrifices. The unmanifest must be comprehended. It is the same with the state of Mahat and consciousness. One must obtain the state that is superior to that of consciousness. Those who are devoted to the sacred texts always know about the supreme and the unmanifest. They are dissociated from birth and death and are disassociated from the qualities. O king! In ancient times, I obtained this knowledge from Janaka and he from Yajnavalkya. This special knowledge is superior to sacrifices. It is through knowledge that one can traverse what is difficult to cross, not through sacrifices. O king! Those who are learned say that birth, death and hardships are difficult to traverse through sacrifices, austerities, rituals and vows. Even if one obtains heaven, one falls down on the ground. You should worship the supreme, great and pure one, auspicious, without blemish and sacred, the path to emancipation. O king! As the kshetrajna, perform the sacrifice of knowledge. That is the truth that the rishi spoke about. It has been spoken about in the Upanishads and in ancient times, Yajnavalkya told King Janaka about this. It is the eternal and the undecaying and he enumerated the auspicious and the immortal. He<sup>935</sup> then obtained the one who is beyond sorrow.”’

## Chapter 1635(307)

“Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained prosperity, great riches and a long lifespan, how can one overcome death? Can one overcome old age and death through extremely great austerities, deeds, learning and the application of medicines?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the conversation between the mendicant Panchashikha and Janaka. To dispel his doubt about dharma, King Janaka of Videha progressively asked the great rishi Panchashikha, who was supreme among those who knew about the Vedas. ‘O illustrious one! What is the conduct through which one can overcome old age and death? Is it through austerities, intelligence, deeds or learning?’ Having been thus addressed by the ruler of Videha, the one who knew about the supreme replied, ‘These two cannot be overcome. But it is not true that they can never be overcome. Days, nights and months pass. Though a person is temporary, he can obtain what is permanent and certain. All creatures are destroyed. Without a

raft, they are continuously borne along on a flow and submerged in the ocean of time. Old age and death are the giant crocodiles and there is no escape from them. There is no one who can aid a person. Nor can he help anyone else. Along that path, one gets to know wives, relatives and others. There is no one with whom one has spent a great deal of time earlier. Because of time, they are repeatedly brought together and repeatedly thrust apart. They are like accumulations of clouds, moved around by the wind. Like wolves, old age and death devour all creatures, regardless of whether they are strong or weak, short or tall. Though creatures are impermanent, in those creatures, there is a being<sup>936</sup> who is eternal. Why should one take delight at birth? Why should one suffer anxiety on account of death? Where have I come from? Who am I? Where will I go? To whom do I belong? Where am I established? Where will I be? Therefore, why are you grieving? Even if you see heaven or hell, you will not remain there. This cannot be overcome through sacred texts, gifts or sacrifices.’”

## Chapter 1636(308)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O supreme among rajarshis of the Kuru lineage! Without abandoning garhasthya, has anyone obtained emancipation and been conveyed to wisdom? Tell me the truth about this. How can the atman be discarded? How can the atman be discarded?<sup>937</sup> What is supreme emancipation? O grandfather! Tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Janaka and Sulabha. It has been heard that in ancient times, there was a king of Mithila who was descended from Janaka and was named Dharmadhvaja. He determined to obtain success through renunciation. He was learned about the sacred texts on emancipation. He was also accomplished in his own sacred texts.<sup>938</sup> He restrained his senses and ruled the earth. O lord of men! He was knowledgeable about the Vedas. He was wise and learned. His conduct was virtuous and other men in this world wished to emulate him. In that yuga when dharma prevailed, there was a mendicant<sup>939</sup> named Sulabha. She followed the dharma of yoga and wandered around the earth. As she roamed around the entire earth, she heard from various *tridandis*<sup>940</sup> about the lord of Mithila, who was pursuing emancipation. On hearing these accounts, she had doubts about the truth of these and wished to ascertain the subtleties. Therefore, she formed a resolution that she should see Janaka. Through the powers of yoga, she discarded her earlier form and assumed a supremely beautiful appearance, flawless in her limbs. Her eyebrows were excellent and her eyes were like the petals of lotuses. In the twinkling of an eye and with great speed, she went to the city of Videha.<sup>941</sup> She reached the beautiful city of Mithila, inhabited by a large number of people. Assuming the form of a mendicant, she presented herself before the lord of Mithila. The king saw her supremely delicate form. He was astounded and asked her who she was, who did she belong to, and where she had come from. Having welcomed her, he instructed that an excellent seat should be given to her. He honoured her by offering her water to clean her feet and satisfied her with wonderful food. Having eaten this, she was gratified. The king was surrounded by his advisers and was in the midst of an assortment of learned people. But the mendicant Sulabha still had her doubts about whether he had understood the dharma of emancipation and wished to test him. She used her powers of yoga to penetrate the king’s spirit with her own spirit. She restrained the rays that emanated from his eyes with the rays that emanated from her eyes. Wishing to test him, she tied him up in the bonds of yoga, determined to make him dumb. But King Janaka, supreme among kings, prided himself on his own invincibility. He countered her resolution with his own. They were both situated thus. He was without his umbrella and she was without her three staffs.<sup>942</sup> Listen to the conversation that took place between them.

“The lord of the earth asked, ‘O illustrious one! What conduct do you follow? Who are you? Having accomplished your purpose, where will you go? Whom do you belong to? Where have you come from? Learning, age, birth and good conduct cannot be ascertained without asking. Therefore, having arrived here, you should answer me truthfully. In particular, know that I have rid myself of my umbrella and other signs. I wish to know who you truly are. I think that you are deserving of my respect. In earlier times, I have obtained knowledge about *vaisheshika*.<sup>943</sup> There is no one else who can speak to you about emancipation. Listen to me. There was an aged and extremely great-souled mendicant named Panchashikha, from the Parashara gotra. As a pupil, he regarded me great-

ly. All my doubts have been severed about the three kinds of moksha dharma—knowledge of sankhya, yoga and the rites that are followed by kings. When he<sup>944</sup> roamed around as a mendicant, as instructed in the sacred texts, in ancient times, he happily dwelt in my city for four months during the monsoon. He instructed me well and told me the truth about the three modes of emancipation, with sankhya as the foremost. But he didn't ask me to give up the kingdom. I completely follow the three kinds of conduct that lead to emancipation. I am without attachment. In solitude, I have based myself on the supreme. Renunciation is the foremost conduct for emancipation. Renunciation results from knowledge and that leads to liberation. One must endeavour for knowledge. It is through endeavour that one can obtain Mahat. Mahat frees one from opposite sentiments. That is the success that transcends death. I am devoid of opposite sentiments and have obtained that supreme intelligence. I am free from attachment and roam around in this world, bereft of delusion. When a field is flooded with water and softened, it leads to seeds sprouting. In that way, the deeds of men lead to rebirth. If a seed is heated in a dish, though the inherent strength for sprouting remains in it, the seed no longer sprouts. The illustrious mendicant Panchashikha spoke to me about knowledge and I no longer have the seed that creates attachment towards material objects. I do not hate anyone. Nor do I love my wife. Since both kinds of attachment are futile sins, I do not find pleasure in either. If a person smears my right hand with sandalwood paste and if another person wounds my left hand, I regard both equally. I am happy at having accomplished my objectives and a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same for me. I am established in my kingdom, but am free from attachments. Therefore, I am superior to tridandis. Maharshis have earlier instructed that there are three kinds of devotion that lead to emancipation.<sup>945</sup> Some hold knowledge to be the best, others the renunciation of all acts. There are people who know about the sacred texts of moksha and say that knowledge is the best. However, there are other ascetics, subtle in their sight, who hold that acts are the best. The great-souled one held that knowledge or deeds alone would not suffice and that the third mode was best.<sup>946</sup> A householder can be the equal of a tridandi in yama, niyama, hatred, desire, receiving, pride, insolence and affection. If emancipation results from knowledge, then there is nothing to prevent the possessor of an umbrella<sup>947</sup> from obtaining it either. Because of different objectives and reasons, one becomes associated with different objects and receives them. One may perceive taints in garhasthya and advance towards a subsequent ashrama. But despite giving up the objects, one may not be freed from attachment. Lordship means that one must chastise and reward. However, rajarshis and mendicants are equal in this and why should they alone be liberated? Irrespective of lordship, one is freed through knowledge alone. If one establishes oneself in the supreme objective, why should one not be freed? The wearing of ochre robes, shaving the head, carrying the three sticks and the *kamandalu*<sup>948</sup>—these are only signs. It is my view that these do not lead to emancipation. Whether these signs exist or not, knowledge alone is the cause for emancipation and freedom from sorrow. The signs alone are futile. Therefore, despite the umbrella, why should it not be found? Freedom is not found in possessing nothing. Nor does possessing something lead to bondage. Irrespective of whether a creature possesses or does not, knowledge results in emancipation. One receives a kingdom for the sake of dharma, artha and kama and if one is not careful, this can lead to bondage. But though I am in that state, I am without bondage. There is a noose from the kingdom's prosperity. There are the bonds of affection. But I have used the sword of renunciation, severed on the stone of emancipation, to sever those. O female mendicant! I have thus been freed. However, I have a liking for you. Therefore, let me tell you that your conduct does not befit your vocation. Your form is delicate. Your body possesses beauty. You are extremely young. I have doubts that you follow niyama. The signs do not suggest it. To test whether I am emancipated, you have assailed and seized me, rendering me immobile. A tridandi wishing to be emancipated should not fall prey to desire. If you cannot protect yourself from this, you will not be able to preserve the liberation you have obtained. You have entered my body. Listen to the transgression you have committed. I have been married earlier. Why have you used your nature to enter me? Why have you entered my kingdom and my city? Have there been any signs suggesting that you are entitled to enter my heart? You are a brahmana, chief and foremost among all varnas. I am a kshatriya. There can be no union between us. Do not cause a mixture of varnas. You follow the dharma of moksha. I am in the ashrama of a householder. This will lead to a second evil, a mixture of ashramas. I do not know whether we have the same gotra or different gotras, and neither do you.<sup>949</sup> If I belong to the same gotra, by entering me, you have confused gotras and caused a third evil. If your husband is alive and lives in a distant place, you are someone else's wife and cannot be approached. Therefore, by causing a confusion of dharma, there has been a



fourth evil. Have you committed these evil acts with some specific objective in mind? Has it been caused by ignorance or false knowledge? Perhaps it is your own evil nature that leads to such independence. If you possess any learning, you should know that all these acts have been wicked. There is a third sin that comes from the touch of an unchaste woman.<sup>950</sup> This sign of sin is evident in what you have expounded. In your desire for victory, it is not me alone that you wish to defeat. You also desire to defeat all my advisers. You are repeatedly glancing towards them and then towards your own self, as if you wish to defeat those on my side and establish the superiority of your own side. You have been confused by the delusion of your powers and intolerance. Therefore, you have invoked the weapon of yoga and have mixed poison with amrita. The mutual desire between a man and a woman, when they seek to obtain each other, is like amrita. However, when one doesn't obtain the person one desires, that is a sin that is like poison. Do not touch me. Know that I am virtuous. Follow the instructions of your own sacred texts. You wished to know whether I am emancipated or not, and that enquiry has been accomplished. You should not have concealed all your secret motives. Perhaps you are doing this at the instigation of some other king.<sup>951</sup> The truth about those secret motives shouldn't have been hidden from me. One must never be deceitful before a king or a brahmana. Nor must one approach a wife with deceit, as long as that wife possesses all the qualities. Prosperity is a king's strength. Knowledge of the brahman is a brahmana's strength. Beauty, youth and good fortune are the greatest strength for a woman. Those who are strong in this way can accomplish their objectives and must be approached with sincerity.<sup>952</sup> Deceit leads to destruction. You should tell me the truth about your birth, learning, conduct, character, natural inclination and the reason why you have come here.'

“She was addressed in these unpleasant and inappropriate words by that Indra among men.<sup>953</sup> However, Sulabha did not tremble. When the king had spoken those words, the beautiful Sulabha replied in words that were more beautiful than her person. ‘There are nine taints associated with speech and nine taints associated with intelligence. Meaningful words must possess eighteen qualities. O king! It has been said that meaningful words must possess five characteristics—subtlety, judging the pros, judging the cons, final determination and ascertaining necessity. I will progressively explain the meaning and characteristics of each of these, beginning with subtlety. Listen to how meanings of words and words should be combined to form sentences. There are differences between knowledge and the object of knowledge. Subtlety consists of using great intelligence to bring out these differences. Before using intended words, one must enumerate and think about their meanings and the various good and bad qualities these words possess. Having examined this progressively, one must then use them in speech. People who are accomplished in framing sentences say that words must thus be progressively used in a sentence. One must specially examine the ends of dharma, artha, kama and moksha and having determined this, then use the instructions to formulate a sentence. O king! When desire and hatred are intense, hardships multiply. O king! Therefore, conduct<sup>954</sup> must be in accordance with necessity. O lord of men! When subtlety and the other mentioned characteristics are combined together, the sentence is perceived to be intelligible. The words I speak to you will be full of meaning, consistent in meaning, restrained, to the point, smooth, without any doubt and excellent. They will not have long syllables. They will not be unkind and harsh. They will not be false. They will be refined and will not be against the three objectives.<sup>955</sup> There will not be words that are difficult to understand, ones that go in different directions. There will be nothing with alternative meanings, nor anything without a reason or an objective. I will not tell you anything because of desire, anger, fear, avarice, misery, destitution, lack of nobility, shame, compassion or pride. O king! When the speaker, the listener and the words are in harmony, the meaning of what is spoken becomes clear. When the speaker disrespects the listener, irrespective of whether it is for his own or someone else's objective, the words spoken have no impact. Even if a man gives up his own objective and accepts the objective of someone else, those words are sinful, because they are capable of giving rise to doubt. O king! If a person speaks words that are incapable of double meaning and are comprehensible to the listener, then he is an excellent speaker, not anyone else. I will speak words that are full of meaning and rich in purport. O king! You should listen to them with single-minded attention. Who am I? Whom do I belong to? Where have I come from? This is what you asked me. I will speak words in reply. O king! Listen attentively. O king! All beings created are combinations, like lac and wood, dust and drops of water.<sup>956</sup> Sound, touch, taste, form and scent are the five senses. They may seem to be different, but are actually together, like lac and wood. It has thus been determined that no one should ask who someone else is. No one knows about his own self, not to speak of someone else. The eye cannot see itself. The ear cannot hear

itself. Nor can they undertake each other's tasks. Like dust and water, even when they combine, they cannot know their own selves. Listen to me. Even for the sake of obtaining their qualities, they have to resort to external objects. Form, eye and light—these three are required for seeing. This is also the case with the other senses of knowledge and the objects of the senses. Between a sense of knowledge and the object of that sense, there is the quality of what is known as the mind. It reflects and arrives at its own determination about what exists and what does not exist. It has been said that the quality known as intelligence is the twelfth.<sup>957</sup> When the others have a doubt, it is intelligence that settles matters. The thirteenth quality that is beyond this is known as *sattva*.<sup>958</sup> It is inferred that creatures may possess a lot of *sattva* or a limited quantity of *sattva*. There is yet another attribute, the fourteenth, known as *kshetrajna*. This helps one think—"I am this. I am not that." O king! There is yet another quality, said to be the fifteenth.<sup>959</sup> O king! There is said to be a sixteenth that is attached to this collection.<sup>960</sup> There is an interaction between these sixteen qualities. The qualities of *akriti* and *vyakti* are attached to these.<sup>961</sup> Happiness and unhappiness, old age and death, gain and loss, pleasant and unpleasant—the union of these opposite sentiments are said to constitute the nineteenth. Beyond these, there is the twentieth characteristic, known as time. Know that the creation and destruction of all beings is because of this twentieth. There is interaction between these twenty characteristics and the five great elements. Existence and non-existence are the other characteristics of manifestation.<sup>962</sup> It is thus said that there are twenty-seven characteristics. Know that there are three characteristics beyond these—Vidhi, Shukra and Bala.<sup>963</sup> It has been said that the number of characteristics is thirty-one.<sup>964</sup> It has been said that all of them circle around in the body. There are those who hold that the unmanifest prakriti is the cause behind all the characteristics.<sup>965</sup> There are others who are gross in their vision and think that the manifest is the cause.<sup>966</sup> Whether it is the unmanifest, the manifest, the combination of the two<sup>967</sup> or all four taken together,<sup>968</sup> those who have thought about *adhyatma* hold that prakriti creates all beings. Prakriti is unmanifest, but becomes manifest in the form of these characteristics. O Indra among kings! I, you and everything that possesses a body are the outcome of this. There is a point at which creation results from the mixture of semen with blood. Because of this union, a *kalala*<sup>969</sup> is generated. A *budbuda*<sup>970</sup> results from the *kalala* and a *peshi*<sup>971</sup> results from the *budbuda*. The limbs manifest themselves in the *peshi*, and nails and hair are attached to the limbs. O lord of Mithila! When nine months are over, the creature is born. When it has been born, on ascertaining whether it is a boy or a girl, a name is given. Immediately after birth, the nails and fingers are seen to have the complexion of copper. When that person becomes an infant, that earlier form is no longer discerned. Infancy becomes youth and youth becomes old age. In this way, from one stage to another, the earlier form is no longer seen. The separate characteristics change from one instant to another. These transformations occur in all creatures, but are so subtle that they are not noticed. O king! The beginning and the end of these minute changes cannot be seen, just as one cannot discern the movement in the flame of a lamp. This is the state of all creation, rushing along like a well-trained horse. Among these numerous people, is it possible to answer who has come from where and who has not come from where? Whom does someone belong to? Whom does someone not belong to? How does one know where someone has come from, or where someone has not come from? What is the connection between beings and their physical forms? Just as fire results when sticks are rubbed together, all creatures are generated from the characteristics mentioned earlier. You see your atman in your own self. In that fashion, why don't you see your atman in other people? But perhaps you do regard yourself and others as identical. In that event, why did you ask me who I am and whom I belong to? O lord of Mithila! If it is true that you have been freed from opposite sentiments, what was the need for expressions like "Who are you?" and "Whom do you belong to?"—At times of peace and war, if a king's action towards enemies, friends and neutrals are no different from that of others, where are the signs that he has become free? The three objectives exist in seven combinations.<sup>972</sup> If one does not know this and does not show it in his deeds and if one is attached to the three objectives, where are the signs of emancipation in him? If one does not cast an impartial sight towards the pleasant and the unpleasant and the weak and the strong, where are the signs of emancipation in him? O king! You pride yourself on having become emancipated. This is without basis. Your well-wishers should restrain you and treat you with medication. O scorcher of enemies! You should think of other similar things that you are attached to. Glance towards the atman inside your own self. That is a sign of emancipation. There are other subtle signs of having resorted to liberation, such as not being attached to the four pursuits.<sup>973</sup> Listen to me. A person who brings the entire earth under a single umbrella<sup>974</sup> is praised. That king then lives in a single city. In that

city, he lives in a single house. In that house, there is a single bed, on which, he lies down at night. Half of that bed has earlier been occupied by his wife. In this context, this is the kind of fruits he enjoys.<sup>975</sup> This is true of all objects of pleasure, food and garments. The qualities he enjoys are limited. He also has to apportion out reward and chastisement. The king is always engaged in the tasks of others. There is little that he directly enjoys. Whether there is peace or whether there is war, how is the king independent? In sporting with women and other kinds of pleasure, the king's independence is always circumscribed. With all those ministers and advisers, where does he have independence? When he instructs others, he is said to be independent. However, he is incapable of personally checking whether they undertake those tasks. He cannot sleep when he wishes. People who have work with him prevent his sleep. He can only lie down after taking their permission. When he is asleep, he is unable to prevent his being awakened. Bathing, obtaining, drinking, eating, offering oblations into the fire, performing sacrifices, speaking, hearing—in all of these, he is helpless and is driven by the objectives of others. Groups of men always come to him and solicit things. However, because he is also the supervisor of the treasury, he is incapable of giving, even if he wishes to. If he gives, the treasury is exhausted. If he does not give, there is enmity. These kinds of taints swiftly generate detachment in him. If wise, brave and rich men gather together in one place, he is suspicious. Even when there is no reason for fear, the king is always frightened of those who serve him. The ones I have mentioned also blame the king. Behold. A similar kind of fear is also generated in them. In their own houses, all men are kings. In their own houses, all men are householders. O Janaka! Like kings, they too chastise and reward. They also possess sons, wives, their own selves, stores, friends and treasuries. Because of these reasons, he<sup>976</sup> is not really different from other people. The country has been destroyed, the city has been burnt down, the best of elephants is dead—in all of these, he is tormented like others. He has a false sense of knowledge. The king is not freed from mental grief that results from desire, hatred, love and fear. He is also afflicted by headaches and other diseases. Opposite sentiments prey on him and he is always alarmed. There are many kinds of hardships in the kingdom and he counts the nights.<sup>977</sup> There is only a little bit of happiness and there is a great deal of misery. How can there be peace if one has obtained a kingdom? You think that this capital and kingdom are yours. O king! But these soldiers, this treasury and these advisers aren't really yours. Whom do they belong to? O king! Allies, advisers, the capital, the country, the staff, the treasury and the king—these seven limbs of the kingdom depend on one another. These seven limbs hold up the kingdom, like three staffs tied together. They depend on each other's qualities. There is none that is superior to the others in qualities. At particular points in time, when a specific task has to be accomplished by it, one of these limbs may be thought to be superior to the rest. O supreme among kings! However, those seven limbs and three others<sup>978</sup> come together. These ten categories enjoy the kingdom, as if they are the king himself. If a king has great enterprise and is devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas, then he should be satisfied with one-tenth share.<sup>979</sup> There are others who are satisfied with less than one-tenth. There is no extraordinary king and there is no kingdom without a king. If there is no kingdom, how can there be dharma? If there is no dharma, how can the supreme objective be attained? The supreme and sacred dharma depends on a king and a kingdom. O lord of Mithila! The earth can be offered as dakshina, but there are those who do not even perform a horse sacrifice. There are many who act so as to cause hardships to their kingdoms, though they are capable. I can mention hundreds and thousands. I am not even attached to my own body. How can I then seize someone else's? You should not therefore say that I have caused an obstruction in your emancipation in this way. From Panchashikha, there is no doubt that you have heard a complete account of what is known as moksha, with techniques, modes, practices and conclusions. O king! However, if you have been freed from all attachment and have overcome all your bonds, specifically, why are you still attached to the umbrella and other objects? I think that you have not heard the sacred texts. Or perhaps you have heard some false sacred texts. Perhaps you came close to the sacred texts, but heard some other texts instead. It is only the consciousness of the material world that is established in you. Therefore, like an ordinary person, you are tied down by these excellent possessions. If you are emancipated in every way, how have I harmed you by penetrating your spirit? It is the ritual and dharma of ascetics to dwell alone. Had you tried to dwell alone, how could I have caused any harm to you? O unblemished one! I have not touched you with my hands, my arms, my feet or my thighs. O lord of men! Nor have I touched your body in any other way. You have been born in a great lineage. You are humble. You are far-sighted. Whether my entering you was good or bad, surely it was bad and futile to speak about it.<sup>980</sup> These brahmanas are superior. They are the fore-

most among advisers. They are your seniors. You treat each other with reverence. That being the case, you should have thought about what should be said and what should not be said. In an assembly, you should not have spoken about the union between a woman and a man. The water rests on the leaf of a lotus without really touching the leaf of the lotus. O lord of Mithila! I am dwelling with you in that way, without touching you. You have felt my touch, even though I have not touched you. What is the seed of knowledge that you then obtained from the mendicant? You have not been able to give up garhasthya. Nor have you obtained moksha, which is so difficult to understand. Though you desire moksha, you are stuck in between the two. If an emancipated person mingles with another emancipated person, that union does not lead to a mixing of varnas, like the mingling between the existent and the non-existent.<sup>981</sup> Those who regard the varnas and the ashramas to be distinct are those who do not perceive that this is different from that.<sup>982</sup> Because they do not know that this is different from that, they think that this acts differently from that. There is a pot in the hand. There is milk in the pot. There is a fly in the milk. Though they mingle and coexist with each other, they are distinct from each other. The pot does not assume the characteristics of milk. Nor does the milk assume the characteristics of a fly. They each possess their own characteristics and not those of something else. The different varnas and ashramas are just like that. Since they are different from each other, how can there be a mixture of varnas? I have not been born in a varna that is superior to yours. Nor am I a vaishya or something worse than that. O king! I belong to the same varna as you and have been born in a pure lineage. There was a rajarshi named Pradhana and it is evident that you have heard of him. Know that I was born in his lineage and my name is Sulabha. In the sacrifices performed by my ancestors, Drona,<sup>983</sup> Shatashringa and Mount Vakra-dvara came to the altars, accompanied by Maghavan. Since I had been born in such a lineage, a husband could not be found for me. Humbly, I adopted the vow of a sage and roamed around alone, observing the dharma of moksha. There is no deceit in my rites. Nor do I desire the possessions of others. I will not cause confusion in dharma. I am firm in my vows and follow my own dharma. I will not be dislodged from my own resolve. Nor do I speak without thinking about it first. O lord of men! I have not come to you and approached you without having thought about it first. I had heard that your intelligence had turned towards moksha and had thought that coming here would be beneficial. I came here, wishing to ask you about moksha. I am not saying this to boast about my side and denigrate another side. A person is not liberated and freed until he is peaceful and tranquil. A mendicant spends only a single night in an empty house. In that way, I will not dwell in your body for more than one night.<sup>984</sup> You have honoured me by treating me like a guest and giving me a seat and speaking pleasant words. O lord of Mithila! I will happily sleep inside you tonight and leave tomorrow.' These sentences were full of reason and purport. On hearing these, the king could not say anything after that.'"

## Chapter 1637(309)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “In ancient times, how did Shuka, Vyasa’s son, obtain knowledge? O Kouravya! I am curious and wish to hear about it.”

‘Bhishma said, “The father saw that the son was engaged in the ordinary norms of good conduct and was roaming around fearlessly. He saw that he was capable of studying and taught him everything that there was to be studied. He said, ‘O son! Serve dharma. Conquer extreme cold, heat, hunger, thirst and the wind. Having vanquished these, always subjugate your senses. Always preserve the ordinances of truth, uprightness, lack of anger, lack of malice, self-control, austerities, non-violence and lack of injury. Always base yourself on the truth. Be attached to dharma. In every way, discard deceit. Eat what is left after serving gods and guests. In this journey, life in the body is like foam in a vessel. The jivatman is like a bird.’<sup>985</sup> O son! Living with beloved ones is temporary. Why dream about it? Even if you are distracted, the enemies are always awake.’<sup>986</sup> They are searching for a weakness. Do not be so foolish as to ignore this. As one counts the years passing, your lifespan becomes less and less. As long as you are alive, why are you not rushing, to be instructed like a disciple? There are extreme non-believers who desire objects in this world and seek to increase their flesh and blood. Regarding tasks for the world hereafter, they are asleep. The intelligence of these men has been deluded and they censure dharma. They advance along wrong paths and those who follow them are also afflicted. However, there are also those who are content and extremely con-

trolled. They are devoted to truth and the sacred texts. They tread along the path of dharma. Worship them and seek instruction from them. Accept the instructions of those aged ones, who have the insight of dharma. Use supreme intelligence to exercise restraint and prevent the consciousness from treading along wrong paths. There are those whose intelligence is fixed only on today. They are fearless and think that tomorrow is far away. They eat everything. Devoid of consciousness, they do not see that this is an arena for action.<sup>987</sup> You are like a silkworm inside a cocoon now, but do not know that you are tied down. There are non-believers who disregard the restraints. They are like bamboos standing up with pride, when the river's bank is being broken down by a current. Avoid these mean men and keep them to your left.<sup>988</sup> Desire, anger, death and the five senses are the water in the river that flows from birth. It is difficult to cross. However, using the boat of resolution, cross it. People are afflicted by death and assailed by old age. The progress of dharma cannot be repulsed and descends on them. Whether you are seated or lying down, death will seek you out. How will you obtain salvation? How will you escape being devoured by death? Despite acquisitions, desire is not satisfied. Like a she-wolf grasping a young ram, death seizes and departs, while one is still engaged in acquiring. The great intelligence of dharma is like the flame of a lamp. Hold it carefully and enter the darkness. Descending through a maze of various bodies, a creature rarely becomes a man and becoming a brahmana is rarer still. O son! Therefore, protect it. You have not been born in this body of a brahmana for the sake of satisfying desire. In this world, it is meant to be tormented through austerities, so that one obtains supreme happiness in the hereafter. The status of a brahmana is obtained after austerities. Having obtained it, it must not be carelessly frittered away. Always be engaged in studying, austerities and self-control. Always endeavour to obtain what is best and beneficial for you. The life of a man is like a horse and it is continuously running. The sixteen parts of the unmanifest Prakriti constitute the body. Its essence is subtle. Kshana, *truti* and nimesha<sup>989</sup> are the body hair. The seasons are the mouth. Shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha, equal in strength, are the eyes. The months are the limbs. If you possess the sight, look at it. It is extended in front, always advancing with great speed. Hear what others have to say about the hereafter and turn your mind towards dharma. There are those who are overcome by desire and are dislodged from dharma. They are always enraged, and engaged in causing harm. Their bodies will be afflicted by pain. Since they do not wish for dharma, they will be burnt by flames.<sup>990</sup> A king who is devoted to dharma and always protects the auspicious can look forward to worlds meant for those with righteous deeds. If he performs many kinds of good deeds, he obtains an unblemished felicity that cannot be obtained in thousands of births. If a man transgresses the words of his preceptor, he goes to hell after death. Fierce dogs, crows with iron beaks, large numbers of wild crows, vultures and other birds and blood-sucking worms attack him. In his mind, Svayambhu fixed ten ordinances that must be followed in this world.<sup>991</sup> If one does not follow these, such a wicked person confronts terrible misery and has to dwell in the desolate dominion of the ancestors.<sup>992</sup> If a man is extremely avaricious, loves falsehood, is always addicted to deception and fraud and causes hardship by appropriating what has been left to him in trust, is the performer of wicked deeds. He goes to the worst of hells and suffers great misery there. He is submerged in the boiling waters of the great river Vaitarani. His body is mangled in a forest where the leaves are like swords. He is flung down and made to lie on a bed made out battle axes. He has to dwell in that great hell and is severely afflicted. You speak about great worlds, but do not see what is supreme. You have never understood that death will always follow. Why don't you go there?<sup>993</sup> A great fear has arisen in front of you. It is terrible and you should arrange for your happiness. Death is ahead of you. On Yama's instructions, death will convey you to him. Yama is terrible. Make efforts to be upright. Earlier, regardless of your misery, the lord has uprooted your relatives. Though you are still alive, there is nothing that can stand in Yama's way. The winds that advance ahead of Yama will begin to blow in front. Since you will be conveyed before him, act for the sake of the hereafter. Like a hiccup, Yama's winds will blow soon. When that great fear arrives, the directions will whirl around in front of you. O son! Soon, the learned texts will disappear. You will head towards agitation. Therefore, act so as to obtain supreme samadhi. Search for the only store of riches. Remembering the past, may you not be tormented by the good and bad deeds that you have done, or have not done. On account of those deeds, may you not be overcome by confusion. Soon, old age will destroy your body and take away your strength, limbs and beauty. Search for the only store of riches. In front of you, Yama will mangle your body with diseases that are like arrows. You will have to tolerate the destruction of your life. Therefore, perform great austerities. Soon, the terrible wolves that are within the human body will attack you in every way.<sup>994</sup> Therefore, try to perform auspicious acts.



