

Chapter 1682(1)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! It has been said that tranquility is subtle and of many different types. But having acted in this way, there is no peace in my mind. O unblemished one! In this connection, you have spoken in many different ways about peace. Because of what I myself have done, these diverse kinds of peace are not available to me. I can see the terrible wounds left by the arrows on your body. O brave one! Thinking of the wicked deeds I have done, I can find no peace. Blood is flowing from your limbs, like streams from a mountain. O tiger among men! On seeing this, I am suffering, like a lotus during the rains. O grandfather! Could I have done anything more painful than this? Having confronted your enemies in the field of battle, you have now been reduced to this state. This is also what has happened to other kings, with their sons and relatives. Under the subjugation of destiny, we, and the sons of Dhritarashtra, were overcome by anger. We have perpetrated this reprehensible act. O king! What end will we obtain? I am the one who has caused your death. I am the one who has killed the well-wishers. On seeing you in this miserable state, lying down on the ground, I cannot find any peace.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When something else is responsible, why do you see yourself as the cause? O immensely fortunate one! The course of action is subtle and beyond the grasp of the senses. In this connection, an ancient history is cited, about a conversation between Mrityu,¹ Goutami, Kala,² a hunter and a serpent. O Kounteya! There was an aged lady named Goutami and she was full of tranquility. She saw that her son had been bitten by a snake and was unconscious. A hunter named Arjunaka was enraged with the snake. He tied it up with some rope and brought it to Goutami. He said, ‘This worst of snakes has killed your son. O illustrious one! Quickly tell me how I should kill it. Should I fling it into the fire, or should I chop it up into bits? This slayer of a child does not deserve to remain alive for much longer.’

“Goutami said, ‘O Arjunaka! You have limited intelligence. Release it. Do not kill it. Virtuous ones who have thought about it do not act so as to impose such a heavy burden on their own selves. They use the boat of dharma to tide over this world, like crossing the waters with a boat. Those who have made themselves heavy with sin sink, like a weapon sinks in the water. By killing it, the one who is dead will not come back to life. What purpose will be achieved by killing this creature? By letting it go, this creature will have life. Why should it be dispatched to the eternal world of death?’

“The hunter responded, ‘I know that you know the difference between good and bad. Everyone bears a great burden. But those words of instruction are for a balanced person only. Therefore, I will kill this inferior snake. For the sake of something immediate, something far away in time must be abandoned. Those who know about objectives realize that it is the immediate that is good and not incessant grieving about what is good and what is bad.³ That is the reason why it must not be released. Once it has been killed, conquer your sorrow.’

“Goutami said, ‘Those who know are not afflicted in this way. The virtuous always seek delight in dharma. The death of this child was predetermined. I cannot go against the power of dharma. Brahmanas are not enraged.⁴ Why should I face the pain from anger? O virtuous one! Be mild and forgiving. Let the serpent go.’

“The hunter replied, ‘Killing it will bring inexhaustible gain. An immediate gain and increase in strength is praised. There is an immediate gain. And by killing such a wicked creature, there may even be long-lasting gain.’

“Goutami asked, ‘Why should one kill an enemy who has been captured, when one can obtain peace by releasing that enemy? O amiable one! Why don’t you wish to forgive the serpent? What is the reason why you don’t want to release it?’

“The hunter replied, ‘O Goutami! There are many who can be protected from this one. A single one should not be protected at the expense of many. Those who know about dharma abandon the vicious. This reptile is wicked and you should allow it to be killed.’

“Goutami said, ‘O hunter! My dead son will not come back to life if this serpent is killed and I will not get him back. Nor do I see any other good from killing it. O hunter! Therefore, save the life of this creature.’

“The hunter replied, ‘After killing Vritra, the king of the gods obtained the best share. By destroying a sacrifice, the god with the trident obtained a share.⁵ Therefore, follow the conduct of the gods. Do not entertain any doubts

about quickly killing this snake.”

‘Bhishma continued, “The hunter asked the immensely fortunate Goutami to act in this wicked way towards the serpent, but she had no intention of perpetrating that evil act. Meanwhile, tied up in the rope and afflicted, it was facing difficulties. It sighed a little and spoke slowly, in a human voice. ‘O foolish Arjunaka! What is the crime that I have committed? I am not independent. I am powerless and Mrityu sent me here. I bit him because of his instructions, not because of any anger or desire. O hunter! If there has been any sin, that sin therefore vests with him.’

“The hunter said, ‘O serpent! Even if you have committed an inauspicious act because you have been under someone else’s subjugation, since you have been the instrument, the sin also vests in you. When an earthen pot is fashioned, the rod and the wheel are thought of as instruments. O serpent! You are also like that. Anyone who has committed a crime deserves to be slain by me. O serpent! You have committed a crime. O serpent! Indeed, you have described yourself as an instrument.’

“The snake replied, ‘The rod and the wheel are helpless in every way. I am just like that. Therefore, I am not the cause that you have mentioned. If you hold a contrary view, realize that these objects are being used by someone else. When something is urged by something else, there is a doubt about which one is the cause and which one is the effect. Thus, I am not guilty. I do not deserve to be killed. I have not committed a crime. Even if you think that there has been a crime, the crime is due to multiple reasons.’

“The hunter said, ‘Even if you are not the prime cause, you have been the agent responsible for his death. Therefore, you deserve to be killed. That is my view. O serpent! Even if you think that if you perform a wicked act and you will not be touched by it, you are the cause whereby that act was undertaken. That is sufficient for you to be killed. Why do you want to speak more?’

“The snake replied, ‘Regardless of whether there has been some other cause or not, an act is driven by its motive. The intention behind my words was to draw particular attention to the motive. O hunter! Even if you truly think that I was the cause, the motive behind that use was someone else’s. The sin of killing a living being then also vests with someone else.’

“The hunter said, ‘O one who is extremely evil-minded! You deserve to be slain by me. You have committed the cruel deed of killing a child. Why do you keep speaking? O worst among serpents! You deserve to be killed.’

“The snake replied, ‘O hunter! In this world and in the next, officiating priests who offer oblations into a sacrifice do not obtain any fruits.⁶ I am like that.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having been goaded by Mrityu, the serpent spoke in this way. Mrityu then arrived before the serpent and spoke these words. ‘O serpent! I was goaded by Kala and I goaded you in turn. I or you are not the causes behind this child’s destruction. The clouds are moved here and there by the wind. O snake! Just like the clouds, you and I are under Kala’s subjugation. All the attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas exist in Kala’s essence and thus exist among beings. Mobile and immobile objects, in heaven and on earth, are all controlled by Kala. O snake! The entire universe is influenced by Kala. Inclinations of people towards pravritti and nivritti and all their various transformations are all said to be dependent on Kala. O serpent! Aditya, the moon, Vishnu, water, wind, Shatakratu, Agni, the sky, the earth, Mitra, the herbs, the Vasus, the rivers, the oceans, existence and non-existence—all these are created by Kala and destroyed again. O snake! Since you know this, why do you think that I am guilty? Had I been a sinner, you would also have been a sinner.’

“The snake replied, ‘O Mrityu! I am not saying that you are absolved, nor am I saying that you are guilty. I have only said that I have been goaded by you. Nor do I say anything about Kala being blamed, or not being blamed. You or I do not possess the right to examine that crime. It is my duty to ensure that I am absolved of the sin. It may also be necessary for me to show that Mrityu is innocent.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The snake then spoke to Arjunaka. ‘You have heard what Mrityu said. I am innocent. You should not torment me in these bonds.’

“The hunter said, ‘O serpent! I have heard your words, as well as those of Mrityu. O serpent! But that does not make you innocent. You and Mrityu are both responsible for this creature’s destruction. I think that both of you are causes. Something that is a cause should not be regarded as not being a cause. Shame on the evil-souled Mrityu. He cruelly afflicts the virtuous. I will kill you too.⁷ You are the sinful cause behind a sinner.’

“Mrityu replied, ‘We are helpless. We are under the subjugation of Kala. We do what he instructs us. If you look at this objectively, there should not be anything to blame us.’

“The hunter said, ‘O Mrityu! O serpent! If both of you are under the subjugation of Kala, how are joy and anger generated?’⁸ I desire to know this.’

“Mrityu responded, ‘Everything that all of us have endeavoured to do is because of us being goaded by Kala. O hunter! I have already told you that all of this is because of Kala. If the two of us have caused any injury, that is because we have been under Kala’s subjugation. O hunter! There is no way that we can be held to be guilty.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “At that time, while there was this confusion about dharma, Kala arrived at the spot. He spoke to the serpent, Mrityu and the hunter Arjunaka.

“Kala said, ‘O hunter! Mrityu or the serpent or I am not guilty of any sin, on account of having caused the death of any creature. O Arjunaka! These outcomes are caused by the deeds a creature commits. Nothing other than one’s own deeds is responsible for destruction and death. It was because of his deeds that he faced death. All of us are under the subjugation of our deeds and those deeds are the reason for destruction. People reap the fruits of their deeds. Being bound by one’s deeds is the manifestation. One deed leads to another, just as we urge each other. A doer fashions whatever he wants with a piece of clay. In that fashion, a man confronts the consequences of his deeds. Light and shadow are always connected to each other. In that fashion, a deed and a doer are connected because of past deeds. You, Mrityu, the snake, you and the aged brahmana lady are not the reasons for the child’s death.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O king! When he spoke in this way, Goutami, the brahmana lady, realized that people suffered the consequences of their own deeds. She told Arjunaka, ‘Kala, the serpent or Mrityu aren’t the cause of the death. This child has died because of his own deeds. And it is because of my earlier deeds that my son has died. O Arjunaka! Let Kala and Mrityu go and release this serpent.’ Mrityu, Kala and the serpent went away to wherever they had come from. Arjunaka was freed of his anger and Goutami of her sorrow. O king! Hearing this, be tranquil and do not think a lot. O bull among men! Know that people obtain the three worlds because of their own deeds.⁹ O Partha! You did not do anything, nor did Duryodhana. Know that the kings died because of what Kala did.’”

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words, the immensely energetic Yudhishtira lost all his anxiety. The one who followed dharma had more questions.’

Chapter 1683(2)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! One who knows about all the sacred texts! O supreme among intelligent ones! I have heard this great account. O king! However, I again to hear about things connected with dharma and artha. You should tell me about some such account. Has any householder been able to conquer death by resorting to garhasthya dharma? O king! Tell me the truth about all of this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, there is an ancient history, about a householder who conquered death by resorting to dharma. O king! Prajapati Manu had a son named Ikshvaku. That king had one hundred sons who were as radiant as the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The tenth son was named Dashashva. He had dharma in his soul, was truthful in his valour and became the king of Mahishmati. Dashashva’s son was a king who was extremely devoted to dharma. His mind was always devoted to truth, austerities and donations. Throughout the earth, that lord of the earth was known by the name of Madirashva. He was always engaged in studying the Vedas and in Dhanurveda. Madirashva’s son was the king named Dyutimat. He was immensely fortunate, immensely energetic, immensely spirited and immensely strong. Dyutimat’s son was the king named Suvira. He possessed dharma in his soul and his treasury was like that of the king of the gods. Suvira had a son who was invincible in battle. He was known by the name of Durjaya and he was accomplished in all the sacred texts. Durjaya’s body was like that of Indra’s. He had a son who was resplendent as the fire. O supreme among kings! He was a great king and his name was Duryodhana. His valour was like that of Indra and so were his possessions and power. He never retreated from the field of battle. His city and kingdom were full of separate stores of jewels, riches, animals and grain. There was no one in the kingdom who was weak or afflicted. No man there was diseased or lean. He¹⁰ was accomplished and

pleasant in speech. He was without jealousy and had conquered his senses. He had dharma in his soul and was non-violent. He was valiant, but did not boast. He performed sacrifices and was restrained in speech. He was intelligent, devoted to brahmanas and devoted to the truth. He did not disrespect others. He was generous and knowledgeable about the Vedas and the Vedangas. The celestial river, Narmada, is sacred and auspicious, with cool waters. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a natural state, she served that best among men!¹¹ O king! Through the river, he had a daughter named Sudarshana. Her eyes were like a lotus. Her form was beautiful to look at.¹² O Yudhishtira! No woman with such beauty had been born earlier. Duryodhana's daughter, Sudarshana, was supremely beautiful.

“Agni wished to marry the princess Sudarshana. Adopting the disguise of a brahmana, he appeared before the king and sought her hand in marriage. The king was unwilling to bestow his daughter, Sudarshana, on the brahmana. After all, he was poor and did not belong to the same varna. At this, Agni disappeared and his sacrifice was destroyed. King Duryodhana spoke these words to the priests who offered oblations. ‘O bulls among brahmanas! What wicked act have I committed, to make Agni disappear? That is the way he should behave towards wicked people. I must have committed an extremely wicked deed to make Agni vanish thus. You must have done something, or I must have done something. Ascertain the truth about this.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the king's words, the brahmanas controlled themselves and using eloquent words, sought Agni's refuge. The illustrious bearer of oblations showed himself to them. The firmament blazed with his radiance. He was as resplendent as the autumn sun. The great-souled one scorched those bulls among brahmanas and said, ‘I seek the hand of Duryodhana's daughter.’ All the brahmanas were astounded at what Chitrabhanu¹³ had said. They immediately arose and went and reported this to the king. The king heard the words of the ones who knew about the brahman and was supremely delighted. However, the intelligent king sought a bride price from the illustrious fire god and this was that Chitrabhanu should always dwell near him. The illustrious Agni agreed to the king's condition. That is the reason why, even today, the fire god is in Mahishmati and in the course of his conquest, Sahadeva saw him in that direction. The maiden was attired in new garments and ornamented. King Duryodhana gave her to the great-souled Pavaka. Following the ordinances laid down in the Vedas, Agni accepted the princess Sudarshana, just as he accepts offerings of clarified butter. Agni was delighted with her beauty, good conduct, noble lineage, form and grace and resolved to have offspring through her. Agni thus had a son named Sudarshana.¹⁴ Even as a child, he knew everything about the eternal brahman.

“There was a king named Oghavat and he was Nriga's grandfather. He had a daughter named Oghavati and a son named Ogharatha. Oghavat gave his daughter, Oghavati, who was as beautiful as a goddess, to the learned Sudarshana as a wife. O king! In the ashrama of garhasthya, Sudarshana dwelt with Oghavati in Kurukshetra. O lord of the earth! The intelligent lord, blazing in his energy, took a pledge that he would conquer death in the state of garhasthya. O king! Pavaka's son told Oghavati, ‘Always act so as to satisfy the guests. One should offer one's own self, without even thinking about it. This vow is always circulating in my mind. O one with the beautiful hips! For householders, there is nothing that is superior to guests. O one with the beautiful thighs! O beautiful one! If you set any store by my words, always bear these words in your heart, without doubting them. O fortunate one! O unblemished one! This is irrespective of whether I am here, or have gone out. If you set any store by my words, never disrespect a guest.’ Oghavati joined her hands in salutation and raised them up above her head. She said, ‘It is my duty to never disregard your words.’ O king! Mrityu sought to test this and followed Sudarshana around in the house, searching for a weakness. Agni's son, Sudarshana, went out for some firewood and a handsome brahmana arrived as a guest before Oghavati. He said, ‘O beautiful one! I seek your hospitality today. Please grant it to me. Prove to me that you are following the dharma of the garhasthya ashrama.’ O lord of the earth! Thus addressed by the brahmana, the illustrious princess welcomed him, following the rites that are spoken about in the Vedas. She gave the brahmana a seat and water to wash his feet. Oghavati then asked the brahmana, ‘Why have you come here? What should I give you?’ The brahmana told the princess who belonged to Sudarshana, ‘O fortunate one! I have come here for you. Without any hesitation, you should act for that objective. O queen! If you wish to prove that you are following the dharma of garhasthya ashrama, you should give yourself to me. Do what I find to be agreeable.’ The king's daughter tried to dissuade him by offering many other desirable objects. However, the only boon that the brahmana sought was that she should offer herself. The daughter of the king remembered the words

that her husband had spoken. Though she was ashamed, she agreed to what the bull among brahmanas had proposed. She remembered her husband's words and desired to follow the ashrama of garhasthya. Therefore, she went to the brahmana rishi and lay down with him.

“Having collected the firewood, Pavaka's son returned. Like a friend who follows, the terrible Mrityu was constantly at his side. Having arrived at the hermitage, Pavaka's son called out to Oghavati. Since there was no reply, he wondered where she could have gone. She was in no position to reply to her husband then. The virtuous one, devoted to her husband, was locked in an embrace in the arms of the brahmana. She thought that she had been defiled and was ashamed of facing her husband. Therefore, the virtuous one remained silent and did not say anything. At this, Sudarshana addressed her again. ‘Where can the virtuous one be? Where could she have gone? Nothing is more important to me than her. She is devoted to her husband. She is truthful in her conduct. She is always upright. As she used to earlier, why is she not smiling and answering?’ The brahmana who was inside the cottage replied to Sudarshana. ‘O Pavaka's son! Know me to be a brahmana guest who has arrived. O excellent one! This upright one is firm in her mind about tending to guests. She offered me other things, but I was only interested in her. Following the prescribed rites, the fair-faced one is now serving me. Whatever you say should be appropriate to the occasion.’ Mrityu raised the heavy club in his hand, thinking that he would slay a person who deviated from his pledge. However, Sudarshana had discarded all anger in his mind, deeds, sight and speech. He smiled and replied, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! Enjoy the intercourse well. This brings great pleasure to me. The prime dharma for a householder is to honour a guest who has arrived. The learned have said that there is no dharma superior to a householder than the departure of a guest after being honoured. My life, my wife and all the riches I possess are to be given to a guest. That is the vow I have taken. There should be no doubt about the words that I have spoken. O brahmana! I speak the truth when I say that it is through this means that I will get to know my own atman. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! The earth, wind, space, water, light as the fifth, intelligence, the atman, the mind, time, the directions and the ten qualities¹⁵ are always a witness to good and bad deeds. Depending on the truth or falsehood of the words I have spoken today, let the gods protect me or consume me.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, a great roar arose in all the directions. ‘This is true in every way. This is not false.’ The brahmana also emerged from the hut. He arose like the wind and his form covered the sky and the earth. The brahmana spoke in accomplished tones and his voice resounded in the three worlds. ‘O one who knows about dharma! In the mantras, you have earlier invoked me as Dharma. O unblemished one! I arrived here to test you. On knowing that you are devoted to the truth, I am greatly delighted with you. You have conquered Mrityu, who has been following you around. He has always been searching for your weaknesses. But your fortitude has subjugated him. O supreme among men! This virtuous one is devoted to her husband and no one in the three worlds is capable of even looking at her. She is protected by your qualities and by her qualities of being devoted to her husband. She has not been touched. The words that I have spoken are not false. This one knows about the brahman and is united with austerities. To purify the worlds, she will become the best of rivers.¹⁶ This immensely fortunate one will control her body through yoga. While half of her self will remain in her body, the other half will become the River Oghavati. With her, you will go to the worlds you have earned through your austerities. There is no return from those eternal and everlasting worlds and you will obtain those worlds in your physical body. You have conquered Mrityu and have obtained the greatest prosperity. Through the valour of your mind, you have transcended the five elements. You have resorted to the dharma of garhasthya and have conquered desire and anger. O king! You have conquered affection, attachment, lassitude, delusion and hatred through your service and have also obtained this princess.’ An excellent chariot arrived, yoked to one thousand white horses. It arrived and bore the illustrious one away. Mrityu, the atman, the worlds, the five elements, intelligence, time, mind, space, desire, anger—all these were conquered through the garhasthya ashrama. O tiger among men! There should be no doubt in one's mind that there is no god who is greater than a guest. The learned ones have said that in one's mind, one must always remember the auspicious fact that even one hundred sacrifices are not equal to honouring a guest. If there is a deserving guest who is not honoured in accordance with good conduct, when he goes away, he takes the good deeds earned and leaves the bad deeds earned.¹⁷ O son! I have thus recounted this excellent account to you, wherein, in ancient times, a householder conquered death. This account¹⁸ brings renown, fame and a long life. A person, who

desires prosperity and wants his evil conduct to be dispelled, should listen to it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person recites this account of Sudarshana's conduct every day, he obtains the sacred worlds.'"

Chapter 1684(3)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O lord of men! O great king! If the other three varnas find it extremely difficult to become a brahmana, how did the great-souled kshatriya, Vishvamitra, with dharma in his soul, become a brahmana? O grandfather! I wish to hear the truth about this. Please tell me. O great grandfather! Through his austerities and infinite valour, the great-souled one instantly killed one hundred of Vasishtha's sons. When anger entered his body, he created many yatudhanas¹⁹ and rakshasas who were fierce in their energy. They were like the Destroyer himself. There were hundreds of brahmana rishis in the great lineage of Kushika.²⁰ Having established this lineage in the world of men, he was praised by the learned brahmanas. The great ascetic, Shunahshepa, was Richika's son. He was treated like an animal at a great sacrifice and was freed by him.²¹ The energetic Harishchandra performed a sacrifice and pleased the gods, thus becoming the intelligent Vishvamitra's son. O lord of men! Because they did not honour their eldest, Devarata, fifty of his sons were cursed and became shvapakas.²² Trishanku, the son of Ikshvaku, was abandoned by his relatives. However, he²³ affectionately conveyed him to heaven, with his head hanging downwards. Vishvamitra created a large, pure and sacred river named Koushiki and this was frequented by the rajarshis and also frequented by the brahmana rishis. There was the apsara named Rambha, who had five tufts of hair and was extremely beautiful. However, because she disturbed his austerities, she was cursed and turned into stone. In ancient times, because he was scared of him, Vasishtha submerged himself in the water and rose after he had been freed from his bonds. That is the reason the sacred and large river came to be known as Vipasha.²⁴ This was a famous deed the great-souled one performed for Vasishtha's sake. The lord praised and pleased the eloquent and illustrious one who was at the forefront of the army of the gods and thus freed himself from the curse.²⁵ He always blazes in the northern direction in the midst of the brahmana rishis and Uttanpada's son, Dhruva.²⁶ O Kourava! These and many others are his deeds. This is despite his being born as a kshatriya and I am curious about this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! How did this happen? Tell me the truth about this. Without taking birth in another body, how did he become a brahmana? O king! You should tell me the entire truth about this. Tell me the truth about Matanga too. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been born in the womb of a chandala, Matanga did not obtain the status of a brahmana. How did he²⁷ then become a brahmana?’”

Chapter 1685(4)

‘Bhishma replied, “O Partha! O son! Listen to the ancient and truthful account about Vishvamitra, about how he obtained the status of a brahmana and became a brahmana rishi. In the lineage of the Bharatas, there was a king named Ajamidha.²⁸ O best among the Bharata lineage! He performed sacrifices and was supreme among those who upheld dharma. His son was the great king named Jahnu. The great-souled one obtained Ganga as his daughter.²⁹ His son was the immensely illustrious Sindhudvipa, who was his equal in qualities. The immensely strong rajarshi, Balakashva, was born from Sindhudvipa. His son was Vallabha, who was like Dharma himself. His son was Kushika, whose radiance was like that of the thousand-eyed one.³⁰ Kushika's son was the prosperous King Gadhi. The mighty-armed one was without a son and began to dwell in the forest. While he dwelt in the forest, a daughter was born to him. Her name was Satyavati and her beauty was unmatched on earth. The illustrious Chyavana's son was the lord Richika, born in the Bhargava lineage. Because of his great austerities, he was famous. He sought her hand. However, Gadhi, the destroyer of enemies, thought that the great-souled Richika was poor and did not give her to him. When he was refused and about to go away, the supreme among kings again said, ‘If you give me a price, I will then give you my daughter.’”

“Richika asked, ‘O Indra among kings! What will I give you as a price? O king! Without hesitating about it, tell me what I should give you for your daughter.’

“Gadhi replied, ‘O Bhargava! Give me one thousand horses that are as swift as the wind, as white as the beams of the moon, but with each one possessing one black ear.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The lord who was Chyavana’s son and was a tiger of the Bhrigu lineage went to Varuna, Aditi’s son and the lord of the waters, and said, ‘O supreme among gods! I seek alms from you—one thousand horses that are as swift as the wind, as white as the beams of the moon, but with each possessing one black ear.’ Varuna, the god Aditya, agreed to what the supreme one of the Bhrigu lineage had asked. ‘As soon as you think of them, the horses will be there.’ Richika thought of horses that were as radiant as the moon and one thousand of them arose from the waters of the Ganga, great in their energy. Not far from Kanyakubja, there are the excellent banks of the Ganga. Even today, men still refer to the spot as Ashvatirtha.³¹ O son! Richika, foremost among those who meditate, cheerfully gave those one thousand fair horses to Gadhi, as a price. King Gadhi was astounded, but was also terrified of a curse. He therefore gave his ornamented daughter to Bhrigu’s descendant. Following the recommended rites, the supreme among brahmana rishis accepted her hand. She was also extremely delighted at having obtained such a husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brahmana rishi was pleased at her conduct and desired to grant a boon to the beautiful one. O supreme among kings! The maiden reported this to her mother. As the daughter stood before her, with downcast eyes, the mother said, ‘O daughter! You should ask your husband to show me his favours too. That great ascetic is capable of granting me a son too.’ O king! She swiftly went to Richika and told him everything about what her mother desired. He said, ‘O fortunate one! Because of my love for you, she will give birth to a son who possesses all the qualities. There will be no violation of this. O fortunate one! You will also have a son who will be proud of his qualities. This prosperous one will extend our lineage. Your brother will also extend his lineage. When you have bathed at the end of your seasons, let her embrace an ashvattha tree and you should embrace a fig tree. O fortunate one! Thereby, both of you will obtain what you wish for. O one with the beautiful smiles! Here are two vessels of charu,³² sanctified with the pronouncement of mantras. When you consume these, you will obtain the desired sons.’ Satyavati happily told her mother what Richika had said. She also told her about the two vessels of charu. The mother inhaled the fragrance of her daughter Satyavati’s head and told her, ‘O daughter! Act in accordance with my words. Your husband first gave you a vessel of charu, sanctified with mantras. Give that to me. Accept the one he gave me instead. O one with the sweet smiles! We should also exchange the trees. O unblemished one! If you honour your mother, this is what you should do. It is evident what the illustrious one wants to do.’³³ O slender-waisted one! Therefore, I desire your charu and your tree. You should also think about obtaining a superior brother for yourself.’ O Yudhishtira! Satyavati and her mother acted in this way and both of them conceived.

“When the great rishi, the supreme one of the Bhrigu lineage, saw that his wife, Satyavati, had conceived, he was distressed in his mind and said, ‘It will soon be apparent that you have not done well in exchanging the charu. O beautiful one! It is clear that you have exchanged the trees too. I had placed all the brahmana energy in the universe in your charu. I had placed all the kshatriya valour in her charu. You would have given birth to a brahmana who would have been famous in the three worlds because of his qualities. She would have given birth to an excellent kshatriya. That is what I had arranged for. However, you and your mother have effected an exchange. Therefore, your mother will give birth to the best among brahmanas. O fortunate one! You will give birth to a kshatriya who will be terrible in his deeds. O beautiful one! Thanks to your affection for your mother, you have not done a good deed.’ O king! On hearing this, the beautiful Satyavati was overcome by grief and fell down on the ground, like a creeper that has been severed. When she regained her senses, she bowed her head down on the ground. The wife, Gadhi’s daughter, spoke, to her husband, the bull among brahmanas. ‘O supreme among those who know about the brahman! Show mercy towards your miserable wife. O brahmana rishi! Show me your favours, so that I do not have a son who is a kshatriya. If you so desire, let my grandson be the performer of terrible deeds. O brahmana! Grant me the boon that my son should not be like that.’ The greatly ascetic agreed to what his wife had said.

“She gave birth to an auspicious son named Jamadagni. O Indra among kings! Through the rishi’s powers, Gadhi’s illustrious wife gave birth to the brahmana rishi, Vishvamitra, knowledgeable about the brahman. The immensely ascetic Vishvamitra obtained the status of a brahmana. Though he was born as a kshatriya, he became the

originator of a lineage of brahmanas. His sons were great-souled and the extenders of the lineages of brahmanas. They were ascetics who knew about the brahman. They were the creators of gotras. The illustrious Madhuchanda, the valiant Devarata, Akshina, Shakunta, Babhru, Kalapatha, the famous Yajnavalkya, Sthuna, great in his vows, Uluka, Yamaduta, the rishi Saindhavayana, the illustrious Karnajangha, the great rishi Galava, the rishi Vajra, the famous Shalankayana, Lalatya, Narada, the one known as Kurchamukha, Vaduli, Musala, Rakshagriva, Anghnika, Naikabhricha, Shilayupa, Sita, Shuchi, Chakraka, Marutantavya, Vataghna, Ashvalayana, Shyamayana, Gargya, Jabali, Sushruta, Karishiratha, Samshrutya, Parapourava, Tantu, the great rishi Kapila, the rishi Tarakayana, Upagahana, the rishi Arjunayana, Margamitri, Hiranyaksha, Janghari, Babhruvahana, Suti, Vibhuti, Suta, Suranga, Aradvina, Amaya, Champeya, Ujjayana, Navatantu, Bakanakha, Shayana, Yati, Shayaruha, Arumatsya, Shirishi, Gardhabhi, Ujjayani, Adapekshi, the great rishi Naradi—all these sages were knowledgeable about the brahman and were descended from Vishvamitra. O king! The great ascetic, Vishvamitra, was born as a kshatriya. O Yudhishtira! But Richika had brought the supreme brahman to him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have truthfully told you the entire account about Vishvamitra's birth. His energy was like that of the moon, the sun and the fire. O supreme among kings! Tell me about everything that you have a doubt over. I will sever your doubts.”

Chapter 1686(5)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I wish to hear everything about the dharma of non-violence and about the qualities of those who are devoted. O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In the kingdom of Kashi, a hunter left his village to hunt for deer. He had poisoned arrows with him. Searching for flesh, the hunter entered a large forest. He saw some deer at a distance and carefully shot an arrow at them. The weapon was difficult to repulse. However, in that large forest, though it has been released in order to kill a deer, it missed the target and struck a tree. The powerful poison in the arrow burnt it down. Having dried up, the tree shed its fruits and leaves. A parrot lived in a hollow in that withered tree. Because of its affection for the tree, it did not leave its abode. It did not emerge in search of food and starved. It suffered and became feeble. Because it was grateful to the tree, the one with dharma in its soul dried up with it. The chastiser of Paka³⁴ was astounded on learning that it looked upon happiness and unhappiness equally. Shakra wondered, ‘This bird has been born as an inferior species. How did it come to resort to non-violence? Or perhaps there is nothing wonderful in this, since all creatures are everywhere seen to be kindly disposed towards each other.’ Thus did Vasava think.

“Shakra assumed a human form, in the attire of a brahmana. He descended on earth and addressed the bird. ‘O parrot! O best among the birds! Daksha’s daughter has indeed had excellent offspring.³⁵ I wish to ask you a question. Why are you not abandoning this withered tree?’ Having been thus asked, the parrot bowed its head down in obeisance and replied, ‘O king of the gods! Welcome. Through my austerities, I know who you are.’ The one with the one thousand eyes exclaimed words of praise. ‘The austerities through which it has discerned this deserve to be honoured.’ The destroyer of Bala³⁶ knew that the parrot was extremely devoted to dharma and that it was the performer of auspicious deeds. However, he still wanted to know why the parrot wouldn’t leave. ‘This tree is without leaves and without fruit. It is withered and can no longer be a refuge for birds. Why are you still on this tree? There are many other trees in this great forest and they have leaves and are full of hollows. In this great forest, there are many other places where you will find a fortunate spot. This one has lost its lifespan and its capacity. Its essence has been destroyed. It has lost its prosperity. O wise and patient one! Why are you not abandoning a tree that has been destroyed and is now fragile?’ The parrot, with dharma in its soul, heard the words that Shakra had spoken. It sighed deeply and spoke these words of distress. ‘O Shachi’s consort! Destiny cannot be overcome. O lord of the gods! Listen to the reason why I am still here. I have been born in this tree. All my virtuous qualities result from it. It protected me well in my infancy and I was not assaulted by my enemies. O unblemished one! Why are you asking questions about the fruits I seek—non-violence, affection and attachment towards those who are devoted? Lack of anger is a great trait of those who are virtuous. Lack of anger always grants cheer to the virtuous. When there is a doubt about dharma, it is you whom the gods ask. O god! That is the reason you have been established as a lord of the gods. O thousand-eyed one! You should not ask me to abandon someone who is devoted to me. When it was

capable, it sustained my life. How can I abandon it now?’ At these amiable words, Paka’s chastiser was delighted. He was satisfied with the parrot’s non-violence and knowledge of dharma and said, ‘O parrot! Ask for a boon.’ The parrot, always devoted to non-violence, asked for the boon that the tree might be revived. Shakra had got to know about the parrot’s firmness and richness of good conduct. Delighted, he quickly sprinkled amrita on the tree. Beautiful fruits, leaves and branches sprouted. Because of the parrot’s firm devotion, the tree regained its beauty again. O great king! Because of its deeds and acts of non-violence, when its lifespan was over, the parrot obtained Shakra’s world. O Indra among men! In this way, those who are devoted become successful in everything, just as the tree did, through the parrot.”