Soon, you will be alone and will perceive a great darkness. Soon, you will see golden trees atop a mountain.<sup>995</sup> Soon, you will have evil companions and enemies disguised as well-wishers. They will make you deviate from your insight. O son! Therefore, strive for the supreme. Obtain the radiant riches that suffer no fear on account of theft. Even when one dies, those riches are not taken away. That is earned through one's own deeds and does not have to be shared with anyone else. One enjoys whatever one has earned. O son! Give, so that one is able to live in the hereafter. On your own, accumulate the riches that are indestructible and permanent. Do not think that greater riches can be obtained after material objects have been cooked and enjoyed.<sup>996</sup> Even before those material desires have been satisfied, you may soon be taken away. When there is the hardship,<sup>997</sup> one has to traverse alone. Mothers, fathers, relatives, praised and beloved people and companions do not follow one there. When one goes there, one only carries the riches that one has earned through one's own acts, good or bad. Stores of gold and jewels, accumulated through fair means or foul, accomplish no objective when the body is destroyed. When one goes to the hereafter, there are deeds that have been performed and deeds that have not been performed. For all these, a man has no witness other than his atman. When one goes there, the human body amounts to nothing. However, through the intelligence of insight, it<sup>998</sup> can see everything that there is to see. In this world, there are three things that exist in the body—the fire, the sun and the wind. They possess the insight of dharma and are witnesses to everything. When it is night, one desires all the other wives.<sup>999</sup> One thinks that this conduct remains secret, but it is revealed. Therefore, follow your own dharma. There are many obstructions along the path, which is guarded by terrible and malformed creatures. But protect your own deeds. Perform your own deeds and go there. One's own deeds do not have to be shared with anyone else. One enjoys the fruits, depending on the acts that one has oneself performed. Large numbers of apsaras and maharshis obtain the fruits of bliss. They obtain the fruits of their deeds and go where they will, on celestial vehicles. In a similar way, pure people with cleansed souls, men who have been born in pure wombs, also obtain the fruits of their good deeds. In the hereafter, those who follow the ordinances of the dharma of garhasthya roam around in the worlds of Prajapati, Brihaspati or Shatakratu. I can speak to you about many thousands of methods. However, there is lack of intelligence and delusion and the perception that there is nothing other than material objects.<sup>1000</sup> Twenty-four years have certainly passed and you are twenty-five years old now. Your life is thus passing. Act so as to build a store of dharma. Soon, Yama will be there and he will smear your self-control with delusion. Before he arises and seizes you, swiftly act in accordance with dharma. On the road that you have to follow, you alone will lead the way and you alone will follow. You<sup>1001</sup> and others do not matter. Without any companions, one has to go there alone. There is fear in the hereafter. Therefore, accumulate the great treasure. Even if one tries to restrain him,<sup>1002</sup> the lord takes away the relatives one is attached to, with the foundations of the family. Thus, act to build up the store of dharma. O son! The instructions I have given you are the ones I honour. I have described them. Use your own insight to examine them and act accordingly. If a person gives away whatever riches he has earned through his own deeds, he is freed from a hundred qualities that are associated with ignorance and delusion.<sup>1003</sup> One must perform the auspicious rites that are in conformity with the sacred texts. The insight that is given there is beneficial and full of purport. The attachment to dwelling in a village<sup>1004</sup> is like a bond made out of ropes. Having severed it, one can perform good deeds. If one does not sever it, one performs bad deeds. O son! What will you do with riches? What will you do with relatives? What will you do with sons? They will die. Enter a cave and search for your atman. Where have all your ancestors gone? Do today a task meant for tomorrow. Do in the forenoon a task meant for the afternoon. Who knows what is today. The soldiers of death do not wait to see. The relatives follow you to the end of the cremation ground and return. Kin and well-wishers hurl a man into the fire. Non-believers are hateful. They are established in their wicked ways. Ignore them and keep them on the left. With undivided attention, seek the supreme. The world is thus afflicted and is oppressed by time. Therefore, resort to dharma with all your soul and resort to the great riches. A man who knows the methods for obtaining this insight well, acts appropriately, in accordance with dharma, and obtains felicity in the hereafter. Know that resorting to another body does not mean death. There is no destruction for a person who himself sticks to the indicated path. A person who enhances dharma is learned. A person who deviates from dharma is deluded. If a person is engaged in his own deeds along the path of action, in due course, he obtains the fruits that have been spoken about. A performer of inferior deeds goes to hell. A person who is devoted to dharma goes to heaven. In general, it is extremely difficult for a man to obtain the staircase to heaven. Therefore, having

obtained it, one should concentrate one's atman, so that one does not fall away again. If a person's intelligence is such that he follows the path to heaven, he is spoken of as a performer of auspicious deeds and his friends and relatives grieve at his death. If a person's intelligence is determined and does not waver, he obtains heaven and does not suffer from great fear. Even if a person has been born in a hermitage and dies there, despite not having experienced desire and objects of pleasure, he obtains only a little bit of dharma. I think that if a person forsakes objects of pleasure and torments his body through austerities, he doesn't obtain only a little, but obtains great fruits. Thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of sons and wives have come and will come again.<sup>1005</sup> Whom do they belong to? Whom do we belong to? Their tasks have nothing to do with you. Your tasks have nothing to do with them. People are born because of their own deeds and depart from here. In this world, others act as relatives when one is rich. If a person is poor, even when he is alive, relatives are destroyed. For the sake of a wife, a man willingly commits inauspicious acts. Because of those, he suffers hardships in this world and in the next. Behold. In the world of the living, the weaknesses of creatures result from their own deeds. O son! Therefore, act entirely in accordance with the instructions I have imparted to you. Look on this as a field of action and enter it. If you desire worlds in the hereafter, your conduct should be auspicious. Time is the witness of all deeds committed by creatures and forcibly cooks them. It uses the months and the seasons to whirl them around. The sun is the fire and the nights and days are the kindling. What can be gained through riches that are not given away? If strength is not used to restrain enemies, what is its use? If dharma is not followed, what is the use of sacred texts? If the senses are not subjugated, what purpose can the atman have?' These were the beneficial words that Dvaipayana spoke. Shuka took his father's leave and went in search of someone who could instruct him about moksha."

## Chapter 1638(310)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! How did Shuka, the great ascetic with dharma in his soul, obtain birth as Vyasa's son? How did he obtain supreme success? Tell me that. Through which woman did Vyasa, the store of austerities, generate Shuka? We do not know anything about his mother, or about the birth of that fierce and great-souled one. When he was a child, how did his intelligence turn towards the pursuit of subtle knowledge? There is no second person in the world in whom such signs can be seen. O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear about all this in detail. Your words are the equal of amrita and I am never satisfied with hearing them. O grandfather! In due course, tell me about Shuka's greatness, the yoga in his atman and about his knowledge.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The rishis did not make dharma dependent on grey hair, riches or relatives. A person who is devoted to learning is great. O Pandava! Everything that you have asked me about has austerities as a foundation. Austerities can be resorted to by controlling the senses and not in any other way. There is no doubt that addiction to the senses is associated with sin. It is through controlling them that a man obtains success. O son! One thousand horse sacrifices and one hundred *vajapeya* sacrifices are not equal to one-sixteenth of the fruits that one can obtain through these means. I will tell you how the fierce Shuka's birth came about, the fruits of his yoga and the end that he attained. It is difficult for a person with an unclean soul to understand this. In ancient times, Mahadeva was sporting on the summit of Mount Meru, which was decorated with *karnikara* flowers.<sup>1006</sup> He was surrounded by a large number of terrible spirits. In those ancient times, the goddess<sup>1007</sup> who was the daughter of the king of the mountains, was also there. The lord, Krishna Dvaipayana, tormented himself through divine austerities there. He was devoted to the dharma of yoga and using yoga, penetrated his atman. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! For the sake of a son, he tormented himself through austerities, meditating in dharana. He repeatedly said, ‘O lord!’<sup>1008</sup> Give me an energetic son who will have the power of the fire, the earth, the water, the wind and space.’ Driven by this resolution, he prayed to the lord of the gods, one whom those with unclean souls find difficult to obtain. He worshipped him through supreme austerities. Subsisting only on air, the lord was there for one hundred years. He worshipped the many forms of Mahadeva, Uma's consort. The brahmana rishis, all the devarshis, the guardians of the worlds, the lords of the worlds, the Sadhyas, accompanied by the Vasus, the Adityas, the Rudras, the sun, the moon, the wind, the Maruts, the oceans, the rivers, the Ashvins, the gods, the gandharvas, Narada, Parvata, the gandharva Vishvavasu, the Siddhas and large numbers of apsaras were also there. Rudra Mahadeva was decorated

with beautiful karnikara flowers. He blazed in his radiance, like moonlight from the moon. That beautiful and divine forest was full of gods and devarshis. For the sake of a son, the rishi<sup>1009</sup> was engaged in supreme yoga there. His complexion did not fade and there was no decay in his beauty. The three worlds thought that this was extraordinary. In his matted hair, his energy was like the flames of a fire. United in that infinite energy, he was seen to be blazing. The illustrious Markandeya told me about this. He always talked about the conduct of the gods. O son! Because, Krishna's<sup>1010</sup> matted hair blazed through those austerities, even today, it is seen to possess the complexion of the fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, he faithfully performed austerities. Maheshvara was gratified and decided to grant him his wish. The illustrious Tryambaka seemed to smile and said, 'O Dvaipayana! You will get the kind of son you desire. You will have a pure and great son and he will be like the fire, the wind, the earth, the water and space. His sentiments and his intelligence will be like that and he will seek refuge in the atman. He will be enveloped in energy and he will obtain fame in the three worlds.'"

## Chapter 1639(311)

‘Bhishma said, “Satyavati’s son obtained this supreme boon from the god. One day, in a desire to create a fire, he collected two sticks and was rubbing them together. O king! At that time, the illustrious rishi saw the apsara named Ghritachi. She blazed in her energy and her beauty was supreme. O Yudhishtira! In that forest, on seeing the apsara, the rishi, the illustrious Vyasa, was suddenly overcome by desire. O great king! On seeing that Vyasa’s mind was overwhelmed by desire, Ghritachi assumed the form of a she-parrot and appeared before him. Seeing the apsara assume a different form, the desire in his body did not vanish, but spread all over his body. The sage summoned his great fortitude and tried to suppress it. However, Vyasa was unable to control it and his mind was agitated. What was going to happen was certain to happen. Thus, Ghritachi’s body seized him. Wishing to control it, the sage tried to create a fire. However, his semen suddenly fell down on those sticks. However, without any anxiety in his mind, the supreme among brahmanas continued to rub those sticks. O king! Through her, the brahmana rishi had a son named Shuka.<sup>1011</sup> When the semen fell down, the great ascetic, Shuka, was born. The supreme rishi and great yogi was born from the womb of those two sticks. At a sacrifice, when oblations are poured on the kindling, a blazing fire results. Shuka was born in such a form, flaming in his energy. O Kouravya! His radiance and supreme beauty and complexion were like that of his father. The one with the clean soul was as resplendent as a fire blazing without any smoke. O lord of men! In her own personified form, Ganga, best among rivers, came to the slopes of Meru and bathed him with her water. O Kouravya! O Indra among kings! From the sky, a staff and a black antelope skin fell down on the ground, for the sake of the great-souled Shuka. Gandharvas sang and large numbers of apsaras danced. The drums of the gods were sounded with a loud roar. The gandharvas Vishvavasu, Tumburu and Narada, and the gandharvas Haha and Huhu, praised Shuka’s birth. With Shakra at the forefront, the guardians of the worlds arrived. So did the gods, the devarshis and the brahmana rishis. The wind god showered down all kinds of divine flowers. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, was delighted. The great-souled and immensely radiant one<sup>1012</sup> was delighted. With the goddess,<sup>1013</sup> he himself arrived and when the sage’s son was born, performed the sacred thread ceremony, following the proper rites. Shakra, the lord of the gods, was delighted and gave him a divine and extraordinary kamandalu<sup>1014</sup> and celestial garments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swans, *shatapatras*,<sup>1015</sup> thousands of cranes and blue jays circled around Shuka. The immensely radiant one obtained a divine birth from those sticks. He dwelt there, intelligent, controlled and a brahmachari. O great king! As soon as he was born, all the Vedas, with their mysteries and their collections, presented themselves before him, just as they had before his father. O great king! Thinking about dharma, he<sup>1016</sup> chose Brihaspati, learned about the Vedas, the Vedangas and their commentaries, as his preceptor. He studied all the Vedas, with their mysteries and their collections. The lord also studied all the histories and the sacred texts about royal policy. Having given a dakshina to his preceptor, the great sage returned. Controlled and a brahmachari, he started fierce austerities. Even when he was a child, the gods and the rishis revered him, because of his knowledge and his austerities. O lord of men! His intelligence found no delight in the three ashramas, with garhasthya as their foundation. He sought insight about the dharma of moksha.”



## Chapter 1640(312)

‘Bhishma said, “Thinking about emancipation, Shuka went to his father. Humbly and desiring what was beneficial, he saluted the preceptor and said, ‘O illustrious one! You are accomplished in the dharma of moksha. Tell me about it. O lord! Let supreme tranquility be generated in my mind.’ On hearing his son’s words, the supreme rishi replied, ‘O son! Study the different texts on moksha and dharma.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shuka, supreme among those who know about the brahman, accepted the instructions of his father and studied the sacred texts of yoga and everything propounded by Kapila.<sup>1017</sup> He was united with the prosperity of the brahman and became like Brahma in his valour. Vyasa thought that his son had become accomplished in knowledge about moksha. He said, ‘Go to Janaka, the lord of Mithila. In particular, he will tell you everything about the objective of emancipation.’ Instructed by his father, he decided to go to Janaka, the king of Mithila, to ask him about the benefit of dharma and devotion to moksha. He was told,<sup>1018</sup> ‘Follow the path that humans take. Do not proceed so as to cause wonder. Do not use your powers to travel through the sky. Be upright in your path. Do not seek happiness along the way. In particular, do not get attached. And in particular, do not seek out companions. You must not show any insolence when you perform sacrifices for that lord of men. If you are obedient to him, he will dispel your doubts. The king is skilled about dharma and is accomplished in the sacred texts of moksha. I am the officiating priest at his sacrifices. Without any doubt, you should do whatever he asks you to.’ Having been thus addressed, the sage, with dharma in his soul, left for Mithila.

“He proceeded on foot, though he was capable of traversing the earth, with all its oceans, through the sky. He passed mountains and traversed rivers and lakes. There were many kinds of forests, full of predators and diverse other animals. He passed through the two *varshas*, Meru and Hari, and went through the *varsha* Himavat.<sup>1019</sup> In due course, he arrived in Bharatavarsha. Having seen many countries, inhabited by the Chins and the Hunas, the great sage arrived in the country known as Aryavarta. Thinking about the words of instruction given by his father, he travelled, like a bird travelling through the sky. Despite many beautiful habitations, prosperous cities and wonderful gems, Shuka saw them, without quite seeing them.<sup>1020</sup> There were beautiful groves and plains and sacred places of pilgrimage. The traveller passed through them. In a short while, he reached Videha, protected by the great-souled Dharmaraja<sup>1021</sup> Janaka. He saw many villages there and many men with food. There were prosperous habitations of cowherds, full of large numbers of cattle. There were fields rich with rice and barley and hundreds of lakes full of lotuses, inhabited by swans and cranes. They were beautiful and adorned. Videha was rich and densely populated. Passing through it, he arrived in the beautiful and expensive groves of Mithila. It was full of elephants, horses and chariots and populated with men and women. The undecaying one passed through them, seeing, but not quite seeing. His mind bore a burden and he kept thinking about this. He found pleasure in his atman. He took delight in his atman and arrived in Mithila. When he arrived at the gate, he was restrained by the gatekeepers. He waited there, free and devoted to meditation.

“Having obtained permission, he entered. He advanced along the royal road, frequented by prosperous people. Without any hesitation, he entered, desirous of meeting the king. But there too, the gatekeepers used harsh words to bar his entry. Like earlier, without any anger, Shuka waited. The heat and the travel had not distressed him, despite his suffering from hunger, thirst and exhaustion. He did not suffer from any misery, nor did the heat trouble him. Shuka waited there, like the midday sun. On seeing him there, one of the gatekeepers was filled with grief. He honoured him in the proper way, greeting him with hands joined in salutation. He escorted him to the second chamber in the king’s palace.<sup>1022</sup> O son! Seated there, Shuka began to think about moksha. The immensely radiant one was indifferent as to whether a place was in the sun or in the shade. In a short while, the king’s minister arrived. Joining his hands in salutation, he escorted him to the third chamber in the king’s palace. The great inner quarters were there, the equal of Chaitraratha.<sup>1023</sup> It was excellently divided into waterbodies used for pleasure. There were beautiful and flowering trees. The minister showed Shuka that supreme grove. He instructed that a seat should be given to him and departed. There were young and beautiful women there, attired in handsome garments. Their hips were excellent and their attire was wispy. They were adorned in ornaments made out of molten gold. They were skilled in conversation and accomplished in dancing and singing. They smiled before they spoke and their beauty was like that of apsaras. They were accomplished in all aspects of kama. They could discern signs and

were skilled in everything. Fifty such excellent women, foremost among courtesans, surrounded him. One after another, they seized his feet and washed them, worshipping him. They satisfied him with excellent objects that were appropriate to the time and the place. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once he had eaten, one after another, they led him and showed him the beautiful groves in the inner quarters. They sported, laughed and sang before Shuka. He was generous in his spirit and knew about the truth. However, all of them entertained him in this way. The one with the pure soul had been born from two sticks. His senses were under subjugation and his anger had been conquered. The performer of the three kinds of karma did not have the three kinds of doubt concerning these.<sup>1024</sup> He was neither delighted, nor enraged. Those supreme women gave him a bed and a seat, decorated with jewels, excellent and supreme. They were strewn with spreads and cushions. Having washed his feet, Shuka performed his evening prayers. He sat down on the seat and began to think about his auspicious objective. In the first part of the night, he engaged in meditation there. As is proper, in the middle of the night, the lord ate and went to sleep. In a short while, he arose and performed the rites of ablution. Surrounded by those women, the intelligent one meditated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following the rites, in this way, Krishna's undecaying son spent the day and the night in the king's household.”

## Chapter 164(313)

‘**B**hishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Later, King Janaka, with all his ministers and with his priest at the forefront, came to the inner quarters. He brought an expensive seat and many kinds of jewels. Bearing those offerings on his head, he approached his preceptor’s son.<sup>1025</sup> He gave him the expensive seat. It was decorated with many gems, was covered with spreads and cushions and was fortunate in every way.<sup>1026</sup> With his own hands, the king received the seat from the priest. He gave it to Shuka, his preceptor’s son, and worshipped him. Krishna’s son was seated there and honoured, in accordance with the sacred texts. Water to wash the feet was offered first. A gift and a cow were given next. Following the prescribed rites and reciting the mantras, he accepted the honour. Having received the honours, the supreme among brahmanas worshipped Janaka. Taking the king’s permission, he accepted the cow. The immensely energetic one asked the king whether he was well and in good health. Shuka next asked about the welfare of the followers. Having taken his permission, the Indra among kings and his followers seated themselves. The generous king joined his hands in salutation and sat down on the ground. The king asked whether Vyasa’s son was well and healthy. The king then asked why he had come.

““Shuka said, ‘O fortunate one! My father said that you are accomplished in the meaning of the dharma of moksha. He said that he is the officiating priest to the famous King Janaka of Videha. If I had any doubts in my heart, he asked me to quickly go there. He said that you would sever my doubts about pravritti and nivritti. Instructed by my father, I have come here to ask you. You are the foremost among the upholders of dharma. Therefore, you should tell me. If a brahmana desires the objective of emancipation for himself, what are the tasks that he should undertake? What are the tasks required for emancipation? Is it knowledge or austerities?’

““Janaka replied, ‘From the time of birth, hear about the tasks a brahmana must undertake. O son! When the sacred thread ceremony is over, he must devote himself to the Vedas. O lord! He must devote himself to austerities, tending to his preceptor and brahmacharya. Without any malice, he must repay the debts to the gods and the ancestors. Having controlled himself, he must study the Vedas. Once this is over, he must take the preceptor’s permission, offer a dakshina, and return. Having returned, with his wife, he must dwell in the state of a householder. He must not go to anyone else.<sup>1027</sup> He must be free from malice and must possess the household fire. Having obtained sons and grandsons, he must dwell in the ashrama of vanaprastha. Following the sacred texts, he must establish a fire there and affectionately attend to the guests. In the forest, a person who knows about dharma ignites another fire in his atman.<sup>1028</sup> He is without the opposite pairs of sentiments. There is no attachment in his soul and he dwells in the ashrama that is devoted to the brahman.’

““Shuka asked, ‘If jnana and vijñana have been generated and if one can see the eternal in one’s heart, is it necessary to reside in the ashrama of the forest? I am asking you about this and you should tell me. O lord of men! Tell me the truth about the purport of the Vedas.’

“Janaka replied, ‘One cannot advance towards emancipation without jnana and vijnana. It has been said that one cannot obtain jnana without association with a preceptor. It has been said that jnana is the boat and the preceptor is the one who steers the boat. After having obtained knowledge, one has accomplished one’s objective. After having reached the shore, one can abandon both.<sup>1029</sup> It has been said that the four ashramas of dharma and their codes of conduct were thought of earlier, to prevent the destruction of the worlds and the destruction of rites. In the course of progress, one performs many kinds of tasks. However, emancipation cannot be obtained in this world by performing good or bad deeds. By thinking about the reasons through many births in this cycle of existence, one can obtain a pure soul and attain emancipation even in the first ashrama. When one has obtained liberation in this way, the learned person can see the purpose behind everything. For someone who desires the supreme in this way, what is the purpose behind the other three ashramas? One must always discard the taints associated with rajas and tamas. Perceiving the atman in one’s atman,<sup>1030</sup> one must adhere to the path of sattva. One must see one’s atman in all beings and all beings in one’s atman. However, one will not be attached, like an aquatic creature in the water. If one is free from the body in this way, one is liberated and beyond opposites. One obtains tranquility. Like a bird, one soars above the flood and obtains the infinite in this world. In ancient times, King Yayati sung a chant about this. Listen. O son! This is upheld by brahmanas who are accomplished in the sacred texts of moksha. “The radiance exists in the atman and not anywhere else.<sup>1031</sup> Be attached to it. If one is extremely controlled in one’s consciousness, one is capable of seeing it oneself. Such a person is not frightened of others and others are not frightened of him. He does not desire or hate. He then obtains the brahman. In deeds, thoughts or words, he does not entertain wicked sentiments towards any creature. He then obtains the brahman. He engages himself in austerities. He discards the enticement of jealousy. He abandons desire and avarice. He then obtains the brahman. In words and sight, he does not cause injury to any creature. He is impartial and beyond opposites. He then obtains the brahman. He looks upon praise and censure equally. He is indifferent to gold and iron, joy and misery, cold and heat, good and evil, pleasant and unpleasant, birth and death. He then obtains the brahman.” A tortoise extends its limbs and then draws them back again. That is the way a mendicant restrains his senses and his mind. When a house is enveloped in darkness, one can see with the light of a lamp. In that way, using the lamp of intelligence, one is capable of seeing the atman. O supreme among intelligent ones! I can see that you are already aware of all of this. You also know the truth about everything else that there is to be known. O brahmana rishi! Through the favours of your preceptor and because of his teachings, you already know about all these subjects. O great sage! It is also because of his favours that this divine knowledge has manifested itself before me and I know all this. Your vijnana is superior to mine and your destination is superior to mine. Even if you do not realize it, your prosperity is superior to mine. Though that vijnana has been generated in you, you are not aware of its existence, perhaps because of doubts associated with a young age, perhaps because of fear that you might not obtain emancipation. Through my pure conduct, I may have been able to sever the doubts. With the bonds of the heart loosened, you will obtain the objective. The vijnana has already been generated in you. You are firm in your intelligence and without avarice. O brahmana! However, without the appropriate conduct, one cannot obtain the supreme. There is no joy or misery in you. In particular, there is no greed. You are not interested in dancing and singing. No attachment was generated in you. You are not bound down by relatives. You are not terrified of things that lead to fear. O immensely fortunate one! I can see that you regard a lump of earth or iron and gold as the same. I and other learned ones can see that you are established on the supreme path, which is without decay and eternal. O brahmana! All the fruits of the objective of moksha exist in you. O brahmana! What else do you wish to ask me?’”

## Chapter 1642(314)

‘Bhisma said, “Hearing these words, the one with the cleansed soul became firm in his resolution. He based his atman on the atman and saw the atman in his atman. He was happy and tranquil at having accomplished his objective. Silently, with the speed of the wind, he headed towards the northern direction, towards the cold mountains. At this time, devarshi Narada wished to see the Himalayas, inhabited by siddhas and charanas. It was populated by a large number of apsaras and reverberated with the sound of singing. There were large numbers of kin-

naras and bees. There were diver-birds, wagtails and wonderful pheasants. There were colourful peacocks, calling in hundreds of tones. There were collections of swans and cheerful cuckoos. Garuda, the king of birds, always went there. To ensure the welfare of the worlds, the four guardians of the worlds, the gods and large numbers of rishis always gathered there. For the sake of a son, the great-souled Vishnu tormented himself with austerities there.

“In his childhood, it was there that Kumara hurled his spear down on the ground, disrespecting the three worlds and the residents of heaven. Having flung it down, Skanda spoke these words to the universe. ‘Is there anyone superior to me? Is there anyone who loves brahmanas more? Is there a second valiant Brahmanya<sup>1032</sup> in the three worlds? If there is any such person, let him raise this spear, or make it tremble.’ On hearing this, the worlds were distressed and wondered who would be the saviour. The large number of gods were frightened that he wished to become Indra. The illustrious Vishnu saw that the asuras and the rakshasas were also agitated. He began to think, ‘What is the best thing to be done under the circumstances?’ He could not afford to tolerate and ignore the act of flinging down by Pavaki.<sup>1033</sup> The one with the pure soul laughed at the blazing spear. Purushottama grasped it in his left hand and it began to tremble. The powerful Vishnu made the spear tremble in this way. The earth, with all its mountains, forests and groves, began to shake. Although he could have uprooted the spear, he only made it tremble a little. In this way, the lord Vishnu preserved Skandaraja’s pride. Having made it tremble, the illustrious one spoke to Prahlada. ‘Behold Kumara’s valour. No one else is capable of acting in this way.’ Unable to tolerate these words, he<sup>1034</sup> determined to uproot the spear. He grasped it, but could not make it tremble. Uttering a loud roar, he fell down on the summit of the mountain, unconscious. Hiranyakashipu’s son was numbed and fell down on the ground.

“O son! The one with the bull on his banner<sup>1035</sup> always goes to the northern slopes of that king among mountains and torments himself with austerities there. The hermitage there is surrounded by a blazing fire and is extremely difficult to approach. It is known as Adityabandhana and a person with an unclean soul cannot approach it. It is surrounded by a blazing fire that extends for ten yojanas.<sup>1036</sup> The valiant and illustrious Pavaka is himself established there. He removes all impediments for the intelligent Mahadeva. Mahadeva was firm in his vows. There, he stood on a single foot for one thousand divine years, thereby tormenting the gods.

“On the slopes of those mountains, Vyasa, Parashara’s immensely ascetic son, taught the Vedas. The great ascetic instructed his disciples—the immensely fortunate Sumantu, Vaishampayana, the immensely wise Jaimini and the ascetic Paila. The great ascetic, Vyasa, was surrounded by these disciples. At that sacred hermitage, the supreme father saw that the one who had been born from the sticks<sup>1037</sup> was approaching, pure in his soul and like the sun in the sky. Vyasa saw that his son was approaching, like a fire scattering flames on every side. He was like the sun in his resplendence. The great-souled one was united with yoga and did not seem to touch the trees, the mountains, or the uneven terrain. He was like an arrow that had been released from a bow. The son of the two sticks approached his father and grasped his feet. Following the rites, the great sage welcomed him. Cheerful in his mind, Shuka informed his father about his conversation with King Janaka. He told him everything. With his son, the great sage, Parashara’s son, Vyasa, continued to dwell on the slopes of the Himalayas, instructing his disciples. They were accomplished in studying the Vedas and tranquil in their souls, having conquered their senses. Those ascetics had obtained the benefits from the Vedas and the Vedangas.

“On one occasion, Vyasa was surrounded by them. The disciples joined their hands in salutation and spoke to their preceptor. ‘We have obtained great benefits and our fame has increased. However, through the favours of our preceptor, there is one thing that we still desire.’ On hearing their words, the brahmana rishi replied, ‘Tell me what you wish for. I will act so as to bring you pleasure.’ On hearing their preceptor’s words, the disciples were cheerful in their minds. They joined their hands in salutation and again bowed their heads down before their preceptor. O king! Together, they spoke these supreme words. ‘O supreme among sages! If our preceptor is pleased, we have been blessed. O maharshi! All of us desire that you should grant us a boon. Through your favours, other than us, let no sixth person become famous.’<sup>1038</sup> The four of us are your disciples and the preceptor’s son is the fifth. We desire the boon that the Vedas may only be established in us.’ Vyasa knew about the true purport of the Vedas. On hearing the words of his disciples, Parashara’s intelligent son thought about welfare in the world hereafter. The one with dharma in his soul spoke these words, which were full of beneficial dharma, to his disciples. ‘They must al-

ways be given to a brahmana who is devoted to the brahman, one who certainly wishes to dwell in Brahma's world. May you multiply and spread the undecaying words of the Vedas. They should not be given to someone who has not become a disciple, nor to a person who is without vows and has not cleansed his soul. These should be known as the true qualities of someone who becomes a disciple. Without testing for character, the knowledge should never be given. Pure gold is tested by heating, cutting and rubbing. In that way, a disciple's birth and qualities must be tested. Do not employ a disciple in a task that should not be undertaken, or where there is great danger. The fruits of knowledge are proportional to intelligence and studying. Let all the difficulties be overcome. Let everyone see what is fortunate. You are accomplished to teach the four varnas, with brahmanas at the forefront. In studying the Vedas, these are said to be the great tasks that must be observed. To praise the gods, Svayambhu created the Vedas. If a person is ignorant and deluded and is jealous of brahmanas, disrespecting a brahmana who is accomplished in the Vedas, there is no doubt that he will be overcome. If a person speaks about this without following dharma, or if a person asks about this without following dharma, there will be no affection between them.<sup>1039</sup> Instead, there will be hatred. I have thus told you everything about the rites to be followed in the course of studying. Bear these in your hearts and bring welfare to your disciples.'"

## Chapter 1643(315)

‘Bhishma said, “On hearing these words of their preceptor, the immensely energetic disciples of Vyasa were delighted in their minds and embraced each other. They said, ‘The illustrious one spoke beneficial words. We will firmly bear these in our minds and act in accordance with them.’ Cheerful in their minds, they again embraced each other. Accomplished in the use of words, they again addressed their preceptor. ‘O great sage! We wish to descend from this great mountain and depart. O lord! If it pleases you, we wish to divide the Vedas into many parts.’ On hearing the words of his disciples, the lord who was Parashara's son replied in beneficial words that were full of dharma and artha. ‘Go wherever you wish, to earth, or to the world of the gods. However, always be attentive. Brahma has a lot of deceit.’<sup>1040</sup> They obtained the permission of their preceptor, who was truthful in his speech. Circumambulating Vyasa and bowing their heads down before him, they departed. They descended to earth and performed four sacrifices. They began to officiate at the sacrifices of brahmanas, kings and vaishyas. They were cheerful and devoted themselves to the householder mode of life, honoured by brahmanas. They were prosperous and famous in the worlds, engaged in studying and officiating at sacrifices.

“When his disciples had descended, Vyasa was only accompanied by his son. The intelligent one was silent and seated alone, engaged in meditation. Narada saw the extremely ascetic one in that hermitage. At that time, he spoke to him in these sweet words and syllables. ‘O maharshi! O one who is descended from Vasishtha's lineage!<sup>1041</sup> The chants of the brahman can no longer be heard. You are silent and seated alone in meditation. What are you thinking about? Without chants of the brahman, the mountain is no longer beautiful. It is like the moon, when it is invaded by Upaplava<sup>1042</sup> and enveloped in dust and darkness. It is no longer as radiant as it was earlier and looks like a habitation of the *nishadas*. Though there are a large number of deva-rishis here, the sounds of the Vedas can no longer be heard. The rishis, the gods and the infinitely energetic gandharvas have been deprived of the sounds of the brahman. It is no longer as resplendent as it used to be.’ On hearing Narada's words, Krishna Dvaipayana replied, ‘O maharshi! You are accomplished in the words of the Vedas and I am in agreement with what you have said. You have indeed said what is appropriate. You know everything. You see everything. You are curious about everything. Everything that happens in the three worlds is known to you. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, tell me what I can do for you. O brahmana rishi! Instruct me about what I should do now. Separated from my disciples, my mind has become cheerless.’

“Narada said, ‘The stain of the Vedas is in their not being chanted. The stain of brahmanas is in the non-observance of vows. Carriers<sup>1043</sup> are the stain of the earth. Curiosity is the stain of women. With your intelligent son, study the Vedas. Let the chants of the brahman protect us from the fear of darkness.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Vyasa was supremely devoted to dharma. On hearing Narada's words, he agreed with those words. Firm in his vows, he cheerfully began to practise the Vedas. With his son Shuka, he began to chant



the Vedas. Those syllables were accomplished and seemed to fill the worlds. Both of them were learned about all kinds of dharma. One day, as they were chanting, a turbulent wind arose. That wind seemed to have arisen from the depths of the ocean. Vyasa instructed his son to refrain from chanting. Having been restrained, Shuka was filled with curiosity. He asked his father, ‘O brahmana! Where has this wind originated? You should tell me everything about the progress of the wind.’ Hearing Shuka’s words, Vyasa was greatly astounded. He spoke these words, explaining why this portent meant that the chanting should cease. ‘You possess divine sight. Your pure mind has also been cleansed. You have discarded tamas and rajas and have resorted to sattva. Just as a person sees a reflection in the mirror, you see the atman in your atman. Basing yourself on your atman, you use your intelligence to think about the Vedas. Vishnu walks along devayana. There is darkness along pitriyana.<sup>1044</sup> After death, there are two paths. One goes to heaven, or one heads downwards. The wind blows on earth and in the firmament. There are seven courses that the wind follows. In due progression, listen to them. O son! The large numbers of gods and the immensely strong Sadhyas gave birth to a son named Samana. He was invincible. Udana was his son. Vyana was his son. Vyana’s son was Apana. Know that Apana’s son, Prana, came after that.<sup>1045</sup> Prana was invincible and the scorcher of enemies. However, he didn’t have any offspring. I will now tell you accurately about their separate deeds. In all living bodies, these winds have their separate courses. Prana is said to be the breath of life in creatures. The first wind, which follows the first course, is known by the name of Pravaha.<sup>1046</sup> It whirls along the large masses of clouds that are full of smoke and heat. It is attached to clouds in the sky and manifests itself in the form of flashes of lightning. The second wind is known as Avaha<sup>1047</sup> and it blows with a loud roar. This is the one that causes Soma and the other stellar bodies to rise and set. Inside bodies, maharshis speak of it as Udana. There is a wind that sucks up water from the four oceans. Having sucked it up, this wind gives it to the clouds in the sky. Having given it to the clouds, it then gives it to Parjanya.<sup>1048</sup> This is the third wind, which always blows and gives rise to rain. This has the name of Udvaha.<sup>1049</sup> There is a wind that causes confusion in the sky and creates separate clouds for the sake of releasing rain. It roars in the clouds. It brings them together and separates them again. It is the roar in the rivers. For the sake of preserving creatures, it appears in the form of clouds. In the sky, it bears the celestial vehicles of the gods. This fourth wind is named Samvaha<sup>1050</sup> and it shatters mountains. There is a fifth and immensely forceful wind named Vivaha.<sup>1051</sup> It is powerful and dry and shatters the trees that yield juice. When they are attached to it, clouds are known as Balahaka. When this wind moves, it creates terrible calamities. It roars in the firmament. The sixth wind is supreme among upright ones and is named Parivaha. It bears the celestial waters in the firmament and prevents them from overflowing. It supports the sacred waters of the Ganga in the sky and prevents them from being dislodged. The sun possesses one thousand rays and lights up the earth. However, because it is restrained from afar by this wind, the sun seems to possess a single ray. It is because of this wind that Soma becomes the store of divine amrita. There is another wind by the name of Paravaha. When the time of death arrives, this takes away the breath of life from all creatures. Death and Vaivasvata<sup>1052</sup> follow its trail. However, there are also those who use their intelligence to properly see. They are tranquil and always devoted to adhyatma. They are cheerful in their practice of meditation. They can think of themselves as immortal. Daksha’s ten sons and the thousands of sons of Prajapati encountered its force at the place where the directions end.<sup>1053</sup> Though it is created, those who can subjugate it don’t have to return.<sup>1054</sup> O son! These Maruts are the extremely wonderful sons of Aditi.<sup>1055</sup> They blow and go everywhere. They sustain everything, but do not get attached to anything. It is a great wonder that this supreme among mountains should suddenly be made to tremble because of the blowing of the wind. Since this blows with great force, it is the wind that results from Vishnu’s breath. O son! When it blows suddenly, the entire universe is distressed. Hence, as long as it is blowing, those who know about the brahman do not chant the name of the brahman. They are also a form of the wind.<sup>1056</sup> It is said that when the brahman is chanted, the other wind that blows suffers from a fear and a difficulty.’ Having spoken these words, the lord who was Parashara’s son instructed his son to chant again, so that the firmament should again be full of the Ganga.”<sup>1057</sup>

hishma said, “At that time, Narada came to the spot where Shuka was alone,<sup>1058</sup> engaged in studying. He wished to ask him about the purport of the Vedas. On seeing that devarshi Narada had presented himself, Shuka first offered him arghya and then honoured him, following the rites laid down in the Vedas. Narada was delighted and spoke these words. ‘O supreme among those who know about the brahman! O son! How can I ensure what is best for you? Cheerfully, instruct me.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hearing Narada’s words, Shuka replied, ‘What is beneficial in this world? You should instruct me about the truth of this.’

“Narada answered, ‘Earlier, rishis with cleansed souls desired to find out about the truth. The illustrious Sanatkumara spoke these words to them. “There is no sight that is like that of knowledge. There are no austerities that are equal to learning. There is no misery that is equal to attachment. There is no bliss that is equal to renunciation. Abstention from wicked deeds, constant engagement in auspicious conduct, virtuous conduct and virtuous behaviour constitute supreme benefit. Having obtained the miserable status of being born as a man, if a person becomes attached, he is confused. Such a person will not be freed from misery. Attachment is the sign of misery. The intelligence of someone who is attached is fickle. The net of delusion is only widened. If one is enmeshed in the net of delusion, one obtains misery in this world and in the next. Every means must be used to restrain desire and anger. These two arise to destroy what is beneficial and prevent observance of beneficial tasks. Austerities must always be protected against anger, and prosperity must be protected against jealousy. Knowledge must be protected against honour and dishonour and the atman against distraction. Non-violence is supreme dharma. Forgiveness is supreme strength. Knowledge of the atman is supreme knowledge. There is nothing that is superior to the truth. Truthful words are the best. However, beneficial words are preferable to the truth. It is my view that whatever brings great benefit to creatures is the truth. A person who has renounced the fruits of all enterprise, is without desires, delinked from possessions and has renounced everything, is knowledgeable and learned. If a person enjoys the senses and the objects of the senses without his self being subjugated by them and if he is not attached, he is tranquil in his soul. He is indifferent and controlled. If a person is immersed in his atman and if he is not attached to anything he is associated with, he has been freed. He will soon obtain the supreme benefit. O sage! If a person does not really see, touch or converse with other creatures, he will obtain the supreme benefit. One should not act violently towards any being. One should always be affectionate. Having obtained birth, one should never exhibit enmity. A person who is content with a trifle, a person who is without hopes and not fickle—such a person is said to have conquered himself. He knows his atman and will obtain the supreme benefit. O son!<sup>1059</sup> Discard all possessions and conquer your senses. Be established in the place that has no sorrow and be without fear, in this world and in the next. Those who have no desires do not grieve. Cast aside all desire from your self. Cast aside all desire and be tranquil. You will thus free yourself from misery and calamity. A sage must control his self, be restrained and always engage in austerities. He must conquer desire, which is difficult to vanquish. In the midst of attachments, he must not be attached. If a brahmana is not attached to an association with any of the qualities and if he always dwells alone, he will soon obtain supreme bliss. Creatures are addicted to the pleasure that comes from sexual congress. In the midst of this, a sage takes pleasure in himself alone. Know him to be a person for whom wisdom has brought contentment. A person who is content with his knowledge does not sorrow. Through auspicious deeds, one obtains divinity in the firmament. Through mixed deeds, one obtains birth as a human. Through inauspicious deeds, one obtains an inferior birth. One is powerless against what has been obtained through deeds. Creatures are cooked in the cycle of life. One is always assailed by death, old age and misery. Why do you not understand this? Something that is not beneficial is regarded by you as beneficial. Something that is transitory is regarded by you as permanent. Something that is undesirable is regarded by you as desirable. Why do you not understand this? Like a silkworm, you are enmeshing yourself in these multiple strands. You are entangling yourself in this cocoon. But you do not comprehend. There has been enough of possessions. Possessions are associated with sins. The worm encased in a cocoon is destroyed by what it has itself done. Beings who are attached to sons, wives and families have to suffer. They are like an aged and wild elephant that has got stuck to the mud in a pond. They have been captured in a large net, like fish that have been dragged to the land. Behold. Creatures are entangled in the net of affection and undergo great misery. Families, sons, wives, bodies and accumulations of objects are all transitory and serve no purpose in the hereafter. There is nothing except one’s good and bad deeds. One must certainly abandon everything and go there. Why should one then be attached to the undesirable and not be engaged in what

brings one benefit? There is no place for resting along that path, no refuge and no provisions. That region is desolate, unknown and enveloped in darkness. How will you go there alone? When you advance there, there is nothing that will follow you from the rear. Your good and bad deeds are the only things that will follow you. One searches for one's objectives through learning, deeds, valour and extremely great wisdom. Once one is successful in accomplishing that objective, one is freed. The attachment towards dwelling in a village<sup>1060</sup> is like a noose made out of ropes. When one has severed it, the ones with good deeds move forward. Without severing it, the ones with bad deeds find it difficult to make progress. Beauty constitutes the banks.<sup>1061</sup> The mind is the current. Touch constitutes the islands and taste is the flow. Scent is the mud. Sound is the water. The flow along the road to heaven is extremely difficult. Forgiveness constitutes the oars. Truth, patience and dharma are the ropes. Renunciation is the wind that swiftly drives it. Using one's intelligence as a boat, one must cross that river. Abandon both dharma and adharma.<sup>1062</sup> Cast aside truth and falsehood. Having cast aside both truth and falsehood, cast aside everything that must be abandoned. Abandon all resolution about dharma. Abandon adharma and violence. Having cast aside both truth and falsehood, use your intelligence to form a resolution about what is supreme. The bones<sup>1063</sup> are the pillars. The sinews are like strings. Flesh and blood are the external plaster. The skin is a sheath. It emits a foul smell and is full of urine and excrement. It is pervaded by the sorrow of old age. It is an abode for disease and affliction. Abandon this residence of creatures, full of passion and impermanent. Everything in the universe is in this universe. This universe has originated in the five great elements. Everything results from the atoms<sup>1064</sup> of Mahat. There are the five senses and tamas, sattva and rajas. The collection of the seventeen<sup>1065</sup> is said to be indicative of the manifest. With the objects of the senses, the manifest and the unmanifest, there are said to be twenty-five,<sup>1066</sup> with the qualities of the manifest and the unmanifest. When all of these are united together, one is always described as a being.<sup>1067</sup> If a person knows the nature of the three objectives,<sup>1068</sup> life and death, he knows the truth. He knows about creation and destruction. A person who has the slightest bit of knowledge knows that prosperity exists in the hereafter. Anything that can be grasped by the senses is established in the realm of the manifest. One must know the unmanifest and attentively comprehend it through the signs. The senses always satisfy a creature, like a shower. However, a person who sees the atman sees that the atman is extended everywhere in the world. Through the strength of knowledge, a person can see the supreme and he does not perceive the lack of a shore. In every way and in every circumstance, he sees it in all beings. Even if he is associated with other creatures, he does not suffer anything undesirable on this account. Through knowledge, one can overcome many kinds of hardship that are due to delusion. When a person's knowledge has become manifest, he does not suffer any injury on account of the ways of the world. An illustrious person who knows about the sacred says that in its atman, a creature is without beginning and without end. It is without decay. It is not the doer and it is without form. Because of its own deeds, a creature is always engaged in tasks and confronts misery. In an attempt to counter this misery, it kills many other creatures. Having performed such an act, it goes through many other births. It is tormented, and suffers like a diseased person without any medication. There are many who are afflicted by such delusion, thinking that unhappiness is actually happiness. Slain and crushed, it is always churned in these deeds. That is the reason one must refrain from the bonds that are caused by deeds. One is wheeled around in this cycle of life and suffers many kinds of pain. However, you have withdrawn from those bonds. You have restrained yourself from deeds. You know everything. You have conquered everything. Be successful and free from all sentiments. Through restraint, abstaining from new bonds and resorting to the strength of austerities, many people have become successful. They have obtained unrestrained bliss.””””

## Chapter 1645(317)

““Narada said, ‘There are sacred texts that dispel sorrow and destroy all grief. They lead to tranquility and are auspicious. If one listens to them, one obtains intelligence and attains happiness. From one day to another, there are thousands of reasons for sorrow and hundreds of reasons for fear. They pervade a foolish person, but not one who is learned. Therefore, for the sake of destroying the undesirable, listen to the history. If one follows their instructions, one obtains the intelligence that destroys sorrow. Through association with the disagreeable and lack



of association with the agreeable, men of limited intelligence suffer from mental grief. When things belong to the past, one should not think about their qualities. By not having bonds of attachment with what is in the past, one can be emancipated. Whenever there is attachment, one should look for evils in it. If one sees the undesirable in such bonds, one is quickly separated from them. If a person sorrows over the past, he has no artha, dharma or fame. Thinking about their absence does not make them return. Creatures obtain some qualities and are also separated from them. All of these, and not just one, are reasons for grief. If a person grieves over the past, over something that is dead or destroyed, he piles misery on misery and doubles the grief. On seeing the progress of the worlds, intelligent people do not shed tears. Those who do not shed tears are the ones who see everything properly. A calamity may lead to physical or mental grief and even if one makes the best of efforts, one may be incapable of doing anything about it. Then, one should not think about it. Not thinking about it is the medicine for grief. Thoughts do not dispel it, but make it increase. Mental grief is destroyed through wisdom, physical through medication. Such is the capacity of learning and one must not behave like a child. Youth, beauty, life, stores of possessions, health and dwelling with loved ones are temporary. A learned person does not desire them. One should not sorrow alone over a calamity that has affected the entire country. Instead of grieving, if one perceives a way, one should act so as to counter it. In life, there is no doubt that there are many more reasons for misery than for joy. There is delusion over the fondness for satisfying the objects of the senses. Death is regarded as unpleasant. A man who casts aside both unhappiness and happiness obtains the brahman, and learned people do not sorrow over the end that he has obtained. There is misery in abandoning riches. But there is no happiness in protecting it. There is misery in obtaining it. Therefore, if there are no riches left, one should not think about it. Specific kinds of men obtain different types of riches. However, they are discontented and meet destruction. Learned people are content. All stores are destroyed. Anything that goes up, falls down. Association ends in disassociation. Life ends in death. There is no end to thirst. Contentment is supreme happiness. Therefore, learned people look upon contentment as the greatest prosperity. One's lifespan passes in an instant. It does not tarry. When one's own body is transitory, there is nothing that one can think of as permanent. Those who think about the nature of beings realize that everything is covered in darkness. They do not sorrow over those who have departed, but look towards the supreme objective. If a person is not satisfied with objects of desire and thinks that they are insufficient, death seizes him and departs, like a tiger grasping an animal. Therefore, one should seek means to be freed from misery. Even if one confronts a hardship, one should not sorrow. Even if one possesses a little riches, once one has enjoyed sound, touch, form, scent and taste, there is nothing further to tie one down.<sup>1069</sup> Before a creature was united with these, there was no misery and all was well. Consequently, a separation from these results in the natural state and there is nothing to grieve about. Fortitude must be used to control the penis and the stomach, the eyes to control the hands and feet. The mind should be used to control the eyes and the ears and knowledge used to control the mind and speech. If a person controls affection towards those who are superior and inferior and conducts himself in accordance with humility, such a person is learned and happy. A person who is devoted to adhyatma, is seated,<sup>1070</sup> is indifferent, without desire and depends only on the atman, is happy.”

## Chapter 1646(318)<sup>1071</sup>

““Narada said, ‘When happiness and misery appear and disappear, they cannot be countered through wisdom, good policy or enterprise. Established in one's own nature, one must make efforts not to suffer from lassitude. A person who loves his atman saves himself from old age, death and disease. Physical and mental diseases afflict the body, like sharp-pointed arrows that have been released from the bows of firm archers. A person who is frightened and desires to remain alive, wishing to be free from the afflictions, is rendered incapable. His body is afflicted and he is destroyed. Through nights and days, the lifespan of a mortal creature is continuously running, like the flowing current in a river, which does not retreat. Shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha incessantly progress. Without tarrying for an instant, they decay mortal creatures who have been born. The sun is without decay, but continuously rises and sets. The happiness and unhappiness of creatures is like that and is subject to decay. While he is concerned with what he has not seen earlier and what he has not obtained earlier, the desirable and undesir-

able aspects of a man set and depart like the night. Had a man not been dependent on the consequences of his earlier deeds, he would have obtained whatever he wished for and all his desires would have been satisfied. There are men who are controlled, accomplished and intelligent. However, if such virtuous people have not performed their own tasks,<sup>1072</sup> they are seen to be unsuccessful. There are others who are foolish, devoid of qualities and the worst among men. But because they possess the benedictions, they are seen to obtain everything that they desire.<sup>1073</sup> There are other creatures who are always ready to indulge in violence. Though they deceive the worlds, they age in happiness. There is someone who doesn't exert at all, but obtains prosperity. There is another one who undertakes all the tasks, but does not get what he should. Do you think that this is due to a transgression in a man's nature? The semen that is generated somewhere, goes somewhere else. Even when it has been placed inside a vagina, there may or may not be conception. It is then like the flower of a mango and it is as if there was abstinence. There are some who desire a son and wish for offspring. They are potent and make efforts, but no embryo results. There may be another brahmana who wishes to avoid embryos, like a venomous serpent. But he has a son with a long life-span. Without a life after death, how could he have become a father? There are those who are miserable and desire sons. They satisfy the gods and perform austerities. After being borne for ten months, a son who is the worst of the lineage is born. There are others who obtain auspicious and extensive stores of riches and grain stored by their fathers and only enjoy them. When two people approach each other in an act of sexual intercourse, the vagina is invaded and an embryo results. When the body decays, the wind of life leaves and enters another body. When a creature's life is destroyed, the flesh and phlegm are rendered immobile. When the next body is burnt, movement and lack of movement pass on to a further body. This ends in destruction. And there is an end in a further destruction. This is like boats moving back and forth.<sup>1074</sup> Through sexual intercourse, an unconscious drop of semen is deposited in the womb. What do you see? Through whose efforts does that embryo become alive? Inside the stomach, why is that embryo not digested? Inside the womb, there is a natural progression of urine and excrement. It<sup>1075</sup> cannot do anything about whether it is retained or discharged. It is not independent. Some foetuses suffer a miscarriage, others are born. There are some that are destroyed as soon as they are born. When there is union with the vagina, semen is released. Sometimes, an offspring results. In due course, that offspring is also submerged in intercourse. Among the hundreds who are born, some survive till seven or ten years of age. Some die and do not survive to be one hundred years old. There is no doubt that when men are assailed by disease, they are unable to get up. They are crushed, like small animals by predatory beasts. They are devoured by disease and spend a great deal of riches. But even then, despite the best efforts of physicians, the pain is not reduced. The physicians may be skilled. They may be accomplished in the use of large numbers of herbs. However, they are themselves afflicted by disease, like animals by hunters. They may drink astringent concoctions and diverse kinds of clarified butter. But they are seen to be crushed by old age, like serpents by stronger serpents. When animals and birds suffer from disease, who on earth treats them? In general, among predatory beasts and poor people, there are rarely those who are afflicted. There may be fiercely energetic kings. Even they are attacked by terrible diseases that are extremely difficult to withstand, like animals by stronger animals. Overcome by confusion and sorrow, people shriek. They are suddenly flung into a current and borne away by something that is stronger. Those with bodies can't counter what is natural—through riches, kingdoms or fierce austerities. Otherwise, no one would have died or become old. Everyone would have obtained everything that he desired. No one would have seen anything unpleasant and all and the fruits would have been obtained. Every person wishes to rise upwards. They try their utmost. But it doesn't work out that way. Even people who are not distracted by deceit and are brave without being cruel, become insolent and intoxicated because of riches and drunk and maddened with liquor. For some, hardships disappear even before they have seen them. There are others who are searching, but do not obtain anything. A great difference is seen between fruits and the undertaking of acts. There are some who bear palanquins. Others ride on those palanquins. Everyone desires prosperity. But only some have chariots advancing in front of them. There are men with hundreds of wives and there are hundreds of widowed women. There is conflict and pleasure in creatures and hundreds of men face these. Therefore, look only towards the hereafter and do not get confused. Cast aside both dharma and adharma. Abandon both truth and falsehood. Having abandoned both truth and falsehood, cast aside everything that must be cast aside. O supreme among rishis! I have told you about a supreme secret. Using this, the gods abandoned the mortal world and went to heaven.”

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing Narada’s words, the extremely intelligent Shuka patiently thought about this in his mind, but could not arrive at a conclusion. ‘Sons and wives lead to great hardship. Knowledge requires great effort. What is the eternal spot that is free from hardship and leads to greatness?’ Having thought about this for some time, he made up his mind to follow the atman. He knew about supreme dharma and the supreme and beneficial end. ‘How can I be unattached and go to that supreme objective? From there, there will no return and birth in this ocean of life. I desire that supreme state, so that I do not have to return again. I have determined in my mind that I will cast aside all attachment and strive towards that end. I will go to the place where the atman will find peace. I will establish myself in the eternal there and there will be no decay and destruction. Without yoga, I cannot obtain that supreme objective. Deeds cannot lead to that unattached state of liberation. Therefore, I will resort to yoga and cast aside this body, which is like a house. I will become a wind and enter the mass of energy in the rays of the sun. Having gone there, there is no decay, unlike the moon and the large number of gods, who tremble and fall down on the ground, ascending again when they have acquired merit. The moon always wanes and waxes again. The sun heats the world with its rays. It receives all the energy and the solar disc never decays. Therefore, going to the sun’s blazing energy appeals to me. I will dwell there, without being assailed, without attachment and based on my inner atman. I will cast my body into the sun’s residence. With the rishis, I will go to the sun’s energy, which is extremely difficult to withstand. I am seeking the permission of the trees, the elephants, the mountains, the earth, the directions, the firmament, gods, danavas, gandharvas, pishachas, serpents and all the creatures in the world. There is no doubt that I will enter there. Let all the gods and the rishis behold the power of my yoga.’ Narada, the rishi who was famous in the worlds, gave him permission. Having obtained his permission, he went to his father. Having greeted the great-souled sage and rishi, Dvaipayana, Shuka circumambulated him. He then asked the sage Krishna’s permission. On hearing the words of the rishi Shuka, the great-souled one was delighted and said, ‘O son! Stay here today, so that my eyes are gratified at the sight of you.’ Shuka had become indifferent, without affection and free from all attachment. Having thought about moksha, he had made up his mind to go. Leaving his father, the supreme among brahmanas went away.”’<sup>1076</sup>

## Chapter 1647(319)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vyasa’s son ascended the slope of the mountain. He sought out a flat spot that was devoid of grass and sat down there. Following the sacred texts, the great sage, accomplished in yoga, progressively held his atman in different parts of the body, beginning with the feet.<sup>1077</sup> A short time after the sun had risen, the learned one sat facing the east, humbly drawing in his hands and feet. There weren’t any flocks of birds there, nothing to see and nothing to hear. Vyasa’s intelligent son embarked on yoga there. Delinked from all attachments, he saw his atman there. On seeing the sun, Shuka laughed. To realize the path of moksha, he again resorted to yoga. The great lord of yoga overcame all limits of the sky.<sup>1078</sup> He circumambulated devarshi Narada and told the supreme rishi that he had resorted to yoga. ‘O one rich in austerities! May you be fortunate. I have seen the path that I should resort to. O immensely radiant one! With your favours, I will go to that beneficial objective.’ Having obtained Narada’s permission, Dvaipayana’s son saluted him.

“He again resorted to yoga and entered the sky. He arose from the slopes of Kailasa and ascended into the sky. Vyasa’s handsome son had made up his mind and travelled through the firmament. As he arose, the best among brahmanas looked like Vinata’s resplendent son.<sup>1079</sup> He possessed the speed of the thought and the wind and all the creatures saw him. Along that divine path, the lord’s complexion was like that of the fire or the sun. He thought about the progress of all the three worlds. He proceeded without any fear, single-minded in his attention. All the creatures, mobile and immobile, saw him. As is proper, they worshipped him, according to their capacity. The residents of heaven showered down celestial flowers. All the gandharvas and the large number of apsaras were astounded on seeing him. The rishis and the Siddhas were also extremely surprised. ‘Who is this who has obtained success through his austerities and is travelling through the sky? His body is downwards and his face is upwards. He is looking at everything with tranquility.’ The supremely patient one, famous in the three worlds, turned his face towards the east and looked at the sun. He seemed to fill the entire sky with his sound. On seeing him swiftly

advance, all the large numbers of apsaras were frightened in their minds. O king! They were filled with great wonder. There were Panchachuda<sup>1080</sup> and the others and their eyes dilated widely. ‘Who is this divinity who has attained such a supreme end? There is no doubt that he has been emancipated and is without desire. That is the reason he has been able to come here.’ Passing beyond them, he went to Mount Malaya, always frequented by Urvashi and Purvachitti.<sup>1081</sup> At the sight of the brahmana rishi’s son, they too were filled with great wonder. ‘Behold. This brahmana has used his intelligence and has studied the Vedas. Like the moon, in a short while, he will traverse through the sky. It is through serving his father that he has obtained this supreme success. He is devoted to his father. He is firm in his austerities. He is a son who is loved by his father. Why has his father not paid attention? Why has he allowed him to go?’ Shuka was supremely devoted to dharma. When he heard Urvashi’s words and the purport of those words penetrated his mind, he looked towards all the directions. He glanced at the firmament, the earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, and the lakes and rivers. All the gods also looked towards him. They joined their hands in salutation and showed great reverence towards Dvaipayana’s son. Shuka, supremely knowledgeable about dharma, spoke these words. ‘My father may follow me and call out my name. In that event, all of you control yourselves and reply to him. Since all of you bear affection towards me, please speak those words for my sake.’ On hearing Shuka’s words, all the directions, the forests, the groves, the oceans, the rivers and the mountains answered in every direction, ‘O brahmana! It shall be as you instruct. When the rishi speaks words to us, we will loudly reply in that way.’”

## Chapter 1648(320)

‘**B**hishma said, “Having spoken these words, the greatly ascetic brahmana rishi, Shuka, established himself in that success and cast away the four kinds of creatures.<sup>1082</sup> He cast aside the eight kinds of tamas and discarded the five kinds of rajas.<sup>1083</sup> The intelligent one also abandoned sattva and this was extraordinary. In that state, he was always without any qualities and was divested of all signs. He was like a blazing fire without any smoke and established himself in the brahman. Meteors showered down. The directions were aflame. The earth trembled. At that time, all these manifestations were extraordinary. Trees released their branches and mountains their summits. There were loud sounds, as if the Himalaya mountains were being shattered. The one with the thousand rays<sup>1084</sup> was no longer radiant. The fire did not blaze. The ponds, rivers and oceans were agitated. Vasava showered down water that was tasty and fragrant. Winds began to blow, with auspicious and divine scents. He saw two divine and unmatched peaks, rising from the Himalayas and Meru. They were sacred and close to each other. One was white, the other was yellow. One was made of silver, the other was made of gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Each was one hundred yojanas in expanse, both in height and in breadth. As he headed towards the northern direction, he saw these beautiful peaks. Without any fear in his mind, Shuka descended on them. At this, the two mountain peaks were cleft into two. O great king! That sight was extraordinary. The mountain peaks suddenly withdrew. Those supreme among mountains were unable to impede his progress. All the residents of heaven created a great roar in heaven. And so did the gandharvas and the rishis who resided in the mountains. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the sight of Shuka dividing the peaks and proceeding, roars of ‘Wonderful! Wonderful!’ arose everywhere. He was worshipped by the gods, the gandharvas, the rishis, the large numbers of yakshas and rakshasas and innumerable vidyadharas. In every direction, the firmament was strewn with celestial flowers. O great king! This is what happened when Shuka descended. As Shuka, with dharma in his soul, travelled above, he saw groves with flowering tree, and the beautiful Mandakini flowed through that region. Large numbers of apsaras were engaged in bathing there. Their bodies were naked and without garments. Because Shuka was without a form, they were not ashamed of their nudity.

“In due course, his father learnt about the excellent route that he had taken. Overcome with affection, he followed him from the rear. Shuka had ascended up into the sky, beyond the region traversed by the wind. Displaying his own powers, he had identified himself with all creatures.<sup>1085</sup> The immensely ascetic Vyasa resorted to the same fierce mode of great yoga. In a short while, he reached the spot where Shuka had descended. He saw the two mountain peaks that Shuka had shattered as he had proceeded. The rishis praised the deeds of his son. Using his

learning, for a long time, he called out Shuka's name. The sounds of his own father's voice resounded in the three worlds. By then, Shuka had become one with everything. He was in the soul of everything and faced every direction. The one with dharma in his soul replied in an echo, with the sound of 'Bho'.<sup>1086</sup> All the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects, replied loudly, resounding with the single syllable of 'Bho'. Even today, when separate sounds are uttered in mountains, caves and slopes, that echo of 'Bho' is heard, as if replying to Shuka. Having exhibited his powers, Shuka disappeared. He abandoned all the qualities, the attributes of sound and the others. He attained the supreme end. On witnessing the greatness of his infinitely energetic son, he<sup>1087</sup> sat down on the slopes of the mountain and began to think about his son. Large numbers of apsaras were sporting on the banks of the Mandakini. On seeing that the rishi had come there, they were frightened and came to their senses. Some of them immersed themselves in the water. Some others tried to cover themselves with creepers. On seeing that supreme among sages, some others tried to clutch at their garments. The sage realized that though they were naked, they had not been ashamed of his son. He understood that though he still had attachment, his son had been freed. He was both pleased and ashamed.

“Surrounded by gods and gandharvas and worshipped by large numbers of maharshis, the illustrious Shankara arrived there, with the Pinaka in his hand. Mahadeva spoke these words of comfort to Krishna Dvaipayana, who was tormented by grief on account of his son. ‘In earlier times, from me, you sought a son whose valour and conduct would be like that of the fire, the earth, the water, the wind and space. Because of your austerities, a son with such traits was born from you. He was pure and full of the energy of the brahman. This happened because of my powers. He has attained the supreme objective, one that is extremely difficult for someone who has not conquered his senses to obtain, even if that person is a god. O brahmana rishi! Why are you grieving? As long as the mountains are established and as long as the oceans exist, your son's undecaying deeds will endure. A shadow that is like your son will always be with you. O great sage! Through my favours, you will be able to see it in this world.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thereafter, through the favours of the illustrious Rudra himself, the sage was enveloped by a shadow and he could see it follow him. He was supremely delighted. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is Shuka's birth and progress. You asked me about it and I recounted it to you in detail. O king! In ancient times, I was told about this by devarshi Narada, and the great yogi, Vyasa, also told me about it on several occasions. This is an auspicious history, full of purport about the dharma of moksha. A person who bears this in mind obtains supreme tranquility and goes to the supreme destination.”

## Chapter 1649(321)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “If a person is in the status of garhasthya, brahmacharya, vanaprastha or a mendicant, and wishes to establish himself in success, which god should be worshipped? How can he certainly go to heaven? How can one obtain supreme benefit? What rites should one observe in offering oblations to the gods and the ancestors? Where does one go when one is emancipated? What is the essence of moksha? Having obtained heaven, how should one act, so as not to be dislodged from heaven? Who is the god of the gods? Who is the ancestor of the ancestors? What is superior to him?<sup>1088</sup> O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O unblemished one! O one who knows how to ask! The question you have asked me is about a mystery. Even if one speaks for one hundred years, one is incapable of answering this through arguments. O king! Without the favour of the gods or without resorting to the sacred texts, this fathomless mystery cannot be recounted. O slayer of enemies! I will recount it to you. In this connection, an ancient history is cited. This concerns a conversation between Narada and the rishi Narayana. My father told me that the eternal Narayana, the soul of the universe, was born in four forms as Dharma's son. O great king! This happened in ancient times, during krita yuga, during Svayambhuva.<sup>1089</sup> These were Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna. Out of these, Nara and Narayana travelled to the hermitage of Badari in their golden wagons and engaged in fierce austerities there.<sup>1090</sup> These were beautiful, yoked to the elements and possessed eight wheels.<sup>1091</sup> Those protectors of the worlds went there and because of the exertions that they undertook, became emaciated. The energy of their austerities was such that even the gods were unable to look at them. Only a god to whom they showed their favours was capable of seeing them. Narada was



devoted to them in his heart and was goaded by a desire to see them. From the summit of the great mountain Meru, he descended on Gandhamadana and this was extremely wonderful. O king! Roaming through the worlds, he quickly went to the spot where the hermitage of Badari was. He was overcome by curiosity and went to the region where those two, the foundations of all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the rishis, the kinaras and the serpents, were based. Earlier, they were in one single form. However, they had been born in four different forms as Dharma's offspring and had been reared by that great one. It was wonderful that Dharma had thus been honoured by those gods, Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna. For some reason, Krishna and Hari were elsewhere then. However, those two<sup>1092</sup> wished to enhance dharma and were engaged in austerities there. This was the time for daily rites.<sup>1093</sup> However, these two are the supreme refuge. What daily rites should they engage in? They are illustrious gods and the ancestors of all creatures. Which god or ancestor will those extremely intelligent ones worship? Thinking this in his mind and full of devotion towards Narayana, Narada suddenly appeared before those two gods. When they finished their prayers to the gods and the ancestors, they glanced towards him and honoured him, in accordance with the rites that are laid down in the sacred texts. Seeing that they followed the rites and prayed, Narada was filled with great wonder. The illustrious rishi was pleased and sat down. Delighted in his mind, he looked towards Narayana. Worshipping the great god, he spoke these words. 'You have been praised in the Vedas, the Puranas, the Vedangas and the additional Vedangas. You are without birth and eternal. You are held to be the creator and the supreme amrita. You are the foundation of everything in the universe, what has happened and what will happen. O god! All the four ashramas, with garhasthya as their foundation, incessantly worship you in the many forms in which you are established. You are the father and mother of the entire universe. You are the eternal preceptor. Which god and ancestor are you worshipping? We do not understand this.'