Chapter 1687(6)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! Which is stronger, destiny or human endeavour?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vasishtha and Brahma. In ancient times, Vasishtha asked the illustrious grandfather, ‘Which is superior, destiny or the deeds of men?’ O king! At this, the grandfather, born from the lotus and the god of the gods, replied in pleasant words that were full of purport and reason. ‘Nothing is born without a seed. There are no fruits without a seed. It is said that seeds result from seeds and fruits result from seeds. The tiller of a field may sow good or bad seeds. The fruits obtained are in accordance with that. Without seeds, a ploughed field does not yield fruits. But in that way, without human enterprise, destiny doesn’t become successful. The field is said to be like human enterprise, the seed is like destiny. Crops are harvested from a union of the field and the seed. The fruits of deeds are not destroyed. The doer reaps them himself. The consequences of good and evil deeds are evident in the world. There is happiness through good deeds and misery through wicked deeds. What is done is enjoyed. What is not done is never enjoyed. A person who does deeds³⁷ obtains prosperity in every way and his good fortune is not destroyed. A person who does not do deeds is destroyed, like caustic matter being poured into a wound. Austerities, beauty, good fortune and many kinds of jewels—all these are obtained through deeds, not through deeds coupled with individual inaction. In a similar way, heaven, objects of enjoyment and everything that one wishes for—all these are obtained through human endeavour, not through lack of action. The stellar bodies, the gods, the serpents, the yakshas, the moon, the sun, the Maruts—all these have been elevated from humanity to divinity through enterprise. Riches, categories of friends, prosperity, good lineage, beauty and objects of pleasure are extremely difficult to obtain, unless one has embarked on action. A brahmana obtains prosperity through purity, a kshatriya through valour, a vaishya through exertion and a shudra through servitude. It is not obtained by someone who is not generous and not brave, someone who is impotent and does not act, someone who does not engage in good deeds, someone who is not valiant and someone who does not resort to austerities. The illustrious Vishnu created the three worlds, the daityas and all the gods. But even he tormented himself through austerities in the ocean. Had there not been fruits from deeds, all these fruits would not have materialized. The worlds would only have looked towards destiny and become indifferent. If a man does not undertake deeds and only follows destiny, all his exertions will be futile, like a woman with an impotent husband. In the world of men, one should not be that frightened of good and bad deeds. More important is the slightest bit of fear in the world of the gods.³⁸ Deeds and human enterprise follow destiny. However, when there is inaction, destiny cannot provide anything. The status of the gods is also seen to be temporary. Without deeds, how can the gods remain established in their states? The gods never approved of good conduct in this world, since they fear that such fierce deeds might lead to their being dislodged. That is the reason there is always conflict between the rishis and the gods. Therefore, if the gods have themselves determined it, how can one speak of destiny? How is destiny itself supposed to have arisen? There are many kinds of deceit that are practised in the world of the thirty gods.³⁹ One’s own atman is one’s friend. One’s own atman is also one’s enemy. The atman is a witness to one’s own self and to the deeds that have been performed and the ones that have not been performed. Between good deeds and perverse deeds, it is the good deeds that lead to success. Sometimes, good and bad deeds do not lead to consequences.⁴⁰ Divinity has the auspicious as a foundation. Everything is based on what

is auspicious. A man with auspicious deeds will obtain everything. What can the gods do? In ancient times, Yayati was dislodged from heaven and fell down on the ground.⁴¹ He was again restored to heaven through the auspicious deeds of his grandsons. In ancient times, the rajarshi, King Pururava, descended from Ila's lineage, obtained heaven, but was restrained by the brahmanas.⁴² Soudasa, the lord of Kosala, performed a horse sacrifice and other sacrifices. However, cursed by a maharshi, he became a maneater.⁴³ Ashvatthama and Rama⁴⁴ were the sons of sages and great archers. However, despite their good deeds in this world, they could not go to heaven. Like a second Vasava, Vasu⁴⁵ performed one hundred sacrifices. However, because of a single act of falsehood, he was dispatched to the nether regions. Destiny bound down Bali, Virochana's son, in the noose of dharma. But it was Vishnu's enterprise that made him lie down in the nether regions. Janamejaya followed in the footsteps of Shakra. He killed brahmana women.⁴⁶ Could destiny prevent this? The brahmana rishi, Vaishampayana, killed a brahmana child in his ignorance and was tainted by this.⁴⁷ Could destiny prevent this? In ancient times, in a great sacrifice, rajarshi Nriga made the false promise of giving cattle to a brahmana. Because of this, he became a lizard.⁴⁸ While performing a sacrifice, rajarshi Dhundumara was overcome by old age.⁴⁹ Abandoning all these delights, he fell asleep in Girivraja. The immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra seized the kingdom of the Pandavas. They obtained it back by resorting to their arms, not through destiny. The sages are devoted to their vows and are engaged in austerities and rituals. Are they able to levy curses because of their deeds or because of destiny? If one abandons wickedness in this world, one can obtain everything that is difficult to get. If a man is overcome by avarice and delusion, destiny cannot save him. Even if a fire is small, when it is fanned by the wind, it becomes large. When united with deeds, a virtuous person thus prospers, aided by destiny. When the oil in a lamp is exhausted, it is extinguished. In that way, if deeds are exhausted, a person is also extinguished. Even if a man obtains a great store of riches and women to be enjoyed, devoid of acts, he will not be able to enjoy them in this world. If a person resorts to the qualities of virtuous deeds, protected by destiny, he will find riches, even if those are well hidden. The world of men is superior to the world of the gods, because the houses of men are full of many riches. In contrast, that of the immortals is seen to be like that of the dead. Devoid of deed, destiny cannot bring success in the world of the living. Destiny can exert no power over someone who has deviated from the path. The performance of great deeds is superior. It drives destiny. The uninterrupted and generous desire to perform deeds conveys enterprise towards the store of destiny. O supreme among sages! I have told you everything about this. It is true that the fruits of enterprise are always seen. Destiny arises because of being engaged in action. By performing the prescribed tasks, one obtains the road to heaven.”

Chapter 1688(7)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best among the great ones! I wish to ask you about all the fruits of auspicious deeds. Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! Listen to this secret of the rishis, about the ends that they obtain and the ends that they desire after death. Whatever are the deeds performed in these bodies, the proportionate fruits are reaped in similar bodies. Whatever is the state in which one performs good deeds or evil deeds, from one birth to another, the fruits are enjoyed in a similar state. Deeds that are performed with the five senses are never destroyed. As a sixth, the atman always remains as a witness. A sacrifice must be performed by honouring with the five dakshinas—by giving one's eyes,⁵⁰ by giving one's mind, by giving one's words and by giving one's devotions.⁵¹ If one cheerfully gives to an exhausted traveller, even if one has never seen him before, one obtains great and auspicious merits. If one lies down on the bare ground, one obtains houses and beds.⁵² If one wears rags and barks, one obtains garments and ornaments. A person who is a store of austerities and immerses himself in yoga obtains mounts and vehicles. A king who lies down alongside a fire is said to obtain manliness. A person who refrains from tasty food obtains good fortune. A person who refrains from flesh obtains animals and sons. A person who hangs, with his head downwards, lives in the water, or always sleeps alone,⁵³ obtains the desired objective. If a person honours a guest and gives him water to wash the feet, a seat, a lamp, food and refuge, it is as if he has performed a sacrifice with the five kinds of dakshinas. If a person sits on a seat meant for heroes, lies down on a bed

meant for heroes and frequents the places meant for heroes,⁵⁴ he obtains the eternal worlds where all the objects of desire are available. O lord of the earth! Riches are obtained by making gifts. Silence leads to others being obedient. Objects of pleasure are obtained through austerities. A long life is obtained through brahmacharya. Beauty, prosperity and lack of disease are the fruits obtained through non-violence. A person who eats fruits and roots obtains a kingdom. A person who eats leaves obtains heaven. If a person fasts, there is happiness everywhere in the kingdom. Heaven is obtained through truth, an excellent lineage is obtained by being consecrated for a sacrifice. Through subsisting only on vegetables, cattle are obtained. Those who desire to go to heaven should subsist on grass. If one bathes thrice after intercourse with one's wife and inhales air, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice. A person who only subsists on water is like a cleansed brahmana who always tends to the fire. A desert-like penance⁵⁵ ensures a kingdom and indestructible residence in the vault of heaven. O king! If a person consecrates himself in a sacrifice that involves fasting and performs this for twelve years, he obtains a region that is better than the one meant for heroes. If one studies all the Vedas, one is instantly freed from all misery. If one follows dharma in one's mind, one obtains the world of heaven. Evil intentions are extremely difficult to conquer. They are not destroyed, even when the body ages. They are like a disease that causes loss of life. If one can discard this thirst, one obtains happiness. A calf is able to identify its mother even among one thousand cows. In that way, earlier deeds always follow the doer. When the time arrives, flowers and fruits develop. So it is with deeds that have been performed earlier. When the body ages, the hair also ages. When the body ages, the teeth age. The eyes and ears also age. However, thirst is not destroyed. When the father is pleased, Prajapati is pleased. When the mother is pleased, it is as if the earth is worshipped. When the preceptor is pleased, it is as if Brahma is worshipped. When these three are respected, all kinds of dharma are respected. When they are disrespected, all rites are fruitless.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Bhishma’s words, the bulls among the Kurus were astounded. Their minds became cheerful and they were delighted. Mantras are futile without sacrifices. Soma is futile unless it is rendered as an offering. A fire without oblations is futile. In that way, without studying, everything is futile. O lord! I have told you what the rishis said about the fruits of good and bad deeds. What else do you wish to hear?’

Chapter 1689(8)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Who should be worshipped? Whom should one bow down to? Whom do you bow down before? O king! Tell me everything about the ones you like. When you confront a hardship, what excellent things does your mind turn towards? Amidst everything in the world of men, and in the next world, what is most beneficial?”

‘Bhishma replied, “I like brahmanas for whom the brahman represents supreme wealth and who have themselves determined that austerities and careful studying constitute heaven. I like those who bear the burden of the aged, the young and fathers and grandfathers, without suffering from this. There are virtuous ones who are learned, humble, self-controlled, mild in speech, full of knowledge and good conduct and always knowledgeable about the brahman. When they speak in an assembly, they are like flocks of swans.⁵⁶ Their words are beautiful and auspicious in form, like the rumblings of celestial clouds. O Yudhishtira! When they are heard, their words are pronounced well. Their words are heard by kings, for happiness in this world and in the next. They are always honoured by those who hear them in assemblies. They are accomplished with the qualities of *vijnana*. I like them. O king! O Yudhishtira! There are those who always give and try to satisfy brahmanas who are extremely polished and auspicious, possessing the qualities. I like them. It is easy to fight in a battle. But it is not easy to give, without a sense of malice. O Yudhishtira! In this world, there are hundreds of brave and valiant people. Among all those numbers, those who are brave in giving are superior. I would have regarded myself as fortunate had I been an ordinary and amiable brahmana, not to speak of one born in a noble lineage, devoted to austerities and learning and knowledgeable about the progress of dharma. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In this world, there is nothing that is dearer to me than you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, brahmanas are dearer to me than you. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Since brahmanas are dearer to me than you, through that truth, I will go to the world where Shantanu has gone. However, my father is not dearer to me than brahmanas. Nor is this true of my father’s

father, or other well-wishers. There is nothing that I desire from brahmanas, small or large, though I am known as a performer of virtuous deeds.⁵⁷ O scorcher of enemies! In deeds, thoughts and words, I have done good to brahmanas. That is the reason I am not tormented now.⁵⁸ I am content that I am referred to as one who is devoted to brahmanas. It is said that they are supremely sacred among all those who are sacred. Since I have followed brahmanas, I see many pure and auspicious worlds. O son! In a short while, those are the regions I will go to. O Yudhishtira! In this world, the dharma for women is to be devoted to their husbands. They are like gods. Like that, other than brahmanas, there is no other destination for kshatriyas. If a kshatriya is one hundred years old and a brahmana is ten years old, know that in deciding who is a father and who is a son, it is the brahmana who will be regarded as the father. In the absence of her husband, a woman accepts her husband's younger brother as her husband. In that way, in the absence of brahmanas, the earth made kshatriyas her lord. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Like the fire, brahmanas must be worshipped. They must be protected like a son and revered like a father. They are upright and virtuous. They are truthful and good in conduct. They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They must always be honoured. When brahmanas are enraged, they are like venomous serpents. Their energy and austerities can always cause fright. Therefore, one must avoid their energy and their austerities. If they are unleashed, both can swiftly lead to fear. O great king! The wrath of an ascetic brahmana can kill. If either is released against a brahmana who has conquered anger, both are extinguished. But though extinguished, one is not entirely extinguished.⁵⁹ With a staff in his hand, a herdsman is always engaged in protecting the herd. Similarly, kshatriyas must always protect brahmanas and the brahman. They must protect brahmanas, who possess the energy of the brahman, like a father protects his son, and must look towards their houses, so that they have a means of sustenance.”

Chapter 1690(9)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! There may be people who have promised things to brahmanas, but because of confusion, they do not subsequently give these. What happens to them? O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me about this kind of dharma. What happens to the evil-minded men who do not give, despite having promised to?”

‘Bhishma replied, “There may be a person who has promised to give a little or a lot, but does not give according to that promise. All his hopes are destroyed, like an impotent person trying to get offspring. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever good deeds he has performed between the night of his birth and the night of his death and all the oblations that he has offered are destroyed. People who are learned about the sacred texts of dharma have a saying about this. O best among the Bharata lineage! Using their supreme intelligence, they have spoken about this. People who are learned about the sacred texts of dharma cite an example, about being freed if one gives away one thousand horses with black ears.⁶⁰ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between a jackal and a monkey. O scorcher of enemies! When they were humans, they used to be friends. They were subsequently born in the wombs of a she-jackal and a she-monkey. The monkey saw the jackal feeding off a corpse in the midst of a cremation ground. Remembering its earlier life, it asked, ‘What wicked and extremely terrible deed did you perform earlier? Why are you in this cremation ground, feeding off vile and putrid carcasses?’ Thus addressed by the monkey, the jackal replied, ‘O monkey! I promised a brahmana something, but committed the injury of not giving it. Because of that sin, I have been born in this species. That is the reason, when I am hungry, I have to eat this kind of food.’ O king! Earlier, I heard this spoken about, in connection with brahmanas.⁶¹ The one who knows about dharma⁶² recounted this ancient and auspicious story. O lord of the earth! O Pandava! I heard this again, when Krishna related accounts about brahmanas earlier.⁶³ This is the reason there is the perennial instruction. If one has promised to give something to a brahmana, one must always give it. One must not bring about one's destruction through brahmanas.⁶⁴ O lord of the earth! It has been said that if a brahmana's hopes have earlier been raised, this is like a blazing fire into which kindling has been offered. O king! If the hopes have been raised and he glances at anything angrily, he will burn everything down, like dead wood being consumed by a fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he resides in the kingdom, he must

be rendered affectionate and satisfied, honoured with words. Then sons, grandsons, animals, relatives and stores in the city and the countryside will be nurtured with peace and benefit. The supreme energy of brahmanas can be seen, like the sun with the thousand rays shining down on the surface of the earth. O Yudhishtira! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, if one has promised something and desires a good birth in the next life, one must always give it. It is certain that one is capable of obtaining supreme heaven by giving to brahmanas. This is the greatest rite and the best of gifts. Know that such donations to brahmanas are gifts that keep the gods and the ancestors alive. O best among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas are said to be like a great tirtha. There is no time of the day when one should not honour a brahmana who has arrived.”

Chapter 1691(10)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O rajarshi! O grandfather! If because of friendship or affection, a person imparts instructions to someone of inferior birth, is any sin incurred because of this? I wish to hear the truth about this. Please explain it. The progress of dharma is subtle. That is the reason men are confused.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! In this connection, following the sacred texts, rishis spoke about this earlier and I heard them. Listen. Instructions must never be given to someone who is of inferior birth. It is said that a teacher who imparts such instruction incurs a great sin. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is an example about this. Listen. O king! O Yudhishtira! The evil that occurs has earlier been spoken about. There was a hermitage of brahmanas on the sacred slopes of the Himalayas. That sacred hermitage was full of a large number of trees. It was full of many creepers and plants and was inhabited by animals and birds. Siddhas and charanas frequented it. It was beautiful because of its flowering groves. There were many mendicants there and many handsome ascetics. The immensely fortunate brahmanas were like the sun or the fire in their splendour. It was full of ascetics who were accomplished in rituals and vows. O best among the Bharata lineage! They had consecrated themselves, were restrained in diet and had cleansed their souls. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were the sounds of the Vedas being studied. It was full of many valakhilya mendicants. There was a shudra who was driven by compassion. He arrived at that hermitage and was honoured by those ascetics. Those large numbers of sages were greatly energetic and were like the gods, having been consecrated in many kinds of ways. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing them, he was delighted. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His mind turned towards the idea of becoming an ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He grasped the feet of the *kulapati*⁶⁵ and said, ‘O bull among brahmanas! Through your favours, I wish to follow the path of dharma. O illustrious one! You should initiate me into a path of renunciation. O illustrious one! I belong to an inferior varna. O excellent one! I have been born as a shudra. I wish to serve you and have sought refuge with you. Show me your favours.’

“The kulapati replied, ‘It is not possible for a shudra to accept those indications. If your mind turns towards that, you should always engage in servitude.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O king! Having been thus addressed by the sage, the shudra began to think. ‘What should I do now? I have great devotion towards the supreme dharma. Let it be known that I will do whatever brings me the greatest benefit.’ Going some distance from the hermitage, he constructed a hut. O best among the Bharata lineage! He created a sacrificial altar and a spot for the gods on the ground. He cheerfully began to practise the rituals. He offered sacrifices and oblations and worshipped the gods. He controlled desire and followed the rituals. He lived on fruits and controlled his senses. He always collected herbs and fruits, so that he could worship the guests who arrived. In this way, he spent a long period of time. One day, to meet him, a sage came to that hermitage. He honoured the rishi who had come and following all the rites, satisfied him. He spoke pleasant words and as is proper, asked him about his welfare. The rishi was extremely energetic, with dharma in his soul and with his senses in restraint. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O bull among men! In this way, desiring to see the shudra, the rishi came to the shudra’s hermitage on several occasions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On one such occasion, the shudra told the ascetic, ‘I wish to perform rites for the ancestors. Please show me your favours.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! The brahmana agreed that he would certainly do so. The shudra purified himself and brought water for the rishi to wash his feet. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He brought darbha grass, wild herbs and the

sacred seat known as a *brisi*.⁶⁶ However, the excellent head of the *brisi* was spread out in the southern direction. This was against the ordinances.⁶⁷ Seeing this, the rishi said, 'Place the head towards the east. Purify yourself and sit with your head facing the north.' The shudra acted in accordance with everything that the rishi had said. He was intelligent and spread out the *darbha* grass, following the instructions. As instructed by the ascetic, he followed all the rites of *havya* and *kavya*. He stayed on the path of *dharma* in observing rites for the ancestors. The rishi instructed him and when the rites for the ancestors were over, took his leave and departed. Subsequently, for a long period of time, the shudra ascetic tormented himself through austerities. O great king! Following these good practices, he died in the forest and thanks to these, the immensely radiant one was born in a lineage of kings. O son! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Following the progress of time, the rishi was also born as a *brahmana*, in a family of priests. The shudra and the sage were born in this way. They gradually grew up and became accomplished in learning. The rishi became extremely learned in the *Atharva Veda*, the *Vedas*,⁶⁸ and the application of *kalpa*⁶⁹ and also obtained excellence in astronomy. His delight in the study of the great *sankhya* increased. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When his father died, the prince performed the funeral rites and was instated by the subjects as a king. In turn, he instated the rishi as his priest and placed him at the forefront. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He followed *dharma* and happily ruled the kingdom, protecting the subjects. However, whenever there was an occasion for sacred oblations to be offered or rites of *dharma* to be practised, the king glanced towards the priest and laughed loudly. O king! Thus, there were numerous occasions when he laughed at the priest. The priest noticed that the king always smiled or laughed at him. On seeing this, he was enraged. The priest came and met the king who was alone. He spoke pleasantly to him and put him at ease. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The priest then told that lord of men, 'O immensely wise one! I desire only a single boon from you.'

"The king replied, 'O supreme among *brahmanas*! I will grant you one hundred boons, why only a single one? I like you and revere you greatly. There is nothing that I cannot give you.'

"The priest said, 'O king! If you are satisfied with me, I desire only one single boon. O great king! If you wish to give me something, let it be such that you will always speak the truth to me, and never utter a falsehood.'"

'Bhishma said, "O *Yudhishtira*! Thus addressed, the king agreed and replied, 'I accept. If I know the answer, I will tell you. If I do not know, I will not speak.'

"The priest asked, 'Whenever sacred oblations are being offered, the rites of *dharma* performed and chants of peace recited, why do you glance towards me and laugh? Since you laugh at me, my mind is ashamed. O king! You have pledged to tell me the truth. If you do not, you will be cursed. There must be some reason behind such sentiments. The laughter cannot be without reason. I am extremely curious. You should tell me the truth.'

"The king replied, 'O *brahmana*! If you ask me in this way, I must certainly tell you the truth, even though this is not something that you should hear. O *brahmana*! Listen attentively. O supreme among *brahmanas*! Listen to what happened in our earlier births. O *brahmana*! I remember that. Listen with single-minded attention. I used to be a shudra earlier and practised terrible austerities. O supreme among *brahmanas*! You were a rishi who was fierce in his austerities. O *brahmana*! Your mind was favourably inclined towards me then. O unblemished one! Following your instructions, I had performed the funeral rites for my ancestors. O supreme among sages! I used *brisi*, *darbha*, *havya* and *kavya*. O *Indra* among *brahmanas*! Because of this transgression in deeds, you have been born as a priest.⁷⁰ I have been born as a king. Behold the progress of time. You imparted instructions for my sake and have reaped this fruit. O *brahmana*! O supreme among *brahmanas*! That is the reason I laugh at you. O *brahmana*! I do not laugh at you out of any disrespect. You are my superior. Indeed, I am enraged at this course of events and my mind is tormented. However, I remember our earlier births and laugh at you. Your fierce austerities have been destroyed by those instructions. Give up this priesthood and endeavour to be born again. O *brahmana*! Otherwise, you may obtain a birth that is inferior to the present one. O *brahmana*! Take whatever riches you want. O excellent one! Purify your self.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The king gave the *brahmana* many gifts and gave him permission to leave. He gave all the *brahmanas* riches, land and villages. As asked, that supreme among *brahmanas* observed many hardships. He went to places of pilgrimage and gave away diverse gifts. The *brahmana* donated cattle to *brahmanas* and cleansed his soul. He went to that hermitage⁷¹ and performed a large number of austerities. O supreme among kings! In this way, the *brahmana* obtained supreme success. In that hermitage, he was revered by all those who dwelt in that her-

mitage. O supreme among kings! Thus, that rishi had faced this great hardship. A brahmana must not reveal things to someone of an inferior varna. O king! A brahmana must always refrain from parting with such instructions. A brahmana who parts with such instructions faces hardships. A king can always receive such instructions from a brahmana. But they should not be revealed to a person who belongs to an inferior varna. O king! Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas—these three are known as the twice-born varnas. A brahmana is not tainted if he tells them anything. Virtuous people do reveal things to those who are advanced in this way. The course of dharma is subtle and is difficult for those with unclean souls to comprehend. That is the reason sages remain silent and perform *diksha*⁷² without speaking. O king! They are scared of saying something that should not have been said. There are those who follow dharma, possess all the qualities, are truthful and upright. Even they can perform the wicked act of speaking what should not be said. Therefore, one must never impart instructions to anyone. Through imparting instructions, a brahmana can incur a sin. Thus, a wise person who desires dharma should act wisely. Instruction bartered in exchange for something is evil. If one is asked about something, one must answer only after determining the consequences. An instruction must only be given when it leads to the accumulation of dharma. I have told you everything about imparting instructions. There can be great hardships as a result of imparting instructions.”

Chapter 1692(11)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! In what kind of man or woman does Shri,⁷³ the one who resides in the lotus, always dwell? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will tell you what transpired, as I have seen it and heard it. Rukmini asked this in the presence of Devaki’s son.⁷⁴ She saw the blazing Shri seated on Narayana’s lap, with a face like that of a lotus. The one with the beautiful eyes, the mother of the one with a makara on his banner, was surprised and curious and asked this question. ‘Who are the beings who worship you? Who are the ones you reside with? Who are the ones to whom you do not show favours? You are loved by the one who is the lord of the three worlds and is the destroyer of beings. O daughter of a maharshi!⁷⁵ Tell me the truth about this.’ Having been thus asked, in the presence of the one who has Garuda on his banner,⁷⁶ the goddess, whose face was as beautiful as the moon, was pleased and replied in sweet words. ‘O beautiful one! O eloquent one! I dwell in men who are truthful and accomplished, who are engaged in deeds. I do not dwell in men who are not good in their deeds, or in those who are non-believers, cause a mixture of varnas and are ungrateful. I do not reside in those who are violent in conduct or indulge in perverse conduct. Nor do I reside in those who are thieves or malicious towards seniors. There are those who are limited in energy, strength, spirit and essence, who are incessantly delighted and enraged. I do not reside with them. O goddess! Nor do I reside with men who hide their true intentions. O goddess! If a man does not desire anything, has no natural enterprise and is always content with whatever little he possesses, I do not reside with him either. I dwell with those who follow dharma in their conduct, great-souled ones who know about dharma, those who serve their seniors, are great-souled and restrained and spirited. I dwell with women who are forgiving, generous, devoted to gods and brahmanas, truthful in their conduct and naturally restrained. I avoid women who do not look towards the broken vessels in their homes, who always speak against their husbands, who prefer the houses of others and are shameless. I avoid women who are fickle and unclean, who lick the corners of their mouths, who have no patience and are quarrelsome, who are addicted to sleep and are always lying down. I always reside with women who are truthful, beautiful to see, united with good fortune and qualities, devoted to their husbands, good in conduct and well-attired. I dwell in vehicles, maidens, ornaments, sacrifices, clouds, rain, blooming lotuses, nakshatras in the autumn sky, mountains, pens of cattle, forests, lakes, blossoming lotuses,⁷⁷ rivers that resound with the calling of swans and the beautiful cries of cranes, with extensive banks and beautiful lakes, frequented by ascetics, siddhas and brahmanas. I always reside in large waterbodies where the water is agitated by lions and elephants. I am always there in mad elephants, bulls, kings, thrones and virtuous people. I always dwell in houses where oblations are offered to the fire, where cattle, brahmanas and gods are worshipped and in houses where, at the right time, flowers are offered as sacrifices in rites.⁷⁸ I reside in brahmanas who are always engaged in studying, in kshatriyas who are always devoted to dharma, in vaishyas who are engaged in agriculture and in shudras who are engaged in

servitude. Single-mindedly, I dwell in Narayana. In every way, I am part of his body. It is in him that great dharma, the brahman and all delight exist. O goddess! I am incapable of saying that my embodied form resides in anything other than these. When I dwell in a man in the form of my attributes, his dharma, fame, artha and kama are enhanced.’”

Chapter 1693(12)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O king! When there is intercourse between a woman and a man, who feels the greater pleasure from this? I have a doubt about this and you should tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Bhangashvana and Shakra is recounted, as if there was an old enmity between them. In ancient times, there was a rajarshi named Bhangashvana and he was extremely devoted to dharma. O tiger among men! He was without a son and performed a sacrifice for the sake of obtaining a son. The immensely strong one performed a sacrifice named Agnishtu,⁷⁹ one that is hated by Indra. Mortal beings who desire sons perform this, as atonement for their sins. The immensely fortunate Indra, lord of the gods, got to know about this sacrifice. Though the rajarshi was controlled in his soul, he began to search for an internal weakness. After some time, the king went out on a hunt. Taking this to be an opportunity, Shakra confused the king. Confused by Indra, the rajarshi wandered around, alone on his horse. The king could not determine any of the directions and was afflicted by hunger and thirst. Afflicted by thirst and exhaustion, the king wandered around, here and there. He then saw a beautiful lake and it was full of excellent water. O son! Having alighted from the horse, he made it drink from the lake. When the horse had drunk, the best among kings tied it to a tree. Descending into the lake, the king bathed and assumed the form of a woman. On seeing that he had turned into a woman, the best among kings was ashamed. He was anxious in his senses and consciousness. His entire self was immersed in thoughts. ‘How will I climb onto the horse? How will I return to the city? Because of the sacrifice named Agnishtu, one hundred sons have been born from my loins. They have been born as immensely strong ones. What will I tell them, or my wives, well-wishers and the inhabitants of the city and the country? Rishis who have seen the truth about dharma have said that mildness, gentleness and timidity are the qualities of women. The attributes of men are exertion, harshness and valour. Why has my manliness been destroyed and why have I obtained womanhood? Because of these traits of having become a woman, I am no longer interested in climbing onto the horse again.’ With a great deal of effort, the lord of men managed to climb onto the horse. O son! O supreme among kings! Having assumed the form of a woman, he returned to the city.

“His sons, wives, servants and the inhabitants of the city and the countryside were extremely surprised on seeing him and wanted to know what had happened. The rajarshi, supreme among eloquent ones, had assumed the form of a woman and spoke to them. ‘I went out on a hunt, surrounded by a strong army. Confounded by destiny, I was confused and entered a terrible forest. That forest was extremely fearful. I was afflicted by thirst and had lost my senses. I then saw a beautiful lake that was populated by birds. Having bathed there, I assumed the form of a woman. There is no doubt that this is nothing but destiny. This must be because I am not content with my sons, my wives and my riches.’ The best among kings, who had assumed the form of a woman, then spoke to his sons. ‘O sons! Happily enjoy this kingdom. I will leave for the forest.’ Consecrating those one hundred sons, the king left for the forest.

“O son! That woman arrived in an ascetic’s hermitage. Through that ascetic and in that hermitage, she gave birth to one hundred sons. Collecting these sons, she returned to her house and told her earlier sons, ‘You are my sons when I was a man. I have obtained these one hundred sons as a woman. O sons! With fraternal sentiments, enjoy this kingdom together.’ Together, they began to enjoy the kingdom, like brothers. Seeing that they were enjoying that excellent kingdom with brotherly affection, Indra of the gods began to think. He was overcome with anger. ‘I seem to have done a good turn to this rajarshi, instead of injuring him.’⁸⁰ Assuming the form of a brahmana, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, went to the city, hoping to spread dissension among the princes. He said, ‘There is no fraternal affection among brothers, even if they happen to be sons of the same father. On account of the kingdom, there was conflict between the gods and the asuras, though both were Kashyapa’s sons. You are the

sons of Bhangashvana. The others are the sons of the ascetic. The gods and the asuras were the sons of Kashyapa. This paternal kingdom is yours. It should not be enjoyed by the sons of the ascetic.’ With Indra having spread dissension, they fought against each other and killed each other.

“Hearing this, the ascetic lady⁸¹ was tormented and started to lament. In the disguise of a brahmana, Indra arrived there and asked her, ‘O one with the beautiful face! Why are you tormented by grief and why are you weeping?’ Seeing the brahmana, the woman piteously replied, ‘O brahmana! Two hundred of my sons have been brought down by destiny. O brahmana! I used to be a king and had one hundred sons. O supreme among brahmanas! They were born from me and were handsome and valiant. On one occasion, I went out for a hunt and was confused in the desolate forest. O supreme among brahmanas! Having bathed in a lake, I assumed the form of a woman. Having established my sons in the kingdom, I departed for the forest. In the form of a woman, through a great-souled ascetic, I obtained one hundred sons. O brahmana! They were born in the hermitage and were conveyed by me to the city. O brahmana! Because of destiny, enmity was generated between them. O Indra among brahmanas! I have been overwhelmed by destiny and that is the reason I am grieving.’ Seeing that she was afflicted, Indra spoke these harsh words. ‘O fortunate one! Earlier, you caused me great hardship and your pain has been caused by me. O evil-minded one! You did not invoke Indra through a sacrifice and you showed me disrespect. I am Indra. O evil-minded one! That is the reason you have caused an enmity between us.’ Seeing Indra, the rajarshi fell at his feet and bowed her head down. She said, ‘O best among the gods! Be pacified. That sacrifice was performed for the sake of a son. O tiger among the gods! There was no intention to injure you and therefore, you should pardon me.’ Seeing that she had prostrated herself, Indra was satisfied and granted her a boon. ‘O king! Tell me. Which of your sons do you wish to bring back to life, those born while you were a woman, or those born while you were a man?’ The ascetic lady joined her hands in salutation and replied to Indra, ‘O Vasava! Let the ones born while I was a woman come back to life.’ Surprised and pleased at this, Indra again asked the woman, ‘Why do you dislike the sons you obtained while you were a man? Why is it that you entertain greater affection for those who were born while you were a woman? I wish to hear the reason behind this. You should tell me.’

“The woman replied, ‘The affection borne by a woman is much greater than that borne by a man. O Shakra! Therefore, the ones born while I was a woman should come back to life.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Addressed thus, Indra was delighted and spoke these words. ‘O one who speaks the truth! All of your sons will come back to life. O Indra among kings! O one excellent in vows! Ask for another boon that you desire. Ask for whatever you wish, the state of a man, or the state of a woman.’

“The women replied, ‘O Shakra! O Vasava! If it pleases you, I wish to remain as a woman.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing this, Indra of the gods replied to the woman, ‘O lord! Why do you wish to give up your manhood? Why does remaining a woman please you?’ Thus addressed, the supreme among kings, who was in the form of a woman, replied, ‘In an act of intercourse, the pleasure obtained by a woman is greater than that obtained by a man. O Shakra! That is the reason why I desire to remain as a woman. O supreme among gods! Truthfully, there is greater pleasure in being a woman. O lord of the thirty gods! I am content with this state of being a woman. Let me go.’ Hearing this response to what he had asked, he agreed and returned to heaven. O great king! Thus, it is said that women obtain the greater pleasure.’”

Chapter 1694(13)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “If a man desires benefit in this progress through the world, what should he do? In this journey through the world, what kind of conduct should he follow?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Three kinds of deeds done with the body, four kinds done with speech and three types done with the mind—these ten kinds of deeds should be avoided. Destruction of life, theft and intercourse with someone else’s wife—these three kinds of wicked deeds done with the body should be avoided. O Indra among kings! Evil conversation, harsh words, calumny and falsehood—one should not think of committing these four kinds of sin with speech. Not desiring the possessions of others, affection towards all creatures and belief that deeds lead to

fruits—these are the three that must be followed with the mind. With words, body or the mind, a man must not perform any sinful deeds. Depending on whether one performs good or bad deeds, one obtains the fruits.”

Chapter 1695(14)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! Tell me the truth about the different names of the lord Isha Shambhu, the tawny one who represents great fortune, the one who withdraws the universe.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! You have asked me about Shiva, whose form is the universe. The god Vishnu, the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, can tell you about him. In ancient times, Tandi⁸² was born from Brahma. In Brahma’s world, in front of Brahma, he recited one thousand names of that god. Dvaipayana and other rishis, controlled, rich in austerities and extremely good in their vows, heard these devotedly. He is Dhruva,⁸³ Nandi,⁸⁴ Hotri,⁸⁵ Goptri,⁸⁶ the creator of the universe, Agni, the immensely fortunate one, the lord, Mundin⁸⁷ and Kapardin.⁸⁸

“Vasudeva said, ‘The gods, Indra and the maharshis, with Hiranyagarbha at the forefront, are incapable of understanding the truth about the progress of his deeds. Even those who possess the subtle sight of knowledge do not know the one who is the beginning and the end. How can an ordinary man comprehend the virtuous one? I will properly recount to you some of the qualities of the illustrious one who is the slayer of asuras and is the lord of vows.’”

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Saying this, the illustrious, great-souled and intelligent one⁸⁹ purified himself by touching water and recounted the qualities.