"The illustrious one replied, 'This is an eternal mystery and nothing should be said about this. O brahmana! However, because of your devotion, I will tell you the truth about this. It is subtle, impossible to comprehend, unmanifest, without mutation and eternal. It is disassociated from the senses, the objects of the senses and all the elements. It is in the atman of beings and is known as kshetraja. It is beyond the three qualities<sup>1094</sup> and has been thought of as Purusha. O supreme among brahmanas! The manifest one,<sup>1095</sup> with the three qualities, has been generated from him. Though unmanifest, she has a manifest form and is the undecaying Prakriti. Know that she is the womb from which we have been generated. We worship that pervading atman, thinking of him as gods or ancestors. There is nothing that is superior to him. There is no other ancestor, god or brahmana. He should be known as our atman and we worship him. O brahmana! Thinking of the worlds, he is the one who has formulated the ordinances. The rites for gods and ancestors are based on his instructions. Brahma, Sthanu, Manu, Daksha, Bhṛigu, Dharma, Tapa, Dama, Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Parameshthi, Vivasvat, Soma, the one known as Kardama, Krodha and Vikṛita—these twenty-one Prajapatis are said to have been generated from him. They worshipped the god's eternal ordinances. They always knew the truth about what had been laid down for the gods and the ancestors. Those supreme among brahmanas knew, and obtained, their atmans. Through his favours, embodied beings and those in heaven who worship him, obtain all the fruits and ends that they desire. It has been determined that those who are devoid of deeds and the seventeen qualities<sup>1096</sup> and have cast aside the fifteen,<sup>1097</sup> are liberated. Those who are liberated attain an end that has been thought of as the brahman or the kshetraja. That is the destination of everything and has been spoken about as being devoid of qualities. We have been generated from there and he can be seen through the yoga of knowledge. Knowing this, we worship that eternal atman. The Vedas and the ashramas resort to many different kinds of forms. However, he is the one who is worshipped with devotion and he is the one who grants the objective. If a person in this world thinks of him alone and is controlled, he obtains a superior end and penetrates into him. O Narada! O brahmana rishi! Because of your devotion and because of our affection towards you, I have recounted this mystery. It is because of your faith that you have been able to listen to it.'"

hishma said, “Having been thus addressed by Narayana, the supreme being and best among men, for the welfare of the worlds, the best among men<sup>1098</sup> spoke these words to Narayana. ‘In four forms, you have obtained this excellent birth in Dharma’s house for a reason. For the welfare of the worlds, let that objective be accomplished. I will now see Prakriti. O protector of the worlds! I have studied the Vedas. I have tormented myself through austerities. I have never uttered a falsehood. I have always worshipped my seniors. I have never revealed the secrets of others. Following the secret texts, I have protected the four.’<sup>1099</sup> I have always treated enemies and friends equally. I have always single-mindedly worshipped the original god and not several. Having purified myself in these special ways, why should I not be able to see the eternal lord?’ Hearing the words of Parameshthi’s son,<sup>1100</sup> Narayana, the protector of the dharma of the Satvatas,<sup>1101</sup> honoured him with many kinds of rites and said, ‘O Narada! Go.’ Having been given permission to leave, Parameshthi’s son also worshipped the ancient rishi.<sup>1102</sup>

“Having ascended into the sky with great force, he suddenly descended on Meru’s peak. For a short while, the sage remained in a solitary spot on the peak of that mountain. He then glanced towards the north-western direction and beheld an extraordinary sight. There is an extensive region named Shvetadvipa to the north of the ocean of milk. The wise ones have said that it is thirty-two thousand yojanas to the north of Meru. Those who dwell there are beyond any senses and do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and their bodies possess fragrances. The men in Shveta have been cleansed of all sins. They uproot the eyes of men who perform wicked deeds. Their bones and bodies are as firm as the vajra and they are impartial towards respect and disrespect. They are divine in form and are marked with auspicious signs. Their heads are like umbrellas and their voices rumble like the clouds. Their feet bear the marks of four *pushkaras* and one hundred *rajivas*.<sup>1103</sup> They possess sixty white teeth and eight smaller ones. They have many tongues and with these, they seem to lick the bright rays of the sun. They are devoted to the god from whom all the people in the universe, the Vedas, dharma, the sages, the tranquil gods and all their offspring have been generated.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “They do not possess senses. They do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and they emit fragrances. How were these men born? What is the supreme end that they attain? O supreme among the Bharata lineage! What are the signs of emancipation exhibited by the men who are the residents of Shvetadvipa? I have great curiosity. Sever my doubt about this. You are the repository of all the accounts and we depend on you.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! This is an extensive account that I heard from my father. What I will tell you is regarded as the essence of all accounts. There used to be a king on earth, by the name of Uparichara. He was famous as Akhandala’s<sup>1104</sup> friend and was devoted to Hari Narayana. He was always devoted to dharma and always attentive towards his father. In ancient times, he obtained his kingdom as a boon from Narayana. Earlier, the satvata rituals had emerged from Surya’s mouth.<sup>1105</sup> He first used these to worship the lord of the gods and then used the remnants to worship the grandfather.<sup>1106</sup> With what remained, he first worshipped the ancestors and then divided up the rest among brahmanas. He was truthful and only ate what remained thereafter. He did not cause injury to any creature. In every kind of way, he was faithful to Janardana, the god of the gods. O destroyer of enemies! His devotion to Narayana was great. Because of this, Shakra, the king of the gods, shared his own bed and his own seat with him. He<sup>1107</sup> regarded his own self, his kingdom, his riches, his wives and his mounts as having been obtained from the illustrious one<sup>1108</sup> and offered all these to him. He desired to perform many sacrifices and excellent rites. Following the satvata rituals, he observed all of these. In the great-souled one’s household, there were many foremost ones who knew about the pancharatra rites and instructed by the illustrious one, they generally ate before all the others.<sup>1109</sup> Thus, the slayer of enemies followed dharma and ruled his kingdom. He did not speak any falsehood and there were no wicked thoughts in his mind. Nor did he perform any exceedingly wicked deeds.

“Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishta—these seven extremely energetic sages were known as the Chitrashikhandins.<sup>1110</sup> The Chitrashikhandins came together and prepared an excellent sacred text. They were like seven Prakritis and Svayambhu was the eighth. The sacred text that emerged from their mouths is studied by all the worlds. Those sages were single-minded in their attention, devoted to restraint and self-control. ‘This is the best. This is the brahman. This constitutes the greatest welfare.’ Thinking about the worlds in this way, they created the sacred text. This speaks about dharma, artha and kama. Later, it also speaks about moksha. It prescribes the many kinds of ordinances that heaven and earth should resort to. Together, all those rishis performed austerities and worshipped the lord god, Hari Narayana, for one thousand celestial years. For the welfare of the

worlds, instructed by Narayana, the goddess Sarasvati entered all those rishis. That is the reason those brahmanas could engage so well in the composition of that first creation—full of words, meanings and reasons. Right at the beginning, the sacred text was ornamented with the syllable ‘Om’. The rishis first recited it at the spot where the compassionate one<sup>1111</sup> was. The illustrious Purushottama was pleased. Unseen by the rishis and in an invisible voice, he instructed them, ‘You have composed one hundred thousand excellent shlokas. So that dharma is observed, everything in the worlds will flow from this. Notions of pravritti and nivritti will be generated from this, so will Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva of Angiras.’<sup>1112</sup> As proof of this, I have created Brahma through my favours, Rudra from my anger, all of you brahmanas from my nature, the sun, the moon, the wind, the earth, the water, the fire, the large number of nakshatras and everything that is known as a creature. Those who speak about the brahman are regarded as authorities. In that fashion, all proof will be found in this excellent sacred text. It is my instruction that this will be taken to be proof. Based on this, Svayambhuva Manu will himself promulgate dharma. When Ushanas<sup>1113</sup> and Brihaspati are born in the future, they will also base their instructions on this sacred text. The worlds will think of this as the sacred texts on dharma prepared by Svayambhuva, Ushanas and the intelligent Brihaspati. O supreme among brahmanas! King Vasu<sup>1114</sup> will obtain the sacred text prepared by you from Brihaspati. That king will think about me and be devoted to me. All the rites in the worlds will be performed in accordance with that sacred text. Among all the sacred texts, this sacred text will be known as the best. Artha, dharma and supreme fame will be based on this. Having propounded it, you will have offspring. The great King Vasu will also be prosperous. This eternal sacred text will exist as long as that king is there, but will disappear after that. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having said this in that invisible voice, Purushottama left the rishis. As they wished, they too left for the different directions. Thus, those ancestors of the worlds<sup>1115</sup> thought about the welfare of the worlds and compiled that sacred text. It is the eternal source of all dharma. When Brihaspati was born in the lineage of Angiras in the first yuga, he established that sacred text, with the Vedangas and the Upanishads. The upholders of all the worlds,<sup>1116</sup> the propounders of all kinds of dharma, left for their desired destinations, having determined to perform austerities.”

## Chapter 1651(323)

‘**B**hishma said, “When that great kalpa was over, the descendant of Angiras was born and all the gods were delighted that a priest had been born for the gods.”<sup>1117</sup> O king! The words Brihat, Brahma and Mahat progressively convey the same meaning and he came to be known as Brihaspati because he possessed all these qualities.<sup>1118</sup> The foremost king, Uparichara Vasu, became his disciple. He properly studied the sacred texts of the Chitrashikhandins. The gods had earlier thought of the birth of King Vasu and he protected the earth, like Akhandala in heaven. The great-souled one performed a gigantic horse sacrifice. His preceptor, Brihaspati, was the officiating priest there. Prajapati’s three sons, the maharshis Ekata, Dvita and Trita, acted as assistant priests at the sacrifice. Dhanushaksha; Raibhya; Arvavasu; Paravasu; the rishi Medhatithi; the great rishi Tandya; the immensely fortunate rishi Shakti, also known as Vedashira; Kapila, the foremost rishi who was the grandfather of Shalihotra; the first Katha; Taittiri, the elder brother of Vaishampayana; Kanva; and Devahotra—all these sixteen were famous.<sup>1119</sup> O king! The great sacrifice had all the ingredients. On the instructions of the king, no animals were slain. He was not violent, pure, not inferior, without desire and devoted to the rites. The shares offered in the sacrifice were all products of the forest. The ancient and illustrious god of the gods<sup>1120</sup> was delighted at this. Though he was incapable of being seen by anyone else, he manifested himself. Though he was not seen by anyone, the god Hari himself seized and took away his share of the sacrificial cake. At this, Brihaspati was enraged. He forcefully picked up the ladle and flung it up into the sky. Shedding tears of rage, he told Uparichara, ‘I have placed a share<sup>1121</sup> in front. While I see, there is no doubt that the god will accept it himself. The other gods are seen to have appeared in person and have accepted the shares offered to them. Why should the lord Hari not manifest himself?’ When he arose in this way, the great King Vasu and all the assistant priests sought to satisfy the sage. Without displaying any fright, they told him, ‘You should not be enraged. In krita yuga, it is not dharma for anyone to display wrath. The god who ac-



cepted the share does not also yield to anger. O Brihaspati! He is incapable of being seen by you or us. He can only be seen by those towards whom he exhibits his favours.’

“Ekata, Dvita and Trita said, ‘We are named as Brahma’s sons, those who have been born through his mental powers. To ensure our benefit, we once went to the northern direction. For four thousand years, we tormented ourselves through excellent austerities. We controlled ourselves and stood on one foot, like wooden pillars. This was to the north of Meru and on the shores of the ocean of milk. That is the spot where we tormented ourselves through extremely terrible austerities. “How can we see the god Narayana?” This is the vow that we resorted to. When we bathed ourselves at the end, we heard an invisible voice. “O brahmanas! Cheerful in your souls, you have tormented yourselves through austerities. With devotion, you have asked how you can see the lord. To the north of the ocean of milk, there is the immensely radiant Shvetadvipa. The men there are as radiant as the moon and are devoted to Narayana. They worship Purushottama with single-minded devotion. They enter the eternal god, who possesses one thousand rays. They are devoid of senses. They do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and they emit fragrant scents. Those men, who live in Shvetadvipa, worship one person alone. O sages! Go there. That is the place where I have revealed myself.” On hearing these invisible words, all of us followed the path that had been indicated and went to that country. Our hearts were full of the desire to see him and went to the great Shvetadvipa. However, when we went there, our sight was blinded by his energy and we could not see that being. At this, we decided that we had not undertaken enough yoga to see the god. Without further austerities, we wouldn’t be able to see the energetic being. At that time, we again performed great austerities for another one hundred years. When we bathed at the end of the vow, we saw some extremely auspicious men. They were as fair as the moon and they possessed all the auspicious signs. Facing the northern and the eastern direction, with hands joined in salutation, they were silently meditating on Brahma. Those great-souled ones were thus engaged in mental chanting. Hari was pleased because of their single-minded devotion. O tiger among men! The radiance and resplendence of each of those men was like that of the sun that arises at the end of a yuga. We thought that energy alone resided in that region. No one was superior or inferior. All of them were equal in energy. O Brihaspati! We suddenly saw another mass of blazing energy, as if one thousand suns had simultaneously arisen. Together, those men quickly ran towards this. Cheerfully, they joined their hands in salutation and said, “We bow down.” A great collective shout arose from them, as if those men were offering a sacrifice to the god. Suddenly, that energy robbed us of our senses. Bereft of sight, strength and senses, we could not see anything. We only heard a single sound, uttered incessantly. “O Pundarikaksha! O creator of the universe! We bow down to you. Victory is yours. O Hrishikesha! We bow down before you. You are the great being and you are the one who was born first.” We heard these sounds, the syllables articulated properly. At that time, an auspicious wind began to blow and it bore all the fragrant scents. There were the fragrances of celestial flowers and herbs that had been used in the rites. Those men knew about the beneficial rituals of pancharatra. They single-mindedly worshipped Hari. There is no doubt that, invoked by those words, the god arrived there. However, because we were confounded by his maya, we could not see him. O supreme among those of the Angiras lineage! When the wind retreated and the sacrifice was over, our minds became full of anxious thoughts. Those thousands of men were born in pure lineages. But they did not honour us with their thoughts or their sight. Those large numbers of sages were single-minded in their vows. They were based on the brahman and paid no attention to us. We were exhausted and afflicted by the austerities. An invisible voice addressed us. “Are you well? These men from Shveta are bereft of all the senses and are capable of seeing the being. Only those who are given sight by these best among brahmanas are capable of seeing him. O sages! All of you should quickly leave this place and go where you have come from. Those without devotion are incapable of ever seeing the god. The illustrious one’s circle of radiance is difficult to see. It can only be witnessed by those who desire to, and have single-mindedly spent a long period of time in worshipping him. O supreme among brahmanas! You have a great task to perform. There will be a catastrophe at the end of this krita yuga. O brahmanas! At the time of Vaivasvat Manu, there will be a treta yuga. You will then become aides in performing a task for the gods.” O drinker of soma! We heard these wonderful words. Having obtained this favour, we returned from that radiant region. In this way, despite austerities and offering of havya and kavya, we could not see that god. How can you see him? Narayana is extremely wonderful. He is the unmanifest creator of the universe. He is the devourer of oblations.”

‘Bhishma said, “The intelligent Brihaspati was entreated by these words of Ekata, Dvita and Trita and also by the assistant priests. He honoured the gods and completed the sacrifice. When the sacrifice was over, King Vasu protected the subjects. Because of the curse of brahmanas, he was dislodged and submerged in the ground.<sup>1122</sup> He was always devoted to dharma, but was submerged inside the earth. He was devoted to Narayana and attained the objective of Narayana. It is through his favours that he arose again from the nether regions of the earth and obtained the abode of the brahman. Because of this devotion to the highest one, he attained a supreme end.”’

## Chapter 1652(324)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Since the great king Vasu was devoted to the illustrious one, why was he dislodged? Why did he have to sink into a hole in the ground?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is the history of a conversation between the rishis and the residents of heaven. The gods told the supreme among brahmanas that ajas should be killed in sacrifices.<sup>1123</sup> However, by aja, one should understand a goat and no other animal.

“The rishis said, ‘The shruti texts of the Vedas aver that only seeds should be offered at sacrifices. The word aja signifies seeds. You should not slaughter goats. O gods! The slaughter of animals cannot constitute virtuous dharma. This is the best yuga of krita. How can one slaughter animals?’”

‘Bhishma continued, “This conversation was going on between the rishis and the gods. At that time, travelling along a path, Vasu, best among kings, arrived at the spot. He could travel through the sky. He was prosperous and all the soldiers and mounts were ahead of him. On seeing Vasu suddenly arrive through the sky, the brahmanas told the gods, ‘He will dispel our doubts. He performs sacrifices. He is foremost among those who donate. He is affectionate towards all creatures and is devoted to their welfare. How can the great Vasu speak contrary words?’ Thus conversing, the gods and the rishis approached King Vasu, who had suddenly arrived, and asked him. ‘O king! How should one sacrifice? Should one use goats or herbs? Sever our doubt about this. We will accept your view as the proof.’ Thus asked, Vasu joined his hands in salutation and said, ‘What are your views? Let both sides tell me the truth.’ The rishis responded, ‘O lord of men! The view of our side is that grain should be offered at sacrifices. The gods are of the view that animals should be offered. O king! Tell us your opinion.’ Ascertaining the views of the gods, Vasu opted for their side. He said that goats should be offered at sacrifices. All the sages were as radiant as the sun and were enraged at this. Vasu was on his celestial vehicle and had spoken on the side of the gods. They told him, ‘You have opted for the side of the gods. Therefore, you will fall down from heaven. O king! From today, you will no longer be able to travel through the sky. Because of our curse, you will shatter the earth and penetrate there.’ As soon as they said this, King Uparichara quickly fell down. The king penetrated a hole in the ground. However, because of Narayana’s instructions, he did not lose his memory.

“All the gods began to think of a means to free Vasu from his curse. The gods anxiously reflected on the king’s good deeds. ‘The great-souled king has obtained this curse on our account. The residents of heaven must unite and do what is agreeable for him.’ Having determined this, the lords swiftly went to where King Uparichara was. They cheerfully spoke to him. ‘You are devoted to the god of the brahmanas, Hari, the preceptor of the gods and the asuras. You should desire to please him. He will then act, so as to free you from this curse. However, the great-souled brahmanas also deserve respect. O supreme among kings! Their austerities must yield fruits.<sup>1124</sup> That is the reason you have suddenly been dislodged from heaven and have fallen down on the surface of the earth. O supreme among kings! However, we will show you a favour. O unblemished one! Because of the taint of the curse, there will be a period when you will be in this hole in the ground. The great-souled brahmanas offer excellent oblations at sacrifices, in the name of “Vasudhara”.<sup>1125</sup> Through our favours, as long as you are here, you will obtain those and hardships and despair will not touch you. O Indra among kings! As long as you are in this hole in this ground, you will not be afflicted by hunger or thirst. You will drink Vasudhara and your energy will not be diminished. Because of our boon, that god<sup>1126</sup> will be pleased with you and will convey you to Brahma’s world.’ This is the boon that all the residents of heaven granted to the king. The gods and the rishis, rich in austerities, returned to their own abodes.

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He always worshipped Vishvakṣena.<sup>1127</sup> He always worshipped him through mantras that had emerged from Narayana’s mouth. O scorcher of enemies! Though he was in the hole in the ground, at five times of the day, he worshipped Hari, the lord of all gods, through the five sacrifices.<sup>1128</sup> The illustrious Narayana Hari was satisfied at his devotion. He was entirely devoted to him. He conquered his soul and was always faithful to him. In the presence of the best among brahmanas, the illustrious Viṣṇu, the granter of boons, smiled and spoke to the immensely swift Garuḍa, who was near him. ‘O supreme among birds! O greatly fortunate one! Listen to my words and go there. There is an emperor named Vasu. He has dharma in his soul and is devoted to me. Because of the wrath of the brahmanas, he has penetrated into the ground. The Indras among brahmanas have already been shown due respect. O supreme among birds! O Garuḍa! On my instruction, go to that hole in the ground. The best among kings can no longer travel up. Without any delay, bring him up into the sky.’ The bird, Garuḍa, left, with a speed that was like that of the wind. He entered the hole in the ground and saved Vasu, as he had been asked to. Vinatā’s son violently rose up into the sky and quickly released him there. In a short instant, King Uparichara regained his senses. In his own body, the supreme among kings went to Brahma’s world. O Kounteya! In this way, in his ignorance, he committed a fault in speech. Because of the curse of the great-souled brahmanas, the performer of sacrifices obtained that end. However, he only worshipped the lord Hari, the great being. He was thus quickly freed from the curse and went to Brahma’s world. I have told you everything about the origin of men. I will now tell you everything about how the rishi Narada went to Shvetadvīpa. O king! Listen with single-minded attention.”

## Chapter 1653(325)

‘Bhishma said, “Having arrived at the great Shvetadvīpa, the illustrious rishi, Narada, saw those men, who were fair in complexion and were like the rays of the moon. He was honoured by them and he worshipped them in his mind, bowing his head down. Desiring to see the supreme one, he remained there, suffering all the hardships. The brahmana and great sage was single-minded and remained there, with his arms upraised. He chanted this *stotra*<sup>1129</sup> to the great-souled one, who is without qualities and is the universe.”

“Narada said, ‘I bow down before you. (1) O god of the gods!<sup>1130</sup> (2) You are without acts. (3) You are without qualities. (4) You are the witness of the worlds. (5) You are kṣetraja. (6) You are infinite. (7) You are Puruṣa. (8) You are Mahapuruṣa.<sup>1131</sup> (9) You are the one with the three qualities. (10) You are Prathana.<sup>1132</sup> (11) You are amṛta. (12) You are space. (13) You are eternal. (14) You are the existent and the non-existent, the manifest and the unmanifest. (15) You are the abode of truth. (16) You are the first among the gods. (17) You are the granter of riches. (18) You are Prajapati. (19) You are Suprajapati.<sup>1133</sup> (20) You are the trees. (21) You are the great Prajapati. (22) You are the lord of energy. (23) You are the lord of speech. (24) You are the lord of the mind. (25) You are the lord of the universe. (26) You are the lord of heaven. (27) You are the lord of wind. (28) You are the lord of the water. (29) You are the lord of the earth. (30) You are the lord of the directions. (31) You are the original abode.<sup>1134</sup> (32) You are Brahmapurohita.<sup>1135</sup> (33) You are Brahmakayika.<sup>1136</sup> (34) You are the one with the gigantic body. (35) You are Maharajika.<sup>1137</sup> (36) You are Chaturmaharajika.<sup>1138</sup> (37) You are Abhasura.<sup>1139</sup> (38) You are Mahabhasura.<sup>1140</sup> (39) You are Saptamahabhasura.<sup>1141</sup> (40) You are Yamya.<sup>1142</sup> (41) You are Mahayamya.<sup>1143</sup> (42) You are with a name and you are without a name. (43) You are Tushita.<sup>1144</sup> (44) You are Mahatushita.<sup>1145</sup> (45) You are Pratardana.<sup>1146</sup> (46) You are Parinirmitta.<sup>1147</sup> (47) You are the one who possesses power. (48) You are Aparinirmitta.<sup>1148</sup> (49) You are the sacrifice. (50) You are the great sacrifice. (51) You are the origin of sacrifices. (52) You are generated from sacrifices. (53) You are the womb of sacrifices. (54) You are the heart of sacrifices. (55) You are praised in sacrifices. (56) You are the one who takes shares in sacrifices. (57) You are the one who holds up the five sacrifices. (58) You are the one who creates the five measurements of time.<sup>1149</sup> (59) You are Pancharatna. (60) You are Vaikuntha. (61) You are the unvanquished one. (62) You are the one who is in the mind. (63) You are the supreme lord. (64) You are the one who has been bathed well.<sup>1150</sup> (65) You are Hamsa.<sup>1151</sup> (66) You are Paramahamsa.<sup>1152</sup> (67) You are supreme among those who sacrifice. (68) You are sakhya yoga. (69) You are the one who lies down on amṛta. (70) You are the one who lies down on gold. (71) You are the one who lies down on the

Vedas. (72) You are the one who lies down on kusha. (73) You are the one who lies down on the brahman. (74) You are the one who lies down on the lotus. (75) You are the lord of the universe. (76) You are the one whom the universe follows. (77) You are prakriti in the universe. (78) There is fire in your mouth. (79) You are the fire that is in the form of a mare's head.<sup>1153</sup> (80) You are the oblations. (81) You are the charioteer. (82) You are vashatkara. (83) You are the sound of "Om".<sup>1154</sup> (84) You are the mind. (85) You are the moon. (86) You are the original eyes. (87) You are the sun. (88) You are the elephants in the directions. (89) You illuminate the directions. (90) You are Hayashira.<sup>1155</sup> (91) You are the first among those who know the hymns. (92) You are the five fires.<sup>1156</sup> (93) You are Trinachiketa.<sup>1157</sup> (94) You are the one who has laid down the six Vedangas.<sup>1158</sup> (95) You are Pragjyotisha.<sup>1159</sup> (96) You are first among those who chant the Sama hymns. (97) You are the one who upholds the vows of the Sama Veda. (98) You are Atharvashira.<sup>1160</sup> (99) You are Panchamahakalpa.<sup>1161</sup> (100) You are Phenapacharya.<sup>1162</sup> (101) You are Valakhilya. (102) You are Vaikhanasa.<sup>1163</sup> (103) You do not deviate from yoga. (104) You do not deviate from enumerating. (105) You are the beginning of a yuga. (106) You are the middle of a yuga. (107) You are the end of a yuga. (108) You are Akhandala. (109) You are the ancient womb. (110) You are Koushika. (111) You are Purushuta.<sup>1164</sup> (112) You are Puruhuta.<sup>1165</sup> (113) The universe is your form. (114) You are infinite in your progress. (115) You are infinite in your pleasure. (116) You are infinite. (117) You are without beginning. (118) You are without a middle. (119) You are without a middle that is manifest. (120) You are without an end that is manifest. (121) You are the refuge of vows. (122) You dwell in the ocean. (123) You dwell in fame. (124) You dwell in austerities. (125) You dwell in prosperity. (126) You dwell in learning. (127) You dwell in fame. (128) You dwell in beauty. (129) You dwell in everything. (130) You are Vasudeva. (131) You are charming in every way. (132) You are Harihaya.<sup>1166</sup> (133) You are Harimedha.<sup>1167</sup> (134) You are the one who accepts shares in great sacrifices. (135) You are the granter of boons. (136) You are the one who upholds the rules of yama, niyama, great niyamas, austerities, extreme austerities, great austerities and all kinds of austerities. (137) You are the one who can be reached through the words spoken about the dharma of nivritti. (138) You are engaged in the rites of the Vedas. (139) You are without birth. (140) You go everywhere. (141) You can see everything. (142) You cannot be grasped. (143) You do not move. (144) You are immensely powerful. (145) Your body is formed out of greatness. (146) You are pure. (147) You are immensely pure. (148) You are golden. (149) You are large. (150) You cannot be countered. (151) You cannot be comprehended. (152) You are foremost among brahmanas. (153) You are the creator of beings. (154) You are the destroyer of beings. (155) You are the one who displays great maya. (156) You are Chitrashikhandin. (157) You are the granter of boons. (158) You are the one who accepts a share of the sacrificial cakes. (159) You are the one who has travelled. (160) You are without thirst. (161) You are without doubt. (162) You have withdrawn from everything. (163) You are in the form of a brahmana. (164) You are affectionate towards brahmanas. (165) The universe is your form. (166) Your form is great. (167) You are the friend. (168) You are affectionate towards your devotees. (169) You are the god of brahmanas. (170) I am your devotee and wish to see you. (171) I wish to see you with single-minded devotion. I worship you. I bow down before you.”

## Chapter 1654(326)

‘Bhishma said, “The illustrious one was thus praised with secret names. The one who upholds the universe in his form showed himself to the sage Narada. His pure soul was somewhat like the moon, but it was also somewhat different from the moon. The lord’s complexion was somewhat like that of the fire and his form was somewhat like that of a meteor. His complexion was somewhat like that of a parrot’s feathers and his radiance was somewhat like that of a crystal. His radiance was seen to be somewhat like that of a mass of black antimony and somewhat like that of gold. His complexion was a bit like that of young coral and somewhat white. Some of the complexion was like that of gold and some of it was like lapis lazuli. The hue was a bit like blue lapis lazuli and a bit like sapphire. The complexion was somewhat like that of a peacock’s neck and somewhat like that of a necklace of pearls. The eternal one was thus radiant in many different kinds of complexions and diverse forms. He possessed a thousand eyes, one hundred beautiful heads and a thousand feet. There were one thousand stomachs and one thousand arms and some of those could not be seen. With one of his mouths, he chanted ‘Om’. With another

mouth, he chanted ‘Savitri’.<sup>1168</sup> When this was over, with other mouths, he chanted the beneficial four Vedas. The Aranayakas were also under the god, Hari Narayana’s, control. In his hands, he held a sacrificial altar, a kaman-dalu, some *darbha* grass, some gems, a pair of sandals, a deerskin, a wooden staff and a blazing fire. The lord of gods and the lord of sacrifices held these in his hands and was cheerful. Narada, supreme among brahmanas, was delighted at this. Restrained in speech, he bowed down before the supreme lord. While his head was still bowed down, the first and undecaying god said, ‘Wishing to see me, the maharshis Ekata, Dvita and Trita came to this spot. However, they could not see me. With the exception of someone who is single-minded in devotion towards me, no one can see me. O brahmana! It is my view that you are thus single-minded. These are the best of my forms, born in Dharma’s house. You must always endeavour to worship these, who have appeared before you. O brahmana! Ask for whatever boon you desire from me. I am pleased with you today and have appeared in my universal form, which is without decay.’

“Narada replied, ‘O god! My austerities, yama and niyama have instantly received their fruits now, since your illustrious self has been seen by me. That I have seen your eternal self is the ultimate boon. O illustrious one! O immensely great lord! In your different forms, you see the entire universe.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having thus shown himself to Narada, the one generated from Parameshthi again spoke these words. ‘O Narada! Without any delay, leave this spot. These devotees of mine are like the moon in their complexions. They are devoid of senses and do not eat. They single-mindedly think of me. Let there not be any obstructions in their pursuits. They are successful and immensely fortunate. In ancient times, they were single-mindedly devoted to me. They have been freed from *tamas* and *rajas*. There is no doubt that they will merge into me. There is one who cannot be seen with the eyes. He cannot be touched with touch. He cannot be smelt through smell. He is beyond taste. He is beyond the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. He is a witness to everything and people speak of him as the *atman*. He is in the body of all creatures and is never destroyed. He is without birth. He is everlasting. He is eternal. He is without qualities. He cannot be divided into components. He is beyond the twenty-four principles and is known as the twenty-fifth. He is the passive *Purusha* and is said to be comprehended through knowledge. O supreme among brahmanas! A person who merges into him is emancipated. He is known as *Vasudeva*. He is the eternal *paramatman*. O Narada! Behold the greatness and power of that god. He is never touched by good and bad deeds. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are said to be the qualities. These exist in all bodies and roam around there. Though these qualities are enjoyed, *kshetrajna* does not enjoy them. He is without qualities. He is free from the qualities. He is the creator of qualities. He is superior to the qualities. O *devarshi*! When the universe is destroyed, the earth merges into water. Water merges into light. Light merges into the wind. The wind merges into space. Space merges into the mind. The mind is a supreme element and it merges into the unmanifest.<sup>1169</sup> O brahmana! The unmanifest merges into the inactive *Purusha*. There is nothing that is superior to the eternal *Purusha*. There is no creation in the universe, mobile or immobile, that is eternal. The only single exception is the eternal *Purusha* *Vasudeva*. The immensely powerful *Vasudeva* is in the *atmans* of all creatures. The great-souled one exists in bodies, known as the accumulation of the earth, the wind, space, water and light as the fifth. O brahmana! Though he cannot be seen, he uses his great valour to enter. That is how birth occurs, through the efforts of the lord. Without a combination of the elements, there cannot be a body. O brahmana! Without the *jivatman*, that combination of elements wouldn’t have moved. That *jivatman* is also known as the lord *Shesha* or *Samkarshana*. Using his own deeds, the one who arises from this is known as *Sanatkumara*. When all creatures are destroyed, it is into him that they merge. The mind of all creatures is known as *Pradyumna*. It is from him<sup>1170</sup> that the the doer and cause and effect arise. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is generated from *Aniruddha*. He is also known as *Ishana* and he manifests himself through all his deeds. The illustrious *Vasudeva* is *kshetrajna* and possesses no qualities in his soul. When that illustrious one is born in any creature, he is known as the lord *Samkarshana*. *Pradyumna* is said to be generated from the mind and is born from *Samkarshana*. *Aniruddha* is generated from *Pradyumna* and is consciousness, or *Maheshvara*. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is generated from me. O Narada! This is true of the destructible and the indestructible, the existent and the non-existent. Those who are devoted to me, enter me and are emancipated. Know that I am the inactive *Purusha*, the twenty-fifth. I am without qualities. I am without separate constituents. I am without opposite sentiments and I am without possessions. You will not understand this, since you are seeing me in a form. However, if I so desire, I

can make this form disappear instantly. I am the preceptor of the universe. O Narada! That you can see me is only because of a maya that has been created by me. I seem to possess the qualities of all creatures, but that's because you cannot comprehend me. I have appropriately told you about my four forms. O sage! There are successful and immensely fortunate men who are single-minded in their devotion to me. They are freed from both tamas and rajas and they enter me. O Narada! I am the doer. I am the cause. I am the effect. The consciousness of creatures is because of me. All creatures find a refuge in me. All creatures are pervaded by me and do not think that you have seen me. O brahmana! I go everywhere. I am in the atmans of all categories of creatures. When the bodies of creatures are destroyed, I am not destroyed. I am Hiranyagarbha, the origin of the worlds. I have four faces and can be understood through nirukta. The eternal god Brahma thinks of me in many ways. Behold! The eleven Rudras are established on my right. The twelve Adityas are established on my left. Behold! The eight Vasus, supreme among gods, are established to my front. Behold! Nasatya and Dasra, the physicians,<sup>1171</sup> are to my rear. Look at all the Prajapatis. Look at the seven rishis. Look at the Vedas, hundreds of sacrifices, amrita, the herbs, the austerities, the niyamas, the separate yamas and the eight kinds of prosperity.<sup>1172</sup> Look at them in their embodied form. Look at Shri, Lakshmi,<sup>1173</sup> Kirti,<sup>1174</sup> the earth, the mountains and the goddess Sarasvati, the mother of the Vedas. Behold! They are all established in me. O Narada! Look at Dhruva<sup>1175</sup> and the best of the stellar bodies in the firmament and also at the oceans full of water, the lakes and the rivers. Behold the embodied forms of the best among the four classes of ancestors.<sup>1176</sup> Behold the three qualities. Abandoning their embodied forms, they are vested in me. O sage! Tasks undertaken for ancestors are held to be superior to tasks undertaken for gods. I alone am the original father of the gods and the ancestors. Along the northern and the western ocean, I became Hayashira. I drank the havya and the kavya, offered faithfully, to the accompaniment of mantras. Earlier, I created Brahma and he himself honoured me through sacrifices. Thus pleased with him, I granted him many excellent boons. At the beginning of the kalpa, I told him, "You will be born as my son and will be the supervisor of the worlds. Once there is consciousness, you will progressively be addressed by different names. No one will transgress the ordinances you lay down. O Brahma! For those who desire boons, you will also be the granter of boons. O one rich in austerities! O immensely fortunate one! Large numbers of gods and asuras, the rishis, ancestors who are rigid in their vows and many kinds of creatures will worship you. To accomplish the tasks of the gods, I will always manifest myself. O Brahma! For such purposes, you can always instruct me, like a father instructs his son." Since I was pleased with him, I granted the infinitely energetic Brahma these and many other excellent boons. Thereafter, I again resorted to nivritti. Among all the kinds of dharma that lead to emancipation, nivritti is said to be the supreme. That is the reason one should follow nivritti and act so as to withdraw all one's limbs. Preceptors like Kapila have set out their firm conclusions in the knowledge of sankhya. That is an aid in advancing towards my eternal self, with the resplendence of the sun. Metrical compositions have praised me as the illustrious Hiranyagarbha. O brahmana! In the sacred texts of yoga, I have been spoken about as the objective of yoga. I am established in the eternal firmament and am thus manifest in the sacred texts. At the end of one thousand yugas, I will destroy the universe again. I will withdraw all mobile and immobile objects into myself. O supreme among brahmanas! I will then exist alone, with nothing except knowledge. Using that knowledge, I will again create everything in the universe. My fourth form creates the undecaying Shesha. This is also spoken of as Samkarshana, and Pradyumna is created from this. From Pradyumna, I repeatedly create myself as Aniruddha. Brahma, the one who is born from the lotus, results from Aniruddha. All mobile and immobile creatures are created by Brahma. Know that this repeatedly happens in several kalpas. It is I who make the sun rise and set in the sky. When it has disappeared, at the right time, I use my force to bring back the extremely radiant one. For the sake of the welfare of creatures, it is I who will bring the earth forcefully back and restore her to her proper state.<sup>1177</sup> When all her limbs are destroyed in the girdle of the ocean, I will assume the form of a boar and bring her back to her right place. I will slay the daitya Hiranyaksha, intoxicated of his valour.<sup>1178</sup> To accomplish the tasks of the gods, I again will slay Diti's son, Hiranyakashipu, the destroyer of sacrifices, in the form of narasimha.<sup>1179</sup> The great asura Bali will be the powerful Virochana's son. He will dislodge Shakra from his own kingdom. Defeating Shachi's consort, he will deprive him of the three worlds. I will be born as the twelfth son of Aditi and Kashyapa.<sup>1180</sup> I will give the kingdom back to the infinitely energetic Shakra. O Narada! I will establish the gods in their own places. I will act so that Bali becomes a resident of the nether regions. In treta yuga, in the lineage of Bhrigu, I will be born as Rama.<sup>1181</sup> I will exterminate the kshatriyas,



powerful with their soldiers and mounts. At the conjunction of treta and dvapara, I will be born as King Rama, the son of Dasharatha. Because of the injury that they caused to Trita, the two rishis who are the sons of Prajapati, Ekata and Dvita, will become malformed and will be born as monkeys.<sup>1182</sup> Born in those forms, those noble ones will be residents of the forest. O brahmana! They will become my allies in accomplishing the tasks of the gods. The terrible lord of the rakshasas will be the worst among those born in the Pulastya lineage. He will be like a thorn to the worlds. In a battle, I will kill Ravana and all his companions. When the intervening period between dvapara and kali is about to end, for Kamsa's sake, I will again manifest myself in Mathura. There, I will slay many danavas, who will be like thorns to the gods. I will dwell in Kushasthali, in the city of Dvaraka. While residing there, I will slay Naraka, the son of the earth, who will cause an injury to Aditi,<sup>1183</sup> and also the danavas Mura and Pitha. The beautiful city of Pragjyotishapura<sup>1184</sup> will be full of many kinds of riches. Having slain that supreme danava, I will bring those to Kushasthali. Shankara and Mahasena will be revered in the world of the gods, but they will be engaged in ensuring the welfare of Bana.<sup>1185</sup> Though they will exert themselves on his side, I will defeat the thousand-armed Bana and win back my son through force. I will also destroy all the residents of Soubha.<sup>1186</sup> There will be the famous Kalayavana, born from Garga's energy. I will slay him.<sup>1187</sup> The powerful Jarasandha will act against all other kings. That powerful asura will be born as the king of Girivraja. It is through my intelligence that someone else will kill him. When the armies of all the kings on earth come together, I alone will be the excellent aide to Vasava's son.<sup>1188</sup> The worlds will speak of us as the rishis Nara and Narayana. To accomplish the objectives of the world, these two lords will consume the kshatriyas. As is desired, we will reduce the burden of the world. O excellent one! I will create a terrible destruction that will devastate my own kin and absorb the foremost among the Satvatas and Dvaraka into my own self. With the four forms, I will thus perform immeasurable deeds. Honoured by Brahma, I will then go to the worlds that I have myself created. O supreme among brahmanas! It is I who will manifest himself as Hamsa and Hayashira. When the sacred texts of the Vedas were lost, I retrieved them.<sup>1189</sup> Earlier, in krita yuga, it is I who had composed the sacred texts of the Vedas. Whenever the Puranas and the sacred texts have suffered, from my excellent self, I have resurrected them several times. Having performed the tasks of the worlds, I have myself entered Prakriti. Single-minded in your devotion, you have been able to see me now and even Brahma has been unable to see me in this kind of form. O brahmana! O excellent one! Because you are faithful to me, I have told you everything, about the mysteries of the past and the future.' The illustrious and undecaying god, with the universe as his form, spoke these words and immediately vanished. The extremely energetic Narada obtained the desired favour. He went and saw Nara and Narayana in the hermitage of Badari. This great Upanishad<sup>1190</sup> is in conformity with the four Vedas and sankhya and yoga, and is referred to by this name in the pancharatra rituals. O son! This song arose from Narayana's mouth and was heard by Narada, in exactly the same way that it is uttered and heard in Brahma's abode."

'Yudhishtira asked, "The greatness of the intelligent one is extraordinary. Did Brahma not know what Narada had heard? What is the difference between the grandfather and that illustrious god? Why should he not know about the power of that infinitely energetic one?"

'Bhishma answered, "O Indra among kings! There have been thousands of mahakalpas and hundreds of mahakalpas and cycles of creation and destruction. At the beginning of every cycle of creation, Brahma is thought of as the lord who creates creatures. O king! He knows that the supreme among gods<sup>1191</sup> is superior to him. He is the paramatman. He is the powerful lord of the atmans. There were large numbers of siddhas who assembled in Brahma's abode and they wished to hear about the ancient accounts that were in conformity with the Vedas. He recited it to them.<sup>1192</sup> There, Surya heard it from the brahmana with the cleansed soul. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He repeated it to the sixty-six thousand rishis, with cleansed souls, who follow him.<sup>1193</sup> Surya had earlier been created to heat the worlds. Surya repeated the account to all those with cleansed souls. O son! Those great-souled rishis were Surya's followers. They repeated this excellent account to the gods who assembled on Meru. The brahmana Asita first heard it from the gods. O Indra among kings! That supreme among sages recounted it to the ancestors. O son! My father, Shantanu, told me about it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have recounted to you what I had heard. All the gods and sages who have heard this Purana repeatedly worship the paramatman. O king! This account has progressively been handed down by the rishis. It should never be recounted to someone who is not Vasudeva's devotee. O king! You have heard many other hundreds of accounts from me, but this repre-

sents the essence of the dharma described in those. O king! In ancient times, the gods and the asuras churned the ocean for amrita. In that fashion, the brahmanas churned the accounts for this amrita. If a man continuously reads it or hears it, alone, controlled and single-minded in his devotion, he obtains the great Shvetadvipa and becomes a man with the complexion of the moon. There is no doubt that he merges into the god with the one thousand rays. If a diseased person listens to this account, he is freed from his affliction. A curious person obtains the objects of his desire. A devoted person obtains the object of faith. O king! You should also always worship Purushottama. He is the mother and the father. He is the preceptor of the entire world. The illustrious and eternal one is the god of the brahmanas. O mighty-armed Yudhishtira! Let the mighty-armed Janardana be pleased with you.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! On listening to this excellent account, Dharmaraja and all his brothers became devoted to Narayana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They spoke the words, “Let us be victorious because of the illustrious one. Let him always be victorious.” Our supreme preceptor is the sage Krishna Dvaipayana. He uttered great words of chanting in Narayana’s name. He went to the oceans of milk and amrita that are near the firmament and honoured the lord of the gods there. Then, he returned to his hermitage.’

## Chapter 1655(327)

Janamejaya asked, ‘The illustrious god and lord is the one who receives the shares at sacrifices. He upholds the sacrifices and knows the Vedas and the Vedangas. He comforts those who are devoted to the illustrious one, established in the dharma of nivritti. Why has the illustrious one created the dharma of pravritti? Why has he arranged for the gods to share in the dharma of pravritti? Why has he created such ordinances for the intelligent ones who wish to engage in the dharma of nivritti? O brahmana! We have a doubt about this eternal mystery. Dispel it. You have heard the accounts about Narayana that are consistent with dharma. The worlds, Brahma, the gods, the asuras and men are always seen to be addicted to rites and engage in them. O brahmana! You have said that emancipation through moksha is supreme bliss. In this world, those who are freed from good and bad deeds merge into the auspicious god with the one thousand rays. The eternal dharma of moksha seems to be exceedingly difficult to follow. Therefore, all the gods abandon it and enjoy havya and kavya. Brahma, Rudra, Shakra, the lord who killed Bala, Surya, the lord of the stars,<sup>1194</sup> Vayu, Agni, Varuna, the sky, the universe and the remaining residents of heaven don’t seem to know about the knowledge of the atman that ensures destruction.<sup>1195</sup> That is the reason they do not resort to the certain, indestructible and undecaying path. It has been said that the existence of those who resort to pravritti is circumscribed by time. This is the great taint associated with deeds, being circumscribed by time. O brahmana! That is the reason I have this doubt in my heart, as if a stake has been impaled there. Dispel it by recounting the histories. My curiosity is great. O brahmana! Why are the gods spoken of as ones who accept shares in sacrifices? O brahmana! Why are the residents of heaven worshipped through sacrifices? O supreme among brahmanas! They receive shares in sacrifices. Why do they themselves perform great sacrifices and give away shares there?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of men! The question that you have asked me is an extremely great mystery. A person who has not tormented himself through austerities, a person who does not know the Vedas and a person who is not acquainted with the Puranas is incapable of explaining this in its entirety. However, I will tell you what you have asked me. In ancient times, our preceptor was Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, the great rishi Vedavyasa. Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, extremely firm in his vows, I as the fourth, and Shuka as the fifth are known as his disciples. All five of us were together and these disciples were controlled. We were pure in our conduct. We had conquered anger and had won victory over our senses. On the beautiful slopes of Mount Meru, frequented by the Siddhas and the charanas, we studied the Vedas, and the Mahabharata as the fifth.<sup>1196</sup> There, on one occasion, we had a doubt about the Vedas. This concerns the question that you have asked and we asked him.<sup>1197</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you what I heard then. Parashara’s son was the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance. On hearing the words of his disciples, the prosperous Vyasa spoke these words. “O excellent ones! I have tormented myself through extremely great and extremely terrible austerities. I thus know the past, the present and the future. I tormented myself through austerities and restrained my senses. Hence, because of the favours of



Narayana, I dwelt on the shores of the ocean of milk. All the knowledge in the three worlds, everything that I desired, manifested itself before me. Based on that knowledge, I will tell you about this great doubt. Listen. Through the sight of knowledge, I got to know about everything that happened at the beginning of the kalpa. People who know about sankhya and yoga speak of him as the paramatman. Because of his own deeds, he has obtained the name of Mahapurusha. From him was generated the unmanifest being, whom the learned know as Pradhana. For the sake of creating the worlds, the manifest lord was generated from the unmanifest. In the worlds, this is known as Aniruddha and the great atman. The one who was generated from this manifest is the grandfather. He is spoken of as consciousness and he is full of every kind of energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Earth, wind, space, water and light as the fifth—these great elements resulted from consciousness. After creating the great elements, he again created their qualities.<sup>1198</sup> On the basis of the elements, the embodied beings were derived. Listen to them. Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, the great-souled Vasishtha and Svayambhuva Manu—these should be known as the eight Prakritis. The worlds are established on them. For the success of the worlds, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, then created the Vedas, the Vedangas, combined with sacrifices and other elements of sacrifices. The entire universe was generated from the eight Prakritis. Rudra was generated from anger. Having been generated, he created ten others that were like himself. These eleven Rudras are known as Vikara-Purushas.<sup>1199</sup> Having been generated, for the success of the worlds, the Rudras and the prakritis who were the divine rishis approached Brahma. ‘We have been created by your illustrious self, through the powers of Vishnu. O grandfather! What are the rights that will be vested in us? Having thought about the objectives, you must have determined rights for us. What powers will we have to protect and supervise those rights? Having thought about our rights, you must also instruct us about our strengths.’ On being thus addressed, the great god spoke to those gods. ‘O gods! O fortunate ones! It is good that you have brought this to my notice. This was also a thought that had arisen in my mind. How should the worlds be upheld and preserved? How should your strength and mine not be diminished in the process? Therefore, let us all go and seek the refuge of the witness of the worlds. He is the unmanifest Mahapurusha.<sup>1200</sup> He will tell us what is beneficial.’ With the welfare of the worlds in mind, Brahma, the rishis and the gods went to the shores of the ocean of milk. They resorted to the austerities that Brahma had laid down in the Vedas. Those are the extremely terrible austerities that are known by the name of the great niyamas. They fixed their minds and raised their eyes and arms upwards. They stood on a single foot. They were controlled and were like pillars of wood. For one thousand celestial years, they tormented themselves through those wonderful austerities. Pleasant words, ornamented with the Vedas and the Vedangas, were then heard. ‘O Brahma! O gods! O rishis who are rich in austerities! Welcome. All of you should listen to these excellent words. I know the reason why you have come, for the great welfare of the worlds. I will increase your strength of life so that you are engaged in tasks of pravritti. O gods! Desiring to worship me, you have tormented yourselves through excellent austerities. O great spirits! Now enjoy the excellent fruits of your austerities. This Brahma is the preceptor of the worlds. He is the grandfather of all the worlds. You are the best among the gods. Worship me with controlled minds. Always give me a share in the sacrifices that you perform. O lords! I will then ensure your benefit and lay down rights for you.’ Hearing the words of the god of the gods, all the gods, Brahma and the maharshis were increasingly delighted. Following the rites laid down in the Vedas, they performed a sacrifice to Vishnu. Brahma determined the share that he would give to him.<sup>1201</sup> Similarly, all the gods and the devarshis also thought of the shares that they would give. They honoured him greatly and following the dharma of krita yuga, offered him a share. He is the Purusha who has the complexion of the sun and is beyond darkness. He is large and goes everywhere. He is the god Ishana, the lord who is the granter of boons. The god granted boons to all the immortals who were assembled there. The great lord was invisible, stationed in the sky, and spoke these words. ‘The shares that you have given me have reached me. I am pleased with you. However, I will give you fruits that will be characterized by the cycle of rebirth. O gods! This is the certain fruit that you will obtain through my favours. In every yuga, you will perform sacrifices for the sake of boons and give away dakshina when the sacrifice is over. You will enjoy the fruits of those who follow pravritti. O gods! Following the ordinances of the Vedas, men will also perform sacrifices and give you shares at these. In the *sutras*<sup>1202</sup> of the Vedas, I will lay down that whatever share someone has given me at this great sacrifice will be proportionate to the share that he receives at those sacrifices.<sup>1203</sup> Based on the shares obtained at the sacrifices, you will hold up the worlds. Those are your rights and you will think of the

welfare of the worlds on that basis. You will be greatly honoured and obtain fruits from rites performed from pravritti. That will give you the strength to hold up the worlds. In the world, men will think of you at all these sacrifices. When you are gratified in this way, you will also gratify me. This is what I have thought of. That is the reason I have created the Vedas, sacrifices and herbs. If these are properly used on earth, the gods will be pleased. O best among the gods! As long as this kalpa is not destroyed, I have created you with the attributes of pravritti. O lords! Therefore, based on your rights, think of the welfare of the worlds. Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha—these seven were created from the powers of the mind. They will be foremost among those who know the Vedas. They have been thought of as the preceptors of the Vedas. However, because they will give birth to offspring, they will also follow the dharma of pravritti. This is eternal path of rites for manifest creatures. Aniruddha is spoken about as the lord who created the worlds. Sana, Sanatsujata, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatku-mara, Kapila and Sanatana as the seventh—these seven will be spoken of as the rishis who were born through Brahma’s mental powers as his sons. They obtained vijnana on their own and will resort to the dharma of nivritti. They are foremost among those who know about yoga. They also know about the dharma of sankhya. They are the teachers of the sacred texts of emancipation. They are the ones who will expound the dharma of moksha. It is from me that the unmanifest has flowed earlier, as have the three great qualities.<sup>1204</sup> The one who is beyond these is thought of as kshetrajna and I am he. Along the path of rites, it is extremely difficult to obtain the spot from where there is no return. Different creatures have been created for different tasks. Helplessly, a creature obtains the fruits of pravritti or nivritti. This Brahma is the preceptor of the worlds. He is the original creator of the worlds. He is the father and the mother and your grandfather. It is on my instructions that he has become one who grants boons to all creatures. Rudra is junior to him and was created from his forehead. It is on Brahma’s instructions that he became one who grants boons everywhere. Go and exercise your own rights. Think of the appropriate rights. Without any delay, let all the rites be observed in all the worlds. O supreme among gods! Depending on the acts undertaken and conduct followed by creatures, determine their spans of life. This period of krita yuga will be the best. In this yuga, at sacrifices, no violence will be exhibited towards animals and there will be no violation of this. O gods! Dharma will possess all its four parts. Thereafter, there will be treta yuga. Animals will be slaughtered then, but only at sacrifices. One part of dharma will no longer exist and only three quarters will remain. After that, there will be the mixed period known as dvapara. Two parts of dharma will decay in that yuga. When that is over, kali yuga will present itself and only one quarter of dharma will remain.’

“‘The gods asked, ‘When only one quarter of dharma remains, where will we go? What will our tasks be then? O illustrious one! Tell us that.’

“‘The illustrious one answered, ‘O supreme among gods! You should frequent countries where the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities, truth, self-control, non-violence and the practice of dharma continue to be followed. Adharma will then not touch you with its feet.’”

‘Vyasa continued, “Thus instructed by the illustrious one, the gods and the large numbers of rishis worshipped the illustrious one and went away to the regions they wished to go to. When the residents of heaven had gone, Brahma remained there. He remained there, wishing to see the illustrious Aniruddha. The god showed himself in the form of the great Hayashira. He held a kamandalu and tridanda and chanted the Vedas and the Vedangas. On seeing the infinitely energetic god, Hayashira, the lord Brahma, the creator of the worlds, desired the welfare of the worlds and bowed his head down in obeisance. He joined his hands in salutation and stood before the one who was the granter of boons. The god embraced him and spoke these words. ‘Think of appropriate means so that all the worlds can progress. You are the creator of all beings and you are the lord and preceptor of the universe. I will impose this burden on you and be completely free from all anxiety. However, whenever the tasks of the gods becomes very difficult to undertake, using my knowledge, I will go to that place and manifest myself.’ Having said this, Hayashira disappeared from the spot. Receiving the instructions, Brahma also went to his own world. He<sup>1205</sup> is the immensely fortunate one. He is the eternal Padmanabha. He is said to be the first one who receives shares in sacrifices. He is the one who always upholds sacrifices. He resorts to the dharma of nivritti, the dharma that leads to an indestructible end. However, for the welfare of the worlds, he has created the colourful dharma of pravritti. He is the beginning, he is the middle and he is the end of all creatures. He is the creator and he is the object of meditation. He is the doer and he is the task. At the end of a yuga, he withdraws the worlds and sleeps. At the be-

ginning of another yuga, he awakes and creates the universe. Bow down to that god. He is without qualities, but has the qualities in his atman. He is without birth. The universe is his form. He is the refuge of all the residents of heaven. He is the lord of the great elements. He is the lord of the Rudras. He is the lord of the Adityas. He is the lord of the Vasus. He is the lord of the Ashvins. He is the lord of the Maruts. He is the lord of the Vedas and the sacrifices. He is the lord of the Vedangas. He always dwells in the ocean. He is Hari. He is Munjakeshi.<sup>1206</sup> He is tranquility for all creatures who are in search of the dharma of moksha. He is the lord of austerities, energy and fame. He is always the lord of speech and the lord of the rivers. He is the intelligent Kapardin, Varaha and Ekashringa.<sup>1207</sup> He is Vivasvat. He is Ashvashira.<sup>1208</sup> He is the one who always bears the four forms. He is mysterious, but can be seen through knowledge. He is both indestructible and destructible. This is the undecaying god who pervades everything and goes everywhere. In ancient times, this is the one I beheld with my sight of knowledge. I have told you the truth about everything that you had asked me. O disciples! Act in accordance with my words and serve the lord Hari. Sing of him in the words of the Vedas and worship him, following the proper rites.”

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The intelligent Vedavyasa told us this. He told all the disciples, including his son, Shuka, supremely devoted to dharma. O lord of the earth! We and our preceptor worshipped him, using hymns from the four Vedas. I have told you everything that you asked me about. O king! This is what my preceptor, Dvaipayana, said in earlier times. If a man is controlled in his mind, says, “I bow down before the illustrious one” and always listens to this account, or recites it, he is then free of disease, radiant, strong and handsome. An afflicted person is freed from ill health. A person who has been tied down is freed from his bondage. A person who desires something obtains the objects that he desires. A long lifespan is obtained. A brahmana gets to know all the Vedas. A kshatriya becomes victorious. A vaishya obtains great gain. A shudra obtains happiness. A person without a son obtains a son. A maiden obtains the desired husband. A lagnagarbha is freed.<sup>1209</sup> A woman who is expecting gives birth to a son. A barren woman gives birth and has many sons and grandsons. A traveller who reads this reaches his destination without facing any hardships. There is no doubt that everyone obtains the object that he desires. These are the words of the maharshi, after due deliberation. They speak about the great-souled Purusha and about the assembly of the rishis and the residents of heaven. Having heard, those devotees obtained great felicity.’

## Chapter 1656(328)

Janamejaya said, ‘O illustrious one! Vyasa and his disciples praised Madhusudana with many kinds of names that they uttered. You should tell me about those. I wish to hear about Hari, the lord of all Prajapatis. On hearing them, I will become purified and will be like the bright moon in the autumn.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Listen to what the lord Hari told Phalgunas.<sup>1210</sup> Cheerfully, the great-souled Keshava recounted these names. O king! Phalgunas, the destroyer of enemy heroes, had asked Keshava about these names and the qualities and deeds that led to their being used.

‘Arjuna said, “O illustrious one! O lord of the past and the future! O creator of all beings! O immutable one! O refuge of the worlds! O protector of the universe! O one who grants the worlds freedom from fear! O god! There are names that the maharshis have used to praise you in the Vedas and the Puranas, because of your mysterious deeds. O Keshava! I wish to hear the true explanations about these. O lord! With the exception of you, there is no one else who is capable of explaining these names.”

‘The illustrious one replied, “O Arjuna! In the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda, the Sama Veda, the Puranas, the Upanishads, the sacred texts of sankhya, yoga and ayurveda, the maharshis have recounted many of my names. Some of those names are based on qualities, others are based on deeds. O unblemished one! Listen attentively. I will explain the ones that are based on deeds. O son! I will tell you. It has been said that in earlier times, you were half of me. I bow down to the extremely famous one, the paramatman who exists in all bodies. He is Narayana. He is the universe. He is without qualities. He possesses all the qualities in his atman. It is through his favours that Rudra was generated from Brahma’s rage. He is the womb of everything, mobile and immobile. O supreme among those who possess sattva! He possesses the eighteen qualities of sattva.<sup>1211</sup> After me, there is

Prakriti, who holds up heaven and earth through her yoga. She is truth. She is immortal. She is invincible. She is the consciousness in the worlds. Everything, the transformations of creation and destruction, flow from her. The ancient and great Purusha is the sacrifice and the person who performs the sacrifice. He is known as Aniruddha and he is the reason behind the creation and the destruction of the worlds. O one whose eyes are like lotus petals! When Brahma's night is over, it is through the favours of the infinitely energetic one that a lotus manifests itself. It is through his favours that Brahma is generated from this. When the day is over, it is because of that god that a son is born from the forehead, as the outcome of rage. This is Rudra, the destroyer.<sup>1212</sup> These two, the best among the gods, are said to be the result of favour and rage. They follow his indicated paths in becoming agents of creation and destruction. Though they are capable of granting boons to all creatures, they are actually nothing but instruments. Rudra is Kapardi, Jatila and Munda.<sup>1213</sup> His house is the cremation ground. He is a yogi who engages in fierce vows. He was terrible for Tripura.<sup>1214</sup> He destroyed Daksha's sacrifice and uprooted Bhaga's eyes. O Pandaveya! From one yuga to another yuga, know that Narayana is always present in his atman. O Partha! Therefore, if Maheshvara, the god of the gods, is worshipped, that is the same thing as the lord god, Narayana, being worshipped. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! I am the atman of all the worlds. Therefore, I single-mindedly worship Rudra as my own self. If Ishana Shiva, the granter of boons, is not worshipped, then I think of that as my own self not being worshipped. The worlds follow my ordinances. Those ordinances must be honoured and I also honour them. A person who knows him,<sup>1215</sup> knows me. A person who knows me, knows him. O Kounteya! Rudra and Narayana possess a single essence, although they divide themselves into two, pervade people and make them engage in all the acts. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! There is no one else who is capable of granting me a boon. In ancient times, I mentally thought this and worshipped the great-souled lord of the universe,<sup>1216</sup> for the sake of obtaining a son. There is no other god that Vishnu bows down before, with the exception of Rudra, who is my own self. Therefore, I worship him. Brahma, the Rudras, Indra and the rishis worship the god who is foremost among the gods, Narayana Hari. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among creatures of the past, the present and the future, Vishnu is the foremost and he must always be served and worshipped. Bow down before Vishnu, the one to whom havya is offered. Bow down before the one who is the refuge. O Kounteya! Bow down before the one who is the granter of boons. Bow down before the one who eats havya and kavya. You have heard that four kinds of people are my devotees.<sup>1217</sup> Among these, the best are the ones who single-mindedly seek me, and not any other god, as the objective. They are without desire and do not pursue rites. Though virtuous, it is the view that the three other categories of devotees desire the fruits. They follow a dharma that leads to rebirth. The enlightened obtain the best outcome. It is said that enlightened ones may serve Brahma, Shitikantha<sup>1218</sup> or any of the other gods, but they obtain me, who is beyond them. O Partha! I have recounted the differences among my devotees. O Kounteya! You and I are known as Nara and Narayana. O Partha! We have entered these human forms to reduce the burden.<sup>1219</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I know adhyatma yoga, who I am and where I have come from. I know the attributes of nivritti and the means whereby dharma is awakened. I alone am known as the eternal refuge of men. The water is known as Nara<sup>1220</sup> and Nara obtained birth from the waters.<sup>1221</sup> Since, in earlier times, the water was my road, I am known as Narayana.<sup>1222</sup> Assuming the form of Surya, I envelop the world and the universe with my rays. Since I am the dwelling of all creatures, I am Vasudeva.<sup>1223</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am the destination of all creatures and subjects. O Partha! My extreme splendour pervades heaven and earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the end, all perishable creatures desire to merge into me. O Partha! Since I make everything progressively flow, I am known by the name of Vishnu.<sup>1224</sup> People who desire success in self-control wish for me and I am in between heaven and earth. That is the reason I am Damodara.<sup>1225</sup> Food, the Vedas, water and amrita are known as prishni.<sup>1226</sup> Since I always bear these in my womb, I am known as Prishnigarbha. The rishis have said that when Trita was flung into a well and hurled there by Ekata and Dvita, he called out, 'O Prishnigarbha! Save Trita.' The rishi Trita, who was Brahma's original son, was thus raised from the well, after calling out the name of Prishnigarbha. The sun fiercely heats the worlds and there are the rays of the moon too. Know these to be my hair. The best among brahmanas, who know everything, therefore call me Keshava.<sup>1227</sup> When the great-souled Utathya's wife had conceived, through a maya worked by the gods, Utathya disappeared.<sup>1228</sup> Brihaspati, best among rishis, approached Utathya's wife for the sake of intercourse. O Kounteya! The fetus had already been formed, constituted of the five elements. It said, 'O one who is the granter of boons! I

am already here. You should not oppress my mother.’ Hearing this, Brihaspati was angered and cursed him. ‘Since you have prevented me when I was about to engage in intercourse, there is no doubt that, because of my curse, you will be born blind.’ In ancient times, thanks to the curse imposed by that foremost rishi, the rishi named Dirghatama was born and remained blind for a long time.<sup>1229</sup> He studied the eternal Vedas, the Vedangas and the subsidiary branches. Using this secret name, he invoked me. Following the prescribed ordinances, he repeatedly called out to Keshava. Because of this, he obtained his eyesight and later came to be known as Goutama. O Arjuna! This is the boon that the name Keshava grants to all the gods and great-souled rishis who invoke it. Agni and Soma come together and unite in the mouth.<sup>1230</sup> Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is based on the essence of Agni and Soma. This is what is said in the Puranas. Agni and Soma are spoken of as having united together. Agni is spoken of as the mouth of the gods. These two great ones come together and hold up the worlds.”<sup>1231</sup>

## Chapter 1657(329)

‘Arjuna asked, “In ancient times, how did it happen that Agni and Soma came together? O Madhusudana! I have a doubt about this. Dispel it.”