‘Vasudeva said, “O Indras among brahmanas! O Yudhishtira! O father!⁹⁰ O son of the river!⁹¹ Listen to the names of the lord of the universe. For the sake of Samba, I meditated earlier and could see the illustrious one, something that is very difficult to accomplish.⁹² Twelve years passed after Rukmini’s intelligent son killed Shambara.⁹³ Jambavati spoke to me. She saw Pradyumna, Charudeshna and the other sons who had been born from Rukmini. O Yudhishtira! Desiring a son, she spoke these words to me. ‘O one without decay! Quickly grant me a brave son who is the best among strong ones and is beautiful and without sin, one who is like you. There is nothing in the three worlds that you cannot obtain. O extender of the Yadu lineage! If you so desire, you can create supreme worlds. For twelve years, you dried yourself by subsisting only on air. You worshipped the lord of creatures⁹⁴ and obtained sons through Rukmini—Charudeshna, Sucharu, Charuvesha, Yasodhara, Charushrava, Charuyasha, Pradyumna and Shambhu. Through Rukmini, you obtained sons who are excellent in their valour. In that way, also grant me a son who is powerful.’ Thus addressed by that goddess, I spoke to the one with the excellent waist. ‘O queen! Grant me leave. I will act in accordance with your words.’ She told me, ‘Go. May you be victorious and obtain what is auspicious. May Brahma, Shiva, Kashyapa, the rivers, the gods who follow the mind, the fields, the herbs, the hymns that convey sacrificial offerings, the large numbers of rishis, the earth, the oceans, the dakshinas, the chants, the bears, the ancestors, the planets, the wives of the gods, the daughters of the gods, the mothers of the gods, the manvantaras, the cattle, the moon, the son, Hari, Savitri, the knowledge of the brahman, the seasons, the years, the *kshapas*,⁹⁵ the kshanas, the lavas, the muhurtas, the nimeshas and the progress of the yugas always protect you. O Yadava! Wherever you go, may they bring you cheer. O unblemished one! May you be safe and undistracted along your path.’ When she had pronounced her benedictions in this way, I took my leave of that daughter of the Indra of the apes.⁹⁶ I then went to my father, supreme among men, my mother, the king and Ahuka.⁹⁷ I told them the purport of what the daughter of the Indra among the vidyadharas had told me, in great affliction.⁹⁸ Miserably, I took their leave and then went to Gada and the immensely strong Rama.⁹⁹ Having taken the permission of the seniors, I thought of Tarkshya.¹⁰⁰ He bore me to the Himalayas and I let him go. It was on that supreme of mountains that I saw the one who is the creator of beings. I saw an excellent hermitage, the best place for performing austerities. This divine spot belonged to the great-souled Upamanyu, the descendant of Vyaghrapada. It was revered by the gods and the gandharvas and possessed all the signs of the brahman. There were *dhavas*,¹⁰¹ *kakubhas*,¹⁰² *kadambas*,¹⁰³ coconut trees, *kurabakas*,¹⁰⁴ *ketakas*,¹⁰⁵ *jambus*,¹⁰⁶ *patalas*,¹⁰⁷ *vatas*,¹⁰⁸ *varunakas*,¹⁰⁹ *vatsanabhas*,¹¹⁰ *bilvas*,¹¹¹ *saralas*,¹¹² *kapitthas*,¹¹³ *priyalas*,¹¹⁴ *salas*,¹¹⁵ *talas*,¹¹⁶ *badaris*, *kundas*,¹¹⁷

punnagas,¹¹⁸ *ashokas*,¹¹⁹ mango trees, *atimuktakas*,¹²⁰ *bhallatakas*,¹²¹ *madhukas*,¹²² *champakas*,¹²³ *panasas*¹²⁴ and many other kinds of wild trees that were full of fruits and flowers. The place was covered with flowers, creepers and lantanas and was adorned with the roots of plantain trees. The trees were full of fruit and many kinds of birds fed on them. These¹²⁵ were flung around here and there, decorating the forest and making it beautiful. The place was inhabited by ruru antelopes, elephants, tigers, lions and leopards. There were deer and peacocks, wild cats and snakes. There were herds of animals and buffaloes and bears. Pleasant winds blew, bearing pollen from many flowers and the scent of *gajapushpa* flowers. Many songs were sung by celestial women. O brave one! There were sounds from streams, the singing of birds, the auspicious trumpeting of elephants, the songs sung by kinnaras and the sacred chants of Sama hymns. The mind cannot think of those ornamented lakes. There were large altars for the sacrificial fire, covered in kusha grass. O king! That place was always decorated and swept by the pure and auspicious waters of Jahnu's daughter.¹²⁶ The best among maharshis, great-souled ones who were the upholders of dharma, were always there and they were like the fire. Some of them only subsisted on air and others only subsisted on water. Those ascetics were always engaged in meditating and cleansing themselves. Some subsisted on smoke, others on fire and still others on milk. In every direction, it was full of Indras among the brahmanas. There were some who followed the conduct of cattle.¹²⁷ Some used stones to grind grain.¹²⁸ Some used their teeth to grind.¹²⁹ Some fed on rays.¹³⁰ Some fed on foam. There were others who conducted themselves like deer.¹³¹ They followed great hardships and rituals and observed excellent austerities. My eyes grew wide and I wished to enter that place. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! That circle of hermitages was as radiant as the solar disc in the firmament. It was revered by the large number of gods and all great-souled ones, even the likes of Shiva. Snakes and mongooses played there. Deer and tiger were like friends. This was because of the power of those ascetics, who possessed all the qualities. That best of hermitages was pleasant to all creatures. It was inhabited by tigers among brahmanas, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. There were great-souled rishis, renowned because they practised many rituals. Entering there, I saw the lord,¹³² who was attired in tattered rags and bark. Because of the energy of his austerities, he blazed like a fire. That bull among brahmanas was tranquil and young and was in the midst of his disciples.

“When I bowed my head down and greeted him, Upamanyu said, ‘O Pundarikaksha! Welcome. Our austerities have now become successful. You should be honoured, but you are honouring me. You should be seen, but you wish to see me.’ I joined my hands in salutation and asked him about his welfare and dharma, that of his disciples and that of the animals, the birds and the sacrificial fire. The illustrious one addressed me in amiable and extremely sweet words. ‘O Krishna! There is no doubt that you will obtain a son who is just like your own self. Perform extremely great austerities and satisfy the lord Ishana. O Adhokshaja! With his wife, he sports here. O Janardana! In ancient times, it was here that the gods and the large numbers of rishis satisfied that best of gods with their austerities, brahmacharya, truth and self-control and obtained their sacred wishes. The illustrious one is the store of energy and austerities here. He creates everything that is good and bad and withdraws them back again. O destroyer of enemies! He is the unthinkable god you wish to meet. He is here, with the goddess. A great danava named Hiranyakashipu was born. He could make Mount Meru tremble. From Sharva,¹³³ he obtained a boon that he would obtain the prosperity of the immortals for one billion years. His eldest son was the famous Mandara. Because of a boon from Mahadeva, he could fight with Shakra for one billion years. O son!¹³⁴ O Keshava! In those ancient times, Vishnu's terrible chakra and Akhandala's¹³⁵ vajra were shattered on the evil one's body. Like an evil planet, that extremely powerful one afflicted the gods. O king! Because of the boon obtained from Shiva, that asura was a severe burden on Indra of the gods. Vidyutprabha¹³⁶ satisfied him and intoxicated at this, roamed around the three worlds. He was the lord of all the worlds for one hundred thousand years. He¹³⁷ said, “Always be my companion.” The lord gave him the boon that he would have one million sons. The illustrious one, who has no birth, gave him the kingdom known as Kushadvipa. Dhatri¹³⁸ created another great asura named Shatamukha. For one hundred years, he offered flesh from his own body as oblations into the fire. Satisfied with this, the illustrious Shankara asked him, “What can I do for you?” Shatamukha replied, “O best among the gods! Please grant me extraordinary yoga, so that I can possess eternal strength.” He¹³⁹ agreed. In ancient times, for the sake of sons, Svayambhu¹⁴⁰ performed a sacrifice. He entered his atman for three hundred years and resorted to yoga. Honoured by this sacrifice, the god¹⁴¹ gave him one thousand sons. O Krishna! Know that there is no doubt about him being the lord of

yoga, referred to in the songs of the gods. In ancient times, the Valakhilyas were disrespected by Maghavan.¹⁴² They were enraged and satisfied the illustrious Rudra through their austerities. The best of the gods and the lord of the universe was pleased and told them, “Through your austerities, you will create Suparna and he will steal the soma.”¹⁴³ In ancient times, the waters were destroyed because of Mahadeva’s wrath. The other gods satisfied him with the sacrifice known as *saptakapala*¹⁴⁴ and made them flow again. Atri’s wife was knowledgeable about the brahman and abandoned her husband.¹⁴⁵ She said, “I will never again subjugate myself to this sage.” Having said this, she sought refuge with Mahadeva. Terrified of Atri, she fasted for three hundred years, lying down on a bed of clubs and trying to please Bhava.¹⁴⁶ The god appeared before her, smiled and said, “You will obtain a son, as you desire. He will be famous in a lineage that is named after him.”¹⁴⁷ O Keshava! Shakalya¹⁴⁸ restrained his soul for nine hundred years and worshipped Bhava through mental sacrifices. The illustrious one was satisfied and told him, “You will be the composer of books. O son! Your deeds will be famous in the three worlds and will never decay. Your lineage will not decay and will be adorned by many maharshis.” In krita yuga, there was a famous rishi by the name of Savarni.¹⁴⁹ For six thousand years, he tormented himself through austerities here. The illustrious Rudra was pleased. He showed himself to him and said, “O unblemished one! I am satisfied with you. You will be without old age and without death. You will be a composer of books and will be famous in the worlds.” O son!¹⁵⁰ O Madhava! In ancient times, I have also seen the lord, the god of the gods. I saw Pashupati himself. Listen to this. O immensely energetic one! In ancient times, I made endeavours to worship Mahadeva. Listen to the details. Earlier, I learnt this from Mahadeva, the god of the gods, himself. O unblemished one! I will tell you everything about that now. O son! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was an immensely illustrious rishi. He was known as Vyaghrapada and he was accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. I was his son and Dhoumya was born as my younger brother. O Madhava! On one occasion, while playing with Dhoumya, I went to a hermitage where there were sages who had cleansed their souls. I saw a cow being milked there. I saw the milk and it seemed to me to be as tasty as amrita. O Madhava! There were also cakes being boiled in water. We were given milk to drink. O son! I had never tasted the milk of cows earlier. O son! I was no longer happy with cakes boiled in water. In my childishness, I told my mother, “Please give me some food cooked in milk.” My mother was overcome with grief. O Madhava! Out of affection for her son, she embraced me and inhaled the fragrance of my head. She said, “O son! How can sages who have cleansed their souls have food with milk? We always reside in forests and eat bulbs, roots and fruits. O son! Without the favours of the undecaying Sthanu Virupaksha, how can one obtain food cooked with milk, objects of pleasure or garments? O son! In every possible way, always seek refuge with Shankara. O son! It is through his favours that you will obtain all the fruits that you desire.” O slayer of enemies! Since that day, on hearing my mother’s words, my faith and devotion in Mahadeva were aroused. I resorted to austerities to satisfy Shankara. I stood on the tips of my toes for one thousand celestial years. For one hundred years, I subsisted only on fruit. For a second one hundred, I subsisted on dried leaves. For a third one hundred, I subsisted on water. Then, for seven hundred years, I only lived on air. The lord Mahadeva, the lord of all the worlds, was pleased. He assumed Shakra’s form and was surrounded by large numbers of all the gods. The immensely illustrious one was in the form of the thousand-eyed one and held the vajra in his hand. He was astride a gigantic elephant that was extremely white and red-eyed. Its ears were folded back and it was crazy with musth. The trunk was rolled back. It was terrible and had four tusks. The illustrious one was seated astride this, radiant in his own energy. He advanced, with a diadem on his head and adorned with necklaces and bracelets. A white umbrella was held aloft his head. He was served by apsaras and celestial gandharvas sung his praises. He said, “O supreme among brahmanas! I am Indra of the gods and I am pleased with you. Ask a boon from me, whatever it is that your mind cherishes.” I wasn’t pleased on hearing Shakra’s words. O Krishna! Hearing the words of the king of the gods, I replied, “O amiable one! I desire no boon from you nor from any of the other gods, with the exception of Mahadeva. I am telling you this truthfully. On Pashupati’s words, I am ready to become a worm, or a tree with many branches. Without Pashupati’s favours, the prosperous kingdom of the three worlds will not bring me any benefit. On Shankara’s instructions, I will become a worm or an insect. O Shakra! However, if they are granted by you, I do not desire the three worlds. He wears the sparkling crescent of the moon on his crest. As long as the illustrious lord, Pashupati, is not pleased with me, I will bear these hundreds of hardships of old age, death and birth. I will bear these miseries in bodies. He blazes like the sun, the moon and the fire. He is the single one who conveys across the impermanence

of the three worlds. It is through Rudra's favours that one overcomes old age and becomes immortal. In this universe, where is the man who can obtain tranquility without him?" Shakra asked, "What is the reason why you regard him as the cause behind all causes? Why don't you desire the favours of any god other than him?"

"Upamanyu answered, 'Why does one have to think of reasons as to why Isha is the cause behind all causes? We have not heard of the gods worshipping anyone else's signs. If we leave aside Maheshvara, who is the other one whom the gods worship in all his signs? Has any such person been worshipped earlier? If you have heard this, tell me. You, Brahma, Vishnu and the other gods always worship his signs. Therefore, he is the supreme one. O Koushika!¹⁵¹ Therefore, I desire a boon from him and am ready to be destroyed otherwise. O Shakra! O slayer of Bala! Stay or go, as you wish. I desire to have a boon, or a curse, from none other than Maheshvara. I do not desire it from any other god, even if it brings all the fruits of desire.'

"Upamanyu continued,¹⁵² 'Once I had said this to Indra of the gods, my senses were overcome with grief. Why has Rudra not been pleased with me? That is what I thought. In a short instant, I again saw Airavata.¹⁵³ It transformed itself into a bull that was as white as a swan or jasmine, as radiant as the stalk of a white lily and like the ocean of milk itself. It was huge in size and its tail was black. Its eyes were reddish brown, like honey. Throughout, the horns were ornamented with molten gold. Its eyes were red and it had large nostrils. Its ears and waist were excellent. Its flanks were excellent and it possessed a huge neck. It was handsome and beautiful to behold. The dazzling hump covered the entire shoulder. It was like the snowclad summit of a mountain, or the crest of a white cloud. With Uma, the illustrious god of the gods was seated on it. Mahadeva was as resplendent as the lord of the stars¹⁵⁴ on a full-moon night. The flames of his energy were like lightning tinging the clouds. It was as if one thousand suns had enveloped everything. The immensely energetic Ishvara was like the fire of destruction that arises at the end of a yuga and consumes all creatures. Since that energy pervaded everything, it was difficult to see anything. My heart again became anxious. I thought "what is this?" In a short while, that energy pervaded the ten directions. However, through the maya of the god of the gods, it also became pacified in an instant. I then saw the illustrious Sthanu Maheshvara stationed there. He was astride Surabhi's descendant¹⁵⁵ and was as peaceful as a fire without smoke. Parvati, beautiful in every limb, was with Parameshvara. The great-souled Nilakantha is the store of the energy of detachment. Sthanu possessed eighteen arms, adorned with all the ornaments. The god was attired in white garments. He had white garlands and unguents. The unassailable standard was white. His sacred thread was also white. His divine companions were like him in valour. They surrounded him, singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments. A white crescent moon was his diadem, arising like the moon in the autumn. The three eyes blazed and looked like three suns that had arisen. The god dazzled, wearing a garland that was white in complexion. It was made out of molten gold and strung with lotuses and decorated with gems. O Govinda! On the infinitely energetic Bhava's person, I also saw the embodied forms of weapons, all of them radiating energy. The great-souled one's bow possessed a thousand colours, like that of the rainbow. This is famous as Pinaka, but is actually a giant serpent. It is giant in form and has seven heads. Its fangs are sharp and its poison is virulent. With a giant neck, it was stationed in a man's embodied form, with the bowstring wound around it. The arrow was like the sun and was as resplendent as the fire of destruction. This was the great and extremely terrible divine weapon, the Pashupata. It was unmatched, impossible to describe and fearful to all creatures. It was gigantic in size, with sparks, and seemed to spout out fire. It possessed a single foot and giant teeth.¹⁵⁶ It had one thousand heads and one thousand stomachs. There were one thousand arms and one thousand eyes, and these seemed to spout out fire. O mighty-armed one! It is superior to Brahma, Narayana, Aindra, Agneya and Varuna weapons and is capable of countering all weapons. O Govinda! In ancient times, Mahadeva sported around and with this single arrow, in an instant, consumed and reduced Tripura to ashes. There is no doubt that if it is released from Maheshvara's arms, in an instant, it can consume the entire universe and the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. There is nothing in the worlds that cannot be slain with it, even Brahma, Vishnu and the gods. O son! I saw that extraordinary, wonderful and supreme weapon there. There was another mysterious and supreme weapon, equal or superior.¹⁵⁷ This is famous in all the worlds as the spear of the one who wields the trident. It is capable of shattering the entire earth and drying up the giant ocean. When it is released from the hand of the one who wields the trident, it can destroy the entire universe. Yuvanashva's son, Mandhata, was an immensely energetic king who became an emperor by conquering the three worlds. In ancient times, Mandhata and all his soldiers were struck down

by this.¹⁵⁸ O Govinda! He was immensely strong and immensely valorous and was like Shakra in his prowess. However, the rakshasa Lavana released it from his hand and struck him down. That trident is sharp at the points. It is extremely terrible and makes the body hair stand up. It seems to be stationed, ready to strike, as if its forehead is creased into three furrows. It is dark and is like a fire without smoke, like sun when it arises at the time of destruction. That trident is impossible to describe. Its handle is a snake. It is like the Destroyer with his noose. O Govinda! Near Rudra, I saw that weapon. In ancient times, Mahadeva was gratified and gave Rama¹⁵⁹ a battleaxe that was sharp at the edges. This was used to destroy the kshatriyas. It was also used to slay Emperor Kartavirya in a great battle. Using this, there were twenty-one occasions when kshatriyas were exterminated from the earth. O Govinda! Jamadagni's son, Rama of the unblemished deeds, accomplished this. It flamed at the edges and was extremely terrible. This was also near the wielder of the trident, who had a snake strung around his neck. It looked like the blazing flames of a fire. The intelligent one also possessed numerous other divine weapons. O unblemished one! I have only recounted the main ones. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, was stationed on the god's left flank. He was astride a celestial vimana, yoked to swans that possessed the speed of thought. Narayana was also stationed on the left flank. He held a conch shell, chakra and club and was astride Vinata's descendant.¹⁶⁰ Astride a peacock, Skanda was near the goddess. Grasping a spear and a bell, he looked like a second fire.¹⁶¹ Nandi could be seen, stationed in front of the god. Stationed with a spear in his hand, he looked like a second Shankara. The rishis, with Bhṛigu at the forefront, born from Svayambhu's mental powers, were there and so were all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront. In every direction, they surrounded the great-souled one and worshipped him. The gods praised Mahadeva with many kinds of hymns. Brahma praised Bhava by uttering the rathantara. Narayana praised the lord of the gods with the *jyeshtha* Sama hymn. Shakra praised him with the excellent *shatarudriya*, which is about the supreme brahman.¹⁶² Those three, Brahma, Narayana and Koushika, the king of the gods, were radiant around the great-souled one, like three fires. In their midst, the resplendent god Shiva was resplendent. He was like the rays of the autumn sun, freed from the clouds.

““I followed excellent vows and worshipped the god through chants. “I bow down before the one who is the god of everything. I bow down before Mahadeva. You are Shakra. You are in Shakra's form. You are in Shakra's attire. I bow down before the one with the vajra in his hand. You are tawny. You are red. You always hold the Pina-ka in your hand. You hold the sword and the trident. I bow down before the one with the dark garments, the one who has dark and curly hair. A black antelope skin forms your upper garment. You are the one who is worshipped on *krishnashtami*.¹⁶³ You are white in complexion. You are white. You are attired in white garments. You are smeared in white ashes. You are engaged in white deeds. Among all the gods, you are Brahma. Among all the Rudras, you are Nilalohita. You are the soul of all creatures. In sankhya, you have been spoken of as Purusha. You are the bull¹⁶⁴ among all things that are sacred. Among yogis, you are the Shiva who is indivisible. You are garhasthya among the ashramas. You are the lord Maheshvara. Among all the yakshas, you are Kubera. You are Vishnu among sacrifices.¹⁶⁵ Among mountains, you are the great Meru. Among nakshatras, you are the moon. You are Vasishtha among the rishis. You are said to be the sun among planets. Among forest animals, you are the lion. You are Parameshvara. Among domesticated animals, you are the bull. You are the illustrious one who is worshipped in the worlds. You are Vishnu among the Adityas. You are Agni among the Vasus. You are Vinata's descendant among the birds. You are Ananta among the serpents. Among the Vedas, you are Sama Veda. In the hymns of Yajur Veda, you are shatarudriya. You are Sanatkumara among the yogis. Among the exponents of sankhya, you are Kapila. O god! You are Shakra among the Maruts. Among the ancestors, you are the king of dharma.¹⁶⁶ Among the worlds, you are Brahma's world. Among all destinations, you are said to be moksha. Among oceans, you are the ocean of milk. Among mountains, you are the Himalaya mountains. You are brahmanas among varnas. Among brahmanas, you are brahmanas who have been initiated. You are the origin of the worlds. You are the destroyer who destroys everything. You are everything that is said to constitute superior energy in the worlds. You are the illustrious one who is everything. That is my firm view. O illustrious one! O god! I bow down before you. O one who is affectionate towards devotees! I bow down before you. O lord of yoga! I bow down before you. O origin of the universe! I bow down before you. Show your favours towards one who is devoted towards you. I am miserable. I am distressed. I am without prosperity. O Bhava! You are the eternal destination. O Parameshvara! O lord of the gods! I may have committed crimes in my ignorance. Since I am your devotee, you

should pardon all these. O lord of the gods! I was confused because of the form you assumed. O lord of the gods! I did not offer you arghya and padya.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, with devotion, I worshipped Ishana and offered him padya and arghya. I joined my hands in salutation and offered everything to him. O son! A shower of auspicious flowers descended on my head. They were sprinkled with cool water and possessed divine fragrances. The servants of the gods sounded celestial drums. An auspicious breeze started to blow. It was pleasant and bore sacred scents.

““With his wife, Mahadeva, the one with the bull on his banner, was pleased with me. Delighted with me, he spoke to the gods who were present. “O all the gods! Look at the great-souled Upamanyu. His single-minded devotion towards me is divine and supreme and he has no other sentiment.” O Krishna! The one with the trident in his hand spoke in this way to the gods. All of them joined their hands in salutation. They bowed down before the one with the bull on his banner and said, “O illustrious one! O god! O lord of the gods! O protector of the worlds! O lord of the universe! Thanks to you, this excellent brahmana will obtain all the fruits that he desires.” All the gods, with Brahma at the forefront, spoke in this way to Sharva. The illustrious lord Shankara seemed to smile at me. He said, “O Upamanyu! O child! I am pleased with you. O bull among the sages! Look at me. Your devotion towards me is firm. O brahmana rishi! I wished to test you.”¹⁶⁸ I am extremely delighted at your great devotion. Therefore, I will now give you everything that you wish for.” This is what the lord Mahadeva told me there. My eyes filled with tears of joy and my body hair stood up. In a voice that was full of joy and devotion, I spoke these words to the god. I sank down on my knees and repeatedly prostrated myself before him. “O god! It seems to me as if I have been born today. My austerities have become successful today. O Mahadeva! I have seen you in person. You are stationed in front of me, pleased with me. I have seen the one who is worshipped, the infinitely valorous one whom even the gods cannot see. Having seen that god, who is more fortunate than me? Learned ones meditate on him as the supreme and eternal truth. He is famous as the lord of attachment. He is supreme of the supreme. He is the one without decay. He is the illustrious god who represents all that is true. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is the one who knows about all truth and ordinances. He is the lord who is the foremost Purusha. He is the one who created Brahma, the creator of the worlds, from his right flank. He is the lord who created Vishnu, for the protection of the worlds, from his left flank. When the end of a yuga arrives, he is the lord who creates Rudra from his limbs. Rudra destroys everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. He is the immensely energetic Destroyer, the fire of destruction. This god, Mahadeva, is the creator of everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. At the end of a kalpa, it has been said that everything is withdrawn into him. You go everywhere. You are the soul of all creatures. You are Bhava, the creator who creates the creator of beings. You always go everywhere, but are incapable of being seen by all the gods. O lord! O Shankara! If you are gratified with me and wish to grant me a boon, let me have eternal devotion towards you. O lord! O supreme among the gods! Through your favours, let me possess the intelligence so that I know everything about the past, the present and the future. Let me and my relatives be able to enjoy an inexhaustible supply of food cooked with milk. May your supreme self always reside near me, in my hermitage.” The illustrious one, revered by the worlds, agreed to this.

““The lord Maheshvara, the immensely energetic preceptor of everything mobile and immobile, said, “Be without old age and without death. Be free from misery. Be full of good qualities. Know everything and be handsome. May you possess eternal youth. May you possess an energy that is like that of the fire. O sage! Wherever you desire, there will be an ocean of milk. As you desire, that store of milk will always be near you. Enjoy that ocean of milk, with amrita mixed in it. With your relatives, always think of worshipping me. O supreme among brahmanas! I will always be with you, in your hermitage. O child! Reside wherever you wish. You should have no anxiety. O brahmana! Whenever you remember me, I will always show myself to you.” The illustrious one was as resplendent as one crore suns. Having granted me the boon, Ishana disappeared from that spot. O Krishna! Thus, through my meditations, I saw the god of the gods. I obtained everything that the intelligent one had mentioned. O Krishna! Behold. You can directly see the siddhas who reside here. There are the rishis, the vidyadharas, the yakshas, the gandharvas and the apsaras. Look at the trees that are always beautiful and full of flowers and fruit. There are flowers everywhere. There are pleasant leaves and excellent branches. O mighty-armed one! Everything has a celestial ring to it.””

Chapter 1696(15)

““Upamanyu said, ‘The great Hara has favoured many thousand others. O Madhava! Why will the illustrious one not show you his favours? Such an assembly of the gods is to be praised, especially by someone like you, who is faithful, devoted to brahmanas and non-violent. I will grant you the *japa*,¹⁶⁹ through which, you will be able to see Shankara””

Krishna said,¹⁷⁰ “I told him, ‘O brahmana! O great sage! Through your favours, I will see the lord of the gods, the one who crushed the large numbers of Diti’s sons.’¹⁷¹ On the eighth day, following the rites, I was initiated by the brahmana. I received the staff and shaved my head. I held the kusha grass and dressed myself in rags. I sprinkled myself with clarified butter and wore a girdle made out of grass. For one month, I lived on fruits. For a second month, I subsisted on water. For the third, fourth and fifth months, I only subsisted on air. I single-mindedly stood on one foot, raising my arms upwards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I saw the energy of one thousand suns in the firmament. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In the midst of that energy, I saw a cloud that was decorated by an array of cranes. It looked like a blue mountain and there were rainbows all over it. Garlands of lightning seemed to form a window inside it. The illustrious and extremely radiant one was seated there, together with the goddess. With his wife, he blazed because of his austerities, energy and beauty. There, with the goddess, the illustrious Maheshvara looked resplendent. It was as if the sun was located inside that cloud, together with the moon. O Kounteya! My body hair stood up in delight. My eyes dilated in wonder. He is the refuge of the large numbers of gods. He is the dispeller of all affliction. I saw Hara. He wore a crown. He held a club and a trident in his hands. He was attired in tiger skin. His hair was matted and he held a staff in his hand. He held the Pinaka and the vajra. His teeth were sharp. He wore sparkling bracelets and his sacred thread was a snake. A celestial garland, with many colours, adorned his chest. It was so large that it hung down, right up to his ankles. I saw him and he looked like the moon in the evening, when the rains are over. Large numbers of demons¹⁷² surrounded him on every side. He was difficult to see, as dazzling as the autumn sun. He was seated on a bull and there were eleven Rudras around him. They sought to praise the deeds of the one who is the performer of auspicious deeds. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Ashvins praised the god who is the lord of the universe. Everything in the universe chanted his praise. Shatakratu and the illustrious Vishnu, both sons of Aditi, and Brahma were near Bhava, praising him with the rathantara Sama hymn. O Yudhishtira! There were many lords of yoga, ancestors and preceptors who knew about yoga, brahmana rishis and their sons, devarshis, the earth, the firmament, the nakshatras, the planets, the fortnights, the months, the seasons, the nights, the years, the kshanas, the muhurtas, the nimeshas, the yugas in due order, the divine branches of knowledge, all the directions, Sanatkumara, the Vedas, *itihasa*, Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, the seven Manus, soma, the Atharvans, Brihaspati, Bhrigu, Daksha, Kashyapa, Vasishtha, *kashya*,¹⁷³ the metres, diksha, sacrifices, dakshina, the fire, oblations, the embodied forms of all the articles required at sacrifices, all the guardians of the worlds, the rivers, the serpents, the mountains, all the mothers of the gods, the wives and the daughters of the gods and thousands, tens of thousands and billions of sages. They, and the mountains, the oceans and the directions, bowed down before the lord of tranquility. There were gandharvas and apsaras, accomplished in singing and the playing of musical instruments. They sung divine and wonderful praises to Bhava. O great king! The vidyadharas, the danavas, the guhyakas, the rakshasas and all the beings, mobile and immobile, bowed down before the lord, in speech, thoughts and deeds. Sharva, the lord of the gods, manifested himself before me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Ishana was in front of me, the universe, with Prajapati and Shakra, glanced towards me. However, I did not possess the strength to look towards Mahadeva.

““At this, the god spoke to me. ‘O Krishna! Look at me and speak to me.’ Delighted, I bowed my head down before the god and the goddess, Uma. I praised Sthanu in words that are used by Brahma and the other gods to praise him. ‘I bow down before the eternal one who is the womb of everything. The rishis speak of you as Brahma’s lord. Virtuous ones speak of you as austerities, sattva, rajas, tamas and truth. You are Brahma. You are Rudra. You are Varuna. You are Agni. You are Manu. You are Bhava. You are Dhatri. You are Tvashtri. You are Vidhatri. You are the lord who faces all the directions. All creatures, mobile and immobile, originate in you. You are the origin of all beings and you are the one who destroys them. The rishis speak of you as being superior to all the objects of the

sense, the mind, the wind, the seven kinds of fire and all the male gods who are in heaven. O illustrious one! There is no doubt that you are the Vedas, the sacrifices, soma, dakshina, the fire, the oblations and everything else required for a sacrifice. Sacrifices, gifts, studies, vows, rituals, modesty, fame, prosperity, radiance, contentment and success are offered to you. O illustrious one! Desire, anger, fear, avarice, insolence, confusion, malice, pain and disease are your offspring. You are deeds. You are the outcome of those deeds. You are destruction. You are the foremost one. You are power. You are immutable. You are the supreme origin of the mind. Your nature is eternal. You are the unmanifest. You are the purifying lord. You are golden and possess a thousand rays. You are the origin of all the qualities. All life is dependent on you. The great atman, Mati,¹⁷⁴ Brahma, the universe, Shambhu, Svayambhu, Buddhi,¹⁷⁵ Prajna,¹⁷⁶ realization, consciousness, fame and fortitude are all words that the great-souled ones have progressively used in the sacred texts to express your greatness. It is through comprehending you that learned brahmanas overcome the confusion that is in the hearts of all beings. The rishis have praised you as kshetrajna. Your arms and feet are in all the directions. Your eyes, heads and faces are in all the directions. You hear everything in the worlds. You are established, pervading everything. You are the fruits of everything that the one with the sharp rays¹⁷⁷ performs in a nimesha. As Purusha, the rays of your power are in all hearts. You are the obtaining of anima and laghima. You are Ishana, the resplendent and undecaying one. The worlds resort to your understanding and intelligence and seek you out as a refuge. Those who have conquered their senses and are devoted to the truth always use yoga to meditate on you. There are those who know you as the eternal one, the lord who is the deep refuge, the Purusha who is everywhere in the universe, the one who is golden in complexion, the one who is supremely intelligent and is the greatest destination. These intelligent ones based themselves on what transcends intelligence. Those intelligent ones know the seven subtle forms,¹⁷⁸ the six of your attributes¹⁷⁹ and the main techniques of yoga and penetrate into you.’ O Partha! I spoke in this way to Bhava, the destroyer of all afflictions. At this, the entire universe and all mobile and immobile objects roared like lions. The large numbers of brahmanas, the gods, the asuras, the serpents, the pishachas, the ancestors, the birds, the large numbers of rakshasas, the large numbers of spirits¹⁸⁰ and all the maharshis bowed down before him. Fragrant and celestial flowers showered down on my head in large numbers. A pleasant breeze began to blow. For the welfare of the universe, the illustrious Shankara glanced towards the goddess Uma, Shatakratu and me and said, ‘O Krishna! O slayer of enemies! We know of your great devotion towards us. I am extremely pleased with you and I will do what brings you benefit. O Krishna! O supreme one! Ask for eight boons and I will give them to you. O tiger among Yadavas! Tell me what you desire, even if it is something that is extremely difficult to get.’”

Chapter 1697(16)

‘K^Rishna said, “I bowed my head down before that great mass of energy. Filled with great delight, I told the illustrious one, ‘Firmness in dharma, the ability to destroy enemies in battle, fame, ferocity, supreme strength, devotion to yoga, your proximity and hundreds and hundreds of sons—these are the boons I seek.’ On hearing my words, Shankara agreed that it would be this way. Thereafter, the mother of the universe, the one who holds up everything, the one who cleanses everything, the store of austerities, Sharvani Uma, spoke to me. ‘O unblemished one! The illustrious one has granted you a son named Samba. Ask for eight boons from me too and I will grant them to you.’ O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Addressed thus, I bowed my head down before her and said, ‘Lack of anger towards brahmanas, the favours of my father, hundreds of sons, supreme objects of pleasure, affection towards my family, the favours of my mother, the attainment of tranquility and skill—these are the boons I seek.’ The goddess replied, ‘It shall be that way. You will possess the power of an immortal. I never speak anything that is false. You will have sixteen thousand wives. Your love for them, and their love for you, will never decay. You will obtain great affection from your relatives. I also grant you a handsome body. Seven thousand guests will always feed in your house.’”

‘Vasudeva continued, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The god and the goddess granted me these boons. O Bhima’s elder brother! Then, with those companions,¹⁸¹ they instantly disappeared. O supreme among the Kourava lineage! I recounted all these wonderful incidents to Upamanyu, the extremely energetic brahmana. The

one who was excellent in his vows bowed down before the god of the gods and said, ‘There is no one who is Sharva’s equal in giving. There is no one who is Sharva’s equal in battle. There is no god who is Sharva’s equal. There is no refuge that is equal to Sharva. O son! In krita yuga, there was a famous rishi named Tandi. For ten thousand years, he meditated on that god. He worshipped him with devotion. Listen to what he obtained as a consequence. Having satisfied Mahadeva with his praises, he saw the lord. He said, “You are the most sacred of the sacred. You are the supreme destination among all destinations. You are the fiercest energy among all kinds of energy. You are the supreme austerity among all austerities. You are the wealth of the universe. You are the golden-eyed one. You are the one who is invoked by many. I bow down before you. O lord! You are the one who grants a lot of fortune. You are the supreme truth. I bow down before you. O lord! You are the one whom ascetics, scared of birth and death, strive to obtain. You are the one who grants emancipation. You are the one with the one thousand rays. I bow down before you. You are the abode of bliss. Brahma, Shatakratu, Vishnu, the Vishvadevas and the maharshis are incapable of comprehending your truth. How can those like us comprehend you? You are the one who gets time going. You are the one into whom time merges. You are spoken of as Kala.¹⁸² You are spoken of as Purusha. You are also spoken of as Brahma. The celestial rishis who know about the Puranas speak of you as possessing three forms.¹⁸³ You are Adhipourusha, Adhyatma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva, Adhiloka, Advijana and Adhiyajna.¹⁸⁴ Even the gods find it difficult to know you. But when learned people know you in the body, they are emancipated and obtain the supreme state of welfare. O lord! Those who do not wish to know you, undergo many births and deaths. You are the gate to heaven and emancipation. You grant and you take away. You are emancipation and heaven. You are desire and anger. You are sattva, rajas and tamas. You are the lower regions. You are the upper regions. You are Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda, Indra, Savitri, Yama, Varuna, the moon, Dhatri, Vidhatri and the lord of riches.¹⁸⁵ You are earth, wind, water, fire, water, speech, intelligence, understanding and mind. You are deeds. You are both truth and falsehood. You are the existent. You are the non-existent. You are the senses. You are the objects of the senses. You are beyond Prakriti. You are permanent. You are superior to the universe and superior to everything that exists in the universe. You can be thought of. You cannot be thought of. You are the supreme brahman. You are the supreme destination. There is no doubt that you are the objective of those who follow sankhya and yoga. There is no doubt that I have become successful today.¹⁸⁶ There is no doubt that I have obtained the destination of the virtuous. This is the destination obtained on earth by those whose knowledge and intelligence are unblemished. Alas! I was foolish. For a long period of time, I did not possess the consciousness. I did not know the supreme god, the eternal one who is known by the learned. It is through the devotion of many births that the god has shown me his favours and I have been able to directly see him. Knowing you is like obtaining amrita. You are the eternal mystery to gods, asuras and men. He is the illustrious god who does everything. His face is in every direction. He is inside all atmans. He sees everything and goes everywhere. He knows everything. He creates life and is the one who upholds life. He is the creator of beings and is the destination of all creatures. He is embodied and is the refuge of all those who are embodied. He is the one who enjoys a body. He is the destination of all those with bodies. He is adhyatma, the destination of all those who are virtuous, those who meditate and know about the atman. He is also the lord who is the immortal objective. He is the one who grants good and bad ends to all creatures. He is the one who ordains birth and death for all creatures. He is the lord who grants success to the rishis who desire success. He is the lord who grants emancipation to the brahmanas who desire emancipation. Beginning with the earth, he is the creator of all the worlds, including the residents of heaven. He maintains the gods and grants them welfare in his eight forms.¹⁸⁷ Everything flows from him and he is established in everything. It is into him that everything is destroyed. He is alone the one who is eternal. He is the world of truth, desired by the supremely righteous ones who desire truth. He is the emancipation and freedom from hardships, sought by those who know about the atman. He is the lord whom Brahma and the Siddhas have kept secret and do not reveal to gods, asuras and humans.¹⁸⁸ That is the reason that gods, asuras and men do not know about Bhava. Though he resides in their hearts, they are confused. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He resides in all atmans and shows himself to those who resort to the yoga of devotion. Knowing him, one is not born and does not have to face death. If one knows that supreme one, there is nothing else that remains to be known. Having obtained that supreme gain, there is nothing else that remains to be obtained. By obtaining that supreme and subtle being, one obtains a state that is without decay. There are those who know the truth about the qualities of sankhya, they are accomplished in

the sacred texts of sankhya. Having got to know about that supreme knowledge, they are freed from bonds. He is the one known by those who are learned in the Vedas. He is the one who is established in Vedanta. Those who are devoted to pranayama and immerse themselves in it, meditate on him. He is devayana and is said to be the gate to the sun. He is pitriyana and is said to be the gate to the moon.¹⁸⁹ He is the colourful progress of time, the years and the yugas. He is existence and non-existence. He is uttarayana and dakshinayana.¹⁹⁰ Earlier, Prajapati praised him in many chants. He accepted you as a son, under the name of Nilalohita. In their rites, officiating priests praise you with many hymns from the Rig Veda. Officiating priests know you in three different ways¹⁹¹ and offer oblations with hymns from the Yajur Veda. Those who are pure in their intelligence and know about the Sama Veda chant Sama hymns to you. You are the supreme origin of sacrifices. You are said to be the supreme lord. Night and day are his hearing and sight. Fortnights and months are his heads and arms. The seasons are his energy. Austerities are his patience. The year constitutes his anus, thighs and feet. He is Mrityu and Yama. He is the fire of destruction. He is time. He is the force of destruction. He is the supreme origin of time. He is eternal time. He is the moon, the sun, the nakshatras, the planets, the winds, Dhruva, the saptarshis and the seven worlds.¹⁹² He is Pradhana and Mahat. He is not manifest. He is the specific destination of all deeds. He is all creatures, beginning with Brahma and ending with the lowest. He is the eight Prakritis.¹⁹³ He is beyond Prakriti. He is the state of lack of anxiety. He is the eternal brahman. He is the supreme objective that those who know about the sacred texts and Vedangas meditate on. He is the supreme kashtha. He is the supreme kala. He is supreme success. He is the supreme objective. He is supreme tranquility. He is supreme detachment. Having obtained him, learned ones think that they have obtained everything. He is contentment. He is success. He is said to be shruti and smriti. He is the objective of adhyatma, sought by the faithful. Learned ones obtain the one who is without decay. Those who desire to perform sacrifices, with a great deal of donations given away, seek him. He is the destination of the divine gods. He is the eternal destination. There are those who meditate, offer oblations and observe vows, subjecting their bodies to hardships and rituals. Their torments are with that god as an objective. Bhava is the objective. There are those who are detached and cast aside all rites. They desire Brahma's world, but you are actually that eternal objective. There are others who seek to overcome death and abandon all detachment, seeking an end to transformations and destructions. He is that eternal end too. He is the refuge of jnana and vijñana. He is said to be without form and without blemish. That god is the objective of emancipation. Bhava is the supreme goal. He has been spoken about in the Vedas, the sacred texts and the Puranas. He has been spoken of as the end after death. It is through the favours of the lord that one obtains, or does not obtain." Thus did Tandī satisfy the undecaying Ishana through his austerities and yoga. He spoke these words, which Brahma, the creator of the worlds, had said in ancient times. "Brahma, Shatakratu, Vishnu, the Vishvadevas and the maharshis are incapable of knowing him." Shiva was pleased at this and replied, "You will be without destruction and without transformation. You will be free from all misery. You will be famous and full of energy. You will possess divine knowledge. The rishis will come to you. Your son will be the composer of sutras.¹⁹⁴ O best among brahmanas! There is no doubt that this will happen through my favours. What will I give you or someone else? What do you desire? Tell me what you wish for." Joining his hands in salutation, he¹⁹⁵ replied, "Let my devotion towards you be firm." The god granted this boon. Praised and worshipped by the gods, the rishis and the residents of heaven, he then disappeared. O lord of the Yadavas! With her companions, the goddess also disappeared. The rishi came to my hermitage and told me everything that had happened. O best among men! For my success, Tandī recounted to me all those famous names.¹⁹⁶ Listen to those. The grandfather knew ten thousand names. The sacred texts have one thousand of Sharva's names. O Achyuta! Tandī mentioned some names of the illustrious one, but those are secret. Through the favours of the god,¹⁹⁷ in ancient times, the great-souled lord of the gods¹⁹⁸ uttered those names.'"

Chapter 1698(17)

‘Vasudeva said, “O father!¹⁹⁹ O Yudhishtira! The brahmana rishi²⁰⁰ controlled himself. He joined his hands in salutation and told me those names, starting at the beginning.

“Upamanyu said, ‘I will satisfy Sthanu through these names, famous in all the worlds. Some were spoken of by Brahma and the rishis. Others are in the Vedas and the Vedangas. These are great names and uttered by those who are truthful, ensure success in every kind of endeavour. Having cleansed his soul, the rishi Tandi devotedly used these names for the god. These names, famous in the worlds, have been uttered by sages who know about the truth. He is supreme. He is the foremost. He is heaven. He is the one who is engaged in the welfare of all beings. These names have been heard everywhere in the universe and open up entry into Brahma’s world. This is the supreme and eternal mystery that Brahma spoke about earlier. O best among the Yadu lineage! I will tell you. Listen with single-minded attention. You are devoted to the supreme god Bhava, Parameshvara. Therefore, listen to what the eternal Brahma said. Even if one tried for one hundred years, one is incapable of speaking about Sharva’s powers in entirety and detail. Even the gods are incapable of comprehending his beginning, middle and end. O Madhava! Therefore, who is capable of speaking about all his qualities? Who is capable of speaking about that god’s greatness of conduct? Through his favours, I will use phrases and syllables to touch on it briefly. Without his blessings, one can neither obtain nor praise the lord. Since I have been granted permission by him, I always praise Bhava. The great-souled one is without beginning and without end. He is the origin of everything. His own origin is unmanifest. I will tell you about some names that have been used for him. He is the granter of boons. He is the one to be revered. The intelligent one’s form is the universe. Listen to the names that were used for him by the one who was born from the lotus.²⁰¹ The great grandfather spoke of ten thousand names. Like clarified butter being churned out of curds, I will use my mind to churn names from those. Gold represents the essence of the mountains. Honey represents the essence of flowers. Cream represents the essence of clarified butter. This essence has been extracted like that. It cleanses all kinds of sins and is in conformity with the four Vedas. They need to be studied carefully and remembered with clean souls. They grant tranquility and benefit. They are great and auspicious and destroy rakshasas.²⁰² They should be told to devotees, those who are faithful and believers. They should not be told to those who are not devoted, have not cleansed their souls and are non-believers. The god who is the wielder of Pinaka is in all atmans. O Krishna! If a person hates him, he will go to hell, with his ancestors and his descendants. This²⁰³ represents meditation. This represents knowledge. This is the supreme mystery. If one gets to know them at the time of death, one goes to the supreme destination. This is sacred, auspicious, pure and supremely beneficial. O mighty-armed one! Recite these names. This is the best chant among all chants of praise. In ancient times, Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, composed these. He thought of it as the divine king of all chants. Since that time, this praise to the great-souled lord has been famous in the universe and has been revered by the immortals. This king of hymns descended from Brahma’s world. In ancient times, he recited it to Tandi and it is therefore thought of as something composed by Tandi. It was Tandi who brought it down from heaven to earth. It is the most auspicious among all things that are auspicious. It is destructive of all sins. O mighty-armed one! I will recite this hymn, which is supreme among all hymns. It is about the one who is the brahmana among all brahmanas, supreme among all things supreme, energy among all kinds of energy and austerity among all types of austerities. He is peace among all kinds of peace, resplendence among all kinds of resplendence, restraint among all kinds of restraint, intelligence among all kinds of intelligence, god among all kinds of gods, sage among all kinds of sages, sacrifice among all kinds of sacrifice, auspicious among all things auspicious, Rudra among all the Rudras, the lord among all lords, the yogi among all yogis and the cause among all causes. All the worlds originate from him and merge into him when they no longer have existence. He is in the atman of all beings. He is the infinitely energetic Hara. Hear Sharva’s one thousand and eight names. O best among men! If you listen to them, you will be successful in all your desires.

“(1) Sthira;²⁰⁴ (2) Sthanu;²⁰⁵ (3) Prabhu;²⁰⁶ (4) Bhanu;²⁰⁷ (5) Pravara;²⁰⁸ (6) Varada;²⁰⁹ (7) Vara;²¹⁰ (8) Sarvatma;²¹¹ (9) Sarvavikhyata;²¹² (10) Sarva;²¹³ (11) Sarvakara;²¹⁴ (12) Bhava;²¹⁵ (13) Jati;²¹⁶ (14) Charmi;²¹⁷ (15) Shikhandi;²¹⁸ (16) Sarvanga;²¹⁹ (17) Sarva-bhavana;²²⁰ (18) Hari;²²¹ (19) Harinaksha;²²² (20) Sarvabhutahara;²²³ (21) Prabhu;²²⁴ (22) Pravritti;²²⁵ (23) Nivritti;²²⁶ (24) Shashvata;²²⁷ (25) Dhruva;²²⁸ (26) Shmashanachari;²²⁹ (27) Bhagavan;²³⁰ (28) Khachara;²³¹ (29) Gochara;²³² (30) Ardana;²³³ (31) Abhivadya;²³⁴ (32) Mahakarma;²³⁵ (33) Tapasvi;²³⁶ (34) Bhutabhavana;²³⁷ (35) Unmatta-vesha-prachchhanna;²³⁸ (36) Sarvaloka-prajapati;²³⁹ (37) Maharupa;²⁴⁰ (38) Mahakaya;²⁴¹ (39) Sarvarupa;²⁴² (40) Mahayasha;²⁴³ (41) Mahatma;²⁴⁴ (42) Sarvabhuta;²⁴⁵ (43) Virupa;²⁴⁶ (44) Vamana;²⁴⁷ (45) Manu;²⁴⁸ (46) Lokapala;²⁴⁹ (47) Antarhitatma;²⁵⁰ (48) Prasada;²⁵¹ (49) Hayagardab-

hi;²⁵¹ (50) Pavitra;²⁵² (51) Mahat; (52) Niyama;²⁵³ (53) Niyamashraya;²⁵⁴ (54) Sarvakarma;²⁵⁵ (55) Svayambhu;
 (56) Adiradikara;²⁵⁶ (57) Nidhi;²⁵⁷ (58) Sahasraksha;²⁵⁸ (59) Virupaksha;²⁵⁹ (60) Soma; (61) Nakshatra-sadhaka;²⁶⁰
 (62) Chandra-surya-gati;²⁶¹ (63) Ketu-graha;²⁶² (64) Graha-pati-vara;²⁶³ (65) Adriradyalaya;²⁶⁴ (66) Karta;²⁶⁵ (67)
 Mriga-banarpana;²⁶⁶ (68) Anagha;²⁶⁷ (69) Mahatapa;²⁶⁸ (70) Ghoratapa;²⁶⁹ (71) Adina;²⁷⁰ (72) Dina-sadhaka;²⁷¹ (73)
 Samvatsara-kara;²⁷² (74) Mantra; (75) Pramana;²⁷³ (76) Parama;²⁷⁴ (77) Tapa;²⁷⁵ (78) Yogi; (79) Yojya;²⁷⁶ (80) Ma-
 habija;²⁷⁷ (81) Mahareta;²⁷⁸ (.) Mahatapa;²⁷⁹ (82) Suvarna-reta;²⁸⁰ (83) Sarvajna;²⁸¹ (84) Subija;²⁸² (85) Vrisha-va-
 hana;²⁸³ (86) Dasha-bahu;²⁸⁴ (87) Animisha;²⁸⁵ (88) Nilakantha;²⁸⁶ (89) Umapati;²⁸⁷ (90) Vishvarupa;²⁸⁸ (91)
 Svayam-shreshtha;²⁸⁹ (92) Balavira;²⁹⁰ (93) Bala;²⁹¹ (94) Gana;²⁹² (95) Ganakarta;²⁹³ (96) Ganapati;²⁹⁴ (97) Dig-
 vasa;²⁹⁵ (98) Kamya;²⁹⁶ (.) Pavitra;²⁹⁷ (.) Parama;²⁹⁸ (.) Mantra;²⁹⁹ (99) Sarva-bhava-kara;³⁰⁰ (100) Hara;³⁰¹ (101)
 Kamandalu-dhara;³⁰² (102) Dhanvi;³⁰³ (103) Banahasta;³⁰⁴ (104) Kapalavan;³⁰⁵ (105) Ashani;³⁰⁶ (106) Shataghni;³⁰⁷
 (107) Pattishi;³⁰⁸ (108) Ayudhi-mahan;³⁰⁹ (109) Sruvahasta;³¹⁰ (110) Surupa;³¹¹ (112) Tejas;³¹² (113) Tejaskara;³¹³ (.)
 Nidhi;³¹⁴ (114) Ushnishi;³¹⁵ (115) Suvaktra;³¹⁶ (116) Udagra;³¹⁷ (117) Vinata;³¹⁸ (118) Dirgha;³¹⁹ (119) Harikesha;³²⁰
 (120) Sutirtha;³²¹ (121) Krishna;³²² (122) Srigala-rupa;³²³ (123) Sarvartha;³²⁴ (124) Munda;³²⁵ (125) Kundi;³²⁶ (126)
 Kamandalu;³²⁷ (127) Aja;³²⁸ (128) Mrigarupa;³²⁹ (129) Gandha-dhari;³³⁰ (130) Kaparda;³³¹ (131) Urdhvareta;³³²
 (132) Urdhva-linga;³³³ (133) Urdhva-shayi;³³⁴ (134) Nabhastala;³³⁵ (136) Trijata;³³⁶ (137) Chiravasa;³³⁷ (138)
 Rudra; (139) Senapati;³³⁸ (140) Vibhu;³³⁹ (141) Ahachara;³⁴⁰ (142) Nakta;³⁴¹ (143) Tigma-manyu;³⁴² (144) Suvar-
 chasa;³⁴³ (145) Gajaha;³⁴⁴ (146) Daityaha;³⁴⁵ (147) Loka;³⁴⁶ (148) Lokadhata;³⁴⁷ (149) Gunakara;³⁴⁸ (150) Simha-
 shardula-rupa;³⁴⁹ (151) Ardracharmambara-vrita;³⁵⁰ (152) Kalayogi;³⁵¹ (153) Mahanada;³⁵² (154) Sarva-vasa-cha-
 tushpatha;³⁵³ (155) Nishachara;³⁵⁴ (156) Pretachari;³⁵⁵ (157) Bhutachari;³⁵⁶ (158) Maheshvara;³⁵⁷ (159)
 Bahubhuta;³⁵⁸ (160) Bahudhana;³⁵⁹ (161) Sarvadhara;³⁶⁰ (162) Amitagati;³⁶¹ (163) Nrityapriya;³⁶² (164)
 Nityanarta;³⁶³ (165) Nartaka;³⁶⁴ (166) Sarvalasaka;³⁶⁵ (167) Ghora;³⁶⁶ (.) Mahatapa;³⁶⁷ (168) Pasha;³⁶⁸ (169)
 Nitya;³⁶⁹ (170) Girichara;³⁷⁰ (171) Nabha;³⁷¹ (172) Sahasra-hasta;³⁷² (173) Vijaya;³⁷³ (174) Vyavasaya;³⁷⁴ (175)
 Anindita;³⁷⁵ (176) Amarshana;³⁷⁶ (177) Marshanatma;³⁷⁷ (178) Yajnaha;³⁷⁸ (179) Kama-nashana;³⁷⁹ (180) Daksha-
 yajnapahari;³⁸⁰ (181) Susaha;³⁸¹ (182) Madhyama;³⁸² (183) Tejopahari;³⁸³ (184) Balaha;³⁸⁴ (185) Mudita;³⁸⁵ (186)
 Artha;³⁸⁶ (187) Jita;³⁸⁷ (188) Vara;³⁸⁸ (189) Gambhira-ghosha;³⁸⁹ (190) Gambhira;³⁹⁰ (191) Gambhira-bala-
 vahana;³⁹¹ (192) Nyagrodharupa;³⁹² (193) Nyagrodha;³⁹³ (194) Vriksha-karnasthithi-vibhu;³⁹⁴ (195) Tikshnatapa;³⁹⁵
 (196) Haryashva;³⁹⁶ (197) Sahaya;³⁹⁷ (198) Karma-kala-vit;³⁹⁸ (199) Vishnuprasadita;³⁹⁹ (200) Yajna;⁴⁰⁰ (201)
 Samudra;⁴⁰¹ (202) Vadavamukha;⁴⁰² (203) Hutashana-sahaya;⁴⁰³ (204) Prashantatma;⁴⁰⁴ (205) Hutashana;⁴⁰⁵ (206)
 Ugrateja;⁴⁰⁶ (207) Mahateja;⁴⁰⁷ (208) Jaya;⁴⁰⁸ (209) Vijaya-kala-vit;⁴⁰⁹ (210) Jyotishamayana;⁴¹⁰ (211) Siddhi;⁴¹¹
 (212) Sandhi-vigraha;⁴¹² (213) Shikhi;⁴¹³ (214) Dandi;⁴¹⁴ (215) Jvali;⁴¹⁵ (216) Murtija;⁴¹⁶ (217) Murdhaga;⁴¹⁷ (218)
 Bali;⁴¹⁸ (219) Vainavi;⁴¹⁹ (220) Panavi;⁴²⁰ (221) Tali;⁴²¹ (222) Kala;⁴²² (223) Kala-katam-kata;⁴²³ (224) Nakshatra-
 vigraha-vidhiguna-vriddhi-laya-agama;⁴²⁴ (225) Prajapati-disha-bahu-vibhaga;⁴²⁵ (226) Sarvatomukha;⁴²⁶ (227) Vi-
 mochana;⁴²⁷ (228) Suragana;⁴²⁸ (229) Hiranya-kavachodbhava;⁴²⁹ (230) Medhraj;⁴³⁰ (231) Balachari;⁴³¹ (232) Ma-
 hachari;⁴³² (233) Stuta;⁴³³ (234) Sarvyaturyaninadi;⁴³⁴ (235) Sarva-vadya-parigraha;⁴³⁵ (236) Vyalarupa;⁴³⁶ (237)
 Bilavasi;⁴³⁷ (238) Hemamali;⁴³⁸ (239) Taranga-vit;⁴³⁹ (240) Tridasha-trikala-dhrik;⁴⁴⁰ (241) Karma-sarva-bandha-
 vimochana;⁴⁴¹ (242) Bandhana-asurendranam;⁴⁴² (243) Yudhishatru-vinashana;⁴⁴³ (244) Sankhya-prasada;⁴⁴⁴ (245)
 Durvasa; (246) Sarva-sadhu-nishevita;⁴⁴⁵ (247) Praskandana;⁴⁴⁶ (248) Vibhaga;⁴⁴⁷ (249) Atulya;⁴⁴⁸ (250) Yajna-
 bhaga-vit;⁴⁴⁹ (251) Sarvavasa;⁴⁵⁰ (252) Sarvachari;⁴⁵¹ (.) Durvasa;⁴⁵² (253) Vasava; (254) Amara;⁴⁵³ (255) Hema;⁴⁵⁴
 (256) Hemakara;⁴⁵⁵ (.) Yajna;⁴⁵⁶ (257) Sarvadhari;⁴⁵⁷ (258) Dharottama;⁴⁵⁸ (259) Lohitaksha;⁴⁵⁹ (260) Mahaksha;⁴⁶⁰
 (261) Vijayaksha;⁴⁶¹ (262) Visharada;⁴⁶² (263) Samgraha;⁴⁶³ (264) Nigraha;⁴⁶⁴ (.) Karta;⁴⁶⁵ (265) Sarpachira-ni-
 vasana;⁴⁶⁶ (266) Mukhya;⁴⁶⁷ (267) Amukhya;⁴⁶⁸ (268) Deha;⁴⁶⁹ (269) Dehardhi;⁴⁷⁰ (270) Sarvakamada;⁴⁷¹ (271)
 Sarvakalaprasada;⁴⁷² (272) Subala;⁴⁷³ (273) Bala-rupa-dhrik;⁴⁷⁴ (274) Akashanidhi-rupa;⁴⁷⁵ (275) Nipati;⁴⁷⁶ (276)
 Uruga;⁴⁷⁷ (277) Khaga;⁴⁷⁸ (278) Roudra-rupa;⁴⁷⁹ (279) Ashura-aditya;⁴⁸⁰ (280) Vasurashmi;⁴⁸¹ (281) Suvarchasi;⁴⁸²
 (282) Vasuvega;⁴⁸³ (283) Mahavega;⁴⁸⁴ (284) Manovega;⁴⁸⁵ (.) Nishachara;⁴⁸⁶ (285) Sarvavasi;⁴⁸⁷ (286)
 Shriyavasi;⁴⁸⁸ (287) Upadeshakara;⁴⁸⁹ (.) Hara;⁴⁹⁰ (288) Muniratma;⁴⁹¹ (289) Pati-loke;⁴⁹² (290) Sambhojya;⁴⁹³
 (291) Sahasrada;⁴⁹⁴ (292) Pakshi;⁴⁹⁵ (293) Pakshirupi;⁴⁹⁶ (294) Atidipta;⁴⁹⁷ (295) Vishampati;⁴⁹⁸ (296) Unmada;⁴⁹⁹
 (297) Madanakara;⁵⁰⁰ (298) Artharthakara;⁵⁰¹ (299) Romasha;⁵⁰² (300) Vamadeva; (301) Varna;⁵⁰³ (302) Prak;⁵⁰⁴
 (303) Dakshina;⁵⁰⁵ (304) Vamana;⁵⁰⁶ (305) Siddhayogapahari;⁵⁰⁷ (306) Sarvarthasadhaka;⁵⁰⁸ (307) Bhikshu;⁵⁰⁹
 (308) Bhikshurupa;⁵¹⁰ (309) Vishani;⁵¹¹ (310) Mridu;⁵¹² (311) Avyaya;⁵¹³ (312) Mahasena;⁵¹⁴ (313) Vishakha;⁵¹⁵

(314) Shashthi-bhaga;⁵¹⁶ (315) Gavampati;⁵¹⁷ (316) Vajrahasta;⁵¹⁸ (317) Vishkambhi;⁵¹⁹ (318) Chamustambha;⁵²⁰ (319) Kratu;⁵²¹ (320) Kratukara;⁵²² (321) Kala;⁵²³ (322) Madhu;⁵²⁴ (323) Madhukara;⁵²⁵ (324) Achala;⁵²⁶ (325) Vanaspatya;⁵²⁷ (326) Vajasena;⁵²⁸ (327) Nityam-ashramapujita;⁵²⁹ (328) Brahmachari;⁵³⁰ (329) Lokachari;⁵³¹ (330) Sarvachari;⁵³² (331) Sucharvit;⁵³³ (332) Ishana;⁵³⁴ (333) Ishvara;⁵³⁵ (.) Kala;⁵³⁶ (.) Nishachara;⁵³⁷ (334) Pinakadhrik;⁵³⁸ (335) Nandishvara;⁵³⁹ (336) Nandi; (337) Nandana;⁵⁴⁰ (338) Nandivardhana;⁵⁴¹ (339) Bhagasyakshi-nihanta;⁵⁴² (.) Kala;⁵⁴³ (340) Brahma-vidam-vara;⁵⁴⁴ (341) Chaturmukha;⁵⁴⁵ (342) Mahalinga;⁵⁴⁶ (343) Charulinga;⁵⁴⁷ (344) Lingadhyaksha;⁵⁴⁸ (345) Suradhyaksha;⁵⁴⁹ (346) Lokadhyaksha;⁵⁵⁰ (347) Yugavaha;⁵⁵¹ (348) Bijadhyaksha;⁵⁵² (349) Bijakarta;⁵⁵³ (350) Adhyatmanugata-bala;⁵⁵⁴ (351) Itihasa-kara;⁵⁵⁵ (352) Kalpa; (353) Goutama; (354) Jaleshvara;⁵⁵⁶ (355) Dambha;⁵⁵⁷ (356) Adambha;⁵⁵⁸ (357) Vaidambha;⁵⁵⁹ (358) Vashya;⁵⁶⁰ (359) Vashyakara;⁵⁶¹ (360) Kavi;⁵⁶² (361) Lokakarta;⁵⁶³ (362) Pashupati;⁵⁶⁴ (363) Mahakarta;⁵⁶⁵ (364) Mahoushadhi;⁵⁶⁶ (365) Akshara;⁵⁶⁷ (.) Parama;⁵⁶⁸ (366) Brahma; (367) Balavan;⁵⁶⁹ (368) Shakra; (369) Niti;⁵⁷⁰ (370) Aniti;⁵⁷¹ (371) Shuddhatma;⁵⁷² (372) Shuddha;⁵⁷³ (373) Manya;⁵⁷⁴ (374) Manogati;⁵⁷⁵ (375) Bahuprasada;⁵⁷⁶ (376) Svapana;⁵⁷⁷ (377) Darpana;⁵⁷⁸ (378) Amitrajit;⁵⁷⁹ (379) Vedakara;⁵⁸⁰ (380) Sutrakara;⁵⁸¹ (381) Vidvana;⁵⁸² (382) Amara-darshana;⁵⁸³ (383) Maha-meghanivashi;⁵⁸⁴ (384) Maha-ghora;⁵⁸⁵ (385) Vashikara;⁵⁸⁶ (386) Agnijvala;⁵⁸⁷ (387) Atidhumra;⁵⁸⁸ (388) Huta;⁵⁸⁹ (389) Havi;⁵⁹⁰ (390) Vrishana;⁵⁹¹ (391) Shankara;⁵⁹² (.) Nitya;⁵⁹³ (392) Varchasvi;⁵⁹⁴ (393) Dhuma-ketana;⁵⁹⁵ (394) Nilastathangalubdha;⁵⁹⁶ (395) Shobhana;⁵⁹⁷ (396) Niravagraha;⁵⁹⁸ (397) Svastida;⁵⁹⁹ (398) Svastibhava;⁶⁰⁰ (399) Bhagi;⁶⁰¹ (400) Bhagakara;⁶⁰² (401) Laghu;⁶⁰³ (402) Utsanga;⁶⁰⁴ (403) Mahanga;⁶⁰⁵ (404) Maha-garbha;⁶⁰⁶ (405) Para;⁶⁰⁷ (406) Yuva;⁶⁰⁸ (407) Krishnavarna;⁶⁰⁹ (408) Suvarna;⁶¹⁰ (409) Indriya-sarva-dehinam;⁶¹¹ (410) Maha-pada;⁶¹² (412) Maha-hasta;⁶¹³ (413) Maha-kaya;⁶¹⁴ (414) Mahayasha;⁶¹⁵ (415) Mahamurdha;⁶¹⁶ (416) Maha-matra;⁶¹⁷ (417) Mahanetra;⁶¹⁸ (418) Digalaya;⁶¹⁹ (419) Maha-danta;⁶²⁰ (420) Maha-karna;⁶²¹ (421) Maha-medhra;⁶²² (422) Maha-hanu;⁶²³ (423) Maha-nasa;⁶²⁴ (424) Maha-kambu;⁶²⁵ (425) Maha-griva;⁶²⁶ (426) Shmashana-dhrik;⁶²⁷ (427) Maha-vaksha;⁶²⁸ (428) Mahoraska;⁶²⁹ (429) Antaratma;⁶³⁰ (430) Mrigalaya;⁶³¹ (431) Lambana;⁶³² (432) Lambitoshtha;⁶³³ (433) Maha-maya;⁶³⁴ (434) Payonidhi;⁶³⁵ (.) Maha-danta;⁶³⁶ (435) Mahadamshtra;⁶³⁷ (436) Maha-jihva;⁶³⁸ (437) Maha-mukha;⁶³⁹ (438) Maha-nakha;⁶⁴⁰ (439) Maha-roma;⁶⁴¹ (440) Maha-kesha;⁶⁴² (441) Maha-jata;⁶⁴³ (442) Asapatna;⁶⁴⁴ (.) Prasada;⁶⁴⁵ (443) Pratyaya;⁶⁴⁶ (444) Giri-sadhana;⁶⁴⁷ (445) Snehana;⁶⁴⁸ (446) Asnehana;⁶⁴⁹ (447) Ajita;⁶⁵⁰ (448) Maha-muni;⁶⁵¹ (449) Vrikshakara;⁶⁵² (450) Vrikshaketu;⁶⁵³ (451) Anala;⁶⁵⁴ (452) Vayu-vahana;⁶⁵⁵ (453) Mandal;⁶⁵⁶ (454) Meru-dhama;⁶⁵⁷ (455) Deva-danavadarpa;⁶⁵⁸ (456) Atharvashirsha;⁶⁵⁹ (457) Samasya;⁶⁶⁰ (458) Rig-sahasra-amitekshana;⁶⁶¹ (459) Yaju-pada-bhujou;⁶⁶² (460) Guhya-prakasha;⁶⁶³ (461) Jangama;⁶⁶⁴ (462) Amoghartha;⁶⁶⁵ (.) Prasada;⁶⁶⁶ (463) Abhigamya;⁶⁶⁷ (464) Sudarshana;⁶⁶⁸ (465) Upahara-priya;⁶⁶⁹ (466) Sharva; (467) Kanaka;⁶⁷⁰ (468) Kanchana;⁶⁷¹ (469) Sthira;⁶⁷² (470) Nabhi;⁶⁷³ (471) Nandi-kara;⁶⁷⁴ (472) Bhavya;⁶⁷⁵ (473) Pushkara; (474) Sthapati;⁶⁷⁶ (.) Sthira;⁶⁷⁷ (475) Dvadasha;⁶⁷⁸ (476) Trasana;⁶⁷⁹ (477) Adya;⁶⁸⁰ (.) Yajna;⁶⁸¹ (478) Yajna-samahita;⁶⁸² (.) Nakta;⁶⁸³ (479) Kali;⁶⁸⁴ (.) Kala;⁶⁸⁵ (480) Makara; (481) Kala-pujita;⁶⁸⁶ (482) Sagana;⁶⁸⁷ (483) Ganakara;⁶⁸⁸ (.) Bhuta-bhavana;⁶⁸⁹ (484) Sarathi;⁶⁹⁰ (485) Bhasma-shayi;⁶⁹¹ (486) Bhasmagopta;⁶⁹² (487) Bhasmabhuta;⁶⁹³ (488) Taru-gana;⁶⁹⁴ (489) Agana;⁶⁹⁵ (490) Lopa;⁶⁹⁶ (.) Mahatma;⁶⁹⁷ (491) Sarva-pujita;⁶⁹⁸ (492) Shanku;⁶⁹⁹ (493) Trishanku; (494) Sampanna;⁷⁰⁰ (495) Shuchi;⁷⁰¹ (496) Bhuta-nishevita;⁷⁰² (497) Ashramastha;⁷⁰³ (498) Kapotastha;⁷⁰⁴ (499) Vishvakarma;⁷⁰⁵ (500) Patirvara;⁷⁰⁶ (501) Shakha;⁷⁰⁷ (.) Vishakha;⁷⁰⁸ (502) Tamroshtha;⁷⁰⁹ (503) Ambujala;⁷¹⁰ (504) Sunishchaya;⁷¹¹ (505) Kapila;⁷¹² (506) Akapila;⁷¹³ (507) Shura;⁷¹⁴ (508) Ayu;⁷¹⁵ (.) Para;⁷¹⁶ (509) Apar;⁷¹⁷ (510) Gandharva; (511) Aditi; (512) Tarkshya; (513) Suvijneya;⁷¹⁸ (514) Susarathi;⁷¹⁹ (515) Parashvadhayudha;⁷²⁰ (516) Deva; (517) Arthakari;⁷²¹ (518) Subandhava;⁷²² (519) Tumbavini;⁷²³ (520) Mahakopa;⁷²⁴ (.) Urdhva-reta;⁷²⁵ (521) Jaleshaya;⁷²⁶ (522) Ugra;⁷²⁷ (523) Vamshakara;⁷²⁸ (524) Vamsha;⁷²⁹ (525) Vamsha-nada;⁷³⁰ (.) Anindita;⁷³¹ (526) Sarvanga-rupa;⁷³² (527) Mayavi;⁷³³ (528) Suhrida;⁷³⁴ (529) Anila;⁷³⁵ (530) Anala;⁷³⁶ (531) Bandhana;⁷³⁷ (532) Bandha-karta;⁷³⁸ (533) Subandhana-vimochana;⁷³⁹ (534) Yajnari;⁷⁴⁰ (535) Kamari;⁷⁴¹ (.) Maha-damshtra;⁷⁴² (536) Mahayudha;⁷⁴³ (537) Bahustva-anindita;⁷⁴⁴ (.) Sharva;⁷⁴⁵ (.) Shankara;⁷⁴⁶ (538) Shankara-adhana;⁷⁴⁷ (539) Amaresha;⁷⁴⁸ (540) Mahadeva;⁷⁴⁹ (541) Vishvadeva;⁷⁵⁰ (542) Surariha;⁷⁵¹ (543) Ahirbudhna;⁷⁵² (544) Nirriti;⁷⁵³ (545) Chekitana;⁷⁵⁴ (.) Hari;⁷⁵⁵ (546) Ajaikapada;⁷⁵⁶ (547) Kapali;⁷⁵⁷ (548) Trishankurjit;⁷⁵⁸ (549) Shiva;⁷⁵⁹ (550) Dhanvantari;⁷⁶⁰ (551) Dhumaketu;⁷⁶¹ (552) Skanda; (553) Vaishravana;⁷⁶² (554) Dhatri; (555) Shakra; (556) Vishnu; (557) Mitra; (558) Tvashtri; (559) Dhruva; (560) Dhara;⁷⁶³ (561) Prabhava;⁷⁶⁴ (562) Sarvaga;⁷⁶⁵ (563) Vayu; (564) Aryama; (565) Savitri; (566) Ravi; (.) Udagra;⁷⁶⁶ (567) Vidhatri; (568) Mandhata; (.) Bhuta-bhavana;⁷⁶⁷ (569) Rati-