‘The illustrious one replied, “O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O Partha! This concerns what was generated from my own energy. Listen with single-minded attention. When four thousand yugas are over, the time for cleansing arrives. All creatures, mobile and immobile, are destroyed and merge into the unmanifest. Light, earth and wind vanish. There is blind darkness everywhere and the world is covered in water. When everything is enveloped in this fashion, nothing other than the unmanifest exists. There is no night, nor day. There is no existence, or non-existence. There is no manifest, or unmanifest. In this state, Narayana is the refuge of qualities. He is without destruction. He is without old age. He is incapable of being grasped by the senses. He is without birth. He is truth. He is beyond the attributes of injury and gain. He is indestructible, immutable and immortal. He is without form, but pervades everything. In that darkness, he is the eternal Purusha who undertakes everything. The undecaying Hari then manifests himself. These are the signs then. There is no day. Nor is there night. There is no existence. Nor is there non-existence. In the beginning, there was only darkness everywhere in the universe. This darkness is spoken of as the mother of the universe. Purusha was born from that darkness. Brahma, born from the lotus, was generated from Purusha. Having been created, this being wished to create subjects and created Agni and Soma from his eyes. After this, the various categories of creatures were generated, progressively subjects like brahmanas and kshatriyas. Soma is the same as Brahma and Brahma is the same as brahmanas. Agni is nothing but the kshatriyas and the brahmanas were more powerful than the kshatriyas. Why did this happen? This is an evident attribute of the worlds. Everything was created after the brahmanas, not before them. Oblations are offered into the blazing Agni. After having created the various categories of beings, Brahma established these creatures, so that the three worlds might be held up. The mantras speak about this. ‘O Agni! For the benefit of the universe, you are the one who receives the oblations at sacrifices. You are the one who is engaged in the welfare of gods, men and the worlds. There are signs for this. O Agni! In the universe, you are the one who receives the oblations at sacrifices. You are the one who is engaged in the welfare of gods, men and the universe. O Agni! You are truly the one who offers oblations and performs sacrifices.’ Agni is Brahma. No oblations can be offered without mantras. There can be no austerities without someone to undertake them. Oblations are offered with mantras and worship. ‘O Agni! The gods and men have appointed you as the receiver of oblations.’ There are men who have been given the right to offer oblations. For kshatriyas, vaishyas and all the twice-born categories, it is only brahmanas who can officiate at sacrifices. That is the reason brahmanas are like Agni. They uphold sacrifices. The gods are satisfied through sacrifices. The gods sustain the earth. There are hundreds of ways to be a brahmana. If a learned person gives food to the mouth of a brahmana, that is like offering kindling and oblations into a fire. The learned have thus come to think of brahmanas as Agni. Since it penetrates all creatures and sustains life, Agni is also Vishnu. There is a shloka that Sanatkumara sung about this. ‘In creating the universe, Brahma created them first. Through chanting about the brahman, those who are born as brahmanas become immortal and are established in the firmament and in heaven. The intelligence, speech, acts, faith and austerities of brahmanas



hold up the earth and the sky, like great amrita sustaining one during the cold season. There is no dharma superior to the truth. There is no preceptor equal to the mother. In this world and in the next, there is nothing superior to a brahmana.' In a kingdom where brahmanas are without a means of subsistence, bulls do not grow or bear burdens, milk does not produce anything when it is churned and property comes under the possession of bandits. The Vedas, the Puranas and the histories state that brahmanas emerged from Narayana's mouth. They are in the atmans of everything. They are in all doers. They are in all creatures. It is said that when the god who is the granter of boons had restrained his speech, the brahmanas emerged first and all the other varnas were born later. That is the reason the brahmanas are superior to gods and asuras. In ancient times, I myself created gods, asuras and maharshis and established brahmanas as superior, so that they could restrain other creatures.

"Because he oppressed Ahalya, Indra was cursed by Goutama and got a tawny beard. Through Koushika's curse, Indra lost his testicles and obtained a ram's testicles.<sup>1232</sup> When Chyavana wished to give shares to the Ashvins, Purandara, the wielder of the vajra, tried to prevent this and his arms were paralysed.<sup>1233</sup> When his sacrifice was destroyed, Daksha was overcome by great rage. He performed austerities again and obtained another eye on his forehead, to replace the one that had been uprooted by Rudra. When Rudra consecrated himself and advanced for the destruction of Tripura, Ushanas<sup>1234</sup> uprooted a strand from his matted hair and hurled it down. Serpents were generated from this. Oppressed by these serpents, his neck turned blue.<sup>1235</sup> Earlier, in Svambhuva manvantara, Narayana had seized his throat with his hand and that is how it had turned blue. To obtain amrita, Brihaspati, born in the Angiras lineage, wished to perform purashcharana.<sup>1236</sup> However, when he tried to touch the water, it turned dirty. Brihaspati was enraged and cursed the water. 'When I tried to touch you, you did not show me your favours and your water turned filthy. Therefore, from now on, you will be dirty and will be populated by fish, makaras, other fish, turtles and aquatic creatures.' Since then, the waters of the ocean have been thus infested.

"Vishvarupa, Tvashtri's son, was the priest of the gods. But his mother was related to the asuras.<sup>1237</sup> Outwardly, he offered shares to the gods. However, secretly, he offered shares to the asuras. With Hiranyakashipu at the forefront, the asuras went to their sister, Vishvarupa's mother, and asked for a boon. 'O sister! Your son, Vishvarupa, also known as Trishira, is Tvashtri's son. As a priest of the gods, he outwardly gives them their shares and only gives us a share privately. Because of this, the gods are prospering and we are suffering. You should restrain him, so that he also serves us.' At that time, Vishvarupa was in the forest of Nandana. His mother went to him and said, 'O son! Why are you making the side of the enemy prosper and why are you destroying your maternal side? You should not act in this way.' Unable to ignore his mother's words, Vishvarupa honoured her and went over to Hiranyakashipu. At this, Hiranyakashipu was cursed by Vasishtha, Hiranyagarbha's son.<sup>1238</sup> 'Since you have appointed someone else to offer the oblations, this sacrifice will not be completed. A being, the like of whom has never been born before, will slay you.' Hiranyakashipu was slain because of this curse. To make his mother's side prosper, Vishvarupa engaged in austerities. To make him desist from his vows, Indra and Agni sent beautiful apsaras. On seeing them, his mind was agitated and within a short period of time, he became attached to those apsaras. Realizing that he had become attached to them, the apsaras said, 'We will not remain here any more. We will return to the place we have come from.' Tvashtri's son replied, 'Where will you go? Stay here with me and I will do what brings you benefit.' They answered, 'We are celestial women, the apsaras. In earlier times, we obtained boons from Indra and the powerful Vishnu.' At this, Vishvarupa replied, 'Indra and the gods will no longer exist.' He chanted a mantra and meditated. Because of the mantra, Trishira began to grow. In all the worlds, the brahmanas offered oblations and soma at sacrifices. With one mouth, he drank the soma. With a second mouth, he ate the oblations. With a third mouth, he sapped the energy of Indra and the gods. Indra saw that because he was drinking the soma, every limb of his body was growing. He began to worry. Indra and the gods went to Brahma and said, 'Vishvarupa is drinking all the soma offered as oblations at sacrifices. We no longer obtain our shares. The side of the asuras is prospering and we are decaying. O creator! You should arrange for our welfare.' Brahma replied, 'The rishi Dadhicha of the Bhargava lineage is tormenting himself through austerities. Go and seek a boon from him, so that he gives up his body. Use his bones to construct a vajra.' The gods went to the place where the illustrious rishi Dadhicha was tormenting himself through austerities. Indra and the gods went to him and said, 'O illustrious one! We hope your austerities are proceeding well, without any hindrances.' Dadhicha replied, 'Welcome. What can I do for you? I will do what you ask me to.' They answered, 'O illustrious one! For the welfare of the worlds, you should

cast aside your body.' Dadhicha was a great yogi. Joy and misery were the same to him and he was not distressed at this. He controlled his atman and gave up his body. When he had merged into the paramatman, Dhatri<sup>1239</sup> collected his bones and constructed the vajra. The invincible vajra was created with the bones of a brahmana and Vishnu penetrated it. Using this, Indra slew Vishvarupa and severed his head. Thereafter, when the body of Vishvarupa, Tvashtri's son, was churned, the energy gave birth to Vritra and Indra also killed Vritra. However, Indra was frightened because he had killed two brahmanas.<sup>1240</sup> He gave up the kingdom of heaven. He entered a lotus stalk that grew in the cool waters of Lake Manasa. Using the powers of anima obtained through yoga, he became minute and penetrated the fibres of the lotus. Shachi's consort, the protector of the three worlds, disappeared, terrified at having killed brahmanas. When the lord of the universe vanished, the gods were enveloped in rajas and tamas. Mantras were no longer chanted. Maharshis were attacked by rakshasas. The sons of the brahman disappeared. The worlds were without an Indra. Weakened, they were easily attacked. At this, the gods and the rishis instated Nahusha, the son of Ayusha, in the kingdom of heaven. There were five hundred blazing stars on Nahusha's forehead and they robbed everyone of energy. He began to rule in heaven. The worlds regained their natural state of comfort. Nahusha said, 'Everything that Shakra used to enjoy has presented itself before me. Shachi is the only exception.' Having said this, he went to Shachi and said, 'O extremely beautiful one! I am the Indra of the gods now and you should serve me.' Shachi replied, 'You are naturally devoted to dharma and you have also been born in the lunar dynasty. You should not oppress someone else's wife.' Nahusha said, 'I have obtained the title of Indra. I have obtained his kingdom and there is no adharma in enjoying anything that Indra used to enjoy.' She replied, 'There is a vow that I am observing now. Within a few days, after the vow has been completed, I will come to you.' When he was thus addressed by Shachi, Nahusha departed. Shachi was afflicted by grief. She wished to see her husband and was frightened of being seized by Nahusha. She went to Brihaspati. On seeing her approach, Brihaspati discerned through his meditations that she wished to ensure her husband's objectives. Brihaspati said, 'Because of the vow and austerities you have observed, you should summon the goddess Upashruti, the granter of boons. She will show Indra to you.' She engaged in those great rituals and using mantras, summoned the goddess Upashruti, the granter of boons. Upashruti arrived before Shachi and said, 'Since you have summoned me, I have come here. What can I do to please you?' Bowing her head down, Shachi replied, 'O illustrious one! You should show me my husband. It is my view that you are the truth.' He took her to Lake Manasa and showed her Indra, hidden in the fibres of the lotus. Seeing that his wife was pale and distressed, he began to think. 'This is a great misery that has presented itself before me. My possessions have been destroyed and I confront this calamity.' Indra asked her, 'How are you?' She replied, 'Nahusha has summoned me and I have only obtained the pledge of some time.' Indra said, 'Go. Speak these words to Nahusha. Tell him that he should come to you on a vehicle that has not been used before. Let him ascend a vehicle to which rishis have been yoked. Tell him that this is the desire in your mind, that there should be a vehicle that is superior to those possessed by Indra and that he should act so as to please you.' Thus addressed, she left cheerfully. Indra again entered the fibres of the lotus. On seeing that Indrani<sup>1241</sup> had returned, Nahusha told her that the time period was over. Shachi repeated what Shakra had asked her to. He ascended a vehicle yoked to maharshis and came to Shachi. Agastya, born in a jar and the son of Maitravaruna, saw Nahusha being dragged by those maharshis. When he was touched by him with the foot,<sup>1242</sup> he told Nahusha, 'You have performed a wicked act and will fall down on earth. As long as the earth and the mountains exist, you will be a snake.' As soon as the maharshi spoke these words, he fell down. The three worlds were again without an Indra. For the sake of an Indra, the gods and the rishis went to the illustrious Vishnu. They said 'O illustrious one! You should save Indra from the sin of having killed brahmanas.' The granter of boons replied, 'Let Shakra perform a horse sacrifice in Vishnu's honour. He will then regain his status.' The gods and the rishis searched for Indra, but could not find him. They went to Shachi and said, 'O beautiful one! Bring Indra here.' She again went to the lake. Indra arose from the lake and went before Brihaspati. For Shakra's sake, Brihaspati arranged for a great horse sacrifice. Instead of a horse, a black antelope was used and Indra, the lord of the Maruts, was made to ride this. In this way, Brihaspati got his old state back for him. The king of the gods was cleansed of sin. Praised by the gods and the rishis, he was established in heaven. The sin of killing a brahmana was divided into four parts and vested in women, fire, trees and cattle. Indra's energy was thus extended through a brahmana. He could slay his enemies and also regain his own status.

“In ancient times, maharshi Bharadvaja was on the banks of the Ganga that courses through the sky. At that time, he was touched by one of Vishnu’s three feet.<sup>1243</sup> Bharadvaja picked up some water in his hand and struck him in the chest with this. This left a mark.<sup>1244</sup> Maharshi Bhrigu cursed Agni that he would devour everything. Aditi cooked some food for the gods, so that on eating it, they would be able to kill the asuras. Having completed a vow, Budha appeared before Aditi and asked for some alms. Aditi thought that no one should be given alms before the gods had eaten. At being refused alms, Budha, who possessed the brahman inside him, was enraged. He cursed her that when Vivasvat would have the second birth in Aditi’s womb in the form of an egg, he would cause her pain.<sup>1245</sup> This form of Vivasvat, Martanda, is the god of funeral ceremonies.

“Daksha had sixty daughters. He gave thirteen to Kashyapa, ten to Dharma, ten to Manu and twenty-seven to the moon. These twenty-seven, known as nakshatras, were equal. But Soma loved Rohini the most. The other wives were jealous. They went to their father and censured Soma. ‘O illustrious one! All of us are equal in beauty. But he loves Rohini more.’ They informed Daksha about this disrespect. Daksha cursed King Soma that tuberculosis would penetrate him. Thus struck by tuberculosis he went to Daksha. Daksha told him, ‘Treat them all equally.’ The rishis saw that Soma was afflicted by tuberculosis and said, ‘Towards the western directions of the ocean, there is the tirtha known as Hiranyasara. Go and bathe there.’ Soma went to the tirtha known as Hiranyasara. He went and bathed there. Having bathed, he was cleansed from his sin. Since that tirtha was illuminated by Soma, the tirtha has come to be famous by the name of Prabhasa.<sup>1246</sup> However, because of the curse, Soma still suffers from the inner trait of waning. On the night of the full moon, his complete form can be seen and is then gradually covered by lines of darkness. Even when he is sparkling, a dark sign can be seen on him, with the mark of a hare.<sup>1247</sup>

“Maharshi Sthulashira went to the northern directions of Meru and tormented himself through austerities there. While he tormented himself through austerities there, an auspicious breeze began to blow. That breeze bore all kinds of fragrant scents and touched his body. His body was tormented because of those austerities. It was lean. Fanned by the breeze, his heart was satisfied. While he was fanned in this way, to satisfy him and show their beautiful selves, the trees blossomed out in flowers. He cursed them, ‘You will not be able to bear flowers all the time.’<sup>1248</sup> In ancient times, for the welfare of the worlds, Narayana became a maharshi named Vadavamukha. He tormented himself through austerities in Meru and summoned the ocean there. Since it did not arrive when it had been summoned, through the heat of his body, the rishi stilled the waters of the ocean. He cursed them and said, ‘Your water will be salty, like the sweat from a body. Your water will be sweet only when Vadavamukha drinks it.’<sup>1249</sup> Since that day, the waters of the ocean cannot be drunk, except by the one known as Vadavamukha.

“Uma, the daughter of the Himalaya mountains, desired Rudra. Maharshi Bhrigu appeared before the Himalayas and said, ‘Give your daughter, Uma, to me.’ The Himalayas replied, ‘I have already chosen Rudra as a groom.’ Bhrigu said, ‘You have refused me your beautiful daughter. Therefore, you will no longer be full of jewels.’ Even today, the words of the rishi remain true. These are the different kinds of greatness of brahmanas. It is through the benedictions of brahmanas that kshatriyas are able to look upon this eternal and undecaying earth as their wife and are able to enjoy her. It is they who hold up the universe.”

## Chapter 1658(330)

“The illustrious one said, “Surya and Chandra and their eternal rays are said to be my hair. They are known to separately exist and heat up the universe. Since they heat up the universe in this way, they cause delight. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! It is because of these deeds of Agni and Soma that I am known as Hrishiksha.<sup>1250</sup> I am Ishana, the granter of boons and the creator of the worlds. When I am invoked through prayers at a sacrifice, I accept the share. Since my complexion is the best one of tawny, I am known as Hari.<sup>1251</sup> Those who have thought about it regard me as amrita and the refuge of all the worlds. Since I am the truth, brahmanas praise me as Ritadhama.<sup>1252</sup> In earlier times, the earth had disappeared and was hidden. Since I found her out and raised her, the gods praise me as Govinda.<sup>1253</sup> I am known as Shipivishta, since I am devoid of body hair.<sup>1254</sup> Someone who is only covered in skin is known as Shipivishta. This is the only name in which the rishi Yaska anxiously chanted my name in sacrifices. Thus, I came to hold the secret name of Shipivishta. Having



praised me through the name of Shipivishta, the intelligent rishi, Yaska, could use my favours to recover the nirukta, which had got submerged.<sup>1255</sup> I was not born earlier. I have not been born now. I will never be born. I am kshetrajna in all creatures. That is the reason I am known as Aja.<sup>1256</sup> I have never spoken anything that is inferior or obscene. The goddess, Sarasvati, Brahma's daughter, is the truth and is always with me. O Kounteya! The existent and the non-existent are immersed in my atman. In Pushkara, in Brahma's abode, the learned rishis addressed me as Satya.<sup>1257</sup> I have never deviated from sattva. Know that sattva has been created by me. O Dhananjaya! In this life too, as earlier, I have resorted to sattva. Those who act, but without any desires, think of me as Satvata. I can be seen by those who have the knowledge of sattva. I am Satvata, the lord of the Satvatas. O Partha! Assuming the form of a plough made up of black iron, I till the earth. O Arjuna! It is because of my dark complexion that I am known as Krishna.<sup>1258</sup> I have united the earth with space, the space with wind and wind with energy. The quality of Vaikuntha<sup>1259</sup> is in me. Emancipation is supreme felicity and dharma is said to be superior to both of these. Since I have never deviated from these in my deeds, I am known as Achyuta.<sup>1260</sup> People on earth know that the earth and the firmament extend in all directions. Since I hold all of them up, I am known as Adhokshaja.<sup>1261</sup> Those who are learned about nirukta and the Vedas and have thought about the purport of words have sung my praises, giving me the first share, and addressing me as Adhokshaja. The supreme rishis have invoked me by that single name too. With the exception of the lord Narayana, there is no one else in the world who can be addressed as Adhokshaja. Clarified butter, which sustains the life of creatures in this world, represents my rays. That is the reason concentrated ones who know about the Vedas address me as Ghritarchi.<sup>1262</sup> There are said to be three elements—bile, phlegm and the wind. Their union is said to constitute all deeds. It is said that when these are weak, creatures are also weakened. In Ayurveda, I am therefore spoken of as Tridhatu.<sup>1263</sup> O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the world, the illustrious Dharma is known by the name of Vrisha. Thus, in the words of Nighantuka, I am known as the supreme Vrisha.<sup>1264</sup> Kapi is said to be the best among boars and Vrisha is said to be the best among dharma. Therefore, Prajapati Kashyapa has addressed me as Vrishakapi.<sup>1265</sup> I am without beginning, without middle and without end. The gods and the asuras have never been able to comprehend my beginning, my middle, or my end. I have been praised as the lord, the lord who is a witness to the worlds. O Dhananjaya! I do not hear, or cause to be heard, anything that is inauspicious. I do not accept anything that is wicked. Hence, I am Shuchishrava.<sup>1266</sup> In earlier times, I assumed the form of a boar and it possessed a divine form, with a single horn. In that form, I raised up the earth. That is the reason I am Ekashringa.<sup>1267</sup> When I assumed that form of a boar, I had three humps. As a measure of my body, I became famous as Triakud.<sup>1268</sup> Those who have thought about the knowledge propounded by Kapila speak of me as Virincha.<sup>1269</sup> I am Prajapati, the consciousness that created all the worlds. With knowledge as a companion, I am established in the eternal Aditya. Those who have arrived at conclusions about sankhya also refer to me as the preceptor, Kapila. I am praised in the chants as the radiant Hiranyagarbha. I am always worshipped by yogis and I am known as Vibhu.<sup>1270</sup> I have been spoken about in the twenty-one recensions of the Rig Veda.<sup>1271</sup> Those learned in the Vedas have spoken about me in one thousand branches of the Sama Veda. Devoted brahmanas who sing about me in the *Aranyakas* are extremely rare. The adhvaryu priests have spoken about me in one hundred and one branches of the Yajur Veda. The brahmanas who know about the Atharva Veda have thought of me as the five kalpas and the rituals of the Atharva Veda.<sup>1272</sup> Know that all the recensions, divisions, knowledge, branches, songs, vowels and pronunciation have been fashioned by me. O Partha! Hayashira, the granter of boons, arose. I am he and all the subsequent sections, divisions and syllables are based on me. It is through the instructions of Rama and my favours that the great-souled Panchala progressively obtained that eternal being.<sup>1273</sup> He was born in the Babhravya gotra and progressively became accomplished. Through Narayana's boon, he attained supreme yoga. Thus, Galava was progressively led on to set out rules on shiksha.<sup>1274</sup> Kandarika and King Brahmadatta repeatedly kept thinking about the misery that comes through birth and death.<sup>1275</sup> Through their efforts, they obtained supreme prosperity for seven births. O Partha! In earlier times, for a certain reason, I was born as Dharma's son. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! I was therefore known as Dharmaja. Earlier, I performed undecaying austerities as Nara-Narayana. On the slopes of Mount Gandhamadana, I ascended on that vehicle that leads to dharma. There was a time when Daksha performed a sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He refused to earmark a share for Rudra. Following Dadhicha's instructions, he repeatedly hurled his blazing spear and uprooted Daksha's sacrifice. The spear reduced Daksha's entire sacrifice to ashes and violently advanced towards us in the

hermitage of Badari. O Partha! It descended with great force on Narayana's chest. Narayana's hair became suffused with energy and assumed the complexion of munja grass. That is the reason I am known as Munjakesha. The great-souled Narayana repulsed the whirling spear with the sound of 'Hum' and it returned to Shankara's hand. At this, Rudra attacked the rishis who were engaged in austerities. When he attacked in this way, Narayana, the soul of the universe, seized his throat with his hand, and he became Shitikantha. To destroy Rudra, Nara picked up a blade of grass. He swiftly invoked mantras and it became a giant battle axe. He hurled it violently, but Rudra shattered it into fragments before it reached him. Since the battleaxe was shattered, I came to be known as Khanda-parashu."<sup>1276</sup>

'Arjuna said, "O Varshneya! That encounter was capable of devastating the three worlds. O Janardana! Who was victorious? Tell me."

'The illustrious one replied, "An encounter started between the souls of Rudra and Narayana. All the worlds suddenly became anxious. The fire god no longer accepted the auspicious oblations offered at sacrifices. The Vedas no longer manifested themselves before the rishis who possessed cleansed souls. Rajas and tamas penetrated the gods. The earth trembled and the firmament started to waver. All the energy diminished and Brahma was dislodged from his seat. The oceans dried up and the Himalayas were shattered. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Ominous portents manifested themselves. Brahma, surrounded by large numbers of gods and the great-souled rishis, swiftly went to the spot where the battle had commenced. The four-faced one<sup>1277</sup> can only be comprehended through nirukta. Because of those portents, he joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Rudra. 'Let everything in the worlds be auspicious. O lord of the universe! For the welfare of the universe, you should throw down your weapon. He is indestructible. He is unmanifest. He is the lord who has created the worlds. He is subtle. He is the doer. He is beyond opposites. He is the learned one. He has assumed this manifest form. Nara and Narayana have been born in Dharma's lineage and actually have a single and auspicious form. These best of gods are engaged in great austerities and major vows. For a different reason, I have also been generated from them. O son! Though you are eternal, in an earlier cycle of creation, you have been born from his rage. O one who is the granter of boons! With the gods and the maharshis, I am soliciting your favours. Let there quickly be peace in the worlds.' Thus addressed by Brahma, Rudra withdrew the fire of his anger and sought to please the lord god Narayana. He sought the refuge of the one who should be worshipped, the granter of boons, Hari. The god, the granter of boons, was in control of his rage and had vanquished his senses. He cheerfully met Rudra. He was worshipped by the rishis, Brahma and the gods. Hari, the lord of the universe, spoke to the god Ishana. 'He who knows you, knows me. He who follows you, follows me. There is no difference between you and me. Do not think otherwise. Your spear will leave the srivatsa mark on my chest. My hand will leave a beautiful mark on your throat, to be known as shrikantha.'<sup>1278</sup> They thus left marks on each other. Rudra and the rishis exhibited a great deal of friendliness towards each other. Giving permission to the residents of heaven to go, they<sup>1279</sup> engaged in austerities again. O Partha! I have told you how Narayana was victorious in that encounter. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have also told you about the secret names and their meanings. The rishis speak about these and recount them. O Kounteya! In this way, I roam around the earth in many forms and also in the world of Brahma and eternal Goloka.<sup>1280</sup> You were protected by me in the great battle and obtained victory. O Kounteya! When the battle presented itself, there was a being who advanced in front of you. Know him to be Rudra Kapardin, the god of the gods. He is also known as Kala<sup>1281</sup> and he was born out of my rage. He had already slain all your enemies. Uma's consort, the god of the gods, is immeasurable in his power. Bow down before that god. He is the lord of the universe and he is the undecaying Hara."<sup>1282</sup>

## Chapter 1659(331)

Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! You have narrated a great account. On hearing this, all these sages are overcome by great wonder. This has been churned from the excellent and extensive ocean of knowledge known as the Mahabharata, consisting of one hundred thousand,<sup>1283</sup> like getting butter from curds, sandalwood from Mount Malaya, the Aranyakas from the Vedas and amrita from herbs. O brahmana! O store of austerities! You have raised it like

excellent amrita and stated it, based on accounts about Narayana. The illustrious lord and god has created the atmans of all creatures. O supreme among brahmanas! Narayana's energy is impossible to look at. Brahma and all the other gods, the rishis, the gandharvas and everything mobile and immobile merge into him at the end of a kalpa. I do not think that there is anything in heaven that is more sacred than him. Visiting all the hermitages and bathing in all the tirthas do not yield as many fruits as listening to Narayana's account does. Hari is the lord of the universe and is the one who destroys all sins. There is nothing colourful that was done by the noble Dhananjaya. Nor is there any excellent victory that was accomplished by him. After all, he had Vasudeva as his aide. I think that someone who has Vishnu, the protector of the three worlds, as his friend, is capable of obtaining anything in the three worlds. O brahmana! All these ancestors of mine were blessed. Janardana was engaged in their welfare and prosperity. The illustrious one is revered in the worlds and cannot be seen through austerities. However, they directly saw the one adorned with the shrivatsa mark on his chest. Narada, Parameshthi's son, was even more fortunate. Narada is known as the undecaying rishi whose energy is significant. He went to Shvetadvipa and saw Hari himself. It is through that god's favours that he obtained that vision. There, he saw the god in the form of Aniruddha. Thereafter, he again went to the hermitage of Badari to see Nara and Narayana. Why did the sage do that? Having returned from Shvetadvipa, the rishi Narada, Parameshthi's son, again went to the hermitage of Badari. After returning from Shvetadvipa, the extremely great-souled one went there. How long did he dwell there and what did he ask them? What did the great-souled rishis, Nara and Narayana, say? Tell me the truth about this. You should tell me everything.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'I bow down to the illustrious and immensely energetic Vyasa. I will narrate this account about Narayana through his favours. Having reached the great Shvetadvipa, he saw the immutable Hari. O king! Narada then swiftly returned to Meru. The brahmana bore in his heart the words spoken by the paramatman. O king! Thereafter, he thought to himself that he had achieved great success. He had travelled a long distance and had returned safe. From Meru, he went to Mount Gandhamadana. He travelled through the sky and quickly descended on the extensive region of Badari. There, he saw the ancient gods, the supreme rishis. They were engaged in extremely great austerities and were following wonderful vows, basing themselves on their own atmans. Their energy illuminated all the worlds and was greater than that of the sun. Those revered ones bore the shrivatsa mark and their hair was matted. They had the marks of a jalapada on their palms.<sup>1284</sup> Their feet bore the auspicious marks of a chakra. Their chests were broad. Their arms were long. They possessed four arms each. They possessed sixty teeth each and their voices rumbled like the clouds. Their faces were beautiful and their foreheads were broad. Their jaws were beautiful and their eyebrows and noses were excellent. Their heads were like umbrellas. These were the signs that those two great beings were marked with. On seeing them, Narada was delighted. He worshipped them and was honoured back in return. They welcomed him and asked him whether he was well. On seeing them, Narada thought within himself, "These two Purushottamas, revered by all creatures, are just like the supreme rishis I saw in Shvetadvipa." Thinking this in his mind, he circumambulated them and sat down on an auspicious seat that was made out of kusha grass. They were the abodes of austerities. They were illustrious and full of energy. Those rishis were tranquil and self-controlled. Having performed their ablutions, they calmly honoured Narada with water for washing the feet and a gift. O king! After observing the rites to welcome a guest, they sat down on two wooden seats. When they sat down there, the entire area was illuminated. It was just like a sacrificial altar, blazing with large flames of the fire, when oblations have been offered. Narada was happily seated. He was rested and having been received with hospitality, was cheerful. Narayana spoke to him. "The original and eternal paramatman is illustrious. He is the supreme form of our Prakriti and you have seen him in Shvetadvipa."

'Narada replied, "I have seen that illustrious and immutable Purusha. The universe is his form. All the worlds and the gods and the rishis are in him. Having seen the two of you now, I see that eternal one in you. The unmanifest Hari did not possess a form. But the signs he possessed are the signs that exist in you, in manifest and embodied forms. There, I saw you on both sides of the god. Having taken the permission of the paramatman, I have come here. With the exception of you two, born as Dharma's sons, who in the three worlds can possess energy, fame and prosperity like his? Earlier, he has told me the signs of the kshetragna. He has also told me how he will manifest himself in the future. In Shveta, there were men who were devoid of their five senses. Their knowledge has been awakened and they are Purushottama's devotees. They always worship the god and he finds pleasure in them. The

illustrious paramatman is affectionate towards his devotees and loves brahmanas. He always finds pleasure in those who are devoted to the illustrious one. The god enjoys everything in the universe and is friendly and affectionate towards his devotees. He is the doer. He is the cause and the effect. He is immensely powerful and radiant. That supreme one in Shvetadvipa represents austerities and sacrifices for those who are united with their atmans. He is famous for his energy. He is illuminated through his own radiance. For successful ones in the three worlds, who have cleansed their souls, he is tranquility. There, the devoted ones have resorted to vows, using their auspicious intelligence. The lord of the gods performs very difficult austerities in a spot where the sun does not heat, the moon does not shine and the wind does not blow. The enjoyer of the universe has constructed an altar on the ground and it measures the length of eight palms. The god is stationed there, standing on a single foot and with his arms raised. He faces the eastern direction. He performs those extremely difficult austerities, chanting from the Vedas and the Vedangas. Brahma, the rishis, Pashupati himself, the other best among gods, daityas, danavas, rakshasas, serpents, birds, gandharvas, siddhas and rajarshis always offer havya and kavya, following the ordinances. All of these present themselves at that god's feet. Intelligent ones perform rites with single-minded attention. That god himself receives all these on his head. There is no one he loves more in the three worlds than learned and great-souled ones who are single-minded in their devotion to him. Having been given permission to leave by the paramatman, I have come here. The illustrious god, Hari, himself told me that I should always reside with you, obtaining supreme benedictions.”

## Chapter 1660(332)

‘Nara and Narayana said, “You are blessed, since you have seen and have been favoured by the lord himself. The one who has been born from the lotus<sup>1285</sup> has himself been unable to see him. The illustrious Purushottama has an unmanifest origin and is extremely difficult to see. O Narada! The words we are speaking to you are entirely true. O best among the brahmanas! There is no one in the worlds that he loves as much as a devotee. That is the reason he has shown himself to you. The paramatman torments himself through austerities in a region. O supreme among brahmanas! With our exception, no one is capable of going there. Because of his radiance, that place seems to be illuminated by one thousand suns together. That place shines through his own resplendence. O brahmana! He is the lord behind the creation of the universe. The quality of forgiveness, and the best among those who forgive, the earth, arose from him. For the welfare of all creatures, the quality of taste also arose from that god and the attribute of fluidity that is associated with the water. It is from that god that light, and the quality of form with which it is associated, arose. United with this, the sun radiates the worlds. It is from the supreme god Purushottama that touch has arisen. United with the wind, this makes the worlds feel. Sound arose from the god who is the lord of the universe. This is attached to space, which extends unconstrained in all the directions. Mind arose from that god and is inside all beings. This becomes attached to the moon and assumes the quality of showing things. That place, associated with the Vedas, is known as the region where the six elements arose.<sup>1286</sup> The illustrious one, the devourer of havya and kavya, resides there, accompanied by knowledge. O supreme among brahmanas! There are people who have been cleansed from sin and are disassociated from good and bad deeds. They are capable of going to that sacred region. That is a region which frees the worlds from delusion and Aditya is said to be the door to that. On entering Aditya, the bodies of such people are consumed. Others are rendered invisible. Becoming like atoms,<sup>1287</sup> such people merge into the god. They are thus emancipated and are established in Aniruddha. After that, they only retain the attributes of the mind and merge into Pradyumna. Freed from Pradyumna, the being next enters Samkarshana. The best among brahmanas, those who know about sankhya and are devoted, merge there. O best among brahmanas! When the three qualities<sup>1288</sup> are completely extinguished, they merge into the paramatman, the kshetrajna who is devoid of qualities. Truly know that Vasudeva, the refuge of everything, is kshetrajna. There are those who have controlled their minds, are restrained and have checked their senses. Single-minded in devotion, they enter into Vasudeva. O supreme among brahmanas! We have been born in Dharma's house. Dwelling in this beautiful spot, we have practised fierce austerities. O brahmana! We have done this for the welfare of the three worlds, so that the supreme one, beloved by the gods, can manifest himself. O supreme

among brahmanas! We have observed rites that have not been witnessed earlier. We have properly observed all the wonderful vows of hardship. O store of austerities! In Shvetadvipa, you saw us too. Having met the illustrious one, you formed a resolution and we know about it. We know everything in the three worlds of mobile and immobile objects, everything that has happened, is happening and will happen, good or bad.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘They were engaged in fierce austerities. Having heard their words, Narada, devoted to Narayana, joined his hands in salutation. He meditated on many kinds of mantras, all of which had originated with Narayana. He spent one thousand divine years in the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. The immensely energetic and illustrious rishi, Narada, dwelt there. He worshipped the gods, Nara and Narayana.’

## Chapter 1661(333)

Vaishampayana said, ‘There was a time when Narada, Parameshthi’s son, resided there. Having performed rites in honour of the gods, he thereafter got ready to perform rites in honour of the ancestors. At that time, the lord who was Dharma’s elder son spoke these words. “O best among brahmanas! What are these rites you are performing in honour of the gods and the ancestors? You are the best among intelligent ones. Tell us about these rites from the sacred texts. Why are you undertaking these rites? What are the fruits you desire?”

‘Narada replied, “Earlier, you yourself said that rites in the honour of the gods must be performed. You said that sacrifices to gods are supreme, from the point of view of obtaining the eternal paramatman. It is because of what you have determined that I perform sacrifices to the undecaying Vaikuntha. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, was formerly generated from him. Parameshthi cheerfully gave birth to my father, though I was the first son that he mentally thought of.<sup>1289</sup> I am performing this sacrifice for my virtuous ancestors and observing the rites in honour of Narayana. The illustrious one is my father, my mother and my grandfather. I always perform these rites and sacrifices in honour of the ancestors, to worship the lord of the universe. The gods instructed the various sacred texts to their sons and the latter offered sacrifices to their ancestors. However, when the Vedas and sacred texts were destroyed, they again had to study them from their sons.<sup>1290</sup> Using the mantras, the sons therefore became like fathers. In this way, fathers and sons came to worship each other and these ancient accounts are certainly known to both of you. Having first spread kusha grass on the ground, I have offered three pindas to the ancestors.<sup>1291</sup> In ancient times, why did the ancestors come to acquire the name of pindas?”

‘Nara and Narayana replied, “In ancient times, the earth was destroyed and disappeared inside the girdle of the ocean. Assuming the form of a boar, Govinda swiftly raised it up. Purushottama established the earth in its proper place. He raised it to accomplish the objective of the worlds and his limbs were covered in water and mud. The sun was at its midday position then and it was time to perform the afternoon ablutions. The lord violently shook his tusks and three balls of mud fell down from there. O Narada! He laid these out on a bed of kusha grass on the ground. Following the proper rites, he offered these to the ancestors, that is, to himself. Following the ordinances, the lord thought of these as three pindas. The heat generated from his own body became the oil obtained from sesame seeds. The lord of the gods faced the eastern direction and himself declared these special rules. So as to establish the ordinances, he spoke these words. ‘I am the ancestor. I have readied myself to create the worlds.’ Having thought this, he immediately began to think of rites in honour of the ancestors. There were those three lumps of mud that fallen down from his tusk on the ground, in the southern direction. He declared that these balls on the ground should thereafter be known as pindas offered to the ancestors. ‘These three have no form. Let these pindas on the ground be assumed to have form. I have thus created the eternal ancestors for the worlds. I am the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather. It is I who will be regarded as being established in these three pindas. There is no one who is superior to me. Whom can I myself worship? Who is my father in this world? Who is my grandfather? I am the grandfather, the father and the cause.’ These were the words that Vrishakapi, the god of the gods, spoke. O brahmana! On the slope of a mountain, the boar spread out and offered those pindas. Having worshipped himself, he disappeared at that spot. Through this auspicious intelligence, the pindas came to be known as the ancestors. Following Vrishakapi’s words, they always obtain the worship. If a person worships the ancestors, the gods, the preceptors, the guests, cattle, the foremost among brahmanas, the earth and the mother, in deeds,



mind and thoughts, then it is as if that person worships Vishnu. That illustrious one is inside all bodies. The lord is impartial towards all creatures and towards happiness and unhappiness. He is the large and great-souled one. He is inside all atmans. He is known as Narayana.”

## Chapter 1662(334)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing these words of Nara and Narayana, Narada became extremely devoted towards that single god. He spent one thousand years in Nara and Narayana’s hermitage. He heard accounts about the illustrious one and saw the undecaying Hari. Then he quickly went to his own hermitage, on the slopes of the Himalayas. The famous rishis, Nara and Narayana, continued to dwell in their own beautiful hermitage, tormenting themselves through supreme austerities. You are extremely valiant. You are the extender of the lineage of the Pandavas. Having heard about these accounts, right from the beginning, you have been completely purified. O supreme among kings! A person who hates the immutable Vishnu in deeds, thoughts and words, possesses neither this world, nor the next. For an eternal number of years, his ancestors are submerged in hell. This is what happens to someone who hates the best among the gods, the god Narayana Hari. How can one hate someone whose atman is in all the worlds? O tiger among men! Know that Vishnu is established in all atmans. Our preceptor is the rishi who is Gandhavati’s son.<sup>1292</sup> O son! He is the one who told us about the paramatman’s greatness. O unblemished one! I have told you what I heard from him. Know that Krishna Dvaipayana is the lord Narayana. O tiger among men! Who else could have composed the Mahabharata? Other than that lord, who could have spoken about the many kinds of dharma? The great sacrifice that you thought of, is going on.<sup>1293</sup> Having listened to the truth about what the sacred texts say about dharma, think of a horse sacrifice.

‘Souti said, “The king who was Parikshit’s son heard this great account.<sup>1294</sup> He started all the rites that were necessary for the completion of the sacrifice.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘I have recounted to you the stories about Narayana. O king! In earlier times, Narada told my preceptor about these, in the hearing of the rishis, the Pandavas, Krishna and Bhishma. He<sup>1295</sup> is the supreme preceptor and the lord of the universe. He is the one who holds up the earth. He is the store of tranquility and rituals. He is the store of the sacred texts and humility. He is engaged in the supreme welfare of brahmanas. The beneficial Hari should be your destination. He is the great store of extremely great austerities. He is famous. He is worshipped by the ones who do not cause injury. He is the single refuge. He is the end that grants freedom from fear. He is the one who accepts shares at sacrifices. He is beyond the three qualities. He has four and five sacred forms.<sup>1296</sup> He accepts a share in the fruits of sacrifices. He is always worshipped. He cannot be vanquished. He is extremely strong. He is the destination for the atmans. He constitutes the good deeds of the rishis. He is a witness to the worlds. He is without birth. He is the Purusha. He is like the sun in complexion. He is the lord who progresses along many paths. He is the single one to whom one should bow down. He emerged from the waters. It is before him that the rishis bow down. He is the origin of the worlds. He is the immortal destination. He is subtle, ancient, immobile and supreme. He is the one who is always upheld by intelligent ones who know about sankhya and yoga, those who are controlled in their souls and know about him.’

## Chapter 1663(335)

Janamejaya said, ‘I have heard about the greatness of the illustrious paramatman, about how he was born in Dharma’s house in the form of Nara and Narayana and about the ancient origin and creation of pinda by the great boar. O brahmana! O unblemished one! I have heard how the modes of pravritti and nivritti were thought of. Earlier, you have also spoken about Hayashira, the devourer of havya and kavya, Vishnu’s form that arose from the north-eastern part of the great ocean. That was seen by the illustrious Brahma Parameshthi. O supreme among intelligent ones! When Hari, the upholder of the worlds, adopted that form in earlier times, what were the aspects of

power and greatness that had not been witnessed earlier? O sage! On seeing that sacred and infinitely energetic form of Hayashira, foremost among the gods and never witnessed earlier, what did Brahma do? O brahmana! Based on that ancient account, such a doubt has arisen. Why did the great being create this excellent form? O brahmana! You have purified us by telling us about these sacred accounts.'

Vaishampayana replied,<sup>1297</sup> 'I will tell you everything about that ancient account, which is in conformity with the Vedas. This was told to the king who was Dharma's son by the illustrious Vyasa. On hearing about the god Harimedha<sup>1298</sup> adopting the form of Hayashira, there was a doubt in the king's mind and he went and asked him.<sup>1299</sup> Yudhishtira asked, "Brahma saw the god in the form of Hayashira. Why did this happen and why did the god appear in such a form?"

'Vyasa said, "O lord of the earth! Everything in the world that possesses a body is made out of the five elements. This creation results from the lord's intelligence. The great god and lord, Narayana, is the creator of the universe. He is in the atmans of all beings. He is the granter of boons. He is with qualities and without qualities. O supreme among kings! It is the unmanifest one who brings about the destruction of beings. Listen. First, the earth was submerged in water and everything was one large ocean. Water merged into light and light merged into the wind. The wind merged into space and space merged into the mind. Mind merged into the manifest<sup>1300</sup> and the manifest merged into the unmanifest.<sup>1301</sup> The unmanifest merged into Purusha and Purusha merged into the one who pervaded everything.<sup>1302</sup> There was darkness everywhere and nothing could be seen. The brahman arose from the darkness. He created himself from that foundation of darkness. With the desire to create the universe, he assumed the form of Purusha. This form is known as Aniruddha and is also known as Pradhana. O supreme among kings! He is also known as the manifest and as a combination of the three qualities. With knowledge as his companion, the lord is also known as Vishvakshena or Hari. Immersed in yoga, he slept on the waters. He thought of creating the universe, with wonderful and diverse attributes. While thinking of creation, he remembered his own great qualities. Consciousness was generated then and this was the auspicious and four-faced Brahma. The illustrious Hiranyagarbha is the grandfather of all the worlds. He possessed eyes that are like a lotus and he emerged from a lotus that was in Aniruddha.<sup>1303</sup> The eternal and radiant one was seated on the flower with the one thousand petals. Wishing to create the worlds, the lord looked at the water that was on all sides. Basing himself on sattva, Parameshthi created the different categories of beings. Before this, Narayana had placed two drops of water, invested with excellent qualities, into the petals of the lotus, which were as bright as the rays of the sun. The illustrious Achyuta is without beginning and without end. He looked at those two drops of water. One of these was beautiful and radiant and looked like honey. On Narayana's instructions, Madhu, based on tamas qualities, was generated from this.<sup>1304</sup> The other drop was hard, and Kaitabha, based on rajas qualities, was generated from this. With the qualities of tamas and rajas, these two superior ones advanced. They were powerful and held clubs in their hands. They roamed around inside the stalk of the lotus. Inside the lotus, they saw the infinitely radiant Brahma. He was engaged in creating the first forms of the four beautiful Vedas. The supreme asuras saw the forms of the Vedas. While Brahma looked on, they violently seized the Vedas. Having seized the eternal Vedas, the best among the danavas quickly entered the nether regions, inside the waters of the great ocean.

"When the Vedas were stolen, Brahma was immersed in grief. Deprived of the Vedas, he spoke these words to the lord. "The Vedas are my supreme sight. The Vedas are my supreme strength. The Vedas are my supreme refuge. The Vedas are the supreme brahman. All my Vedas have been stolen by the powerful danavas. With the Vedas having been stolen, the world is enveloped in darkness. Without the Vedas, how will I engage in the task of creating the worlds? I am suffering from a great grief because my Vedas have been stolen. My heart is afflicted and I am consumed by a great misery. Who will raise me from this ocean of grief into which I have been submerged? Who will save the destroyed Vedas and do something agreeable for me?' O supreme among kings! These were the words that Brahma spoke. O supreme among intelligent ones! The intelligent one thought of some hymns in praise of Hari. Joining his hands in salutation, the lord bowed down and approached the supreme one. He chanted, 'I bow down before you. You are Brahma's heart. I bow down before you. You were created before me. You are the origin of the worlds. You are the best in the universe. You are the lord who is the store of sankhya and yoga. You are the creator of the manifest and the unmanifest. You are established on the path of tranquility. You are the enjoyer of the universe. You are inside all creatures. You are without birth. I have been generated through your favours. O



Svayambhu! You are the abode of the worlds. My first birth, honoured by all the brahmanas, was from your mind. My ancient and second birth was from your eyes. It is through your favours that my great and third birth occurred from your speech. O lord! It is the truth that my fourth birth was from your ears. O one without decay! It is the truth that my fifth birth was from your nose. It is true that you thought of my sixth birth from an egg. O infinitely powerful lord! This, my seventh birth, has happened from a lotus. O one who is devoid of the three qualities! From one cycle of creation to another cycle of creation, I have been your son. You are famous as Pundarikaksha. You are Pradhana, who has thought of the qualities. You are the natural lord. You are Svayambhu and Purushottama. I have been created by you and the Vedas are my eyes. The Vedas, which are my eyes, have been stolen. Though I have been born, I am blind. Please awake. Give my eyes back to me. I am dear to you. You are dear to me.’ The illustrious Purusha, who faces every direction, was thus praised.

“To accomplish the task of recovering the Vedas, he raised himself from his sleep. Using his powers, he assumed a second form. He assumed a form with an excellent nose and it was as radiant as the moon. The lord who is the abode of all the Vedas assumed the auspicious form of Hayashira. The firmament, with its nakshatras and stars, became his head. His long and flowing hair was as radiant as the rays of the sun. The sky and the nether regions constituted his ears. The earth was his forehead. The sacred and great rivers, Ganga and Sarasvati, were his eyebrows. The sun and the moon were his eyes. The evening was said to be his nose. The syllable ‘Om’ was his mind and the lightning was his tongue. O king! The ancestors, who drink soma, were known as his teeth. Goloka and Brahmaloka<sup>1305</sup> became the great-souled one’s lips. O king! The terrible night of universal destruction, which is beyond the three qualities, became his neck. He created this form of Hayashira and it was covered with many kinds of other forms. The god who was the lord of the universe disappeared and penetrated the nether regions. Having entered the water, he resorted to supreme yoga. Using accomplished techniques of pronunciation, he uttered the syllable ‘Om’. This sound was pleasant in every way and echoed everywhere. It possessed all the beneficial qualities and reverberated in the nether regions. Having decided to come back for the Vedas, the asuras flung them down into the nether regions and swiftly proceeded to the spot where the sound was coming from. O king! Meanwhile, Hari, the god who was in the form of Hayashira, picked up all the Vedas from the nether regions. He gave them back to Brahma and assumed his natural form again. Hayashira was the abode of the Vedas and he established this form of Hayashira in the north-eastern parts of the great ocean. O king! The danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, could not find anyone and quickly returned to the spot. However, they found that the place where they had flung the Vedas was empty. Those two supremely powerful ones resorted to great speed. They quickly raised themselves from the nether regions and saw the lord Purusha, who had originally created them. He was based in the form of Aniruddha and he was as pure in complexion as the fair moon. The valiant one had again resorted to yoga and was sleeping on the waters. He had manifested himself in this form and was sleeping on the waters. He was sleeping on the hood of a serpent<sup>1306</sup> and seemed to be enveloped in a covering of flames. The beautiful lord was full of sattva and without any blemish. On seeing him, the Indras among the danavas laughed loudly. Full of rajas and tamas, they said, ‘This Purusha is fair and he is lying down, immersed in sleep. There is no doubt that he is the one who has stolen the Vedas from the nether regions. Whom does he belong to? Who is he? Who belongs to him? Why is he sleeping on a snake?’ While they were speaking in this way, Hari was awakened. The god Purushottama realized that they wished to fight with him. He saw that the two Indras among rakshasas had made up their minds to fight. A battle commenced between them on one side and Narayana on the other. Madhu and Kaitabha were full of rajas and tamas. To please Brahma, Madhusudana slew them.<sup>1307</sup> Purushottama quickly killed the ones who had stolen the Vedas and dispelled Brahma’s grief. Brahma was again revered and surrounded by the Vedas that had been stolen. Without any sense of ownership, he created the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. He<sup>1308</sup> gave the grandfather the powerful intelligence required for the creation of the worlds. Having given this to the god, Hari went away. It is thus that Hari assumed the form of Hayashira and killed the two danavas. He assumed that form so that the dharma of pravritti could be propagated again. Thus did the immensely fortunate Hari assume the form of Hayashira. This form of the lord who grants boons is regarded as the most ancient. If a brahmana always hears it, or recites it, his studies will never be destroyed. Using fierce austerities, the rishi Panchala worshipped the god who assumed the form of Hayashira and learnt shiksha, following the path instructed by Rama. O king! I have recounted the story of Hayashira to you. This is an ancient account that is in con-

formity with the Vedas and you had asked me about it. To accomplish different kinds of tasks, the god assumes different kinds of forms. Using his atman, the god creates himself and performs those different tasks.

“He is the store of the Vedas. He is prosperous. He is the store of austerities. The powerful lord Hari is yoga, sankhya and the brahman. Narayana is the supreme Vedas. The sacrifices constitute Narayana’s atman. Narayana represents supreme austerities. Narayana is the supreme objective. Narayana is the supreme truth. Amrita is Narayana’s atman. Narayana is the supreme dharma and from this, it is extremely rare to return.<sup>1309</sup> Dharma with the characteristics of pravritti has Narayana as its soul. Scent, said to be the best attribute of the earth, has Narayana as its soul. O king! Taste, the quality of water, has Narayana as its soul. Form, the quality of light, is said to have Narayana as its soul. Touch, the quality of the wind, is said to have Narayana as its soul. Sound, resulting from space, also has Narayana as its soul. Mind, with the quality of the unmanifest,<sup>1310</sup> has Narayana as its soul. Time, computed through the measurement of the stellar bodies, is nothing but the supreme Narayana. The supreme Narayana is the deities of Kirti, Shri and Lakshmi.<sup>1311</sup> Sankhya and yoga are the supreme Narayana and they have Narayana as their soul. He is the cause as Purusha. He is also the cause as Pradhana. All deeds are in his nature. He is the cause behind the gods. He is enumerated as the five kinds of causes.<sup>1312</sup> Hari is there in all devotion. He is the truth that the curious ones seek. He is the reason that faces all the directions. He is the single truth. He is the great yogi. He is the lord Hari Narayana. He is the one Brahma, the worlds, the great-souled rishis, the practitioners of sankhya and yoga and the ascetics seek to know. The learned ones know of him as Keshava. Everything that is done in all the worlds for the sake of gods and ancestors, the donations that are given, the great austerities that are observed—all these have the lord Vishnu as their refuge. He has determined the ordinances for these. He resides in all creatures and is said to be Vasudeva.<sup>1313</sup> He is eternal. He is the supreme maharshi. He possesses the greatest power. He is beyond qualities. He is without the three qualities. When the occasion arises, he acts so as to quickly bring about a union of the qualities. The great-souled ones cannot comprehend his progress. No one can see his movements. Maharshis who are restrained and possess knowledge in their atmans always see the Purusha, who is beyond the qualities.”

## Chapter 1664(336)

Janamejaya said, ‘The illustrious Hari is affectionate towards all beings who are single-minded in their devotion to him. The illustrious one himself accepts offerings made according to the ordinances. There are people who have burnt up the kindling,<sup>1314</sup> are free of good and bad deeds and have followed the instructions that have progressively been passed down.<sup>1315</sup> They advance towards the fourth objective of Purushottama.<sup>1316</sup> Those single-minded ones go to the supreme objective. There is no doubt that the dharma of being single-minded is the best and is loved by Narayana. They do not have to pass through the other three, but directly go to the undecaying Hari. There are brahmanas who study the Vedas and the Upanishads properly, following the strictures and observing the dharma of ascetics. I know that men who are single-minded in their devotion are superior to them. Was it a god or a rishi who first propounded this kind of dharma? O lord! When did this single-minded mode of worship develop? Please dispel my doubt about this. My curiosity is great.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘The armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas were arrayed in the battle. When Arjuna was distracted, the illustrious one himself sung about this, about the ends that are obtained and the ends that are not obtained.<sup>1317</sup> I have told you about this earlier. This dharma is deep and is difficult for those who have not cleansed their souls to comprehend. This is in conformity with the Sama Veda and was thought of in the first yuga.<sup>1318</sup> O king! It was sustained by the lord Narayana himself. O great king! Partha asked the immensely fortunate Narada about the purport of this, in the midst of the rishis and in the hearing of Krishna and Bhishma. O supreme among kings! My preceptor heard what was said.<sup>1319</sup> He heard what Narada said. O lord of the earth! Brahma was born through Narayana’s mental powers and heard what emerged from Narayana’s mouth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following dharma, Narayana himself performed the divine rites that any father should. The rishis who subsist on foam then obtained the dharma. The Vaikhanasas obtained the dharma from those who lived on foam. Soma obtained it from the Vaikhanasas. But it then disappeared again. O king! Brahma had a second birth from the

eyes.<sup>1320</sup> Then, the grandfather obtained and learned this dharma from Soma. O king! He gave this, which has Narayana as its soul, to Rudra. O king! In that ancient krita yuga, Rudra immersed himself in yoga and taught this dharma to all the Valakhilya rishis. However, because of the god's<sup>1321</sup> maya, it disappeared again. Brahma had a third birth from his<sup>1322</sup> great speech. O king! The dharma was again generated from Narayana himself. A rishi named Suparna obtained it from Purushottama and tormented himself with austerities, following self-restraint and rituals. Suparna followed this supreme dharma thrice a day. Because of this, on earth, he came to be known as Trisouparna.<sup>1323</sup> These are read when one studies the Rig Veda and the vows to be followed are extremely difficult. O best among men! From Suparna, this eternal dharma was obtained by the wind god, who is known as the one who sustains life in the universe. Vayu gave it to the rishis who only subsist on leftovers. The great ocean obtained the supreme dharma from them. However, it disappeared again and merged into Narayana. The great-souled one, Brahma, was again born from his ear.<sup>1324</sup> O tiger among men! I will tell you what happened. Listen. The god, Hari Narayana, himself thought of creating the universe. The lord, who is the creator of everything in the universe, thought of a being. When he thought of this, the being, his son, emerged from his ears. The lord of the universe spoke to Brahma, the creator of different categories of subjects. "O son! Create. Create everyone from your mouths and feet. O one who is excellent in vows! I will do what is beneficial for you. I will give you the strength and the energy. Also receive this dharma from me. It is known as satvata. Use it to create and establish all the rites of krita yuga." At this, Brahma bowed down before the god Harimedha. He eagerly accepted the dharma, with its mysteries and collections and groups of *Aranyakas*. These arose from Narayana's mouth. With infinite energy, he instructed this dharma to Brahma and said, "You know about the dharma of krita yuga, which has the traits of being without desire and without deeds." Having said this, he<sup>1325</sup> departed to beyond tamas, to the place where the unmanifest is established. Then, Brahma, the god who grants boons and is the grandfather of the worlds, created all the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. That is how the first sacred krita yuga commenced. The dharma of satvata pervaded everything in the world. Brahma, the creator of the various worlds, used that original dharma to worship the lord Hari Narayana, the lord of the gods. For the welfare of the worlds and for the sake of establishing this dharma, he then taught it to Svarochisha Manu.<sup>1326</sup> O king! In ancient times, Svarochisha, the lord and protector of all the worlds, himself carefully taught it to his son, Shankhapada. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shankhapada taught it to his son Sudharma, the protector of the directions. When treta yuga commenced, it<sup>1327</sup> disappeared again. O supreme among kings! Then, in ancient times, Brahma was born from the nose. In Brahma's presence, the lord and god, the lotus-eyed Hari Narayana, himself chanted this dharma. O king! The illustrious Sanatkumara studied it. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! From Sanatkumara, at the beginning of krita yuga, Prajapati Virana obtained this dharma and studied it. Having studied it, Virana gave it to the intelligent Rouchya and Rouchya gave it to his son Shudra, who was excellent in his vows and great in his intelligence. He gave it to Kukshi, who protected the directions.<sup>1328</sup> However, the dharma that arose from Narayana's mouth vanished again. Brahma was again born as Hari's son, from an egg and this dharma arose again, from Narayana's mouth. O king! Brahma received it, and following the instructions, applied it. O king! He taught it to the sages named Barhishada.<sup>1329</sup> A brahmana who knew about the Sama Veda obtained it from the Barhishadas. His name was Jyeshtha and because of this, he came to be known as Jyeshtha Hari, the follower of the Sama vows. King Avikampana obtained it from Jyeshtha. O king! Then the dharma that had been received from the lord Hari disappeared again. O king! Brahma had a seventh birth from the lotus and Narayana himself spoke to him about this dharma. At the beginning of the yuga, the sacred grandfather was the upholder of the worlds. In those ancient times, the grandfather gave this dharma to Daksha. O supreme among kings! Daksha gave it to Aditya, who was the eldest of his grandsons through his daughters and was also older than Savitri. Vivasvat obtained it from him.<sup>1330</sup> At the beginning of treta yuga, Vivasvat gave it to Manu. For the prosperity of the worlds, Manu gave it to his son, Ikshvaku. When Ikshvaku spoke about it, it spread in all the worlds. O king! At the end of the destruction, it will again merge into Narayana. O supreme among kings! This is the dharma that is practised by the mendicants. With the collection of the ordinances, it has been recounted in *Hari Gita*.<sup>1331</sup> O king! Narada obtained this dharma, with its mysteries and its collections, from the protector of the worlds himself. O king! These are the origins of this great and eternal dharma. It is difficult to comprehend and it is difficult to practise. It is always sustained by those with sattva. Those who know about dharma appropriately apply it in their deeds. This dharma is without violence and it

pleases the lord Hari. Some worship him in one form and some in two forms.<sup>1332</sup> He is sometimes enumerated in three forms.<sup>1333</sup> He is sometimes seen in four forms.<sup>1334</sup> Hari is kshetrajna. He is without a sense of ownership and he is without parts. He is the atman in all beings and is beyond the five elements. O king! He is spoken of as the mind that controls the five senses. He is the intelligent one who ordains the worlds. He is the creator of the worlds. He is not the doer. But he is also the doer. He is the cause and the effect. O king! He is the immutable Purusha, who sports as he wills. O supreme among kings! I have spoken to you about the dharma of single-minded devotion. It is difficult for those with unclean souls to understand. I have obtained it through my preceptor's favours. O king! Men who are single-minded in their devotion are difficult to find. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Had the worlds been full of many such people, who are non-violent and devoted to their atmans, engaged in the welfare of beings, then it would have been krita yuga. People would have been free of desire and freed from rites. O lord of the earth! This is what the illustrious Vyasa, my preceptor, the one who knows about dharma, and supreme among brahmanas, told Dharmaraja. O king! This was in the hearing of the rishis and of Krishna and Bhishma. He had earlier been told this by Narada, the immensely ascetic one. Narayana is the god who is the supreme brahman. He is immutable and fair in complexion, with the radiance of the moon. Those who are single-minded go to him.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Those who have been awakened practise many different kinds of dharma. Why don't other brahmanas follow this too, instead of devoting themselves to diverse vows?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! Those who are bound in bodies possess three kinds of nature. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They follow sattva, rajas and tamas. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Among those who are bound in bodies, the best man is one who follows sattva. O tiger among men! It is certain that he will be emancipated. A man who is devoted to the brahman and is attached to Narayana is known and spoken of as a *sattvika* person. Such a person thinks of Purushottama and obtains learning. He is always devoted to Narayana and is single-minded in his faith. There are some learned people who desire emancipation. Hari, who looks after yoga and *kshe-ma*,<sup>1335</sup> eliminates their thirst.<sup>1336</sup> Know that if a man is born and Madhusudana looks favourably at him, he is sattvika and his emancipation is certain. The dharma of those who are single-minded is equal to sankhya and yoga. A person who has Narayana in his soul obtains liberation and goes to the supreme destination. Such a person cheerfully comprehends Narayana. O king! However, unless he so desires,<sup>1337</sup> knowledge is not awakened. It is said that a nature that has rajas and tamas is confused. O lord of the earth! A person with these traits in his soul is born again. If a person possesses these attributes of attachment, Hari does not look at him himself. If a man is immersed in rajas and tamas, he is born again and it is Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, who looks at him. O supreme among kings! The gods and the rishis desire sattva. However, sattva is subtle and those who deviate from it are said to undergo transformations.'<sup>1338</sup>

Janamejaya asked, 'How can a man with transformations advance towards Purushottama?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Purusha is united with the subtlety of sattva. It is united with the three syllables.<sup>1339</sup> Abstaining from acts, a man goes to the one who is the twenty-fifth. He is the single one who has been spoken about in sankhya, in yoga, in the Vedas, in the Aranyakas, in the other limbs and in the doctrines of pancharatra. Those who are single-minded in their dharma go to Narayana, the paramatman. O king! The waves of the ocean seem to retreat from it, only to return to it again. In that way, the great waves of knowledge again merge into Narayana. O relative of the Yadus!<sup>1340</sup> I have spoken to you about satvata dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you can, follow it properly. This is what the extremely fortunate Narada told my preceptor, about the single-minded mendicants of Shvetadvipa, who followed the immutable one. Vyasa affectionately recounted it to Dharma's intelligent son.<sup>1341</sup> Passed down from my preceptor, I have also told you about it. O supreme among kings! This dharma is extremely difficult to follow. There are others who are so confused that they do not follow it. It is Krishna, the creator of the worlds, who confuses them in this way. O lord of the universe! That is because he is also the reason behind destruction.'

anamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana rishi! Sankhya, yoga, pancharatra, the Vedas and the *Aranyakas*—these kinds of knowledge are prevalent in the worlds. O sage! Do they speak about the same thing, or different things? Tell me what I have asked and in due order, describe the rites that they prescribe.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘A son was born to maharshi Parashara and Gandhavati in the midst of an island.<sup>1342</sup> He is infinite and knows a lot. He is the knowledge that dispels darkness. I bow down before him. Learned ones speak about his power and say that he is the sixth one, even before the grandfather.<sup>1343</sup> Dvaipayana was the single son<sup>1344</sup> who was born as part of Narayana. He is the great store of the Vedas. He is immensely powerful and was born at that time of darkness.<sup>1345</sup> Narayana, the great store of the brahman, created the generous and energetic one as his son. Thus, the great-souled Vyasa is actually ancient and without birth.’

Janamejaya said, ‘O best among brahmanas! It has been said that, earlier, Vasishtha had a son named Shakti and that Shakti’s son was Parashara. Parashara’s son was the sage Krishna Dvaipayana. However, you have also spoken about him as Narayana’s son. Did the infinitely energetic Vyasa have an earlier birth? Tell me about that excellent birth, when he was born from Narayana.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘My preceptor desired to know about the purport of the Vedas. He was devoted to dharma and was the store of austerities. Devoted to knowledge, he spent some time on the slopes of the Himalayas. Having composed the account of the Mahabharata, the intelligent one was exhausted and performed austerities. O king! At that time, we tended to him—Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, extremely firm in his vows, I as the fourth disciple, and Shuka, Vyasa’s son. Vyasa was thus surrounded by five excellent disciples. He was resplendent on the slope of the Himalayas, like the lord of the demons,<sup>1346</sup> surrounded by the demons. After having been instructed about the Vedas, the Vedangas, the Mahabharata and all their meanings, we worshipped the generous one, when he was reflecting in his mind. In the course of the conversation, we asked that supreme among brahmanas to tell us about the meanings of the Vedas, the meanings of the Mahabharata and about Narayana’s birth. The one who knew the truth first told us about the meanings of the Vedas and the meanings of the Mahabharata. He next told us about his birth from Narayana. “Listen to this excellent account about the birth of a supreme rishi. O brahmanas! Through my austerities, I got to know about my ancient birth. This was the seventh cycle of creation<sup>1347</sup> that resulted from the lotus. The great yogi, Narayana, is free from good and bad deeds. From his navel, he created the infinitely radiant Brahma, his son. When he manifested himself, he spoke these words. ‘You have been born from my navel. You are the lord who will create different categories of subjects. O Brahma! Create many kinds of subjects, those who are learned and those who are dumb.’ Having been thus addressed, he was reluctant and anxiously thought about this in his mind. He bowed down before Hari, the lord and god who is the granter of boons, and said, ‘O lord of the gods! I bow down before you. But where do I possess the strength to create subjects? O god! I do not possess the requisite wisdom. You decide what is to be done next.’ Having been thus addressed, the illustrious one who is the creator of beings,<sup>1348</sup> disappeared. The intelligent one, the lord of the gods and supreme among intelligent ones, began to think. The lord Hari resorted to yoga and used this yoga to make the goddess of intelligence present herself before him. Using the power of yoga, the undecaying lord then addressed the virtuous and powerful goddess of intelligence. ‘O goddess of intelligence! Enter Brahma, so that the objective of creating the worlds become successful.’ Having been thus instructed by the lord, the goddess of intelligence swiftly entered him. Hari saw that he was united with intelligence and again spoke to him. ‘Create different categories of subjects.’ Saying this, the illustrious one vanished from there and in an instant, returned to his one state of divinity. He entered Prakriti and remained united with her. However, the intelligent one again began to think along the following lines. ‘Brahma Parameshthi will create all the subjects—daityas, danavas, gandharvas and large numbers of rakshasas. The ascetic, the earth, will become burdened with those who have been born. The earth will be full of many strong daityas, danavas and rakshasas. They will engage in austerities and obtain excellent boons. Insolent at having obtained these different kinds of boons, they will obstruct the large numbers of gods and the rishis, stores of austerities. It is proper that I should devise a method for removing this burden. Therefore, in different forms, I will progressively be born on earth. I will chastise the wicked and protect the virtuous. The virtuous and ascetic earth will then be able to bear the burden. In the form of a serpent,<sup>1349</sup> I will hold her up from below. Thus held up by me, she will hold up the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. So that I can save the earth, I will have incarnations.’ The illustrious Madhusudana thought in this way. ‘I will create and manifest in different kinds of forms—boar,



man-lion, dwarf and human. I will slay the insolent enemies of the gods.’ After this, the creator of the universe uttered the sound of ‘*Bho*’.<sup>1350</sup> This sound echoed and Sarasvat manifested himself. This son, who manifested himself from the lord’s speech, came to be known as Apantaratama.<sup>1351</sup> He was truthful, firm in his vows and knew about the past, the present and the future. He bowed his head down before the original and immutable god, who told him, ‘O supreme among intelligent ones! Your task is the recounting of the Vedas and the sacred texts. O sage! You should act in accordance with these instructions of mine.’ In the manvantara known as Svayambhuva, he<sup>1352</sup> collated the Vedas. The illustrious Hari was pleased with his deeds, his tormenting himself with austerities, his self-restraint and rituals.