tirtha;⁷⁶⁸ (570) Vagmi;⁷⁶⁹ (571) Sarva-kama-gunavaha;⁷⁷⁰ (572) Padma-garbha;⁷⁷¹ (573) Maha-garbha;⁷⁷² (574) Chandra-vaktra;⁷⁷³ (575) Manorama;⁷⁷⁴ (.) Balavan;⁷⁷⁵ (576) Upashanta;⁷⁷⁶ (577) Purana;⁷⁷⁷ (578) Punyachanchuri;⁷⁷⁸ (579) Kuru-karta;⁷⁷⁹ (580) Kala-rupa;⁷⁸⁰ (581) Kurubhuta;⁷⁸¹ (.) Maheshvara;⁷⁸² (582) Sarvashaya;⁷⁸³ (583) Darbhashayi;⁷⁸⁴ (584) Sarvesham-praninampati;⁷⁸⁵ (585) Deva-deva-mukha;⁷⁸⁶ (586) Asakta;⁷⁸⁷ (587) Sat;⁷⁸⁸ (588) Asat;⁷⁸⁹ (589) Sarva-ratna-vit;⁷⁹⁰ (590) Kailasa-shikharavasi;⁷⁹¹ (591) Himavat-giri-samshraya;⁷⁹² (592) Kulahari;⁷⁹³ (593) Kulakarta;⁷⁹⁴ (594) Bahu-vidya;⁷⁹⁵ (595) Bahu-prada;⁷⁹⁶ (596) Vanija;⁷⁹⁷ (597) Vardhana;⁷⁹⁸ (598) Vriksha;⁷⁹⁹ (599) Nakula-chandanachhada;⁸⁰⁰ (600) Sara-griva;⁸⁰¹ (601) Maha-jatru;⁸⁰² (602) Alola;⁸⁰³ (603) Mahoushada;⁸⁰⁴ (604) Siddhartha-kari;⁸⁰⁵ (605) Siddharthachhanda-vyakaranottara;⁸⁰⁶ (606) Simha-nada;⁸⁰⁷ (607) Simhadamshttra;⁸⁰⁸ (608) Simhaga;⁸⁰⁹ (609) Simhavahana;⁸¹⁰ (610) Prabhavatma;⁸¹¹ (611) Jagat-kala-tala;⁸¹² (612) Lokahita-taru;⁸¹³ (613) Saranga;⁸¹⁴ (614) Nava-chakranga;⁸¹⁵ (615) Ketumali;⁸¹⁶ (616) Sabhavana;⁸¹⁷ (617) Bhutalaya;⁸¹⁸ (618) Sarva-bhutanam-nilaya;⁸¹⁹ (.) Vibhu;⁸²⁰ (.) Bhava;⁸²¹ (619) Amogha;⁸²² (620) Samyata;⁸²³ (621) Ashva;⁸²⁴ (622) Bhojana;⁸²⁵ (623) Prana-dharana;⁸²⁶ (624) Dhritiman;⁸²⁷ (625) Matiman;⁸²⁸ (626) Satkrita;⁸²⁹ (627) Yugadhipa;⁸³⁰ (628) Gopali;⁸³¹ (629) Gopati;⁸³² (630) Grama;⁸³³ (631) Go-charmavasana;⁸³⁴ (.) Hara;⁸³⁵ (632) Hiranyabahu;⁸³⁶ (633) Guha-palapraveshinam;⁸³⁷ (634) Pratishthayi;⁸³⁸ (635) Maha-harsha;⁸³⁹ (636) Jitakama;⁸⁴⁰ (637) Jitendriya;⁸⁴¹ (638) Gandhara;⁸⁴² (639) Surala;⁸⁴³ (640) Tapah-karma-rati;⁸⁴⁴ (641) Dhanu;⁸⁴⁵ (642) Maha-gita;⁸⁴⁶ (643) Mahan-ritta;⁸⁴⁷ (644) Apsara-gana-sevita;⁸⁴⁸ (645) Maha-ketudhanu;⁸⁴⁹ (646) Dhatunaika-sanu-chara;⁸⁵⁰ (.) Achala;⁸⁵¹ (647) Avedaniya;⁸⁵² (648) Avesha;⁸⁵³ (649) Sarva-gandha-sukhavaha;⁸⁵⁴ (650) Torana;⁸⁵⁵ (651) Astarana;⁸⁵⁶ (.) Vayu;⁸⁵⁷ (652) Paridhavati;⁸⁵⁸ (653) Ekata;⁸⁵⁹ (654) Samyoga;⁸⁶⁰ (.) Vardhana;⁸⁶¹ (655) Vriddha;⁸⁶² (656) Maha-vriddha;⁸⁶³ (657) Ganadhipa;⁸⁶⁴ (.) Nitya;⁸⁶⁵ (658) Atmasahaya;⁸⁶⁶ (659) Devasura-pati;⁸⁶⁷ (660) Pari;⁸⁶⁸ (661) Yukta;⁸⁶⁹ (662) Yukta-bahu;⁸⁷⁰ (663) Dvidida;⁸⁷¹ (664) Suparvana;⁸⁷² (665) Ashada;⁸⁷³ (666) Sushada;⁸⁷⁴ (.) Dhruva;⁸⁷⁵ (667) Harihana;⁸⁷⁶ (.) Hara;⁸⁷⁷ (668) Vapuravarta;⁸⁷⁸ (669) Manebhya;⁸⁷⁹ (670) Vasushreshtha;⁸⁸⁰ (671) Maha-patha;⁸⁸¹ (672) Shirohari;⁸⁸² (673) Vimarsha;⁸⁸³ (674) Sarvalakshana-bhushita;⁸⁸⁴ (675) Aksha;⁸⁸⁵ (676) Ratha-yogi;⁸⁸⁶ (677) Sarvayogi;⁸⁸⁷ (678) Maha-bala;⁸⁸⁸ (679) Samannaya;⁸⁸⁹ (680) Asamannaya;⁸⁹⁰ (681) Tirtha-deva;⁸⁹¹ (682) Maharatha;⁸⁹² (683) Nirjiva;⁸⁹³ (684) Jivana;⁸⁹⁴ (.) Mantra;⁸⁹⁵ (685) Shubhaksha;⁸⁹⁶ (686) Bahu-karkasha;⁸⁹⁷ (687) Ratna-prabhuta;⁸⁹⁸ (688) Raktanga;⁸⁹⁹ (689) Maharnava-nipanvit;⁹⁰⁰ (690) Mula;⁹⁰¹ (691) Vishala;⁹⁰² (692) Amrita; (693) Vyakta; (694) Avyakta; (695) Tapo-nidhi;⁹⁰³ (696) Arohana;⁹⁰⁴ (697) Niroha;⁹⁰⁵ (698) Shailahari;⁹⁰⁶ (.) Maha-tapa;⁹⁰⁷ (699) Sena-kalpa;⁹⁰⁸ (700) Maha-kalpa;⁹⁰⁹ (701) Yugayuga-kara;⁹¹⁰ (.) Hari;⁹¹¹ (702) Yuga-rupa;⁹¹² (703) Maha-rupa;⁹¹³ (704) Pavana;⁹¹⁴ (705) Gahana;⁹¹⁵ (706) Naga;⁹¹⁶ (707) Nyayanirvapana;⁹¹⁷ (708) Pada;⁹¹⁸ (709) Pandita;⁹¹⁹ (710) Achalopama;⁹²⁰ (711) Bahu-mala;⁹²¹ (712) Maha-mala;⁹²² (713) Sumala;⁹²³ (714) Bahu-lochana;⁹²⁴ (715) Vistara-lavana;⁹²⁵ (716) Kupa;⁹²⁶ (717) Kusuma;⁹²⁷ (718) Safalodaya;⁹²⁸ (719) Vrishabha;⁹²⁹ (720) Vrishabhankanga;⁹³⁰ (721) Mani-bilva;⁹³¹ (722) Jatadhara;⁹³² (723) Indu-visarga;⁹³³ (724) Sumukha;⁹³⁴ (725) Sura; (726) Sarvayudha;⁹³⁵ (727) Saha;⁹³⁶ (728) Nivedana;⁹³⁷ (729) Sudha-jata;⁹³⁸ (730) Sugandhara;⁹³⁹ (731) Maha-dhanu;⁹⁴⁰ (732) Gandhamali;⁹⁴¹ (733) Bhagavanutthana-sarva-karmanam;⁹⁴² (734) Manthana;⁹⁴³ (735) Bahula;⁹⁴⁴ (736) Bahu;⁹⁴⁵ (737) Sakala;⁹⁴⁶ (738) Sarva-lochana;⁹⁴⁷ (739) Tarastali;⁹⁴⁸ (740) Karastali;⁹⁴⁹ (741) Urdhvasamhanana;⁹⁵⁰ (742) Vaha;⁹⁵¹ (743) Chhatra;⁹⁵² (744) Suchattra;⁹⁵³ (745) Vikhyata;⁹⁵⁴ (746) Sarva-lokashraya;⁹⁵⁵ (.) Mahat;⁹⁵⁶ (.) Munda;⁹⁵⁷ (.) Virupa;⁹⁵⁸ (747) Vikrita;⁹⁵⁹ (748) Dandi-munda;⁹⁶⁰ (749) Vikurvana;⁹⁶¹ (750) Haryaksha;⁹⁶² (751) Kakubha;⁹⁶³ (752) Vajri;⁹⁶⁴ (753) Dipta-jihva;⁹⁶⁵ (754) Sahasra-pat;⁹⁶⁶ (755) Sahasra-murdha;⁹⁶⁷ (756) Devendra;⁹⁶⁸ (757) Sarva-deva-maya;⁹⁶⁹ (758) Guru;⁹⁷⁰ (759) Sahasra-bahu;⁹⁷¹ (.) Sarvanga;⁹⁷² (760) Sharanya;⁹⁷³ (761) Sarva-loka-krit;⁹⁷⁴ (.) Pavitra;⁹⁷⁵ (762) Tri-madhurmantra;⁹⁷⁶ (763) Kanishtha;⁹⁷⁷ (764) Krishna-pingala;⁹⁷⁸ (765) Brahma-dandavinirmitta;⁹⁷⁹ (.) Shataghni;⁹⁸⁰ (766) Shata-pasha-dhrik;⁹⁸¹ (.) Padmagarbha;⁹⁸² (.) Maha-garbha;⁹⁸³ (767) Jalodbhava;⁹⁸⁴ (768) Gabhasti;⁹⁸⁵ (769) Brahma-krit;⁹⁸⁶ (770) Brahma; (771) Brahmaid;⁹⁸⁷ (772) Brahmana-gati;⁹⁸⁸ (773) Ananta-rupa;⁹⁸⁹ (774) Naikatma;⁹⁹⁰ (775) Tigma-teja;⁹⁹¹ (.) Svayambhu;⁹⁹² (776) Urdhvagatma;⁹⁹³ (.) Pashupati;⁹⁹⁴ (777) Vatamraha;⁹⁹⁵ (778) Manojava;⁹⁹⁶ (779) Chandani;⁹⁹⁷ (780) Padmalagrya;⁹⁹⁸ (781) Surabhyuttarana;⁹⁹⁹ (782) Nara; (783) Karnikaramahasragvi;¹⁰⁰⁰ (784) Nila-mouli;¹⁰⁰¹ (785) Pinaka-dhrik;¹⁰⁰² (786) Uma-pati;¹⁰⁰³ (787) Uma-kanta;¹⁰⁰⁴ (788) Jahnvi-dhrik;¹⁰⁰⁵ (789) Uma-dhava;¹⁰⁰⁶ (.) Vara;¹⁰⁰⁷ (790) Varaha;¹⁰⁰⁸ (791) Varesha;¹⁰⁰⁹ (792) Su-mahasvana;¹⁰¹⁰ (793) Maha-prasada;¹⁰¹¹ (794) Damana;¹⁰¹² (795) Shatruha;¹⁰¹³ (796) Shvetapingala;¹⁰¹⁴ (797) Pritatma;¹⁰¹⁵ (798) Prayatatma;¹⁰¹⁶ (799) Samyatatma;¹⁰¹⁷ (800) Pradhana-dhrik;¹⁰¹⁸ (801) Sarva-parshvasuta;¹⁰¹⁹ (.) Tarkshya;¹⁰²⁰ (802) Dharma-sadharana;¹⁰²¹ (.) Vara;¹⁰²² (803) Characharatma;¹⁰²³ (804) Sukshmatma;¹⁰²⁴ (805) Suvrisha;¹⁰²⁵ (806) Go-vrisheshvara;¹⁰²⁶ (807) Sadhyarshi-vasura-

dityavivasvansavita-mrida;¹⁰²⁷ (808) Vyasa-sarvasya-samkshepa-vistara;¹⁰²⁸ (809) Paryaya;¹⁰²⁹ (810) Naya;¹⁰³⁰ (811) Ritu;¹⁰³¹ (812) Samvatsara;¹⁰³² (813) Masa;¹⁰³³ (814) Paksha;¹⁰³⁴ (815) Samkhya-samapana;¹⁰³⁵ (816) Kala; (817) Kashtha; (818) Lava; (819) Matra;¹⁰³⁶ (820) Muhurta; (821) Aha;¹⁰³⁷ (822) Kshapa;¹⁰³⁸ (823) Kshana; (824) Vishvakshetra;¹⁰³⁹ (825) Praja-bija;¹⁰⁴⁰ (826) Lingamadya;¹⁰⁴¹ (.) Anindita;¹⁰⁴² (827) Sadas;¹⁰⁴³ (.) Vyakta;¹⁰⁴⁴ (.) Avyakta;¹⁰⁴⁵ (828) Pita;¹⁰⁴⁶ (829) Mata;¹⁰⁴⁷ (830) Pitamaha;¹⁰⁴⁸ (831) Svarga-dvara;¹⁰⁴⁹ (832) Praja-dvara;¹⁰⁵⁰ (833) Moksha-dvara;¹⁰⁵¹ (834) Trivishtapa;¹⁰⁵² (835) Nirvana;¹⁰⁵³ (836) Hladana;¹⁰⁵⁴ (837) Brahma-loka;¹⁰⁵⁵ (838) Paragati;¹⁰⁵⁶ (839) Devasura-vinirmata;¹⁰⁵⁷ (840) Devasuraparayana;¹⁰⁵⁸ (841) Devasura-guru-deva;¹⁰⁵⁹ (842) Devasuranamaskrita;¹⁰⁶⁰ (843) Devasura-mahamatra;¹⁰⁶¹ (844) Devasuraganashraya;¹⁰⁶² (845) Devasura-ganadhyaksha;¹⁰⁶³ (846) Devasuraganagrani;¹⁰⁶⁴ (847) Devatideva;¹⁰⁶⁵ (848) Devarshi-devasuravaraprada;¹⁰⁶⁶ (849) Devasureshvara;¹⁰⁶⁷ (.) Deva;¹⁰⁶⁸ (850) Devasura-maheshvara;¹⁰⁶⁹ (.) Sarva-deva-maya;¹⁰⁷⁰ (851) Achintya;¹⁰⁷¹ (852) Devatatma;¹⁰⁷² (853) Asambhava;¹⁰⁷³ (854) Udbhida;¹⁰⁷⁴ (855) Trivikrama;¹⁰⁷⁵ (856) Vaidya;¹⁰⁷⁶ (857) Viraja;¹⁰⁷⁷ (858) Virajombara;¹⁰⁷⁸ (859) Idya;¹⁰⁷⁹ (860) Hasti;¹⁰⁸⁰ (861) Sura-vyaghra;¹⁰⁸¹ (862) Deva-simha;¹⁰⁸² (863) Nararshabha;¹⁰⁸³ (864) Vibudhagra-vara;¹⁰⁸⁴ (865) Shreshtha;¹⁰⁸⁵ (866) Sarvadevottomottama;¹⁰⁸⁶ (867) Prayukta;¹⁰⁸⁷ (.) Shobhana;¹⁰⁸⁸ (868) Vajra; (.) Ishana;¹⁰⁸⁹ (.) Prabhu;¹⁰⁹⁰ (.) Avyaya;¹⁰⁹¹ (.) Guru;¹⁰⁹² (869) Kanta;¹⁰⁹³ (870) Nija;¹⁰⁹⁴ (871) Sarga;¹⁰⁹⁵ (.) Pavitra;¹⁰⁹⁶ (872) Sarvavahana;¹⁰⁹⁷ (873) Shringi;¹⁰⁹⁸ (874) Shringa-priya;¹⁰⁹⁹ (875) Babhru;¹¹⁰⁰ (876) Rajaraja;¹¹⁰¹ (877) Niramaya;¹¹⁰² (878) Abhirama;¹¹⁰³ (879) Sura-gana;¹¹⁰⁴ (880) Virama;¹¹⁰⁵ (881) Sarva-sadhana;¹¹⁰⁶ (882) Lalataksha;¹¹⁰⁷ (883) Vishva-deha;¹¹⁰⁸ (884) Harina;¹¹⁰⁹ (885) Brahma-varchasa;¹¹¹⁰ (886) Sthavaranam-pati;¹¹¹¹ (887) Niyamendriya-bardhana;¹¹¹² (888) Siddhartha;¹¹¹³ (889) Sarvabhutartha;¹¹¹⁴ (.) Achintya;¹¹¹⁵ (890) Satya-vrata;¹¹¹⁶ (.) Shuchi;¹¹¹⁷ (891) Vratadhipa;¹¹¹⁸ (.) Parama;¹¹¹⁹ (.) Brahma;¹¹²⁰ (892) Muktanam-parama-gati;¹¹²¹ (893) Vimukta;¹¹²² (894) Mukta-teja;¹¹²³ (895) Shriman;¹¹²⁴ (896) Shri-varadhana;¹¹²⁵ and (897) Jagat.¹¹²⁶

““Since you are the foremost and illustrious one, I have praised you with devotion. Brahma and the other gods and learned maharshis praise, worship and honour you. Who can satisfy the lord of the universe? However, because of my devotion, I have placed that prosperous lord of sacrifices at the forefront. Having obtained his permission, I have praised that supreme among intelligent ones. These names of Shiva enhance prosperity. If one is always pure and uses these to praise the god, one obtains the atman inside one’s own atman.¹¹²⁷ Svayambhu himself chanted these as a means towards the supreme brahman. The rishis and the gods subsequently chanted these. When he is thus praised, Mahadeva is himself pleased. Compassionate towards his devotees, the illustrious one comforts them. The foremost among men are believers and faithful and praise him across several births. Whether they are asleep, awake or wandering along different paths, they praise the one who should be praised and are content and delighted. They do this in thousands of crores of births and in many wombs of the cycle of life. When all the sins have been cleansed in a creature, devotion towards Bhava is created. That devotion towards Bhava is also created by him and by no one else. He is the reason behind the emancipation of everyone. This god is extremely difficult to obtain. It is rare to find single-minded, unobstructed and unwavering devotion towards Rudra among men. It is only through his favours that men obtain such faith. When their consciousness is overcome by such sentiments, they advance towards the supreme end. When men are overcome by such supreme sentiments in every way, the god becomes gracious towards them and saves them from this cycle of life. I think that other gods, with the exception of Mahadeva, do not wish that men should use the strength of their austerities to be freed from the cycle of life.¹¹²⁸

““O Krishna!¹¹²⁹ Tandi was pure in his intelligence and was Indra’s equal. Thus did he praise the illustrious Kritivasa, the lord of officiating priests. Illustrious Brahma himself chanted this praise. Brahma recounted it to Shakra and Shakra recounted it to Mrityu. Mrityu recounted it to the Rudras and the Rudras presented it to Tandi. Through great austerities, Tandi obtained it in Brahma’s abode. Tandi recounted it to Shukra and Bhargava¹¹³⁰ recounted it to Goutama. O Madhava! Goutama told Vaivasvata Manu about it. The intelligent Manu instructed Narayana and the Sadhyas. Achyuta Narayana and the illustrious Sadhyas told Yama about it. The illustrious Vaivasvata Yama told Nachiketa. O Varshneya! Nachiketa told Markandeya about it. O Janardana! Following the proper rituals, I obtained it from Markandeya. O slayer of enemies! I have now given this famous chant to you, and heaven, freedom from disease, a long life, riches and strength can be obtained through it. The danavas, yakshas, rakshasas, pishachas, yatudhanas, guhyakas and serpents cause no obstructions for such a person. If a person is

pure, follows brahmacharya, is in control of his senses and reads this continuously for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.’”

Chapter 1699(18)

Vaishampayana said, ‘After this, the great yogi, the sage Krishna Dvaipayana, spoke. “O son!¹¹³¹ Read this.¹¹³² May you be fortunate and let Maheshvara be pleased with you. O son! In ancient times, I tormented myself through supreme austerities on the slopes of Meru. O great king! That was for the sake of a son and I praised him through this chant. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Thus did I obtain my desires. In that way, you will also obtain all your wishes from Sharva.” Then, Shakra’s beloved friend, Chatushirsha, also known as Alambayana,¹¹³³ spoke, driven by a feeling of compassion. “I went to Gokarna and performed austerities for one hundred years, thus obtaining one hundred sons who were not born from any woman’s womb. They were self-restrained, learned about dharma and extremely radiant. Without facing old age and misery, they lived for one hundred thousand years. O son of King Pandu! In ancient times, I obtained them through Sharva.” Next, the illustrious Valmiki spoke to Yudhishtira. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once, in the course of a dispute, sages who were learned in the Sama Veda accused me of having killed a brahmana.¹¹³⁴ As soon as they said this, in an instant, that adharma overcame me. To cleanse myself, I sought to satisfy the unblemished Ishana. I was incapacitated. But that dispeller of grief freed me. The destroyer of Tripura told me that I would obtain great fame.” O son! Jamadagni’s son,¹¹³⁵ supreme among the upholders of dharma, spoke to Kounteya. Stationed amidst the rishis, he was like the sun radiating heat. “O eldest among the Pandavas! I was afflicted because I had killed brahmanas who were like my father.¹¹³⁶ O king! To purify myself, I sought Mahadeva’s refuge. I chanted the god’s names and praised him. Bhava was satisfied and gave me a battleaxe. The god also gave me divine weapons. He said, ‘From now on, no sin will attach to you and you will be invincible. Death will have no power over you and you will be famous.’ The illustrious Shikhandi, auspicious in form, spoke to me in this way and I obtained everything through the favours of that intelligent one.” Next, Asita-Devala spoke to the king who was Pandu’s son. “Earlier, because of Shakra’s curse, all my dharma was destroyed. I obtained my dharma, great fame and a long life because of Bhava.” There was a rishi named Gritsamada and he was Shakra’s beloved friend. This illustrious one was like Brihaspati in his radiance. He told Ajamidha,¹¹³⁷ “The illustrious Vasishtha was Chakshusha Manu’s son. Shatakratu performed the inconceivable task of a sacrifice that lasted for one thousand years. While that was going on, I was given the task of reciting Sama hymns and he¹¹³⁸ told me, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! The rathantara is not being chanted properly. O supreme among brahmanas! Cast aside your delight and use your intelligence to consider what you are doing again. O extremely evil-minded one! Why are you acting so that the sacrificial offerings will not be conveyed?’ Having said this, he was overcome by great rage. Wrathfully, he again spoke these words. ‘You will become a forest dweller. You will be miserable and bereft of wisdom. You will always be terrified and you will remain in that state for ten thousand, eight hundred and ten years. You will have neither food nor water and you will be abandoned by other animals.¹¹³⁹ That spot will not have any trees that can be used for sacrifices and will be populated by ruru deer and lions. You will become a cruel animal and will face great hardships.’ O Partha! Because of his words, when I died, I was born as an animal. I sought refuge with Maheshvara and the yogi told me, ‘You will be without old age. You will be immortal. You will be free from misery. Your friendship¹¹⁴⁰ will be ensured and both your sacrifices will prosper.’ The illustrious lord exhibits his favours in this way. In matters of happiness and unhappiness, he is always superior to the creator and the ordainer. In deeds, thoughts and words, the illustrious one is incomprehensible. O son! I know of no warrior who is superior to him, nor anyone who is his equal in learning.”

‘Jaigishavya added, “O Yudhishtira! In ancient times, in Varanasi, the illustrious and powerful one carefully protected me and gave me the eight kinds of powers.”¹¹⁴¹

‘Gargya continued, “O Pandava! On the banks of the Sarasvati, I satisfied him through a mental sacrifice and he conferred on me the sixty-four different branches associated with the knowledge of time.¹¹⁴² He also gave me one

thousand sons who were my equal in knowledge of the brahman. I and my sons obtained life-spans of one million years each.”

‘Parashara said, “O king! In earlier times, I thought of Sharva in my mind and gratified him. I desired a son from Maheshvara, one who would be great in asceticism, great in energy, immensely famous and a great yogi. He should be one who would classify the Vedas, be the abode of prosperity and be driven by compassion towards the brahmanas. Knowing that this was the desire in my heart, the supreme among gods spoke to me. ‘The fruit that you desire from me will be obtained and you will have a son named Krishna.¹¹⁴³ This will happen in the creation associated with Savarni Manu¹¹⁴⁴ and he will be one of the saptarshis. He will classify the Vedas and extend the Kuru lineage. That son will compose itihasa¹¹⁴⁵ and be engaged in the welfare of the universe. That great sage will be loved by the great Indra. O Parashara! Your son will be without old age and will be immortal.’ Having said this, the illustrious one vanished from the spot. O Yudhishtira! The great yogi is full of energy. He is without decay and without transformation.

“Mandavya added, ‘I was no thief. But suspected of being one, I was impaled on a stake.¹¹⁴⁶ While I was in that state, I praised the god. Maheshvara told me, “You will be freed from the stake and will live for one billion years. O brahmana! But you will not suffer any pain from being impaled on the stake. You will be free from all kinds of affliction and disease. O sage! Your atman has been generated from the fourth foot.¹¹⁴⁷ Your birth is unrivalled. Make it successful. Without any obstructions, you will be able to bathe in all the tirthas. O brahmana! When you die, I ordain that you will obtain eternal heaven.” The illustrious one, with the bull as his mount, spoke in this way. O great king! Maheshvara deserves worship. The immensely radiant one is clad in hides. With his companions, the best among gods then disappeared.’

“Galava continued, ‘Having obtained Vishvamitra’s permission, I went to my father.¹¹⁴⁸ My mother was miserable and wept piteously. She said, “O son! Through Koushika’s¹¹⁴⁹ favours, you have been adorned with knowledge of the Vedas. O unblemished one! O son! You are young and self-controlled. But your father is unable to see you.” On hearing my mother’s words, I despaired, because I wouldn’t be able to see my senior. I controlled my atman and devoted myself to Mahadeva. He showed himself and spoke to me. “O son! Your father and mother will not suffer from death. Swiftly enter your house and you will be able to see your father there.” O Yudhishtira! Having obtained the illustrious one’s permission, I went home. O son! I saw my father there, emerging after having completed a sacrifice. He held some offerings, kusha and other grass. With tears in his eyes, my father flung these away. O Pandava! I had bowed down before him. He raised me, embraced me and inhaled the fragrance of my head. He said, “I have seen you through good fortune. O son! You have returned after completing your learning.””

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The sages spoke about these and other extraordinary deeds of the great-souled one. On hearing this, Pandava was astounded. Then Krishna,¹¹⁵⁰ supreme among extremely intelligent ones, again spoke to Yudhishtira, who was always devoted to dharma, like Ishvara speaking to Puruhuta.¹¹⁵¹ “O Ajamidha! Aditya, Chandra, wind, fire, heaven, the earth, the water, the Vasus, the Vishvadevas, Dhatri, Aryama, Shukra, Brihaspati, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, Varuna, the protector of riches,¹¹⁵² Brahma, Shakra, the Maruts, the truth about the brahman, the Vedas, sacrifices, dakshina, those who chant the Vedas, soma, the one who sacrifices, all the offerings and oblations, protection, consecration, rituals, svaha, vashatkara, the brahmanas, the descendants of Surabhi, the wheel of dharma, the wheel of time, movement, fame, self-control, the steadfastness of intelligent and wise people, good and bad, the seven sages, the best of intelligence, thoughts, sight and touch, success in deeds, success itself, the large number of gods who drink heat and soma, the horizon, *suyamas*,¹¹⁵³ *tushitas*,¹¹⁵⁴ everything with a form of the brahman, the shining bodies, those who survive on scent, those who survive on sight, those who restrain their speech, those who restrain their thoughts, the pure, those who are devoted to emancipation, the gods who survive on touch, the gods who survive on sight, the gods who survive on clarified butter, the foremost among gods that one can think of, all the other gods, birds, gandharvas, pishachas, danavas, yakshas, serpents, charanas, the subtle, the gross, the mild, the extremely subtle, happiness, unhappiness, all that is intermediate between joy and misery, sankhya, yoga, everything that is superior to the most supreme and everything that I have recounted—know that all these originate with Sharva. All creatures have originated from him. He is the one who deserves to be revered. In ancient times, all the gods who are the protectors of the universe and all the rakshasas who have penetrated into the

earth were created by him. I think of him in my mind and please him. He is the reason behind this breath of life and I bow down before him. When he is praised and pleased, that god, the lord without decay, grants boons. If a man purifies himself and reads this praise after having controlled his senses, restrained and not deviating from yoga for one year, then he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. A brahmana obtains all the Vedas, a king conquers the entire earth, a vaishya obtains gains and dexterity and a shudra obtains a good destination and happiness after death. This is the king of chants. If one fixes one's mind on Rudra and chants it, one is freed from all sins and becomes pure, sacred and famous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Such a man dwells in heaven for thousands of years, for as many years as there are hairs on his body.”

Chapter 1700(19)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why is it that at the time of accepting a woman’s hand in marriage, it is stated in the learned texts that one must follow dharma together? This *sahadharma*¹¹⁵⁵ has been spoken about by the great rishis earlier. Does this dharma result from *arsha*, *prajapatya* or *asura*?¹¹⁵⁶ I have a grave doubt on this account and my mind refuses to accept this. Why has *sahadharma* been recommended, if there is death? O grandfather! When one dies, one goes to heaven. What does *sahadharma* mean then? If one of the couple dies first, what happens to the other one then? Tell me this. There are diverse fruits that result from deeds. There are diverse means of subsistence. Depending on what they do, there are diverse and many kinds of hells that men go to. Those who have laid down the sutras have said that women are false in their behaviour. O father!¹¹⁵⁷ If women are prone to falsehood, why have the sacred texts spoken about *sahadharma*? Even in the Vedas, one can read that women are prone to falsehood. The signs of dharma are said to be the observance of rituals and rites on auspicious occasions. I have thought about this incessantly, but it seems to be a great mystery to me.¹¹⁵⁸ O grandfather! As has been instructed in the sacred texts, as it is practised and as it has come down, dispel all my doubts about this. O immensely wise one? You should explain this to me in its entirety.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Ashtavakra and Dishā. In ancient times, the great ascetic, Ashtavakra, desired the daughter of the great-souled rishi Vadanya, and asked for her. The lady was known by the name of Suprabha and her beauty was unmatched on earth. She was supremely worthy in her qualities, conduct, virtue, character and beauty. A glance of that beautiful-eyed one had robbed him of his heart, just like a beautiful grove adorned with blossoming flowers does so in the spring. The rishi said, ‘I will give you my daughter. But listen to me. First, go to the auspicious northern directions, to see what you might find there.’

“Ashtavakra answered, ‘You should tell me what I will see there. I will undertake whatever task you ask me to.’

“Vadanya said, ‘When you pass beyond the dominion of the lord of riches, you will approach the Himalayas and see Rudra’s plains, frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. A large number of his cheerful companions will be there. They will possess many kinds of faces and will be engaged in dancing. Their limbs will be smeared with divine paste. There will also be many kinds of pishachas. They will clap their hands and sound musical instruments. The rhythms of their cheerful dancing will be both uneven and smooth. They serve Sharva there. We have heard it said that in that celestial region in the mountains, the god is always present, with his auspicious companions. To obtain Shankara, it was there that the goddess¹¹⁵⁹ tormented herself with extremely difficult austerities. It has therefore been said, that region is desired by the god and Uma. There is a cave that is on the great slopes that are to the north of where the god resides. The seasons, the night of destruction¹¹⁶⁰ and celestial humans, all assume their own forms to worship the god there. You should cross that region and proceed further. You will see a blue forest that has the complexion of the clouds. You will see a beautiful lady there, charming to the mind. The immensely fortunate one is aged and has consecrated herself to asceticism. When you see her there, worship her carefully. When you return after having seen her, you can accept the hand.¹¹⁶¹ If you want to make a true pledge, then undertake a successful journey there.’”

Chapter 1701(20)

““A shtavakra replied, ‘There is no doubt that I will undertake a successful journey there, just as you have said. O virtuous one! May you also be truthful in your words.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The illustrious one headed further and further towards the north, to the slopes of the Himalaya mountains, populated by the siddhas and the charanas. The tiger among brahmanas reached the great mountains, the Himalayas. He went to the sacred river of Bahuda, the granter of dharma. He bathed in the clear waters of the tirthas and rendered offerings to the gods. He then spread out a bed of kusha grass and lay down happily. Having spent the night in this way, the brahmana arose in the morning. Having bathed, he followed the rites, kindling a sacrificial fire and offering oblations. He reached the cave known as Rudrani and rested near the lake there. After resting, he awoke and headed towards Kailasa. He saw a golden gate that blazed in its beauty. He saw Mandakini and Nalini, both belonging to the great-souled lord of riches.¹¹⁶² There were rakshasas entrusted with the task of protecting that lake full of lotuses and they were led by Manibhadra. On seeing the illustrious one, all of them arose and greeted him. He also honoured those rakshasas, who were terrible in their valour, and told them to quickly inform the lord of riches that he had arrived. O king! At this, the rakshasas told the illustrious one, ‘King Vaishravana is himself approaching you. The illustrious one knows the reason for your coming here. Behold. The immensely fortunate one has arrived, blazing in his energy.’ Vaishravana approached the unblemished Ashtavakra. He duly asked him about his welfare and told the brahmana rishi, ‘May you obtain happiness here. Tell me what you desire from me. O brahmana! Tell me everything. I will do whatever you ask me to. O supreme among brahmanas! If it pleases you, do enter my residence. I will honour you properly. When your task has been accomplished, depart without any obstructions.’ Having said this, he took that supreme among brahmanas and led him into his residence. He gave him his own seat, water to wash his feet and a gift.

““When both of them were seated, Kubera’s companions, the yakshas, gandharvas and rakshasas, with Manibhadra leading them, also sat down. When they were seated, the lord of riches spoke these words. ‘If they have your permission, the large numbers of apsaras will commence dancing. It is my supreme duty to serve a guest like you.’ In a sweet voice, the sage replied that it could commence. Urvara, Mishrakeshi, Rambha, Urvashi, Alambusa, Ghrithachi, Chitra, Chitrangada, Ruchi, Manohara, Sukeshi, Sumukhi, Hasini, Prabha, Vidyuta, Prashama, Danta, Vidyota, Rati—these and many other beautiful apsaras started to dance. The gandharvas played on many kinds of musical instruments. The celestial music and dancing started. Without realizing it, the rishi, the extremely great ascetic, found pleasure and spent an entire divine year there. King Vaishravana spoke to the illustrious one. ‘O brahmana! Behold. Since you arrived here, more than a year has elapsed. O brahmana! O noble one! This kind of performance is known by the name of gandharva. O brahmana! It shall be as you wish. Shall it continue? You are a guest in my household and a guest must be honoured. All of us will quickly follow your commands. We are supremely devoted to you.’ Pleased with Vaishravana, the illustrious one replied, ‘O lord of riches! You have honoured me, as is proper. I shall now depart. O lord of riches! I am pleased with you. Everything that you possess is exactly like you. O illustrious one! Through your favours, I must now undertake the task the great-souled rishi¹¹⁶³ has entrusted me with. May your prosperity become even more prosperous.’ The illustrious one emerged and headed in a northward direction. He passed Kailasa, Mandara and all the golden mountains.

““Beyond this, there is the supreme region, the great mountain known as Kairata. He controlled himself, bowed his head down and circumambulated it. Having descended again on the ground, he thought that he had been purified. Circumambulating the mountain thrice, he proceeded northwards. With joy in his heart, he advanced along the plain ground that extended in front of him. He then saw another beautiful forest. There were roots and fruits that grew in every season and it was full of birds. It was as if the beautiful forest was, here and there, adorned with them. The illustrious one saw a divine hermitage there. There were hills with many kinds of forms, decorated with gold and jewels. Gems were stuck to the ground and there were lakes. He saw many other extremely beautiful things. At this, the maharshi with the cleansed soul was delighted in his mind. There, he saw a celestial and golden house, covered everywhere with jewels. It was extraordinary in form and was superior to the residence of the lord of riches. There were many giant palaces that were like mountains. There were beautiful vimanas and many kinds of gems. The river Mandakini flowed there, covered with *mandara* flowers. There were gems that blazed with their

own radiance and the ground was strewn with diamonds. There were many kinds of houses, with colourful jewels on their gates. Nets of pearls were flung around and there were decorations of gems and jewels. It was beautiful everywhere, captivating the mind and the eye, and everything was auspicious. In every direction in that beautiful place, he saw rishis. He began to think about where he might be able to find a residence. He advanced towards a gate. Stationing himself there, he said, 'Let those who dwell here know me to be a guest who has arrived.' At this, several maidens emerged from that house. They had many different forms and all of them were beautiful. O lord! Actually, there were seven maidens. They were so beautiful that, whichever one he looked at, happened to steal his mind. Despite making the best of efforts, he could not control his mind. Finally, the intelligent brahmana resorted to his fortitude and controlled himself. The women said, 'O illustrious one! Enter.' The brahmana was filled with curiosity about the extremely beautiful women in that house and entered the house. There, he saw an aged lady. She was overcome with old age and was dressed in a white garment. Though she was lying down on a bed, she was adorned with every kind of ornament. He spoke words of greeting and the lady reciprocated. She arose and asked the brahmana to be seated.