“The illustrious one said, ‘O son! In each manvantara, you will thus establish the way of the worlds. O brahmana! You will not deviate and you will always be unassailable. The Kurus, known as the Bharatas, will be descended from you. They will be great-souled kings who are famous on earth. They will be born from you. But there will be a dissension within the lineage. O supreme among brahmanas! Barring you, all the others will destroy themselves. Then too, engaged in austerities, you will classify the Vedas. In that dark age, you will have a dark complexion. You will know about different kinds of dharma and the diverse tasks that have to be performed. However, despite engaging in austerities, you will not be freed from attachment. Your son will be free from attachment and will be like the paramatman. This will happen through the grace of Maheshvara and my words will not be falsified. Vasishtha is spoken of as the intelligent son who has been born from the grandfather’s mental powers. He is a store of austerities and his radiance transcends that of the sun. A maharshi named Parashara will be descended from him and he will be extremely powerful. He will be supreme among those who are storehouses of the Vedas. He will be a great ascetic and will immerse himself in austerities. He will be your father. There will be a maiden who will dwell in her father’s house. While still a virgin, she will have you as her son, through that rishi.<sup>1353</sup> You will know about the past, the present and the future, and all your doubts will be dispelled. The progress of thousands of yugas will pass before you. Through my instructions, you will witness all of them and be engaged in austerities. O sage! I am without beginning and without end. When thousands of yugas have passed, you will again see me, with the chakra in my hand. O sage! All this will happen to you because of your meditations and my words will not be falsified. Shanaishchara<sup>1354</sup> will be Surya’s son and will be a great Manu. In that manvantara, because of my grace, you will be superior to the saptarshis. O son! There is no doubt about this.’”

‘Vyasa said, “The virtuous rishi, Sarasvata Apantaratama, heard these words spoken by the lord. Through the favours of the god Harimedha, I am the one who was born as Apantaratama. I was born through Hari’s commands. I was again born as the famous one who is a descendant of the lineage of Vasishtha.<sup>1355</sup> I have thus told you about my earlier birth, whereby I was born through Narayana’s favours and as Narayana’s part. I performed extremely great austerities. I performed terrible austerities. O best among intelligent ones! In ancient times, I performed excellent meditation. O sons! I have told you everything that you asked me about, about my earlier birth and my future. You are devoted to me and I am affectionate towards you.’”

Vaishampayana continued, ‘O king! I have thus told you how my preceptor was born earlier. Vyasa was cheerful in his mind and when he was asked, this is what he said. Listen. O rajarshi! Know that there are many kinds of knowledge—sankhya, yoga, pancharatra and *pashupata*. The great rishi, Kapila, is said to be the exponent of sankhya. The ancient Hiranyagarba, and no one else, is known as the exponent of yoga. Apantaratama is said to be the teacher of the Vedas. Some speak of him as the rishi Prachinagarbha. Brahma’s son, Shiva Shrikantha, the lord of the demons and Uma’s consort, is said to be the attentive exponent of the knowledge known as pashupata. The illustrious one<sup>1356</sup> himself is the exponent of all of pancharatra. O best among kings! All of these are considered as the exponents of knowledge. O lord of the earth! All the sacred texts and all knowledge speaks of devotion to the lord Narayana. Those who are enveloped in darkness do not comprehend this. There are learned ones who have propounded the sacred texts. They said that there is nothing other than faith in the rishi Narayana. There is no doubt that Hari always resides in everything. However, Madhava does not reside in those in whom doubt is strong and who dispute. O king! There are those who know about pancharatra and follow it properly. They are single-minded in their devotion and merge into Hari. O king! Sankhya and yoga are eternal and so are all the Vedas. All the rishis have said that the ancient Narayana pervades everything in the universe. Everything that is done in all the

worlds, good or bad, depends on him. All forms of knowledge flow from him. He is in the firmament, the sky, the earth and the water.’

## Chapter 1666(338)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! Are there many Purushas or is there only one? Which is the best Purusha and what is said to be the origin of everything?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘In the reflections of sankhya and yoga, people have spoken about many Purushas. O extender of the Kuru lineage! They do not wish to accept that there is a single Purusha. All these many Purushas are held to have a single origin. That is explained as the single Purusha in the universe, possessing superior qualities. I will first bow down before my preceptor, the infinitely energetic Vyasa. He is a supreme rishi, controlled and united with austerities, deserving to be worshipped. O king! This *purushasukta* exists in all the Vedas.<sup>1357</sup> It is famous as both rita and satya.<sup>1358</sup> The lion among rishis<sup>1359</sup> thought about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kapila and the other rishis thought about adhyatma and devoted themselves to the contradictions spoken about in the sacred texts. Vyasa brought all this together and spoke about a single Purusha. Through the favours of that infinitely energetic one, I will tell you about the truth. O lord of the earth! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Brahma and Tryambaka. O king! In the midst of the ocean of milk, there is a supreme mountain, known by the name of Vaijayanta. Its hue is like that of gold. Thinking about the progress of adhyatma, the god<sup>1360</sup> used to go there alone. He always went there from his resplendent abode and spent time on Vaijayanta. The intelligent one with the four faces was seated there. His son, Shiva, born from his forehead, arrived there. Travelling as he willed through the sky, the three-eyed lord of yoga saw him seated there. From the sky, the lord quickly dropped down on the summit of the mountain. He cheerfully presented himself before his superior and worshipped his feet. On seeing him prostrate at his feet, Prajapati, the single lord, raised him with his left hand. Having met his son after a long time, the illustrious one welcomed him and said, “O mighty-armed one! Welcome. It is through good fortune that you have come before me. O son! Is everything well? You are always engaged in studying and austerities. You are always engaged in fierce austerities. That is the reason I am asking you about those.”

‘Rudra answered, “O illustrious one! Through your favours, all is well with my studies and austerities. The entire universe is also without decay. O illustrious one! It has been a long time since I saw you in your radiant abode. That is the reason I have come to this mountain, where your feet are resting now. Since you have decided to come here alone, I am curious. O grandfather! There must be a grave reason why you have done that. Your excellent abode is free from hunger and thirst. It is always inhabited by gods, asuras, the infinitely radiant rishis and gandharvas and apsaras. Why have you given that up and come alone to this supreme mountain?”

‘Brahma said, “Vaijayanta, this supreme mountain, is always frequented by me. Here, with concentration in my mind, I think of the great Purusha.”

‘Rudra replied, “O Brahma! You are Svayambhu and you have created many Purushas. O Brahma! You are creating others too. But there is only a single great Purusha. O Brahma! Whom are you thinking about? Who is that Purushottama?<sup>1361</sup> I have great curiosity and a doubt about this. Tell me.”

‘Brahma said, “O son! As has been stated by you, there are many Purushas. But this one cannot be seen and transcends all the others. I am telling you that this single Purusha is alone the foundation. That single one is said to be the origin of the many Purushas. That Purusha is the universe. He is supreme and extremely great. He is devoid of qualities. Devoid of qualities, they<sup>1362</sup> enter the eternal one.”’

## Chapter 1667(339)



rahma said, “O son! Hear about the eternal and undecaying Purusha. He is said to be without destruction and immeasurable. He goes everywhere. O virtuous one! I, you, nor anyone else, can see him. He is this universe, with qualities and without qualities. It is said that he can be seen through wisdom. He is without a body. But he also dwells in every body. Though he dwells in bodies, he is not touched by any of the acts committed by them. He is in my atman, in yours and in that of others, conscious of the bodies. He is a witness to everything, but cannot be grasped by anyone. The universe is his head. The universe is his arms. The universe is his feed, his eyes and his nose. As he wills, he alone cheerfully wanders among all the kshetras.<sup>1363</sup> The kshetras are the bodies, the seeds of everything, good or bad.<sup>1364</sup> Since he knows them through the yoga of his atman, he is known as kshetrajna. No creature can discern his coming and going, though this progress is indicated in the ordinances of sankhya and yoga. Even if I think about his progress, I will be unable to comprehend that supreme progress. According to my knowledge, I will tell you about that eternal Purusha. His alone is the greatness. There is said to be only one Purusha. That single and eternal one should be praised by the words of Mahapurusha.<sup>1365</sup> There is one fire, but it blazes in different kinds of kindling. There is one sun. There are many austerities, but their origins are the same. There is one wind, but it blows in many ways in the world. There is one great ocean, though there are many sources of water. There is one Purusha, devoid of qualities. The universe is his form and it also enters Purusha, devoid of qualities. One should abandon all the qualities. One should discard all acts, good and bad. One should give up both truth and falsehood. In this way, one should be divested of qualities. One can then know the one who is unthinkable. He has four subtle forms.<sup>1366</sup> An ascetic who roams around in this way can advance towards the lord, Purusha. There are some learned ones who desire him as the paramatman. There are others who have thought about adhyatma and think of him as the single atman within their own selves. The paramatman is always spoken of as one who is devoid of qualities. He is known as Narayana. He is the Purusha who is inside all atmans. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, he is not touched by any acts. He is sometimes engaged in acts.<sup>1367</sup> He is sometimes freed from bonds and united with moksha. He is sometimes united with the accumulation of the seventeen.<sup>1368</sup> In this way, in due order, Purusha is spoken of in many ways. Everything in the worlds has a refuge in him. He is the supreme object of knowledge. He is the one who knows and he is also what is to be known. He is the thinker and the object of thought. He is the eater and the object that is eaten. He is the one who smells and the object that is smelt. He is the one who touches and the object that is touched. He is the seer and the object that is seen. He is the hearer and the object that is heard. He is the one who learns and he is the object of learning. He is with qualities and without qualities. He has been spoken of as Pradhana, the accumulation of qualities. He is always eternal and immutable. He is the foundation and the prime cause behind Dhatri.<sup>1369</sup> Brahmanas speak of him as Aniruddha.<sup>1370</sup> There are virtuous and beneficial acts in the world, sanctioned by the Vedas. All these flow from him. All the gods and sages, righteous and controlled, take their places on the altar and offer him a share in the sacrifices. I am Brahma. I am the first lord of subjects. I have been generated from him and all of you have been generated from me. O son! I am the origin of all mobile and immobile objects in the universe, and all the Vedas and their mysteries. Purusha is divided into four parts and sports as he wishes. The illustrious one is awakened through his own knowledge. O son! I have thus told you exactly what you have asked. I have described to you the knowledge of sankhya and yoga.”

## Chapter 1668(340)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have spoken about dharma and the sacred dharma of moksha that one must seek refuge with. Among the different ashramas, you should now tell me what is the best kind of dharma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If followed, all kinds of dharma lead to heaven and yield the fruits of truth. There are many doors to dharma and no rites in the world are fruitless. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Whoever determines that he should follow one particular mode, decides that all the others are not worth knowing. O tiger among men! In this connection, you should listen to an account. In ancient times, Narada, the rishi of the gods, and Shakra spoke about this. O king! Narada, the rishi of the gods, had obtained success and was revered by the three worlds.

He progressively roamed around the worlds, like a wind that is not restrained. O great archer! On one occasion, he went to the abode of the king of the gods. The great Indra honoured him well and welcomed him. After some time, when he was seated, Shachi's lord<sup>1371</sup> asked him, 'O brahmana rishi! O unblemished one! Have you seen anything wonderful? O brahmana rishi! You wander amidst the mobile and immobile objects of the three worlds, always curious. You have obtained success and are like a witness to what transpires. O devarshi! There is nothing in the worlds that is unknown to you. Tell me about anything that you might have heard, felt or seen.' O king! Narada, supreme among eloquent ones, was seated. At this, he told Indra of the gods about an extensive account. I will tell it to you as that supreme among brahmanas described it. He recounted this account when he was asked. You too should listen to this."

## Chapter 1669(341)

‘Bhishma said, “O best among the Kuru lineage! In an excellent city named Mahapadma, on the southern banks of the Ganga, there lived a brahmana who was controlled. He was amiable and was born in the lineage of the moon. All his doubts had been dispelled and he knew the path he should pursue. He was always devoted to dharma and had conquered anger. He was always content and had conquered his senses. He was always engaged in non-violence. He was truthful and was revered by the virtuous. He obtained riches through proper means and through his own efforts. His conduct was good. He possessed many relatives and kin. There were honoured friends who sought refuge with him. He was born in a noble and great family and resorted to the best of conduct. O king! On seeing that he had many sons, who were engaged in the extensive tasks of dharma that the family required, he thought about a dharma that would be superior to this. He thought there were three kinds of dharma—that spoken about in the Vedas, that laid down in the sacred texts<sup>1372</sup> and the dharma practised by virtuous people. Which are the auspicious tasks that I should perform? What will bring benefit? What should I resort to? He always thought about such things and could never arrive at a conclusion. While he thus reflected on dharma, a guest arrived at his house. He was also an extremely controlled brahmana and was devoted to the supreme. He honoured him well, in accordance with the proper rites that have been laid down. When he was rested and seated, he spoke these words.”’<sup>1373</sup>

## Chapter 1670(342)

“‘The brahmana said, ‘O unblemished one! Because of the weight of your words, I have become attached to you.’<sup>1374</sup> You have become my friend. Listen to me. I will tell you something. O Indra among brahmanas! I have handed over the dharma of garhasthya to my son. O brahmana! I now want to be established on the path of supreme dharma. What should I do? I have based my atman on the atman<sup>1375</sup> and wish to be established in the atman. I do not wish to do anything that leads to bondage to the ordinary qualities. So far, all of my life has been spent on acquiring the fruit of a son. Therefore, I desire provisions for the world hereafter. The virtuous ones in this world desire the supreme that will enable them to cross the hereafter. That resolution has been awakened in me. Where will I obtain the raft of dharma? I have heard that people are confused in this world and even those with sattva in their souls find it difficult to emerge. Above the heads of all subjects, I have seen the garlands, flags and standards of dharma held aloft. My mind no longer finds delight in time spent on pleasure. I have seen that mendicants desire the hereafter. O guest! You possess the strength of intelligence and know the truth about the purport of dharma. Engage me in that.”’

‘Bhishma continued, “The guest heard the words of the one who desired to pursue dharma. The wise one replied in gentle and sweet words. ‘I am also confused and that is my wish too. I cannot make up my mind. There are many doors to heaven. Some praise moksha, other brahmanas the fruits of sacrifices. Some resort to the dharma of vanaprastha, others resort to garhasthya. Some resort to the dharma of kings, others to the fruits of the atman.

Some resort to serving preceptors, others speak words in favour of yama. Some have gone to heaven by serving their mothers and fathers. Others have gone to heaven through non-violence, and still others through truth. Some have advanced towards battle, were slain and have gone to heaven. Others became successful through the practice of the vow of *unchha*<sup>1376</sup> and have advanced along the path that leads to heaven. Some have been engaged in studying and have been devoted to the auspicious vows of the Vedas. Intelligent ones have gone to heaven by being content and conquering their senses. There are others who were upright, but were killed by people who were deceitful. There are upright ones, pure in their souls, who have been established in the vault of the sky.<sup>1377</sup> In this way, in this world, there are many doors to heaven that have been opened. Thus, my mind is also anxious, like a light cloud that is driven by the wind.’”

## Chapter 1671(343)

““The guest said, ‘O brahmana! I will instruct you in accordance with the sacred texts. I will tell you the purport of what I have learned from my preceptor. Listen. In an earlier cycle of creation, the wheel of dharma was set in motion in Naimisha, on the banks of the Gomati. There is a city of the serpents there. O bull among brahmanas! All the residents of heaven had assembled there and had performed a sacrifice. There, the supreme king, Mandhata, had surpassed Indra. The great Padmanabha dwells there. He has dharma in his soul and follows it in deeds, sight and words. The immensely fortunate resident is famous by the name of Padma. O bull among brahmanas! He pleases creatures in three different ways—words, deeds and thoughts. He protects everything through his insight and controls wicked people through the four techniques of conciliation, gifts, dissension and chastisement. You should go and ask him about the desired techniques. When you bow down before him, he will show you what supreme dharma is. The intelligent serpent is accomplished in all the sacred texts and is attentive towards guests. He possesses the rare and desired nine qualities.<sup>1378</sup> His nature is such that he is always immersed in water.<sup>1379</sup> He is always engaged in studying. His conduct is excellent and he practises austerities and self-control. His inclinations are towards performing sacrifices and donations. He is forgiving and his conduct is supreme. He is truthful in speech and without malice. He always resorts to good conduct. He eats what is left.<sup>1380</sup> He is pleasant in speech. He has discarded deceit. He does what is best and is grateful. He is without enmity and is engaged in the welfare of beings. He has been born in a lineage that is as noble as the waters in a lake in the midst of the Ganga.’”

## Chapter 1672(344)

““The brahmana said, ‘I have heard your words of reassurance. It is as if a load has been taken off the back of someone who is bearing a great load. Your words have delighted me—like a tired person when he lies down, like an exhausted person when he finds a seat, like a thirsty person when he finds a drink, like a hungry person when he finds food, like a guest who is given the desired food at the right time, like an aged person who obtains a beloved son after a long time and like the sight of a beloved one has been thinking about. I have been like a hesitant person, casting his eye towards the sky. Your words of wisdom have served to instruct me. I will certainly do what you have asked me to. O virtuous one! Spend this night with me. In the morning, happily go wherever you wish to. The illustrious Surya is gradually withdrawing his rays.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O destroyer of enemies! At this, the guest accepted his hospitality. He spent the night with the brahmana. They had a conversation that was full of words of dharma. They spent the night in this way and it was almost as if it was day. When it was morning, the brahmana honoured the guest, according to his capacity, and desired to accomplish his own objective. The brahmana made up his mind to accomplish dharma. The one who knew about dharma took the permission of his relatives. As instructed, at the right time, resolving to perform good deeds, he set out for the residence of the Indra among serpents.’”

## Chapter 1673(345)

‘**B**hishma said, “Progressively, he passed through many wonderful groves, places of pilgrimage and lakes and arrived before a sage. The brahmana asked him about the serpent the other brahmana had spoken about. Having been duly instructed, he proceeded again. He was clear about his intention and went to the residence of the famous serpent. Having reached, he exclaimed, ‘I am here. Is there anyone here?’ The serpent’s wife was devoted to her husband. She was beautiful and devoted to dharma. She came and showed herself to the brahmana. She was devoted to dharma and following the prescribed rites, honoured him. She said, ‘Welcome. What can I do for you?’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘I was exhausted. But your gentle words of reverence have swept that away. I wish to see your lord, the supreme serpent. This is my supreme task. This is the fruit that I desire. That is the reason I have come here now, to the serpent’s abode.’

“‘The serpent’s wife said, ‘O honourable one! He has gone for a month, to bear Surya’s chariot. O brahmana! There is no doubt that he will return in fifteen days and show himself to you. I have told you the reason why the noble one is not here. That being the case, what else can I do for you? Tell me that.’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘O virtuous one! That is the reason why I decided to come here. O goddess! I will wait for him to return and dwell in that great forest. When he returns, tell him I have come here, anxious to see him. You should also tell me when he returns. O beautiful one! Till then, I will reside on the banks of the Gomati. I will spend the time, following the practice of living on a restrained diet.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The brahmana repeatedly entreated the serpent’s wife in this way. The bull among brahmanas then went to the banks of the river.”’

## Chapter 1674(346)

‘**B**hishma said, “O best among men! The serpents were distressed when the ascetic brahmana began to dwell there, without any food. All the serpent’s relatives, including his brother, son and wife, assembled and went to where the brahmana was. They saw him in a lonely spot along the riverbank, controlled in his vows. Without any food, the brahmana was seated, devoted to meditation. All of them approached the brahmana and worshipped him properly. The relatives wished to extend hospitality and spoke these words. ‘O one rich in austerities! Since you arrived here, this is the sixth day. O one who is devoted to dharma! But you do not desire any food. We have come and have presented ourselves before you. All of us belong to the household and it is our duty to extend hospitality to a guest. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! You should take whatever food you wish to have—roots, fruits, leaves or water. As a virtuous person, you are dwelling in the forest, without any food. All of us, old and young, are afflicted and face a conflict of dharma. None of us has killed a foetus. None of us is one from whom food cannot be received. None of us utters a falsehood. There is no one in our family who eats before serving to gods, guests and relatives.’

“‘The brahmana replied, ‘Because of your entreaty, it is almost as if I have eaten. Eight nights are still left for the serpent to return. If the serpent does not return after eight nights are over, then I will indeed eat. But until then, I have this vow, for the serpent’s sake. You should not be tormented on this account. Go wherever you have come from. My vow is for him and you should not do anything that causes it to be violated.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The serpents then took leave of the brahmana. O bull among men! Having accomplished their objective, they returned to their own houses.”’

## Chapter 1675(347)

hishma said, “When those many lunar days were over,<sup>1381</sup> the serpent completed his task. He took Vivasvat’s<sup>1382</sup> permission and returned to his own house. On seeing that he had arrived, his wife gave him water to clean his feet and performed other similar tasks. The virtuous one approached him and the serpent asked, ‘O fortunate one! I hope you have been attentive in tending to the gods and the guests, as used to be the case when I was here. I hope you followed the ordinances I told you about. The intelligence of women is not straightforward and is often false towards accomplishing an objective. O one with the excellent hips! I hope you have not violated the norms of dharma in my absence.’

“The serpent’s wife replied, ‘The duty of disciples is to serve the preceptor, that of brahmanas to be devoted to the Vedas, that of servants to follow the words of their master and that of kings to protect people. It is said that the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect all creatures and that of vaishyas is to support sacrifices and attend to guests. The task of shudras is to serve brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. O Indra among serpents! The dharma of householders is to be engaged in the welfare of all beings. Restrained diet and the constant observance of vows, in the proper order, are dharma. In particular, there is an association between dharma and the senses.<sup>1383</sup> Whom do I belong to? Where have I come from? Who am I? Who belongs to me? If a person is devoted to the state of pursuing moksha, it is necessary that he should always ask these questions. It is said that being devoted to the husband is the supreme dharma for a wife. O Indra among the serpents! I have learnt the truth about this through your instructions. You are always devoted to dharma and I also know about dharma. Why will I abandon the path of virtue and advance along an uneven road? O immensely fortunate one! There has been no decrease in the dharma with which I have worshipped the gods. I have always been attentively engaged in tending to the guests. Fifteen days ago, a brahmana arrived here. He desired to meet you and has not divulged his objective to me. He is waiting on the banks of the Gomati, anxious to meet you. The brahmana is rigid in his vows and is seated there, concentrated on the brahman. O Indra among serpents! O supreme among serpents! I pacified him and told him that when you arrived before me, I would sent you to him. O immensely wise one! Having heard this, you should go there. O one who hears with the eyes!<sup>1384</sup> You should show yourself to him.’”

## Chapter 1676(348)

“The serpent asked, ‘O one with the beautiful smiles! In the form of a brahmana, whom did you see? Was that brahmana only a human, or was he a god? O illustrious one! Among men, who is capable of seeing me, or would desire that? Would anyone like that speak and leave words of instruction that I should go and see him? O beautiful one! Among the number of gods, asuras and devarshis, the serpents are certainly immensely valorous. They are the descendants of Surasa and are swift.<sup>1385</sup> They deserve to be honoured and are the granters of boons. We deserve to be followed by others. In particular, it has been heard that men follow us for riches.’

“The serpent’s wife replied, ‘O one who subsists on air! From his uprightness, I know that he is not a god. O one who is extremely wrathful! I know that he is devoted to you alone. He desires to accomplish some task through you and is waiting, like the chataka bird for water.<sup>1386</sup> Like the bird which loves the monsoon, he desires to meet you. He should be protected against any misfortune and anxiety. A person like you, with noble birth, should not disregard someone who has come before you. You should cast aside your natural anger and go and see him. You should not cause torment to yourself by destroying his hopes. If a king or a prince does not wipe away the tears of someone who has come with hope, he commits the sin of having killed a foetus. Knowledge is the fruit of silence. Great fame results from giving. Through eloquence and truthful words, one obtains greatness in the hereafter. Through donating land, one obtains an end that is lauded by all the ashramas. Even if the riches obtained have been destroyed in this way, one gets fruits. If one desires benefit, one must perform all the desirable acts. One will then never go to hell. Those who are learned about dharma say this.’

“The serpent said, ‘O virtuous one! Because of the great pride associated with the sinful species that I have been born into, I possessed insolence and resolved to yield to anger. But that has been burnt down by the fire of your words. O virtuous one! I do not see any darkness that is greater than being consumed by anger. Serpents are said to be especially prone to this. This is the sin that the powerful Dashagriva<sup>1387</sup> fell prey to. He rivalled Shakra

and was slain by Rama in the battle. On hearing that Rama had entered the inner quarters of the palace to seize the calf, the sons of Kartavirya were also afflicted by this sin and were slain.<sup>1388</sup> The immensely strong Kartavirya was like the thousand-eyed one.<sup>1389</sup> However, he was slain in a battle by Rama, Jamadagni's son. Because of your words, I have controlled my anger, which is the enemy of austerities and destroys all benefit. You are large-eyed and possess all the qualities. I am indeed praiseworthy, since I have someone like you as my wife. I will therefore go where that brahmana is waiting. In every way, I will speak appropriate words to him. He will not depart as one unsuccessful.'"

## Chapter 1677(349)

‘Bhishma said, “The lord of the serpents advanced towards the brahmana, mentally thinking about the task that might have brought him there. O lord of men! The Indra among serpents was intelligent and devoted to dharma. Having arrived there, he addressed him in naturally pleasant words. ‘I am addressing you peacefully. You should not be enraged with me. What is the task that has brought you here? What is your purpose? O brahmana! I have arrived before you and am asking you affectionately. On the banks of the Gomati, whom do you desire to worship?’

“The brahmana replied, ‘Know me to be Dharmaranya, foremost among brahmanas. I have come here to see the serpent Padmanabha. I have some work with him. I have heard that he has gone away, so I am waiting nearby for him, like a person waiting for a relative, or a farmer waiting for the rain. I wish to dispel his hardships and do what is beneficial for him. Therefore, without any difficulty, I am engaged in yoga here, united with the brahman.’

“The serpent said, ‘O virtuous one! Your conduct is beneficial and you are devoted to righteous people. O immensely fortunate one! I have heard that you bear supreme affection towards him. O brahmana rishi! I am that serpent and you have now met me. What is your command? Tell me what I can do to bring you pleasure. I have heard from my relatives that you had come here. O brahmana! That is the reason I have myself come here to meet you. Now that you have come here, you will be successful in your pursuits. O foremost among brahmanas! You can instruct me to be engaged in whatever pursuit you wish. In particular, all of us have been won over by your qualities. You have abandoned your own welfare and are engaged in seeking ours.’

“The brahmana replied, ‘O immensely fortunate one! I have come here with a desire to meet you. O serpent! I do not know the truth and have a desire to ask you about the truth. With my atman based on the atman,<sup>1390</sup> I wish to embark on a path that brings benefit to the atman. O immensely wise one! I am not attached to anything and wish to worship that which is powerful. You are radiant and famous through your qualities, as if you are the origin of the sun's rays. The radiant touch of your inner self now seems to be like the touch of the moon's beams. O one who survives on air! Answer the question that has arisen. Later, I will tell you about the task that has brought me here. I should hear about this from you.'"

## Chapter 1678(350)

“The brahmana said, ‘Vivasvat's<sup>1391</sup> chariot has a single wheel and in due course, you firmly draw it. If you have seen anything wonderful and praiseworthy, you should tell me about it.’

“The serpent replied, ‘Successful sages and the gods reside in his thousand rays, like birds perched on branches during the spring. The great wind emerges from Surya's rays and yawns in the sky. O brahmana! What can be more wonderful than that? The one named Shukra is at his feet.<sup>1392</sup> At the time of the monsoon, he showers down rain from the clouds in the sky. What can be more wonderful than that? For eight months, he sucks up the water through his pure rays and at the right time, showers them down again. What can be more wonderful than that? The atman is always established in specific parts of his energy. That is the seed of the earth and sustains mobile and immobile objects. The mighty-armed god is eternal. He is supreme and without decay.<sup>1393</sup> O brahmana! He is without

beginning and without end. What can be more wonderful than that? There is something that is even more extraordinary than all these wonders. Hear about it from me. Residing with Surya, I have seen this in the sparkling sky. In ancient times, at midday, the sun used to scorch the worlds. At that time, an entity was seen to advance towards the sun. It illuminated all the worlds with its own natural radiance. It advanced towards the sun and seemed to splinter the sky in the process. The rays of that energy blazed like oblations poured into the fire. That form was like that of a second sun and could not be looked at. As it advanced, Vivasvat stretched out his hand. As if honouring back in return, the entity also stretched out its right hand. Splintering the firmament, it then entered the solar disc. It mingled with Aditya's energy and in an instant, merged inside it. A doubt arose, because we could no longer distinguish between the two different masses of energy. Of these two, which one was Surya on his chariot? And which was the one that had arrived? Since a doubt arose in us, we asked Ravi,<sup>1394</sup> "O Surya! Who is the one who has advanced through the firmament and has merged into you, like a second self?"

## Chapter 1679(351)

“Surya said, ‘O friend! This is not the wind god, an asura or a serpent. This is a sage who has gone to heaven because he has become successful through the vow and conduct of unchha. This brahmana controlled himself and subsisted on roots and fruits. He ate dry leaves. He did not eat, or subsisted only on air. The brahmana obtained favours by reciting hymns from the Rig Veda Samhita. His acts opened the doors to heaven and he went to heaven. O serpent! He was restless in his desire, but he possessed fortitude. He always subsisted only on unchha. This brahmana was always engaged in the welfare of all beings. He was not a god, a gandharva, an asura, or a serpent. But because he was powerful among beings, he obtained the supreme objective.’

“The serpent said, ‘O brahmana! Such was the wonder that I witnessed. He obtained success in his human form and obtained the destination meant for those who are successful. O brahmana! With Surya, he circles around the earth.’”

## Chapter 1680(352)

“The brahmana said, ‘O supreme among serpents! There is no doubt that this is extraordinary. I am extremely delighted. Your sentences are full of meaning and have shown me my path. O virtuous one! O supreme among serpents! May you be fortunate. I will depart. Remember me and send your messengers to find out how I am.’

“The serpent replied, ‘You have not told me about the task that you are attached to. How can you then go? O brahmana! Tell me what is to be done and the reason why you have come here. O bull among brahmanas! Whether you state it or don't state it, take my permission and leave only after you have accomplished your purpose. O brahmana! You should only go after you have honoured me and received my permission. I have become attached to you. You should not go only after having seen me, seated near the root of this tree. O brahmana rishi! This is not how you should depart. O foremost among brahmanas! There is no doubt that you have also become attached to me. O unblemished one! All these people belong to you. In staying with me, what is there to think about?’

“The brahmana said, ‘O immensely wise one! O serpent! It is exactly as you have understood it. The gods are not superior to you in any way. O serpent! I am you and you are me. I, you, and all the creatures can always go everywhere.<sup>1395</sup> O lord of Bhoga!<sup>1396</sup> There was a doubt in my mind about the way to accumulate merit. O virtuous one! I have now seen the truth and will follow the vow of unchha. O virtuous one! I have now made up my mind to follow the best method. O fortunate one! O serpent! I have obtained success and I seek your leave.’”

## Chapter 1681(353)



‘Bhishma said, “O king! The brahmana honoured the foremost among serpents. He made up his mind to be initiated and desiring this, resorted to Chyavana, of the Bhargava lineage. O king! He<sup>1397</sup> performed the sacraments for him to be initiated into the way of dharma. O king! O Indra among kings! Bhargava also recounted this story in Janaka’s abode. He<sup>1398</sup> described this sacred account to the great-souled Narada. O Indra among kings! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! When he was asked, Narada, unblemished in his deeds, recounted this account in the abode of the gods. O lord of the earth! In ancient times, the king of the gods recounted this sacred account to an assembly of the praiseworthy Vasus. O king! When I fought that extremely terrible battle with Rama,<sup>1399</sup> the Vasus recounted this story to me. O lord of the earth! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Having been asked by you, I have told you the truth about this sacred account, which is full of dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You asked me about supreme dharma. O king! This account is about a patient person who acted in accordance with dharma and artha. That foremost among brahmanas was firm in his resolution and to accomplish his objective, was instructed by the lord of the serpents. At the extremities of the forest, he practised yama and niyama. He engaged in practices that were sanctioned by those who eat in accordance with unchha.”’

*This concludes Moksha Dharma Parva and also concludes Shanti Parva.*