"Ashtavakra said, 'Let all these women go to their houses and let only a single one remain. Let the one who remains be extremely wise and extremely tranquil. As they wish, let the others depart.'

"Thus addressed, the maidens circumambulated the rishi and left the house. The aged lady was the only one who remained. She lay down on a radiant bed and he told her, 'O fortunate one! You should go to sleep. Night is passing.' They were engaged in conversation, but the brahmana put an end to it, himself lying down on a second, extremely radiant bed. After some time, she pretended that her limbs were trembling with the cold and she climbed onto the maharshi's bed. The illustrious one respectfully welcomed her. O bull among men! She was delighted. Stretching out her arms, she embraced the rishi. The rishi was indifferent and was as rigid as a piece of wood. On seeing this, she was miserable and began to converse with the rishi again. 'O brahmana! A man may possess patience, but women are overcome by desire. I am overcome by kama and desire you. You should desire me. O brahmana rishi! Be happy and have intercourse with me. O brahmana! Embrace me. I am severely afflicted with desire for you. This is the revered fruit obtained by your following dharma and observing austerities. As soon as I saw you, I began to desire you. Desire me. All the riches that you see here, all the forests and everything else that you see, are mine. There is no doubt that you will become their lord and also of me. If you find pleasure with me, I will give you every object that you desire. O brahmana! Sport with me in these forests, which grant every fruit that one desires. If you sport with me, I will become obedient to you. We will enjoy all the objects of desire, divine and human. For a woman, there is no task that is superior to that of having intercourse with a man. For us women, that is the supreme fruit. When they are goaded by the god of love, women do whatever they wish. Even if they have to walk over sand that is extremely hot, they do not get burnt.'

"Ashtavakra replied, 'O fortunate one! I never have intercourse with another man's wife. The sacred texts of dharma have decreed that intercourse with another person's wife is a sin. O fortunate one! I tell you truthfully that I am indeed interested in kama. However, know that I am inexperienced in material objects and am only interested in offspring for the sake of pursuing dharma and artha. There is no doubt that after having obtained a son, I will proceed to those worlds. O fortunate one! Know that this is dharma and that there is nothing superior to this.'

"The woman said, 'O brahmana! Anila, Agni, Varuna and the other residents of heaven are not loved by women as much as Kama.¹¹⁶⁴ Women are addicted to sexual desire. Among thousands of women, even among hundreds of thousands, there will perhaps be only one who is devoted to her husband. They do not care for the father, the lineage, the mother, the brother, the husband, the son or the husband's younger brother.¹¹⁶⁵ In the pursuit of pleasure, they destroy the family, just as a great river destroys its banks.¹¹⁶⁶ Prajapati himself has spoken about the wicked vices of those evil ones.'"

'Bhishma continued, 'The rishi was single-minded and replied to the woman, 'I find no pleasure or desire in you. Tell me what I should do.' The woman said, 'O illustrious one! O immensely wise one! One sees according to the time and the place.¹¹⁶⁷ Dwell here and my task will have been accomplished. After that, depart.' O Yudhishtira! The brahmana rishi agreed to this and remained there. He said, 'As long as I am interested in doing so, there is no doubt that I will reside with you.' The rishi glanced at the woman and saw that she was overcome with old age. He thought a lot about this and was tormented. Whenever the brahmana rishi looked at her limbs, he derived no

pleasure, because her beauty had been destroyed. 'She is the owner of this house. There is no doubt that her beauty has been destroyed through some curse. I must deduce the reason and not arrive at any hasty conclusion.' He was occupied with these thoughts and desired to know the reason. His mind was anxious and he thought about this, until the day was over. After this, the woman spoke to him. 'O illustrious one! Look at the sun. Its form is now tinged by the evening clouds. What can I possibly do for you?' He told the woman, 'Bring me water for my bath. I will restrain my speech and my senses. Having bathed, I will perform the evening rites.'"

Chapter 1702(21)

Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed, the woman agreed to what the brahmana had said. She brought some divine oil and a garment he would wear during his bath. Having obtained the sage's permission, the woman rubbed the great-souled one's limbs, everywhere, with the oil. She rubbed him gently and then took him to the bathroom. The rishi was made to sit on a colourful, new and excellent seat. When he was seated on that excellent seat, she used her hands to pleurably and gently wash the rishi all over. She tended to the sage in many divine ways. Because of the pleasure associated with the warm water and because of the pleasure associated with the touch of the hands, the one who was great in his vows did not realize that the entire night had passed in this way. When he arose, the sage was extremely surprised. He saw that in the eastern direction, the sun was rising in the sky. He thought that his intelligence had been confounded. Having worshipped the one with the thousand rays, he asked her what he should do next. She gave the rishi some food that tasted like amrita. Because the food was so delicious, he couldn't eat much. In the course of this, the day passed and it again became evening. The woman requested the illustrious one to go to sleep. Excellent beds were prepared for him and for her.

"Ashtavakra said, 'O fortunate one! My mind is not interested in intercourse with another person's wife.¹¹⁶⁸ O fortunate one! Arise. It is better that you should desist. Go and sleep.'"

Bhishma continued, "She was thus rebuffed by the brahmana's fortitude. She replied, 'I am independent and you will not commit any deviation from dharma.'¹¹⁶⁹

"Ashtavakra said, 'There is no independence for women. Women are dependent. It is Prajapati's view that women do not deserve to be independent.'

"The woman replied, 'O brahmana! I am constrained by the need for intercourse. Behold my devotion to you. O brahmana! You will suffer from adharma if you do not give me delight.'

"Ashtavakra said, 'If a man is wilful, there are many kinds of sins that lead him astray. O fortunate one! I possess the strength of my fortitude. Go to your own bed.'

"The woman replied, 'O brahmana! I am bowing down my head before you and you should show me your favours. O unblemished one! I am lying down on the ground before you and have sought refuge with you. O brahmana! I am giving myself to you. If you perceive a sin from congress with another person's wife, then touch me and accept my hand now. There will be no sin associated with this. I am telling you truthfully. Know that I am independent. If there is any adharma, it will vest with me.'¹¹⁷⁰

"Ashtavakra said, 'O fortunate one! How can you be independent? Tell me the reason. There is no woman in this world who should be regarded as independent. The father protects her when she is a maiden, the husband protects her when she is young and the son protects her when she is aged. There is no woman who deserves to be independent.'

"The woman replied, 'Since I have been young, I have followed the vow of brahmacharya. There is no doubt that I am a virgin. O brahmana! Do not have a doubt about me. Do not destroy my devotion towards you.'

"Ashtavakra said, 'Just as you are attracted towards me, I am also attracted towards you.'¹¹⁷¹ However, there still remains a doubt. Will the pledge I made to the rishi¹¹⁷² not be violated? This is a great wonder. What will bring greater benefit? This maiden has presented herself before me and she was adorned in divine garments and ornaments. How does she possess this supreme beauty and why was she enveloped in that aged appearance earlier? She has assumed the form of a maiden now. Who knows what form she will assume later? However, I should resort to

the great strength of my fortitude and never deviate. Deviations do not appeal to me. I will obtain success by resorting to my fortitude.””

Chapter 1703(22)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Why was that woman not scared of being cursed by that extremely radiant one? How did the illustrious one return? You should tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Ashtavakra asked her, ‘How could you change your form? Tell me. You should not wish to utter a falsehood before a brahmana.’

“‘The woman said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! O one with truth as his valour! Listen to everything attentively. Whether one is in heaven or on earth, there is desire everywhere. You have witnessed the fickleness of a woman. But know me to be the northern direction. O one with truth as his valour! You have conquered the worlds through your composure. O unblemished one! I was employed to test you. Even when women are aged, they suffer from the fever of sexual desire. Now, the grandfather and the gods, together with Vasava, are satisfied with you. O illustrious one! That is the reason why you were sent here. O bull among brahmanas! You were sent here by the brahmana who was the father of the maiden. I have done everything so that you might be instructed. Go in peace and you will not suffer from any exhaustion when you head home. O brahmana! You will obtain the maiden and she will bear a son. I tested you through my desire, but you rebuffed me through an appropriate reply. In all the three worlds, this is something that is impossible to overcome. Having accomplished a good deed, depart. What else do you desire to hear? O brahmana rishi! O Ashtavakra! I have told you exactly what occurred. O bull among brahmanas! It was for your sake that I pleased that rishi.¹¹⁷³ It is to show him honour that I spoke those words to you.’”

‘Bhishma said, “On hearing her words, the brahmana stood there, his hands joined in salutation. Having obtained her permission, he returned to his own house again. On reaching his house, he rested and honoured his relatives. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Following what was proper, he then went to that brahmana. He was asked by that brahmana about the signs that he had seen. With great delight in his heart, the brahmana told the brahmana, ‘Having taken your permission, I proceeded towards Gandhamadana. I encountered a great divinity towards the north of that region. It is with her permission that I am recounting this to you. O lord! I have returned home after hearing her words.’ The brahmana told him, ‘Accept my daughter. Let us follow the conjunction of the nakshatras and the tithis.¹¹⁷⁴ You are the best groom possible.’ O lord! Thus instructed, Ashtavakra agreed and accepted her. The one who was supremely devoted to dharma was delighted with the maiden. He accepted the extremely beautiful maiden as his wife. He was free from all anxiety and dwelt happily in his hermitage.”’

Chapter 1704(23)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O best among the Bharata lineage! Who have the brahmanas always described as the best recipient of a gift? Is it a brahmana with the signs or is it a brahmana without the signs?”¹¹⁷⁵

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! It has been said that one must give to a person who follows his own prescribed conduct, regardless of whether he bears the signs or not, because both are ascetics.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! A person may be unclean. Nevertheless, with supreme devotion, he gives to brahmanas. What are the taints associated with such havya, kavya and gifts?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son!¹¹⁷⁶ There is no doubt that even if a man is impossible to restrain, he is cleansed through devotion. O lord of the earth! He is cleansed in every way. What else is there to say?”

‘Yudhishtira said, “A man must not examine a brahmana who is engaged in the tasks of the gods. However, the learned have also said that when it comes to offering kavya, the learning of the brahmana must be tested.”¹¹⁷⁷

‘Bhishma replied, “Brahmanas do not ensure the success of havya. It is the gods who ensure success. There is no doubt that a person who undertakes a sacrifice is successful in that sacrifice because of the favours of the gods. O best among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas always speak about the brahman. In ancient times, Markandeya, the most intelligent person in the worlds, said this.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “A person whom one has not met before, a learned person, a person who is related through marriage, an ascetic and a person who is devoted to sacrifices—why are these regarded as worthy recipients of a gift?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Noble lineage, devotion to tasks, learning, non-violence, modesty, uprightness and truthfulness—the foremost recipients possess at least three of these attributes.”¹¹⁷⁸ O Partha! Listen to the views of four energetic ones—the earth, Kashyapa, Agni and Markandeya.

“The earth said, ‘When a stone is flung into the great ocean, it is destroyed because of that act of flinging. In that way, all evil conduct is destroyed in three kinds of conduct.’”¹¹⁷⁹

“Kashyapa said, ‘O king! All the Vedas and the six Vedangas, sankhya, the Puranas and noble birth—if a man deviates from good conduct, none of these can save him from destruction.’

“Agni said, ‘There may be a person who studies and thinks himself to be learned. He may use his learning to destroy the fame of others. Such a brahmana acts as if he has killed a brahmana. All the worlds are destroyed for him.’

“Markandeya said, ‘If one thousand horse sacrifices and truth are weighed on a pair of scales, I do not know whether truth will weigh one and a half times the other.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having said this, those four infinitely energetic ones, the earth, Kashyapa, Agni and Bhargava, with his excellent weapons, quickly went away.””¹¹⁸⁰

‘Yudhishtira asked, “In this world, there may be a brahmana who follows vows. In order to please brahmanas, if offerings meant for gods are eaten by such a brahmana, is that regarded as good conduct?””¹¹⁸¹

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! A brahmana may have been instructed and may have become accomplished in the Vedas. However, if he devours what is meant for the brahman, he has deviated from his vows.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! Learned ones have said that dharma has many end objectives and many doors. Please tell me what has certainly been determined.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! Non-violence, truth, lack of anger, lack of injury, self-control and uprightness—these are said to be the certain signs of dharma. There are those who praise dharma and roam around the earth. O lord! However, they may be engaged in wicked conduct, amounting to a confusion of dharma. If a person gives gems, gold, cattle or horses to such a person, then the giver remains in hell for ten years, surviving on excrement. This is also the case if one gives to those who eat human fat and flesh, those who live as outcasts outside habitations and those who are confused by anger and confusion and talk about the undesirable acts that others have performed. O Indra among kings! There may be a brahmana who follows brahmacharya. If a person stupidly gives something meant for the Vishvadevas to such a brahmana, he is made to enjoy inauspicious worlds.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is superior to brahmacharya? What are the best signs of dharma? What is the best kind of purification? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! The avoidance of liquor and flesh is superior to brahmacharya. The signs of dharma are adherence to strictures, tranquility and purity.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “When is the time for pursuing dharma? When is the time for pursuing artha? When is the time for being happy? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There is a time for pursuing artha and that for pursuing dharma comes after that. It is after this that one should pursue kama. But one must not get attached. One must honour brahmanas and worship seniors. One must treat all creatures in a proper way. One must be mild in conduct and pleasant in speech. In a judicial dispute, one must not utter a lie. When one is brought before a king, one must not be deceitful. One must not behave falsely towards a senior. All these are equal to the sin of killing a brahmana. One should not strike a king, nor should one kill a cow. Anyone who does either commits a sin that is equal to that of killing a foetus. One must not abandon the sacrificial fire. One must not abandon the Vedas. Nor should one attack a brahmana. These sins are equal to the sin of killing a brahmana.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What kind of brahmanas are good? Who are the ones to whom one should donate, so as to obtain great fruits? Who are the ones who should be fed? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Those who are without anger, those who are devoted to dharma, those who are truthful and those who are always self-restrained—these brahmanas are regarded as virtuous. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are those who aren’t insolent, withstand everything, are cheerful in pursuing their objectives, have conquered their senses, are engaged in the welfare of all beings and are friendly. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are those who are without avarice, pure, learned, modest, truthful in speech and engaged in their own tasks. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are bulls among brahmanas who have studied the four Vedas and the six Vedangas and have withdrawn from action. The learned have said that they are the best recipients of gifts. Great fruits are obtained from donating to those who have these kinds of qualities. If one gives to a person with these qualities, the giver’s own qualities are multiplied one thousand times. Even if there is only one single bull among brahmanas who possesses wisdom and learning and good conduct, he is alone capable of saving an entire lineage.¹¹⁸² One should give cattle, horses, riches, food and other objects to such a person. In that event, one won’t have to grieve after death. Even one brahmana who is excellent is capable of saving an entire lineage. That is the reason one must be selective about choosing the recipient. If one hears that a brahmana who possesses the qualities and is revered by the virtuous lives some distance away, even then, one must honour him and worship him in every possible way.”

Chapter 1705(24)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! I desire that you should tell me about the time of a funeral ceremony. What have the gods and the rishis ordained about the gods and about dharma?”

‘Bhishma replied, “One must perform rites for the gods in the forenoon and those for the ancestors in the afternoon. This must be done after one has made efforts to purify oneself and has completed the recommended auspicious rites. At an appropriate time towards midday, gifts can be made to men. The learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of anything that is given at the wrong time. Anything left over, anything licked or touched, anything performed that has been preceded by a discord and anything that has been seen by a woman who is in her season—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of these. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If there has been public proclamation of a gift, if it has been eaten by someone who doesn’t follow vows and if it has been seen or licked by a dog—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of these. If hair or worms are found in food, if someone has sneezed into it, if a dog has looked at it, if drops of tears have fallen into it, or if it is unclean—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If food has been tasted by an unworthy person¹¹⁸³ or by someone who is armed and if food has been tasted by an evil-souled person—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. If food has been tasted by someone else, or if it has been eaten without offerings first being made to the gods and the ancestors—the learned say that the rakshasas always obtain a share in it. If reprehensible or censured food is offered to the gods and the ancestors, or if it is served with anger—the learned say that they don’t accept it and that the rakshasas obtain a share. O foremost among men! At funeral ceremonies, if the three varnas serve food without mantras and without rites, the learned say that rakshasas obtain a share in it. If food is served without offerings of clarified butter being made first, or if it has been tasted by wicked people earlier, the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have spoken to you about the shares that have been stated to be for the rakshasas.

“I will now tell you how one should determine higher classes of brahmanas. Listen. O king! In rites performed for gods and ancestors, brahmanas who have become outcasts and those who are stupid and mad should never be invited. O king! Nor should one invite and honour one who suffers from white leprosy or leprosy, one who is impotent, one who has been afflicted by tuberculosis, one who suffers from epilepsy or one who is blind. One who is a physician, one who is in a temple, one who practises futile rituals and one who sells soma should never be invited to a funeral ceremony.¹¹⁸⁴ A king must never invite those who are singers, dancers, acrobats, players of musical instruments, raconteurs and warriors. A king must never invite those who officiate at the sacrifices of vrishalas,¹¹⁸⁵

teaches vrishalas or become the disciples of vrishalas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who becomes a teacher or a student because of payment should never be invited to a funeral ceremony. They are sellers of the brahman. Even if a brahmana is foremost and is learned in every possible way, if he marries into an inferior varna, a king should never invite him. A brahmana without a sacrificial fire, one who tends to dead bodies, one who is a thief and one who is an outcaste—a king should never invite such a person. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One whose earlier antecedents are unknown, one whose tribe is unknown and one who is a *putrika-putra* should never be invited to a funeral ceremony.¹¹⁸⁶ A king must never invite a brahmana who earns a living off the interest on loans given to kings, or one who makes a living by selling animals. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who was a woman in a former life, one who is the husband of a courtesan, or one who does not perform his meditations, should never be invited to a funeral ceremony. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There are brahmanas who have been recommended for funeral ceremonies and for rites to the gods. They can affectionately give and receive.¹¹⁸⁷ Listen. O king! If they observe vows, possess qualities, know about the *savitri* mantra and perform rites, they are capable of being invited, even if they happen to be agriculturists. O son! If a brahmana has been born in a noble lineage, even if he resorts to the dharma of kshatriyas or is a trader, he can be invited to a funeral ceremony. O king! A brahmana who observes the agnihotra sacrifice, resides in a village, is not a thief and tends to guests, can be invited. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! One who chants the *savitri* mantra three times a day, survives by begging for alms and performs the rites can be invited. O king! If a person is rich in the morning and poor in the evening,¹¹⁸⁸ if he is non-violent and only has minor faults, he can be invited. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! If a brahmana is not mean and is not prone to arguing, if he consciously resorts to begging for alms, he can be invited. There may be one who is devoid of vows, deceitful, a thief, a merchant, or a person who earns a living by selling living beings. O king! If he subsequently drinks soma, he can be invited. A person may have earlier earned riches through terrible deeds, or through agriculture. O king! If he subsequently serves the guests, he can be invited. Wealth obtained by selling knowledge, that earned by living off a woman and that earned by living off a eunuch must never be given to the gods and the ancestors. O bull among the Bharata lineage! After a brahmana has officiated at a rite, if he does not speak the words which should be uttered, he commits adharma that is equal to *gavanrita*.¹¹⁸⁹ O Yudhishtira! On the day of the new moon, when one has obtained a brahmana, curds, clarified butter and the flesh of wild animals, that is the time for performing a funeral ceremony. When a brahmana's funeral ceremony has been completed, one must say 'svadha'. For a kshatriya, one must say, 'May your ancestors be pleased.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For a vaishya, one must say, 'May everything be inexhaustible.' For a shudra, one must say, 'svasti'. For a brahmana, it is recommended that the sacred word must be pronounced for the gods.¹¹⁹⁰ In this way, for a kshatriya, words pronounced for the gods must not have the word 'Om'. For a vaishya, one should say, 'May the gods be pleased.'

"Listen to what has been decreed about the rites that must be performed, one after the other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those associated with jatakarma¹¹⁹¹ must be performed for all the three varnas. O Yudhishtira! For brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas, these must be performed with the aid of mantras. A brahmana's girdle must be made out munja grass. For someone belonging to the royal family, it will be made out of hemp.¹¹⁹² O Yudhishtira! It is dharma that for a vaishya it should be made out of *balbajika*.¹¹⁹³ O lord! Listen to what is dharma and adharma for the giver and the receiver. If a brahmana utters a lie, that is an act of adharma and he commits a sin. It is said that for a kshatriya, this becomes four times and for a vaishya, it becomes eight times.¹¹⁹⁴ If a brahmana has earlier been invited by another brahmana, he should not eat anywhere else. If he does so, he becomes inferior and commits adharma that is equal to causing injury to animals.¹¹⁹⁵ If he eats elsewhere after having first been invited by a king or a vaishya, he becomes inferior and commits a sin that is half of what is committed by causing injury to animals. O king! When a sacrifice is performed for the gods, the ancestors, or brahmanas and the other varnas, if a brahmana eats without having bathed first, he commits the adharma of *gavanrita*. When a sacrifice is performed for kings, brahmanas and the other varnas, and a brahmana eats there out of greed, knowing himself to be impure,¹¹⁹⁶ he commits the adharma of *gavanrita*. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! If a person invites someone else to perform a task, because of greed for food or anything else, he is said to commit adharma that is equal to uttering a falsehood. O Yudhishtira! In the three varnas, there may be people

who do not observe the vows of the Vedas, are devoid of character and serve without the necessary mantras. They commit adharma that is equal to gavanrita.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! There may be things intended for the ancestors and the gods. To obtain great fruits, whom should one give these to? I wish to hear about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! Just as farmers wait for excellent rains, there are wives who wait for the leftovers, after their husbands have eaten. Feed them.¹¹⁹⁷ There are kings who possess good character. They are emaciated because their subsistence has suffered. Their wealth has disappeared. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O king! There are those who are without food, without homes, without riches and without shelter. When they seek riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O Yudhishtira! There are those who have suffered at the hands of thieves and others and are oppressed by fear. They seek riches so that can obtain food. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are guiltless brahmanas who have made up their minds to beg. When such brahmanas beg, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are brahmanas who have lost their possessions and their wives when the country has been flooded. When they desire riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are learned brahmanas who are mendicants. They resort to rituals and desire riches so that these can be completed. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There may be those whose dharma has suffered because of rules enforced by the wicked. Their lives and riches are afflicted. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are innocent people who have been robbed of everything by those who are stronger. They desire some food. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There may be ascetics who are devoted to austerities and have resorted to begging for sustenance. When they desire some riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have heard about what has been decreed concerning the great fruits from giving.

“Now hear about what makes one go to hell and what makes one go to heaven. Those who seize other people’s wives, those who oppress other people’s wives and those who have intercourse with other people’s wives go to hell. Those who seize other people’s property, those who destroy other people’s possessions and those who point out the weaknesses of others go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who destroy stores of drinking water, assembly houses, roads and apartments go to hell. Men who deceive women without protectors and those who are young, aged, terrified and ascetics, go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who destroy means of sustenance for others, or their homes or wives, those who destroy other people’s hopes and those who cause dissension among friends go to hell. Those who proclaim the weaknesses of others, those who destroy bridges, those who earn a living off others and those who are ungrateful towards friends go to hell. Those who are heretical and censure,¹¹⁹⁸ those who censure the ordinances and those who deviate from their beliefs go to hell. Those who cause divisions and take away the shares of those who have accomplished their tasks and are waiting go to hell.¹¹⁹⁹ Those who eat without giving shares to wives, fires, servants and guests and those who deviate from making offerings to ancestors and gods go to hell. Those who sell the Vedas,¹²⁰⁰ those who censure the Vedas and those who render the Vedas in writing go to hell. Men who are outside the four ashramas, outside the boundaries of learning and survive through perverse deeds go to hell. O king! Those who sell hair, those who sell poison and those who sell milk go to hell. O Yudhishtira! Those who cause obstructions in the tasks of brahmanas, cattle and women go to hell. O Yudhishtira! Those who sell weapons and make them and those who make stakes and bows go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who cause obstructions along roads, using stakes, pits and holes, go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who abandon preceptors, servants and followers without any valid reason go to hell. Those who make under-age animals work, pierce their noses and tether them go to hell. Having accepted one-sixth of the produce as taxes, those who do not protect, despite being capable, go to hell.¹²⁰¹ There are people who are forgiving, self-controlled and wise. Despite having associated with such people for a long time, if a person discards them when they are no longer of any use, he goes to hell. Men who eat first, without giving to children, the aged and servants go to hell. All these who have thus been named go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the various categories that go to the world of heaven.

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In all the tasks undertaken by brahmanas, where gods are placed at the forefront, if a person causes hindrances, all his sons and animals are slain.¹²⁰² O Yudhishtira! Men who follow dharma through donations, austerities and truth go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who have obtained learning through servitude and austerities and are no longer attached to what they receive go to heaven.

Men who act so as to free others from fear, sin, impediments in the way of learning and affliction from disease go to heaven. Men who are forgiving, patient, prone to performing acts of dharma and those who follow auspicious indications go to heaven. Men who refrain from liquor, flesh, intercourse with other people's wives and drinking go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who construct hermitages and establish lineages, countries and cities go to heaven. Men who give garments, ornaments, food, drink and grain and those who give to their matrimonial allies go to heaven. Men who refrain from all kinds of violent conduct and withstand everything and men who are refuges to all creatures go to heaven. Men who serve their mothers and fathers, are in control over their senses and are affectionate towards their brothers go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who are patient and conquer their senses, despite being rich, powerful and young, go to heaven. Men who are kind towards those who cause injury, men who are mild and affectionate towards their friends and those who gratify and make others happy go to heaven. Despite being surrounded by thousands, men who give to thousands and save thousands go to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Men who give away gold, cattle, vehicles and mounts go to heaven. O Yudhishtira! Men who give garments to maidens at the time of marriage and to servants go to heaven. Men who construct *viharas*,¹²⁰³ houses, gardens, wells, resting-houses, assemblies and *vapras*¹²⁰⁴ go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who give houses, fields and habitations to those who ask for them go to heaven. O Yudhishtira! Men who give juices, seeds and grain of their own accord go to heaven. Men who are born in noble lineages, have hundreds of children, live for one hundred years, possess compassion and have conquered their anger go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the rites that must be performed for the gods and the ancestors. As laid down earlier by the rishis, I have also told you about dharma and adharma concerning gifts.”

Chapter 1706(25)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should tell me the truth about this. What kinds of violence are said to be the equal to the sin of actually killing a brahmana?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! On an earlier occasion, I had invited Vyasa to tell me about this. I will tell you the truth about this. Listen with single-minded attention.’ O sage! O one who is fourth from Vasishta!¹²⁰⁵ Tell me the truth about this. What kinds of violence are said to be equal to the sin of actually killing a brahmana?’ O great king! Thus asked, Parashara’s son told me about the skilful and supreme determination of dharma on this.’ There may be a brahmana who is lean because he lacks a means of subsistence. If a person himself invites him for the sake of giving alms and later says that nothing is available, know that this person has effectively killed a brahmana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!¹²⁰⁶ If an evil-minded person is indifferent and destroys the livelihood of a brahmana who is devoted to learning, know that he is regarded as having killed a brahmana. O lord of the earth! When cattle are thirsty and seek to slake their thirst, if a person causes obstructions in this, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. The learned texts have been composed by the sages and these sacred texts have been passed down properly. Without knowing them, if a person censures them, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a person has a beautiful and excellent daughter, but does not bestow the maiden on a groom who is her equal, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a stupid person is addicted to adharma and, through falsehood, causes affliction and sorrow to brahmanas, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a person robs all the possessions of someone who is blind, lame or dumb, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. Because of delusion, if a person sets fire to a hermitage, a forest, a village or a city, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana.”

Chapter 1707(26)

udhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! Visiting the tirthas, bathing in them and hearing about them is said to be superior. I desire to hear the truth about this. You should tell me about all the sacred tirthas on earth. O lord! I have controlled myself and wish to hear about them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely radiant one! Angiras spoke about a listing of all the tirthas. O fortunate one! Listen to that and you will obtain supreme dharma. The brave Goutama, rigid in his vows, went to the hermitage of the brahmana and great sage, Angiras, and asked him, ‘O illustrious one! I have a doubt about which of the tirthas bring dharma. I wish to hear about all of them. O great sage! Instruct me. O sage! What fruits are obtained by bathing in the waters of these tirthas? What does one get after death? O immensely wise one! Tell me the truth about this.’

“Angiras said, ‘If one fasts for a week and bathes in the waters of the Chandrabhaga or the Vitasta,¹²⁰⁷ which has garlands of waves, then one loses all sense of ego and becomes like a sage. In the circle of rivers that flow through Kashmira, there are many great rivers that flow into the river known as Sindhu.¹²⁰⁸ If one bathes there, one obtains good conduct and goes to heaven. If one bathes in Pushkara, Prabhasa, Naimisha, the waters of the ocean, Devika, Indramarga and Svarnavindu, know that one then ascends a vimana and is served by apsaras.¹²⁰⁹ If one restrains one’s agitation and reverentially bathes in Hiranyavindu, Kusheshaya and Devatva, one is cleansed from all sins. If a man controls and purifies himself and then approaches and bathes in Indratoya, which is near Gandhamadana, and in Karatoya, which is in Kuranga, after having fasted for three nights, he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If one bathes in Gangadvara, Kushavarta, Vilvaka, which is in the Nemi mountains, and in Kankhala,¹²¹⁰ one is cleansed of sins and goes to heaven. If a person is a brahmachari, conquers his anger, is devoted to the truth and is non-violent, and if he bathes in the lake known as Apa, he obtains the fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. Bhagirathi Ganga flows in a northern direction, in a spot favoured by Maheshvara. If a man fasts for one month and then bathes there, he can then see the gods themselves. However, even if a man worships at Sapta-Ganga, Tri-Ganga and Indramarga and tastes the water there, he has to be born again.¹²¹¹ If a person observes agnihotra, purifies himself, fasts for one month and then bathes in Mahashrama, he obtains success within a month. If a person frees himself from avarice, fasts for three nights and bathes in the great lake known as Bhrgutunga,¹²¹² he is freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana. If one bathes in the waters of Kanyakupa and Balaka, one obtains fame like that of the gods and blazes in that reknown. If a man bathes in the waters of Deshakala and in Lake Sundarika, after death, he obtains beauty and radiance that is like that of the Ashvins. If one fasts for a fortnight and bathes in Mahaganga and Krittikangaraka, one sparkles in heaven. If one bathes in Vaimanika and in the hermitage known as Kinkinika, one obtains greatness and divinity, can roam as one wishes, and dwells with apsaras. If one conquers anger, observes brahmacharya for three nights and bathes in the hermitage of Kalika, in the waters of Vipasha,¹²¹³ one is freed from rebirth. If one bathes in the hermitage of Krittika and worships the ancestors, one satisfies Mahadeva and obtains sparkling heaven. If a man fasts for three nights and bathes in Mahapura, he is freed from fear of all immobile objects and also discards fear of bipeds. If a man purifies himself, fasts for seven nights and bathes in the waters in the forest of Devadaru, he cleanses himself and obtains the world of the gods. If one bathes in the waterfalls in Koushanta, Kushastamba and Dronasharmapada, one is served by large numbers of apsaras. If one fasts and bathes in Chitrakuta, Janasthana¹²¹⁴ and in the waters of the Mandakini, one obtains royal prosperity. If one goes to the hermitage known as Shyama, fasts and resides there for three nights and bathes there, one dwells in the city of the gandharvas. If one fasts for one month and bathes in the beautiful waters of Gandhatarika, one obtains the powers of disappearing at will. If a man goes to Koushikidvara, casts aside all greed and survives only on air for twenty-one nights, he ascends to heaven. If one bathes in Matanga, one becomes successful in a single night. If one conquers one’s senses and bathes in the eternal waters of Analamba, Andhaka, Naimisha or Svargatirtha, within one month, one obtains the fruits of *purushamedha*.¹²¹⁵ If one bathes in the waters of Gangahrada and Utpalavana for a month, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If one bathes in the tirthas that are along the Ganga and the Yamuna and in the sixty lakes that are in Mount Kalanjara,¹²¹⁶ this is superior to all kinds of donations. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the month of Magha, ten thousand tirthas and another thirty crore tirthas assemble in Prayaga.¹²¹⁷ O foremost among the Bharata lineage! If one is controlled, rigid in vows and bathes in Prayaga in the month of Magha, one obtains sparkling heaven. If a man bathes in Marudgana, in the sacred hermitage of the ancestors and in the tirtha of Vaivasvata, he becomes like a tirtha himself. If one goes to

Brahmashira and bathes in the waters of the Bhagirathi, after having fasted for one month, one obtains the world of the moon. If a man fasts for twelve days and bathes in the waters of Kapotaka and Ashtavakra, he obtains the fruits of a human sacrifice. If one goes to Munjaprishta, the divine mountain of Nirriti and Krouchapadi, all three of which are in Gaya, one is freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana.¹²¹⁸ If one bathes in Kalashya, know that one will obtain a great deal of water. If a man bathes in the city of Agni, in the waters of Vishala and in Devahrada, he becomes radiant and merges with the brahman. If a man is controlled and non-violent and bathes in Purapavartana, Nanda or Mahananda, he goes to Nandana¹²¹⁹ and is served by apsaras. At the conjunction of Urvashi and Krittika, as is ordained, if one is self-controlled and bathes in the Lohitya, one obtains the fruits of a *pundarika* sacrifice.¹²²⁰ If one fasts for twelve days and bathes in Ramahrada and in the waters of Vishala, one is freed from all sins. If a man purifies his mind and bathes in Mahahrada, fasting for one month, he obtains the end got by Jamadagni. If one is non-violent and devoted to the truth, tormenting oneself in Vindhya and standing on one foot for six months, one will be purified within a month. If one fasts for a fortnight and bathes in the waters of Narmada and Surparaka, one becomes a prince. If one goes to Jambumarga and is controlled and self-restrained for three months, one obtains success within a single day and a single night. If one goes to the hermitage of Chandanika and bathes in Kokamukha, subsisting on vegetables and attired in rags, one obtains ten maidens. If one resides in Kanyahrada, one goes to the world of the gods and never goes to Vaivasvata's¹²²¹ abode. O mighty-armed one! If a man is controlled and bathes in Prabhasa on the night of the new moon, when he is reborn, he obtains success within a single night. If one bathes in Ujjanaka, in the hermitages of Arishtishena and Pinga, then, one is freed from all sins. If one purifies oneself and fasts for three nights, bathing in the waters of Kulya and chanting the aghamarshana mantra, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If a man fasts for one night and bathes in Pindaraka, then, as soon as night is over, he is purified and obtains the fruits of an *agnishtoma* sacrifice. If one goes to Brahmasara, adorned by the forest known as Dharmaranya, then, as soon as night is over, one is purified and obtains the fruits of a *pundarika* sacrifice. If one bathes in Mount Mainaka for a month, performing the morning and evening prayers and conquering desire, one then obtains the fruits of all sacrifices. The Himalayas are sacred and famous. They are Shankara's father-in-law. They are a store of all jewels and are frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. There may be a brahmana who knows about Vedanta and knows that life is transient. If he worships the gods, bows to the sages and, following the prescribed rites, fasts and gives up his life there, he obtains divine success. He goes to Brahma's eternal world. There may be a person who dwells in a tirtha, having given up desire, anger and avarice. Since he has gone to a tirtha, there is nothing that he cannot obtain. Even if one wishes to go to all the tirthas, some tirthas are inaccessible and difficult to reach. In that case, one should approach them mentally. They are like sacrifices. They make one fortunate. They yield divine bliss. It is a great secret that even the gods purify themselves by bathing there. This secret can be divulged in the hearing of brahmanas, the virtuous, sons, well-wishers and devoted disciples."

'Bhishma continued, "The great ascetic, Angiras, told Goutama about this, after having obtained the permission of his preceptor, the intelligent Kashyapa.¹²²² What the maharshi said is pure and supreme and should be chanted. If one chants it when one wakes up, one is cleansed and obtains heaven. This mystery was obtained from Angiras. If one hears it, one is born in an excellent lineage and remembers one's past life."

Chapter 1708(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'He was Brihaspati's equal in intelligence and Brahma's equal in forgiveness. He was Shakra's equal in valour and as infinitely energetic as Aditya. Gangeya was extremely radiant and had been brought down in the battle by Arjuna. With his brothers and the others, Yudhishtira worshipped him. The one without decay was waiting for the right time and was lying down on a hero's bed. The maharshis arrived, wishing to see the foremost one among the Bharata lineage. There were Atri, Vasishtha, Bhrgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angiras, Goutama, Agastya, Sumati, controlled in his soul, Vishvamitra, Sthulashira, Samvarta, Pramati, Dama, Ushanas, Brihaspati, Vyasa, Chyavana, Kashyapa, Dhruva, Durvasa, Jamadagni, Markandeya, Galava, Bharadvaja, Raibhya, Yavakrita, Trita, Sthulaksha, Shakalaksha, Kanva, Medhatithi, Krishna, Narada, Parvata, Sudhanva, Ekata,

Dvita, Nitambhu, Bhuvana, Dhoumya, Shatananda, Kritavrana, Jamadagnya Rama, Kamya, Chetya and others. These great-souled maharshis arrived to see Bhishma. In due order, with his brothers, Yudhishtira worshipped the great-souled ones who had arrived. Having been worshipped, the maharshis seated themselves and began to converse. In extremely gentle tones, which delighted all the senses, they talked about Bhishma. On hearing the words of the rishis, who had cleansed their souls, Bhishma was supremely delighted and satisfied and thought that he was already in heaven. While everyone looked on, taking the leave of Bhishma and the Pandavas, all the rishis vanished. Though those extremely fortunate rishis had disappeared, all the Pandavas continued to repeatedly worship and bow down before them. With cheerful minds, all these supreme Kurus presented themselves before Gangeya, like those who know about mantras presenting themselves before the rising sun. Because of the powers of austerities of the rishis, the Pandavas saw that the directions were ablaze. All of them were quite astounded at this. They thought that the rishis were much more than fortunate. The Pandavas started to converse with Bhishma. When that conversation was over, Yudhishtira, Dharma's son, touched Bhishma's feet with his head and again questioned him about dharma. "O grandfather! Which countries, provinces, hermitages, mountains and rivers are really sacred?"

Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a person who followed *shilonchhavritti* and one who had obtained success.¹²²³ A best among bipeds roamed over the entire earth, adorned with mountains. He finally arrived at the house of someone who was best among those who followed *shilavritti*. Once he arrived, he was duly honoured. After the ablutions, the guest, who had obtained success, seated himself. Those great-souled ones seated themselves and started to talk about auspicious things, such as what was in the Vedas and in their appendices, and their various attributes. When this conversation was over, the intelligent one who followed *shilavritti* carefully asked the one who had obtained success to answer the question that you have asked me.

"Shilavritti asked, 'Which countries, provinces, hermitages, mountains and rivers are really sacred? Tell me that.'

"The Siddha¹²²⁴ replied, 'Countries, provinces, hermitages and mountains are best when Bhagirathi Ganga, supreme among rivers, flows through them. Through austerities, brahmacharya, sacrifices and renunciation, a creature cannot obtain the ends that can be obtained by frequenting the Ganga. If the limbs have been sprinkled with the waters of the Ganga, or if creatures cast aside their bodies there, they are not dislodged from heaven. O brahmana! When embodied creatures perform all their rites in the waters of the Ganga, having left earth, such men are permanently in heaven. Men may have committed sins in the earlier parts of their lives. However, later, if they reside near the Ganga, they advance towards a supreme end. If men control their souls and bathe in the pure waters of the Ganga, they obtain merits that are greater than those obtained through one hundred sacrifices. As long as a man's bones are established in the waters of the Ganga, he obtains greatness in heaven for thousands of years. The sun rises in the morning and through its radiance, dispels the terrible darkness. In that way, when washed by the waters of the Ganga, the sins are dispelled and one is radiant. Without the auspicious waters of the Ganga, countries and directions are deprived, like a night without the moon, or a tree without flowers. Without the Ganga, the universe is like sacrifices without soma, or the varna and ashrama system, with everyone deprived of knowledge about his own dharma. There is no doubt that deprived of the Ganga, countries and directions are as deprived as the firmament without the sun, the earth without mountains, or the sky without air. When they obtain the auspicious waters of the Ganga, all the beings in the three worlds are supremely satisfied and become content. Drinking water from the Ganga, heated by the sun, is superior to picking out and eating food from the excrement of a cow. To purify one's body, a person may perform one thousand *chandrayana* sacrifices. It is impossible to determine whether this is equal, or unequal, to drinking the water of the Ganga. A man may stand on a single foot for one thousand yugas. It is impossible to determine whether this is equal, or unequal, to standing in a similar way in the Ganga for one month. A man may remain for ten thousand yugas, with his face hanging downwards. However, if one remains on the banks of the Ganga for some time, that is superior. O supreme among brahmanas! When cotton is burnt in a fire, nothing is left. In that way, through submerging in the Ganga, all sins are washed away. The consciousness of all creatures is taken away by misery. If they seek an escape, there is no escape that is equal to the Ganga. On seeing Tarkshya,¹²²⁵ a snake loses its poison. In that way, on seeing Ganga, one is freed from all sins.

Because of their addiction towards adharma, there are those who are without any status. They obtain refuge, prosperity and protection from the Ganga. There are many who are worst among men, prone to inauspicious deeds and destined for hell. After death, they are saved by the Ganga. Those who always advance towards the Ganga are certainly counted together with the sages and the gods, with Vasava. There are many who are inauspicious and worst among men, devoid of good conduct and humility. O brahmana! When they resort to the Ganga, they become auspicious. The waters of the Ganga are for men what amrita is for the gods, svadha is for the ancestors and *sudha* is for serpents.¹²²⁶ Children who are afflicted by hunger seek out their mothers. In that way, embodied beings who desire welfare seek out the Ganga. Svayambhu's region is said to be the best. In that fashion, Ganga is said to be the best among rivers to bathe in. Cattle and the earth are said to be the best means of sustenance for the gods and others. In that way, for all beings on earth, Ganga is the means of sustenance. The gods are established in the sun and the moon and sustain themselves through sacrifices and amrita. For men, the waters of the Ganga are like that. If a man smears himself with sand from the banks of the Jahnavi and arises, he can think of himself as adorned as the gods in heaven. If a person raises up mud from the banks of the Jahnavi and smears it on his head, he becomes radiant, as sparkling and radiant as the sun, the dispeller of darkness. If water mixed with drops of water from the Ganga's waves touches a man, he is instantly cleansed of all sin. If a man is afflicted by hardships and is about to be destroyed, the mere sight of the Ganga cheers him up and dispels those hardships. Swans, ruddy geese and other birds crying on the Ganga challenge the gandharvas and her banks challenge tall mountains. There are swans and many other kinds of birds on the Ganga. There are herds of cattle along the banks. On seeing these, one forgets heaven. The supreme delight obtained by men who reside along the banks of the Ganga is greater than the bliss from residing in heaven, with all one's wishes gratified. There may be a man who has committed the worst of sins in speech, thought and deeds. There is no doubt that on seeing Ganga, he is purified. If a man sees, touches and bathes in the Ganga, he saves seven generations of his ancestors and seven generations of his descendants. In particular, by wishing to hear about the Ganga, seeing it, touching it and drinking its waters, a man rescues both his family lines.¹²²⁷ By seeing, touching, drinking and praising the Ganga, hundreds and thousands of sinners become purified. People who desire to make their births, lives and learning successful should go to the Ganga and worship the ancestors and the gods. Through sons, riches and deeds, a man cannot obtain the fruits that can be derived through approaching the Ganga. If a person, though able, does not go and see the sacred and auspicious waters of the Ganga, he is like one born blind, or one who is dead or disabled. The Ganga is worshipped by maharshis who know about the past, the present and the future, and by the gods, together with Indra. Which man will not worship it? Those in vanaprastha and garhasthya, those who are mendicants and brahmacharis and those who have knowledge and learning resort to the Ganga. Which man will not seek refuge there? When a man is about to give up his breath of life, if he behaves virtuously, controls himself and thinks of the Ganga, he obtains the supreme objective. If a man worships the Ganga at the time of giving up his body, he has no fear from fear and does not suffer from any sin. The extremely sacred goddess fell down from the sky and was held by Maheshvara on his head. It is she who is there in heaven. The three sparkling courses adorn the three worlds.¹²²⁸ A man who frequents her waters becomes successful in every possible way. Among the rivers of earth, Ganga is like the lord of the gods¹²²⁹ to men, the moon to the ancestors and the sun to the stellar bodies in the firmament. The misery on being separated from a mother, a father, sons, wives or riches is nothing compared to the sorrow on being separated from the Ganga. Through meritorious deeds, sons and the inflow of riches, men do not obtain as much gratification as they do from seeing the Ganga. The hearts of men are delighted on seeing the full moon. On seeing the Ganga, which possesses three flows, hearts rejoice in that fashion. With faith, single-mindedness, devotion and steadfastness, if a devotee worships the Ganga, he becomes her beloved. Creatures who are on earth, in the sky or in heaven, and even those who are higher still, should always bathe in the Ganga. This is a task indicated for the virtuous. Ganga is sacred and is famous in the three worlds. She is illustrious. Sagara's sons, who were reduced to ashes, were conveyed by her to heaven.¹²³⁰

““Ganga's waves are tall, bright and sparkling and arise, after being driven by winds that make a loud noise. Those who are washed by these are purified and become as radiant as the sun, the one with the one thousand rays. The prosperous waters are swift and difficult to immerse in. They are like the clarified butter generously offered at sacrifices. Patient men who go to the Ganga and give up their lives there, become like the gods. The Ganga is illus-

trious and large. The universe is her form. She is worshipped by the sages and by the gods, with Indra at their head. She grants all the objects of desire to those who are blind, dumb and bereft of possessions. Her water is full of energy and is sweet as honey. She is extremely sacred and has three flows. She is the protector of the three worlds. Those who seek refuge with the Ganga, go to heaven. If a mortal person dwells near her and sees her, the gods grant him happiness. He is cleansed by the touch and the sight. The gods grant him auspicious directions. She is large, excellent and accomplished. She is the earth. She is auspicious and like amrita. She is lovely and extremely gracious. She is brilliant and all creatures are established in her. A person who goes to Ganga goes to heaven. Her fame is always known on earth, in the sky and in heaven, and fills the directions and the minor directions. She is supreme among rivers, and by resorting to her waters, all mortal beings accomplish their objectives. This Ganga is always established. She bore the golden Guha in her womb.¹²³¹ She possesses three flows. She has descended as the water of the universe. She is like a flow of clarified butter. If a person bathes in the Ganga in the morning, he is cleansed of all sin. She is a daughter of the mountains and is Hara's wife. She is like an ornament of heaven and earth. She is the radiant one who sustains the earth. O king!¹²³² Ganga is the purifier of the three worlds. Her flows are as sweet as honey. She is like the clarified butter offered at sacrifices. She is adorned with large waves and with brahmanas. Ganga is like a garland in heaven. She is the daughter of the mountains. She descended from heaven and was held by Bhava on his head. She is the best of wombs. She is radiant and subtle. Fame is granted by her roaring and surging waters. She is the one who protects the universe. Her form is one that confers the greatest benefit. For heaven and for earth, Ganga is the path to follow. In forgiveness, protection and sustenance, brahmanas revere Ganga as the earth's equal. She is like the fire and the sun in her radiance. In being gracious towards the brahmanas, she is always like Guha. She is ancient and is praised by the rishis. She emerged from Vishnu's feet. Her waters are extremely auspicious and take one to the worlds one can think of. A person who resorts to Jahnavi with all his soul, goes to Brahma's world. She possesses all the qualities and with all their souls, there are people who worship her, like sons towards their mothers. She is the one who facilitates the restraint of one's soul. If a person desires benefit in Brahma's abode, he should worship Ganga. She is like a pleasant cow that provides her waters to the universe. She is like an ocean of prosperity, as sweet as honey. She is like the amrita desired by the virtuous and is loved by Brahma. Those who seek success in their souls seek refuge with Ganga. Through his fierce austerities, Bhagiratha worshipped the lord and the god,¹²³³ pleased him and brought down Ganga. Men who go to her can free themselves of all fear, in this world and in the next. Using the best of my intelligence, I have considered and recounted some of her qualities. However, I do not possess the capacity to enumerate and speak about all her qualities. One can enumerate all the jewels in Meru and all the waters that exist in the ocean. But one is incapable of enumerating all the qualities of the waters of the Ganga. Resorting to devotion, one should listen to Jahnavi's supreme qualities and show great faith and reverence, in words, thoughts and deeds. One will then obtain fame and prosperity in the three worlds. One will then obtain the great success, created by Ganga herself, one that is difficult to obtain. In a short while, you will roam around in the desired worlds. She possesses all the great qualities. If we are devoted to our own dharma, may she always turn our intelligence towards her. Ganga is affectionate towards those who seek refuge with her. She grants happiness to those who worship her with faith.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The successful one was radiant. In this way, he expounded the many qualities of the one with the three flows to Shilavritti. Having instructed him in many ways and having told him about the truth of her form, he ascended up into the sky. Shilavritti was awakened by the words of the successful one. In the proper way, he worshipped Ganga and obtained the kind of success that is extremely difficult to obtain. O Kounteya! Therefore, resort to great devotion and always worship Ganga. You will obtain supreme success.'"

Vaishampayana said, 'This is the history that Bhishma recounted and Yudhishtira and his brothers were filled with great delight at hearing about Ganga's praise. This is a sacred history, filled with praise about Ganga. Even now, if a person hears it or reads it, he is freed from all sins.'

udhishthira said, “You possess wisdom, learning, good conduct and behaviour. You possess all the qualities and are also aged. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Therefore, I am asking you about dharma. O supreme among kings! If a person is a kshatriya, vaishya or a shudra, you should tell me how he can become a brahmana. O grandfather! Does one become a brahmana through austerities, great deeds or learning? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! O Yudhishtira! For a kshatriya and the others, the three varnas, becoming a brahmana is extremely difficult. For all beings, that is the best state. O son! If one is repeatedly and progressively cooked in the cycle of life, one can then be born as a brahmana. O Yudhishtira! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Matanga and a she-ass. O son! There was a brahmana and this lord obtained a son through a varna that was not his equal.¹²³⁴ His name was Matanga and he possessed all the qualities. O Kounteya! O scorcher of enemies! Wishing to perform a sacrifice, his father sent him to bring the required objects. He departed on a wagon that travelled fast and it was drawn by an ass. O king! The ass was young and it dragged the wagon to its mother. At this, he¹²³⁵ repeatedly struck it on the nose. The she-ass loved its son. On seeing those terrible wounds, it said, ‘O son! Do not grieve. A chandala is driving you. A brahmana is never terrible. A brahmana is said to be friendly. He is the preceptor of all creatures and their instructor. How can such a person strike? This one is wicked in nature and does not show any compassion, even to someone who is young. By exhibiting his character, he is only exhibiting the nature of his birth.’ Matanga heard these terrible words of the she-ass. He descended from the wagon and addressed the she-ass. ‘O she-ass! O fortunate one! How was my mother tainted? How do you know that I am a chandala? O she-ass! Instruct me quickly. How was I born as a chandala and how has my status as a brahmana been destroyed? O immensely wise one! Without leaving out anything, tell me everything about this.’

“The she-ass said, ‘There was a brahmana lady who was overcome with desire and you were born through a vrishala who was a barber. That is the reason you have been born as a chandala and the reason why your status as a brahmana has been destroyed.’” ‘Bhishma continued, “Having been thus addressed, Matanga returned home. On seeing that he had returned, his father spoke these words. ‘I asked you to do some things connected with the sacrifice. How can you return without performing the tasks instructed by your superior? Is everything well with you?’

“Matanga replied, ‘How can someone of uncertain birth, or with the worst possible birth, be well? O father! How can someone with a mother like that be well? O father! I have got to know that though my mother is a brahmana, my father is a vrishala. A superhuman she-ass told me this. Therefore, I must torment myself through great austerities.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having spoken to his father and having made up his mind, he left for the great forest, to torment himself through great austerities. The gods themselves were tormented by the force of these austerities. Through his good conduct, Matanga desired the region that would provide great bliss. While he was thus engaged in austerities, Harivahana¹²³⁶ appeared before him and asked, ‘O Matanga! Why are you tormenting yourself? Why have you given up the pleasures that men like? I wish to grant you a boon. Tell me about the boon that you desire. Without any delay, tell me about everything that is in your mind.’

“Matanga replied, ‘I have started these austerities with the desire of becoming a brahmana. Having attained this, I will depart from this place. This is the boon sought by me.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “On hearing his words, Purandara said, ‘You desire the status of a brahmana, but that cannot be obtained by someone whose soul has not been cleansed. This is the best state among all creatures. Therefore, refrain from these austerities. This desire and these fierce austerities will quickly destroy you. Among gods, asuras and mortals, this state is said to be sacred and supreme. Having been born as a chandala, you can never obtain it.’”

Chapter 1710(29)

‘Bhishma said, “O one without decay! Matanga was careful about his vows and in control of his soul. Though he was addressed in this way, he stood on one foot for one hundred years. The immensely illustrious Shakra

again appeared before him and said, ‘O Matanga! The supreme state that you desire is extremely difficult to obtain. O son! Do not exhibit this futile rashness. This isn’t the path of dharma. You cannot obtain what you wish for and will soon be destroyed. O Matanga! I have sought to restrain you from aspiring to obtain that supreme state. If you still desire to perform these austerities, you will be destroyed in every possible way. Among all the men who are born as inferior¹²³⁷ species, only a few are reborn as pulkasa or chandala. O Matanga! Anyone on earth who is seen to have been born as wicked species, will have to whirl around in that state for a long period of time. After having spent one thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a shudra.¹²³⁸ One is whirled around in the state of a shudra for a long period of time. After three thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a vaishya. One is whirled around in the state of a vaishya for a long period of time. After six thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a king.¹²³⁹ One is whirled around in the state of a king for a long period of time. After six thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of being a friend of a brahmana.¹²⁴⁰ One is whirled around in the state of being a friend of a brahmana for a long period of time. After two thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a brahmana who earns a living by selling weapons. One is whirled around in the status of a brahmana who earns a living by selling weapons for a long period of time. After three thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of an ordinary brahmana. Having obtained this status, one is whirled around for a long period of time. After four thousand births in this way, one is born as a learned brahmana. One is whirled around in the state of a learned brahmana for a long period of time. O son! In that state, anger, delight, desire, hatred, insolence and argumentation penetrate him and try to make him the worst among brahmanas. When he abandons these enemies, he obtains a virtuous end. However, if they defeat him, he falls down, as if from the top of a palm tree. O Matanga! That is the reason I have spoken to you, restraining you and asking you to ask for some other boon. The status of a brahmana is something that is extremely difficult to obtain.’”

Chapter 1711(30)

‘**B**hishma said, “Thus addressed, Matanga was overwhelmed by great grief. He went to Gaya and stood on one toe for one hundred years. He performed many kinds of extremely difficult yoga. He became thin and was reduced to veins. The one with dharma in his soul was reduced to nothing but bones and we have heard that he fell down. When he was falling down, Vasava came and seized him. After all, the lord and the granter of boons is engaged in the welfare of all beings.

“Shakra said, ‘O Matanga! You are engaged in trying to obtain the status of a brahmana, but this is a perverse pursuit. Worship what will bring you happiness. Do not worship what will bring you unhappiness. Among all creatures, it is controlled brahmanas who display yoga and kshema. The ancestors and the gods are satisfied through brahmanas. O Matanga! Among all creatures, brahmanas are said to be supreme. It is brahmanas who grant what you are asking for.¹²⁴¹ O son! One is repeatedly and progressively cooked in the fire of the cycle of life. It is only in rare cases that one can obtain the status of a brahmana.’

“Matanga replied, ‘I am already afflicted by grief. Why are you oppressing me? You are striking me, but I am already like one who is dead. I am not grieving that I have not obtained the radiance that comes about from being a brahmana. O Shatakratu! Among the three varnas, if the status of a brahmana is so difficult to obtain, why do men who have obtained it deviate? An evil person who acts in this way should be regarded as the worst among wicked ones, since he disregards the status of being a brahmana, something that is like getting riches which are extremely difficult to obtain. It is indeed hard to become a brahmana and having become one, it is very difficult to maintain it. Having obtained something that is difficult to get, men do not maintain it. O Shakra! I find pleasure in only one thing.¹²⁴² I do not suffer from opposite sentiments. I am devoid of possessions. I am non-violent. I am self-restrained and generous. Why should I not obtain the status of a brahmana? Let me roam around in my own pleasures, just as birds roam around as they will. Without any constraints, let me be revered by both brahmanas and kshatriyas. O Purandara! Let me obtain fame without decay.’

“Indra said, ‘You will become famous as the god of metre and will be worshipped by women.’”¹²⁴³

‘Bhishma continued, “Vasava granted this boon to him and disappeared. Having given up his life, Matanga obtained a supreme station. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus, the status of a brahmana is supreme. As indicated in the words of the great Indra, it is extremely difficult to obtain.”’

Chapter 1712(31)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O extender of the Kuru lineage! I have heard this great account. O supreme among eloquent ones! You have said that the status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. O excellent one! However, though you have said that it is extremely difficult to obtain, it has been heard that in ancient times, Vishvamitra became a brahmana. I have also heard that rajarshi Vitahavya became a brahmana.¹²⁴⁴ O Gangeya! O lord! I wish to hear everything about this. O supreme among kings! What deeds enabled him to become a brahmana? Was it through a boon or austerities? You should explain this to me in detail.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen. King Vitahavya was greatly illustrious. Though he was a kshatriya, he became a brahmana and was revered by the worlds. O son! The great-souled Manu followed dharma and ruled his subjects. He had a famous son named Sharyati, who possessed dharma in his soul. O king! Two kings were born in that lineage. O supreme among victorious ones! They were Haihaya and Talajangha and they were the sons of Vatsa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his ten wives, Haihaya had one hundred brave sons, who did not retreat in battle. They were equal in beauty and power. They were learned and accomplished in fighting. In every way, they completed their learning of *dhanurveda* and of the Vedas. O king! There was a king in Kashi and he was Divodasa’s grandfather. He was famous as Haryashva and he was foremost among victorious ones. O bull among men! Because of enmity, in the area between the Ganga and the Yamuna, Vitahavya’s sons brought him down in a battle.¹²⁴⁵ Having slain that best of men, the maharathas who were the sons of Haihaya fearlessly returned to their beautiful city in the land of the Vatsas. Haryashva’s son became the king of Kashi. His name was Sudeva. He was like a god and he was dharma personified. With dharma in his soul, the descendant of the Kashi lineage ruled the earth. However, because of enmity, Vitahavya’s sons again invaded and conquered everything in the battle. Having become victorious in this way, they returned to wherever they had come from. Sudeva’s son, Divodasa, was installed as the king of Kashi. Divodasa realized that his great-souled enemies were valorous. On Shakra’s instructions, the extremely energetic one rebuilt the fortifications of Varanasi. There were large numbers of brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras there. There were stores of many kinds of objects and provisions and prosperous shops and stalls. O supreme among kings! The area extended from the northern banks of the Ganga to the southern banks of the Gomati and it was like Shakra’s Amaravati. O lord of the earth! The tiger among kings used to dwell there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yet again, the Haihayas advanced and attacked. The immensely radiant Divodasa emerged and fought with them. It was a terrible battle, like that between the gods and the asuras. O great king! He fought against them for one thousand days. However, since his mounts were repeatedly slain, he was overcome by distress. O king! The warriors were killed and the king’s treasury was exhausted. Abandoning his city, Divodasa fled. He went to the hermitage of the intelligent Bharadvaja. O scorcher of enemies! The king joined his hands in salutation and sought refuge with him.

“The king said, ‘O illustrious one! Vitahavya’s sons have destroyed my lineage in battle. I am the only one who has escaped and I have sought refuge with you. O illustrious one! You should protect me, just as you would a disciple. Those performers of wicked deeds have destroyed my lineage.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The powerful and immensely fortunate Bharadvaja replied, ‘Do not be frightened. O Sudeva’s son! Do not be scared. Dispel your fear. O lord of the earth! So that you can have a son, I will immediately perform a sacrifice. You can use him to strike down thousands on Vitahavya’s side.’ Desiring a son, the rishi performed a sacrifice. A son was born and he was known as Pratardana. As soon as he was born, he grew up and looked like someone who was thirteen years old. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He learnt all the Vedas and *dhanurveda*. The intelligent Bharadvaja immersed himself in yoga. He accumulated all the energy of the worlds and made it penetrate into him.¹²⁴⁶ He was clad in armour and wielded a bow and arrows. He blazed like a fire. Wielding the bow and with his form like that of a monsoon cloud, the archer advanced. On seeing him advance,

Sudeva's son was filled with great delight. In his mind, the king thought that Vitahavya's sons had already been consumed. He instated Pratardana as the heir apparent. The king thought that he had already become successful and was full of joy. The king instructed his son Pratardana, the scorcher of enemies, to advance and slay the sons of Vitahavya. On his chariot, the valiant one swiftly crossed the Ganga. The destroyer of enemy cities advanced towards the city of the sons of Vitahavya. The sons of Vitahavya heard the sounds created by that chariot. They emerged on their own chariots, which were like cities, and advanced against the enemy's chariot. They were as swift as tigers. They were colourful in fighting. They emerged, attacked Pratardana and showered down arrows and weapons on him. O Yudhishtira! They attacked the king with many kinds of weapons and floods of chariots, like rain clouds showering down on the Himalayas. King Pratardana repulsed their weapons. The immensely energetic one slew them with arrows that were like the vajra or the fire. O king! Hundreds and thousands of broad-headed arrows were used to sever the heads. Flowing with blood, they fell down, like severed *kimshuka* trees. When all of his sons were slain, Vitahavya abandoned his city and fled to Bhrgu's hermitage. King Vitahavya went to Bhrgu and sought refuge with him. Bhrgu offered him shelter, as if to a disciple. Following him, Pratardana swiftly arrived there.

“Having arrived there, Divodasa's son said, ‘O disciples of the great-souled Bhrgu! O those who are in the hermitage! Listen. Please go and tell the sage that I wish to see him.’ When he got to know, Bhrgu emerged from the hermitage. Following supreme rites, he honoured him and asked, ‘O Indra among kings! What is your purpose with the king?’¹²⁴⁷ O king! He told him the reason why he had come. ‘O brahmana! King Vitahavya has come here. Please surrender him. O brahmana! His sons have destroyed my entire lineage. They have devastated the kingdom and the stores of jewels in Kashi. Through my valour, I have slain one hundred of his insolent sons. O brahmana! By killing this one now, I will repay the debt to my father.’ Bhrgu, supreme among the upholders of dharma, was overcome by compassion, and replied, ‘There is no kshatriya here. Everyone who is here is a brahmana.’ Hearing Bhrgu's words, Pratardana thought that this must be the truth. He touched his feet, laughed and gently spoke these words. ‘O illustrious one! There is no doubt that I have become successful. Because of my valour, the king will now have to give up the state he was born in. O brahmana! Grant me permission to leave and pronounce your auspicious benedictions on me. O extender of the Bhrgu lineage! Because of you, the king has been forced to give up my varna.’ O great king! Having obtained his permission, King Pratardana departed to where he had come from, like a serpent that has given up its poison. O great king! Thanks to Bhrgu's words alone, Vitahavya became a brahmana rishi and became knowledgeable about the brahman. He had a son named Gritsamada, who was Indra's equal in beauty. Once, taking him to be Indra, the daityas oppressed him. O lord of the earth! There is a hymn in the Rig Veda that states, ‘Wherever the brahmana Gritsamada goes, the brahmanas regard that place as great.’ The illustrious Gritsamada was a brahmana rishi and a brahmachari. Gritsamada had a brahmana son named Suteja.¹²⁴⁸ Suteja's son was Varcha and his son was Vihavya. Vihavya's son was Vitatya. Vitatya's son was Satya and Satya's son was Santa. Santa's son was the rishi Shravas and Shravas had a son named Tama. Tama had a son named Prakasha, who was supreme among brahmanas. Prakasha's son was Vagindra and he was supreme among victorious ones. His son was Pramati, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. Through Ghritachi, he had a son named Ruru.¹²⁴⁹ Through Pramadvarya, Ruru had a son named Shunaka and he was a brahmana rishi. His son was Shounaka. O lord of men! O bull among kshatriyas! O Indra among kings! Thus, though he was a kshatriya, through Bhrgu's favours, Vitahavya became a brahmana. In that way, I have also described Gritsamada's lineage to you in detail. O great king! What else do you wish to ask?”

Chapter 1713(32)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Whom should men worship? Who should they bow down to? Tell me this in detail. I am not satisfied with what you have told me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and Vasudeva. On seeing that Narada had joined his hands in salutation and was worshipping bulls among the brahmanas, Keshava asked, ‘O illustrious one! Whom are you bowing down to? Whom among these are you revering

so much and bowing down to? O supreme among those who know dharma! If possible, I wish to hear this. Tell me.'

“Narada replied, ‘O Govinda! O scorcher of enemies! Listen to whom I am worshipping. Truly, with your exception, which other man in the world is capable of hearing this? O lord! I always worship and bow down before Varuna, Vayu, Aditya, Parjanya, Jataveda,¹²⁵⁰ Sthanu, Skanda, Lakshmi, Vishnu, brahmanas, Vachaspati,¹²⁵¹ the moon, the water, the earth and Sarasvati. O one who should be revered! O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! I always worship those who are stores of austerities, those who know the Vedas and those who are always devoted to the Vedas. O lord! I bow down before those who perform the tasks of the gods without eating and without boasting about it and those who are content and full of forgiveness. O Yadava! I bow down before those who perform sacrifices well, those who are forgiving, self-controlled and in control of their senses and those who give away grain, riches, land and cattle. O Yadava! I bow down before those who perform austerities in the forest, surviving on roots and fruits, those who do not store anything and those who observe rites. O Yadava! I bow down before those who are fond of maintaining their servants, those who always love the act of tending to guests and those who only eat leftovers, after the gods have eaten. I always worship those who have become unassailable after learning the Vedas, eloquent ones who are knowledgeable about the brahman and those who are always engaged in officiating at sacrifices and teaching. I worship those whose hearts are always pleasant towards all creatures and those who study until their backs are heated.¹²⁵² O Yadava! I bow down before those who study by satisfying their preceptors, those who endeavour to be firm in their vows, those who serve and those who are without malice. O Yadava! I bow down before sages who are excellent in their vows, brahmanas who are devoted to the truth and offer havya and kavya. O Yadava! I bow down before those who are devoted to subsistence through begging, those who are emaciated, those who live in the houses of their preceptors, those who do not pursue happiness and those who are without riches. There are men without a sense of ownership, without enemies, without shame,¹²⁵³ without requirements and without violence, devoted to the truth, self-controlled and devoted to tranquility. O Keshava! I bow down before them. There are those who are householders, devoted to worshipping gods and guests and following the conduct of pigeons.¹²⁵⁴ O Yadava! I always bow down before them. There are those who pursue the three objectives¹²⁵⁵ without deviating from them and are addicted to good conduct. I always bow down before them. In the three worlds, there are brahmanas who pursue the three objectives, without greed, and are devoted to auspicious conduct. O Keshava! I bow down before them. There are those who always subsist on water, air and milk, engaged in many kinds of vows. O Madhava! I bow down before them. I bow down before brahmanas who are celibate, those who aren't celibate but tend to the sacrificial fire, those who are the source of the brahman and those who are the refuge of all creatures. O Krishna! I always bow down before rishis who have created the worlds. They are the eldest in the worlds. Like the sun, they are the dispellers of the darkness of ignorance in the worlds. O Varshneya! Therefore, I always worship those brahmanas. O unblemished one! They confer happiness and deserve to be worshipped. You should also worship them. In this world and in the next, these people are the ones who grant happiness. If you revere them, they will also confer bliss on you. There are those who are always hospitable towards guests and tend to cattle and brahmanas. They are always devoted to the truth and succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. They are always devoted to peace and are without malice. They are always devoted to studying and succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who bow down before all the gods, those who resort to even a single god and those who are faithful and controlled succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who bow down before the foremost of brahmanas, are careful in their vows and are addicted to giving succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who follow the rituals, kindle and maintain the sacrificial fire and offer oblations of soma into it succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! A person who is like you and always tends to his mother, his father and his preceptor properly, is always united with bliss. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should also properly tend to ancestors, gods and guests and worship them. You will then obtain a beneficial end.’”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! What is the supreme task that has been recommended for a king? For both the worlds,¹²⁵⁶ what are the tasks a king should undertake?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king has been instated, if he desires great happiness, he should worship brahmanas. Learned and aged brahmanas must always be worshipped. There will be extremely learned brahmanas who dwell in the city and in the countryside. They must be comforted, given their shares, revered and worshipped. A king must always look towards this as his supreme task. He must protect them, just as he protects his own self or his sons. When they honour him, he must firmly honour them back. When they are at peace, the kingdom is radiant in every possible way. They must be honoured, revered and protected, like a father. The progress of the worlds depends on this, just as creatures depend on Vasava. They can burn everything down, without leaving any remnants, through their mantras and their energy. Their valour is based on truth and if enraged, they can perform fierce deeds. I do not see anything that can pacify them. When they are enraged, their sight can envelop the directions, like the flames of a forest conflagration. They are learned and courageous and possess excellent qualities. They are like the clear sky, or like pits hidden by grass.¹²⁵⁷ Some are fierce, while others are as mild as cotton. Some are extremely cunning, but others are extreme ascetics. While some are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, others earn a living through begging. Some may be thieves and resort to falsehood. Others may be actors and dancers. They are seen to be engaged in all kinds of tasks, superior and inferior. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas follow many diverse kinds of conduct. They are engaged in many kinds of tasks. They earn a living through diverse kinds of occupations. Some among them are virtuous and knowledgeable about dharma and are always praised. O lord of men! Such immensely fortunate brahmanas officiate as priests for the ancestors, gods, men, serpents and rakshasas. Gods, ancestors, gandharvas, rakshasas, asuras and pishachas are incapable of vanquishing these brahmanas. They can grant divinity to someone who is not divine. They can take away divinity from someone who is divine. If they wish, they can make someone a king. If they dislike someone, they can destroy him. They are skilled in understanding praise and censure and can cause fame and ill repute to people. O king! If inadvertently, a person slanders brahmanas, brahmanas always become enraged with someone who hates them. If brahmanas praise a person, he prospers. If brahmanas censure a person, he is instantly defeated. It is because there are no brahmanas among them that Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas and other similar kshatriya tribes are regarded as the equals of vrishalas. It is because there are no brahmanas among them that Dramilas, Kalingas, Pulindas, Ushinaras, Kolas, Sarpas, Mahishakas and other similar kshatriya tribes are regarded as the equals of vrishalas. O supreme among victorious ones! It is better to be defeated by them than to defeat them. There is no sin as serious as that of killing a brahmana. The supreme rishis have said that killing a brahmana is a great sin. One must never hear slander about brahmanas. When such words are spoken, one must be silent, with a downcast face. Alternatively, one must arise and walk away. On this earth, there is no one who has been born, or will be born, who can spend a life of happiness after opposing brahmanas. It is impossible to grasp the wind with one’s hands. It is impossible to touch the moon with one’s hands. It is impossible to hold up the earth on one’s head. In this world, it is impossible to vanquish brahmanas.”’

Chapter 1715(34)

‘Bhishma said, “Brahmanas must always be worshipped reverentially. With Soma as their king, they are the lords of happiness and unhappiness. Just as a king worships and protects his ancestors, they must always be worshipped and revered and offered objects of pleasure, ornaments and whatever else they wish for. The tranquility of the kingdom flows from them, just as all creatures flow from Vasava. Let pure brahmanas, as radiant as the brahman, be born in the kingdom. Maharatha kings,¹²⁵⁸ those who can scorch enemies, are also desired. There may be a brahmana who has been born in a noble lineage, knows about dharma and is rigid in his vows. O king! There is nothing superior to making him dwell in your house. Offerings made to brahmanas are received by the gods. They are the forefathers of all creatures and there is nothing that is superior to them. Aditya, the moon, Vayu, the earth, the water, the sky and the directions—all these enter the body of a brahmana and consume whatever food he eats. When a brahmana does not eat, the ancestors do not consume. When a wicked person hates brahmanas, the

gods do not eat with him. When brahmanas are satisfied, the ancestors are always delighted. O king! That is the way with gods too and there is no need to think about this. Therefore, when they¹²⁵⁹ are given offerings, the givers are themselves gratified. After death, they aren't destroyed and go to the ultimate destination. Whatever be the proportion in which a man gives offerings to brahmanas, in that proportion, the ancestors and the gods are delighted. All the subjects have originated from brahmanas. They are the origin and after death, they are also the destination. Brahmanas know about the paths to heaven and hell, about both what has happened and about what will occur. They are supreme among bipeds. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Through his intelligence, a brahmana knows his own dharma. A person who follows them is never defeated. Nor does such a person confront destruction and defeat after death. Great-souled ones who have cleansed their souls and accept the words that issue out of the mouths of brahmanas are never defeated. Kshatriyas scorch through their energy and strength, but are pacified by the energy and strength of brahmanas. The Bhrigus defeated the Talajanghas.¹²⁶⁰ The son of Angiras defeated the Nipas.¹²⁶¹ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Bharadvaja defeated the Vitahavyas and the Ailas. All these warriors were colourful in fighting. However, those with standards made out of black antelope skins¹²⁶² vanquished them. They are capable of flinging away their water pots, crossing over and striking.¹²⁶³ In this world, everything that has been heard of or seen is latent within brahmanas, like a fire concealed inside wood. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vasudeva and the earth.

“Vasudeva asked, ‘O mother of all creatures! O beautiful one! I am asking you about a doubt. If a man is a householder, through which acts can be cleanse his sins?’

“The earth replied, ‘The best method of purification is to serve brahmanas. Through serving brahmanas, all kinds of dirt are destroyed. This is the source of prosperity. This is the source of fame. Intelligence is generated by this. This grants superiority over another and is better than the best. If a man is praised by brahmanas, he prospers. If a man slanders brahmanas, he is soon defeated. Just as a lump of earth flung into the great ocean is destroyed, in that way, a performer of wicked deeds faces destruction. Behold the dark marks on the moon and the saline water in the ocean. The great Indra was also marked with the signs of one thousand vaginas. It was through their powers that these were converted into one thousand eyes and Shatakratu obtained peace.¹²⁶⁴ O Madhava! They are like that. O Madhusudana! A man who desires prosperity and fame and the worlds, follow brahmanas and purifies his soul.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing the earth’s words, Madhusudana applauded them. Having heard them, he worshipped the earth. O Partha! Since you have heard this, try to always worship the bulls among brahmanas. That is the way you will obtain benefit.”’

Chapter 1716(35)

‘Bhishma said, “If one is born as a brahmana, one is immensely fortunate. One is revered by all creatures and if one is a guest, one gets to eat first. O son! Brahmanas are well-wishers towards everyone. They have excellent minds and mouths. When they are worshipped, they pronounce auspicious words of benediction. O son! There may be those who hate brahmanas and disrespect their birth. When they are not properly worshipped, let them pronounce terrible curses on these. Those who know about the ancient accounts recount a hymn that was sung by Brahma. In ancient times, having created brahmanas, the creator ordained their tasks. ‘He¹²⁶⁵ should never do something that has not been properly laid down for him. When they are protected, brahmanas protect. They are the best ornament of any habitation. When a brahmana undertakes his own tasks, there is prosperity. They set the standards for all beings and also restrain them along their paths. A learned brahmana must never undertake tasks recommended for a shudra. If he performs tasks recommended for a shudra, dharma is obstructed. Through studying, he obtains prosperity, intelligence, energy, powers, influence and unadulterated greatness. By offering oblations, they are established in great fortune. Prosperous brahmanas have been thought of as those who deserve to eat even before expectant mothers. If such a person has great faith, is without violence and without greed and is devoted to self-control and studying, he obtains all the objects of desire. Through their austerities, knowledge and humility, they can be successful in obtaining everything that exists in the world of men and gods.’ O unblemished one! I

have thus recounted to you what Brahma chanted. Out of compassion towards brahmanas, the intelligent one himself stated this. I think that the strength of those who are ascetics is equal to that of those who are kings. They are impossible to assail, fierce, proud and swift in action. There are some virtuous ones who are as spirited as lions. There are others who are as spirited as tigers. There are some who are as spirited as boars or deer. Others are as spirited as elephants. There are some who are as mild as cotton. Others are like *makaras* to the touch. There are some who can destroy those who speak against them. Others can slay with their sight. There are virtuous ones who are like the poison of serpents. But there are also virtuous ones who are mild. O Yudhishtira! Many kinds of conduct are followed by brahmanas. Because there are no brahmanas among them, Mekalas, Dramidas, Kashas, Poundras, Kollagiras, Shoundikas, Daradas, Darvas, Chouras, Shabaras, Barbaras, Kiratas, Yavanas and many other tribes of kshatriyas have been reduced to the status of vrishalas. Having been defeated by brahmanas, asuras had to resort to the depths of the ocean. It is through the favours of brahmanas that gods got to reside in heaven. One is incapable of touching the sky. The Himalaya mountains are incapable of moving. A bridge cannot be constructed over the Ganga. On earth, brahmanas are incapable of being defeated. If one acts counter to brahmanas, one is incapable of ruling the earth. Great-souled brahmanas are like gods among the gods. If you desire to enjoy this entire earth, right up to the girdle of the ocean, always worship them through gifts and servitude. O unblemished one! When they receive gifts, the energy of brahmanas is pacified. O unblemished one! If you wish to protect yourself, do not engage with those who do not receive.”

Chapter 1717(36)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between Shakra and Shambara. Listen. Shakra assumed the disguise of an ascetic with matted hair, smeared with dust all over his body. In that distorted form, he presented himself before Shambara and asked, ‘O Shambara! What is the conduct through which you have come to be regarded as the foremost one among your relatives? I am asking you. Tell me that.’

“Shambara replied, ‘I never censure brahmanas and Brahma, the grandfather. When brahmanas recite from the sacred texts, I cheerfully honour them. I do not ignore what I have heard, nor do I ever find fault with it. Having grasped the feet of those intelligent ones, I worship and then question them. Since they are always assured by me, they speak to me trustfully. Even if they are distracted, I am attentive. When they are asleep, I am awake. Without any malice, I follow the path indicated by the sacred texts. Like bees use honey in a hive, these brahmanas sprinkle me with knowledge from the sacred texts. I satisfy them and use my intelligence to accept whatever they say. Meditating with my soul, I always think of myself as inferior. I am like one who is licking the juices at the tip of their tongues. That is how I am established amidst my kin, like the moon among nakshatras. The sacred texts that emanate from the mouths of brahmanas are like amrita on earth. If one acts in accordance with this, one obtains supreme benefit. Thus, in ancient times, my father was delighted and amazed to see that this was being used in a battle between the gods and the asuras in ancient times.¹²⁶⁶ On witnessing the greatness of the great-souled brahmanas, my father asked the moon, “How do they become successful?”

“Soma said, “All the brahmanas become successful through their austerities. Their strength always lies in speech, just as that of kings lies in the valour of their arms. For brahmanas, words are weapons. Wherever he dwells, he should study. If he lives in a place that is extremely difficult to reside in, he must tend to the fire. He must be without anger and without pride. He must be an ascetic who looks upon everything equally. If he is born in a superior lineage, he must dwell in his father’s house and study all the Vedas. He must not boast about this learning. Know that this is the sign of an ordinary person. Just as a snake is swallowed up by a hole in the ground, a king who is unwilling to fight and a brahmana who does not dwell far away¹²⁶⁷ are both swallowed. Great insolence destroys prosperity for men who are limited in intelligence. A maiden who conceives is tainted and this is also true of a brahmana who resides at home.”

“Shambara continued, ‘My father heard these extraordinary instructions from Soma. He followed the great vow of worshipping brahmanas and so do I.’”

‘Bhishma said, “On hearing the words that had emanated from the mouth of the Indra among the danavas, Shakra worshipped brahmanas and became the great Indra.”’

Chapter 1718(37)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! Who is the best recipient for a gift—a stranger, a person with whom one has lived for a long time, or a guest who has come from a long distance away?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “People follow diverse rites and excellent vows. Everything should be given to whoever asks. However, we have heard that donations that make the various categories of servants suffer must not be undertaken. If the various categories of servants suffer, one’s own self suffers. The learned know that all these are proper recipients—a stranger, a person with whom one has lived for a long time, or a guest who has come from a long distance away.”’

‘Yudhishtira said, “One must not give by making the servants suffer or by causing violence to dharma. We must also ascertain the nature of the recipient, so that we do not suffer from the act of giving.”’

‘Bhishma said, “If the officiating priest, the priest, the preceptor, the disciple, matrimonial allies and relatives possess learning and lack tendencies of causing injury, they must all be honoured and worshipped. All those who do not possess these traits do not deserve to be treated virtuously. Therefore, one must always attentively examine men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lack of anger, truthfulness in speech, lack of injury, self-control, uprightness, lack of hatred, lack of excessive pride, modesty, patience, austerities, tranquility and lack of improper deeds—if these signs are seen in a person, he is a deserving recipient and must be honoured. Whether it is someone with whom one has dwelt for a long time, or whether it is someone one has just met, whether it is a stranger or someone one knows, if these signs are present, he is a deserving recipient and must be honoured. A person who questions the proof of the Vedas and transgresses the sacred texts, or a person who questions the ordinances in every way, destroys his own self. O son! There may be a brahmana who thinks himself to be learned but censures the Vedas, who is addicted to the futile knowledge of argumentation and scrutinizes everything in detail, who questions the reasons behind everything and seeks to be triumphant over those who cite reasons, who always speaks against brahmanas and talks too much, who is suspicious of everyone, childish and harsh in speech—the learned know such a man to be the equal of a dog. He barks like a dog, always seeking to bite. The purpose of such speech is to destroy all the sacred texts. Such people are limited in learning and are inferior in arguments. When they are asked, they are seen to be lacking in learning. They may exhibit the signs of knowledge, but they are engaged in detecting weaknesses in those who are learned about shruti, smriti, itihasa, Puranas and the *Aranyakas*. However, there are also acts that lead to the progress of the worlds and do not cause damage to dharma or one’s own self—men who engage in these, obtain prosperity for eternity. The rishis have said that debts to gods, rishis, ancestors, brahmanas and guests, as the fifth, must be repaid.¹²⁶⁸ In due order, if a householder purifies himself and undertakes these tasks that have been laid down, then, his dharma does not suffer.”’

Chapter 1719(38)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the character of women. O grandfather! Women are the root of all sins and their intelligence is fickle.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and the courtesan Panchachuda. In ancient times, the intelligent devarshi Narada was roaming through the worlds. In Brahma’s region, he saw the unblemished apsara, Panchachuda. On seeing all her beautiful limbs, the sage asked the apsara, ‘O one with the excellent waist! There is a doubt in my heart. Tell me.’ Having been thus addressed, she told the brahmana Narada, ‘If you think that I am capable, tell me what the subject is.’

“Narada said, ‘O fortunate one! I will never ask you to do something that you are incapable of. O one with the beautiful face! I wish to hear the truth about the character of women.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “On hearing the words of the devārshi, the supreme among apsaras replied, ‘Since I am a woman, I am incapable of criticizing women. You know about women and their nature. O devārshi! You should not ask me to answer such a question.’ The devārshi said, ‘O one with the excellent waist! You have spoken the truth. However, lying is a sin. There is no sin in speaking the truth.’ Having been thus addressed, the one with the beautiful smiles made up her mind. She truthfully spoke about the eternal vices of women.

“Panchachuda said, ‘O Narada! Even if a woman belongs to a noble lineage, is beautiful and has a protector, she doesn’t follow the restraints. That is a fault among women. There is nothing more evil than women. Women are the root of all sins. You yourself know this. There may be a husband who is famous, prosperous, handsome and obedient. Even then, a woman waits to disregard him. O lord! We women are prone to wickedness and adharma. We abandon our shame and are attracted to evil men. Women like those who approach, desire and serve them. They aren’t concerned about not following the restraints. Out of fear of relatives, or injury caused to people, women aren’t constrained to follow restraints and stick by their husbands. Women do not find anyone unapproachable, nor do they care about age. They enjoy men, regardless of whether they are handsome or ugly. Because of fear, compassion, riches, kin, family and alliances, women never remain with their husbands. Women of good families also envy independent women who are young and wear beautiful ornaments and garments. There may be beloved wives who are protected and always greatly respected. Even they are attracted to those who are hunch-backed, blind, dumb and dwarves. O devārshi! They are attracted to the disabled and other ugly men. O great sage! There is no one in this world whom women regard as unapproachable. O brahmana! If a man can be obtained in any way, a woman never remains with her husband. If a woman is restrained and protects herself, that is because a man cannot be obtained, out of fear of relatives, or out of fear of being killed or imprisoned. Their nature is fickle. They are difficult to please and difficult to understand. Women are like words spoken by the wise.¹²⁶⁹ Wood never satisfies a fire. The great ocean is never satisfied by rivers. Yama is not satisfied with all creatures. The fair-eyed ones are never satisfied with men. O devārshi! I think that this is a mystery about all women. As soon as she sees a man, a woman’s vagina is moistened. Even the best of women are not satisfied with husbands who give them everything that they wish, do whatever they desire and protect them. A woman does not attach as much importance to objects of pleasure, many ornaments and large stores of possessions as she does to the prospect of sexual intercourse. The destroyer, destruction, death, the nether regions, the subterranean fire, the sharpness of a razor, the poison of a snake and the fire—all these collectively exist in a woman. The creator ordained the worlds and the five great elements originated with him. O Narada! When men and women were created, these are the sins that were implanted in women.’”

Chapter 1720(39)

‘Yudhishtira said, “In this world, men are extremely attracted to women. O king! They are overcome by great confusion and think that this is because of destiny. In this world, it can be distinctly seen that women are also attracted to men. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, a great doubt is circling around in my heart. Why are men attracted to women? Which are the men who attract and repel women? O tiger among men! How is one capable of protecting them? You should tell me about women and men. They seem to be full of illusion and deceive men. If a man falls into their hands, how can he escape? Like a cow searching out new grass, they seem to seize upon newer and newer men. The learned say that Shambara’s maya, Namuchi’s maya and that of Bali and Kumbhinasas, all of that exists in a woman. When a man laughs, they laugh.¹²⁷⁰ When a man cries, they weep. By chance, even if a disagreeable person arrives at the house, they greet him with pleasant words. The intelligence of a woman is superior to the sacred texts that Ushanas and Brihaspati know. That being the case, how can men protect themselves? They present falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. O brave one! That being the case, how can men protect themselves? O slayer of enemies! The purport of the sacred texts seems to have been derived from the essence of feminine intelligence. I think that Brihaspati and others derived their norms of good conduct on that ba-

sis. When they are worshipped by men, they turn their minds away from men. O king! Women also agitate the minds of men. How can one protect oneself? I have a great doubt on this score. O mighty-armed one! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Tell me about this. O best among the Kuru lineage! If it is possible, how does one protect oneself against them? How does one do this? Has anyone managed to do this earlier? You should explain this to me.”

Chapter 1721(40)

‘Bhishma said, “O mighty-armed one! It is exactly like that. O Kouravya! O lord of men! There is no falsehood in what you have said about women. In this connection, there is an ancient history about how, earlier, the great-souled Vipula was able to ensure protection. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O son! O lord of the earth! I will also tell you the truth about how and why women were created by Brahma. O son! There is no one who is more evil than women. O lord! A woman is the flame of a fire. She is Maya’s maya.¹²⁷¹ She is the sharp edge of a razor. She is the poison of a snake. A woman is all these, and death, come together. O mighty-armed one! We have heard that these subjects were once devoted to dharma. They themselves obtained divinity. The gods were alarmed at this. O scorcher of enemies! The gods went and met the grandfather. They told him what was in their minds. They stood there silently, with downcast faces. The grandfather discerned what was in the hearts of the gods. For the sake of confusing men, the lord created women. O Kounteya! In an earlier creation, all the women were virtuous. In this creation, Prajapati created those who were wicked. The grandfather gave them desire and, driven by desire, they started to pursue each other. Driven by desire and greed, women tormented the men. The lord, the lord of the gods, also created anger as an aide of desire. Under the subjugation of desire and, anger, all the subjects were submerged. There is no special act of dharma that has been laid down for women. The sacred texts say that they are without senses and without mantras and are prone to falsehood.¹²⁷² Prajapati gave women beds, seats, ornaments, food, drink, ignoble behaviour, immoderation in speech and addiction to desire. Men are incapable of ever restraining them. O son! Even the creator of the universe is incapable of doing that, how can men do it? Words, the prospect of being killed, imprisonment and many kinds of hardships are incapable of keeping women within bounds. They are always without restraints.

“O tiger among men! However, earlier, I have also heard how, in ancient times, Vipula was able to restrain his preceptor’s wife. There was an immensely fortunate and famous rishi by the name of Devasharma. His wife was named Ruchi and her beauty was unmatched on earth. O Indra among kings! All the gods, gandharvas and danavas were attracted to her beauty, in particular, the slayer of Vritra and Paka. The great sage, Devasharma, knew about feminine nature. As best as he could, to the best of his ability, he sought to protect his wife. He knew that Purandara coveted other people’s wives. That is the reason he made efforts to protect his wife. O son! On one occasion, the rishi made up his mind to undertake a sacrifice. He began to think about how his wife’s protection might be ensured. The immensely ascetic one thought and thought about a method for protection. He summoned his beloved disciple, Vipula, who was from the Bhargava lineage. ‘O son! I will depart to undertake a sacrifice. The lord of the gods has always desired Ruchi. You must protect her, to the best of your ability. Be attentive and always watch out for Purandara. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! He can assume many different kinds of forms.’ O king! The ascetic, Vipula, controlled in his senses and always fierce in his austerities, with a resplendence that was like the fire and the sun, was thus addressed. He was knowledgeable about dharma and truthful in speech. He signified his assent. O great king! As his preceptor was about to leave, he again asked him, ‘O sage! What are the forms in which Shakra appears? What kind of body and energy does he assume? You should explain this to me.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious one described the truth about Shakra’s maya to the great-souled Vipula. ‘O brahmana rishi! The slayer of Bala and chastiser of Paka has many kinds of maya. Repeatedly, he assumes all these diverse forms. He sports a diadem and wields a vajra or bow. Or he may wear a crown and adorn himself with earrings. In a short instant, he may assume a form like that of a chandala. O son! Yet again, he may have a crest and matted locks and attire himself in rags. His body may be large and thick, or it can again become thin. He can also assume complexions that are fair, dusky or dark. He may be ugly or handsome, young or old. He can be wise, stupid, dumb, short or tall. Shatakratu can appear like a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya or a shudra. He can belong

to a superior varna, or an inferior one. He may appear in the form of a parrot or a crow, or in the form of a swan or a cuckoo. He can also assume the form of a lion, a tiger or an elephant. He can appear as a god, a daitya or a king. He may seem to be extremely thin, as if the wind can break down his limbs. He can also appear like a malformed bird. Sometimes, he assumes many forms which are those of quadrupeds. He may also seem to be foolish. He can assume the form of a fly or a mosquito. O Vipula! One is incapable of comprehending the form that he has assumed. O son! The creator of the universe, the one who has created this entire world, cannot understand it. Shakra can also disappear and only be seen with the sight of knowledge. The king of the gods can also transform himself into the form of the wind. O Vipula! Therefore, you must make great efforts in protecting the one with the slender waist. O supreme among the Bhṛigu lineage! You must ensure that Indra of the gods does not molest Ruchi. That would be like sacrificial oblations being licked by an evil-minded dog.’ Having said this, the sage departed, to undertake the sacrifice. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely fortunate Devasharma went away.

“Hearing his preceptor’s words, Vipula began to think. ‘I will make supreme efforts to protect her from the immensely strong king of the gods. But what can I possibly do to protect my preceptor’s wife? Indra of the gods is well versed in many ways. He is valiant and unassailable. What efforts will I make to protect her from the chastiser of Paka? He can assume many kinds of forms and enter this cottage. Shakra is capable of assuming the form of the wind to molest my preceptor’s wife. Therefore, the best thing I can do now is to penetrate Ruchi’s body. In that way, I can protect her through my manliness. The illustrious Harivahana is capable of deception through his many disguises. I will use the strength of my yoga to protect her from the chastiser of Paka. I will penetrate her body with my body and protect her. My preceptor will return and see that his wife, Ruchi, has been defiled. There is no doubt that he will curse me in rage. The great ascetic possesses divine sight. But this lady cannot be protected through techniques adopted by other men. Indra of the gods has the power of maya and I am confronted with a dilemma. I must certainly obey my preceptor’s instructions. If I am able to protect her, that will be extraordinary. I will use yoga to penetrate the body of my preceptor’s wife. She will be free from taint and no sin will attach to me. On his journey, a traveller seeks shelter in a deserted house. In that way, I will reside in the body of my preceptor’s wife. A drop of water moves, but does not touch the lotus leaf that it is on. In that way, I will dwell inside the body, detached.’ Knowing everything about the Vedas, this is the way he looked at dharma. Vipula considered his own austerities and those of his preceptor. Having made up his mind, Bhargava resorted to this technique of protection. O king! He made great efforts. Listen. The great ascetic, Vipula, seated himself near his preceptor’s wife. When the one with the unblemished limbs was also seated, he distracted her by telling her stories. He fixed his eyes on her eyes and the vision that emerged from him on her vision. Vipula entered her body, like the wind entering the sky. His attributes mixed with her attributes. His face merged into her face. Like an immobile shadow, the sage remained inside her. Vipula numbed the body of his preceptor’s wife. He resided there and protected her and she herself didn’t get to know. O king! He continued to do this until his great-souled preceptor returned to his house. He protected her for the duration that the sacrifice took.”

Chapter 1722(41)

‘Bhishma said, “One day, Indra of the gods assumed a divine form. Sensing an opportunity, he arrived at the hermitage. O lord of men! He assumed a form that was attractive and handsome and in that disguise, he entered the hermitage. He saw that Vipula’s body was seated immobile. His eyes were visionless, as if he was a portrait. Ruchi was beautiful in her limbs. Her hips and breasts were full. Her eyes were as large as lotus petals. Her face was like the full moon. She was also seated. On seeing him, she wished to stand up. She was astounded at his form and wished to ask him who he was. O Indra among men! But though she wished to rise, she was restrained by Vipula, who was inside her. She was incapable of movement. In extremely sweet and gentle words, Indra of the gods addressed her. ‘O one with the beautiful smiles! Know that I am Indra of the gods and I have come here for you. I am afflicted by the god of love and desire you. O one with the beautiful brows! Therefore, accept me. A long period of time has already elapsed.’¹²⁷³ The sage, Vipula, heard Shakra’s words. From inside the body of his preceptor’s wife, he saw the lord of the gods. O king! However, the unblemished one was incapable of rising. O

king! Since Vipula had penetrated her, she was also incapable of speaking. Through the signs, the extender of the Bhṛigu lineage understood what his preceptor's wife intended.¹²⁷⁴ O lord! Using his powers of yoga, the immensely energetic one restrained her. Using the bonds of yoga, he tied down all her senses.

“‘Seeing that she was indifferent, Shachi's consort addressed her again. O king! Restrained by the strength of yoga, she was ashamed that she couldn't speak. She wished to reply, ‘Come to me. Welcome.’ However, Vipula restrained the words his preceptor's wife desired to speak. Instead, the words that emerged were, ‘Hello. Why have you come here?’ From a mouth that was as beautiful as the moon, these refined words emerged.¹²⁷⁵ Under someone else's subjugation, she shame-facedly spoke these words. Purandara was terrified at this and became distracted. O lord of the earth! The king of the gods glanced at her again. The one with the one thousand eyes glanced at her with his divine sight. He thus saw the sage inside her body. Inside the body of the preceptor's wife, he was like an image in a mirror. Purandara saw that he was terrible in his austerities. O lord! Scared of being cursed, he trembled. The immensely great ascetic, Vipula, released his preceptor's wife. He entered his own body and addressed the terrified Shakra. ‘O Purandara! You have not conquered your senses. You are wicked in your soul. Gods and men will not worship you for long. O Shakra! Have you forgotten? Is that incident no longer in your mind? You were marked with the signs of vaginas and freed from those because of Goutama. I know that you are foolish in understanding and that you have not cleansed your soul. You are fickle. O stupid one! She is protected by me. O wicked one! Go wherever you have come from. O foolish one! If you do not, I will instantly burn you down with my own energy. O Vasava! It is only out of pity towards you that I am not burning you down. O evil-minded one! My preceptor is intelligent and terrible in his austerities. If he sees you, his eyes will blaze in rage and he will burn you down. O Shakra! Never again, should you disrespect brahmanas in this way. If you do not depart, through the power of brahmanas, your sons and your advisers will be destroyed. You think yourself to be immortal and conduct yourself in this way. But that is not true and there is nothing that cannot be obtained through austerities.’ Hearing the great-souled Vipula's words, Shakra did not say anything in reply. Overcome by shame, he disappeared.

“‘Soon after Shakra had departed, the great ascetic, Devasharma, returned to his hermitage, having completed the sacrifice he had desired to undertake. O king! Vipula was engaged in doing what brought his preceptor pleasure. As soon as he returned, he handed over his preceptor's unblemished wife, whom he had protected, to him. Devoted to his preceptor and tranquil in his soul, he greeted his preceptor. Without any fear, Vipula greeted him and stood there. When he had rested and was seated with his wife, Vipula told him what Shakra had done. Hearing Vipula's words, the powerful sage was satisfied with his good conduct, austerities and control. The lord saw the Vipula was devoted to his preceptor and was virtuous. On seeing that he was devoted to dharma, he uttered words of praise. The one with dharma in his soul applauded his disciple, who was devoted to dharma. He wished to grant a boon to the one who was devoted to his preceptor. Having obtained his preceptor's permission, he asked that he might be able to perform supreme austerities. From that day, Devasharma, the great ascetic, dwelt there with his wife. In that desolate forest, he no longer had any fear from the slayer of Bala and Vritra.”’

Chapter 1723(42)

‘**B**hishma said, “Having acted in accordance with his preceptor's words, Vipula performed terrible austerities. The valiant one thought that he had accomplished a lot of austerities. O lord of the earth! He rivalled the entire earth in these deeds. He roamed around without any fear. Amongst men, he was regarded as one who had obtained great fame. O Kourvya! The lord Vipula thought that he had conquered both the worlds because of his deeds and austerities. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After some time had passed, an occasion arose when gifts of riches and grain were to be made to Ruchi's sister. At that time, a celestial damsel was travelling through the sky. Her dazzling beauty was supreme. From her body, some flowers fell down on the ground, not very far from the hermitage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their fragrance was divine. O king! Ruchi, the one with the beautiful eyes, picked them up. Soon, an invitation arrived from the kingdom of Anga. O son! Her elder sister, named Prabhavati, was the wife of the king of Anga, Chitraratha. The beautiful one braided those flowers in her hair. To

honour the invitation, Ruchi went to the house of the king of Anga. On seeing those flowers, the queen of the kingdom of Anga, possessing beautiful eyes, asked her sister to get some flowers for her. Ruchi, with the extremely beautiful face, told her husband everything about this. She told the rishi everything that her sister had said.

“The great ascetic, Devasharma, summoned Vipula. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He instructed him to go in search of the flowers. Without any hesitation, the great ascetic, Vipula, accepted his preceptor’s command. O king! He agreed and went to the spot and the region where those had fallen down from the sky. He saw some other flowers lying there and they were still not faded. He took those divine and beautiful flowers, which were divine in scent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He managed to get them because of his own austerities. Having obtained them, he was delighted at having been able to follow his preceptor’s words. With that garland of champaka flowers, he quickly left for the city of Champa.¹²⁷⁶ O son! In a desolate forest, he saw a human couple. Holding each other’s hands, they were dancing around in a circle. O king! One of them quickly advanced too far ahead and a quarrel ensued between them. One said, ‘You moved too fast.’ The other said, ‘No.’ O son! They disagreed and argued with each other. While they debated with each other, each one of them muttered an oath and in the words that each of them mentally spoke, each named Vipula. ‘If I have spoken falsely, in the world after death, may I face the end that is destined for the brahmana Vipula.’ Hearing this, Vipula’s face became cheerless. ‘I have undergone terrible austerities and find this difficult to accept. Why has this couple said that I will attain an evil end? Why have they said that my end will be the worst among all creatures?’ O supreme among kings! Vipula thought along these lines. He bowed his head down and, distressed, began to think about any wicked deed that he might have committed. As he proceeded, he saw six men gambling with golden and silver dice, so excited that their body hair stood up. They also took oaths just like the ones the couple had uttered and mentioned Vipula in their words. ‘If there is anyone among us, who is driven by avarice and plays unfairly, after death, may he obtain the kind of end that Vipula will get.’ O Kouravya! Hearing this, Vipula began to think about everything that he had done since birth, but could not remember any transgression of dharma. O king! He was tormented, like a fire burning in the midst of another fire. Because of the curse he had heard, his mind burnt in grief. O son! While he proceeded, he thought about this for many days and nights. He then remembered the way he had protected Ruchi. ‘I penetrated her vision with my vision and her face with my face. But I did not narrate the truth to my preceptor.’ O Kouravya! This was the wicked deed that Vipula thought of. O immensely fortunate one! He thought that there was no doubt that this was the transgression. He went to the city of Champa and gave his preceptor the flowers. Loved by his preceptor, he followed the rites and worshipped his preceptor.”

Chapter 1724(43)

‘Bhishma said, “O lord of men! On seeing that his disciple had returned, the immensely energetic Devasharma spoke these words to him. Listen.

“Devasharma asked, ‘O Vipula! What did you see in that great forest? They know about your accomplished soul and about Ruchi.’

“Vipula said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O lord! Who were the couple? Who were those men? They knew about me. You should tell me the truth about this.’

“Devasharma replied, ‘O brahmana! Know that the couple was night and day. Whirling around in a circular way, they knew the truth about your wicked deed. O brahmana! Know that the men who were cheerfully gambling with the dice were the seasons. They too knew about your wicked deed. No one should be comforted that his wicked deed will remain unknown. O brahmana! A man hides his wicked soul and his wicked deed. Even if a man performs a wicked deed secretly, the seasons, night and day are witness to this. They saw that you had not told your preceptor about your deed, but were nevertheless, cheerful. They thought that a learned person like you should be reminded of this. Day and night and the seasons always know the wicked deeds that a man undertakes, the auspicious, as well as the inauspicious deeds. You did not tell me the truth about what you had done, out of fear that you had committed a transgression. O brahmana! Knowing that you had not told me, they spoke to you about it, so that you did not go the worlds that are meant for wicked people. Having committed a deed, you did not tell

me about it. O brahmana! You were capable of protecting a woman, whose nature is evil. You did not do anything to cause my displeasure and I am pleased with you. O supreme among brahmanas! Had I thought that you had committed a wicked deed, without thinking about it and in anger, I would have cursed you. Women have intercourse with men and men find this to be an excellent pursuit. However, your intention was to protect her. Otherwise, your end would have been as the recipient of a curse. O son! You protected her and this is known to me. O son! I am pleased with you. You will progress along a path that is comfortable.”

‘Bhishma said, “The great rishi, Devasharma, was pleased and spoke to Vipula in this way. With his wife and his disciple, he cheerfully ascended to heaven. O king! In ancient times, in the course of a conversation on the banks of the Ganga, the great sage, Markandeya, told me about this. O Partha! That is the reason I have said, women must be protected. Both types of women can always be seen, those who are virtuous and those who are evil. The ones who are virtuous are extremely fortunate and are revered as the mothers of the worlds. O king! They hold up this entire earth, with its forests and groves. The ones who are evil are wicked in conduct. Having determined to sin, they destroy the lineage. O king! They can be known through their wicked signs, naturally manifest on their bodies. It is in this fashion that great-souled ones are capable of protecting them. O tiger among kings! There is no other way in which one is capable of protecting women. O tiger among men! They are fierce. They are fierce in their valour. There is nothing that they love more than sexual intercourse with men. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Even when they have agreed to live with one person, they do not act in this way. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! They consort with other men. O lord of men! Men should not act out of affection towards them, nor should they be driven by jealousy. They should be enjoyed regretfully, because that is dharma. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! If a man acts in a contrary way, he will destroy himself. O tiger among men! In every kind of situation, logic is always honoured. That is the single method Vipula used to protect a woman. O king! In this world of men, there is no other way to protect women.”’

Chapter 1725(44)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! Tell me the foundation of all dharma concerning offspring, the home, ancestors, gods and guests.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of the earth! Those who have thought about dharma have expressed their views about all kinds of dharma associated with the bestowing of a maiden. O Yudhishtira! A virtuous brahmana who is always devoted to dharma bestows his daughter on an excellent groom, after ascertaining his good conduct, learning, birth and deeds. This kind of favourable bestowal is also the eternal dharma of virtuous kshatriyas and is known as a *brahma* form of marriage. O Yudhishtira! When one bestows one’s daughter on someone she has herself chosen, ignoring one’s own wishes, those who know about dharma speak of this as a *gandharva* kind of dharma.¹²⁷⁷ O king! When a lot of riches are used to tempt a girl’s relatives and purchase her, the learned say that this is an *asura* kind of dharma. O son! When weeping relatives are slain and their heads severed and a weeping maiden is forcibly abducted from her house, that kind of dharma has the signs of *rakshasa*. O Yudhishtira! Of these five, three constitute dharma and two are *adharma*.¹²⁷⁸ The *paishacha* and *asura* forms should never be resorted to.¹²⁷⁹ O bull among the Bharata lineage! The *brahma*, *kshatra* and *gandharva* forms represent dharma.¹²⁸⁰ There is no doubt that these should be resorted to, in pure or mixed form.¹²⁸¹ A brahmana can have three wives, a kshatriya can have two wives. A vaishya should take one from his own varna. The children will be equal.¹²⁸² The brahmana wife will be senior and the kshatriya wife for the kshatriya.¹²⁸³ There are people who say that a shudra wife can be accepted for intercourse, but others disagree. The virtuous do not praise the birth of offspring through shudras. If a brahmana has offspring through a shudra, penance is recommended. A man who is thirty years old should wed a girl who is ten years old, known as *nagnika*.¹²⁸⁴ Alternatively, a man who is twenty-one years old should wed a girl who is seven years old. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a girl has a father, but does not have a brother, she should not be wed, since she might follow the dharma of a *putrika*. When a girl has attained puberty, one should wait for three years. In the fourth year, if she is still not married, she should look for a husband herself. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The offspring of such a girl are not tainted, nor is intercourse with her condemned. If she does not act in

this way, Prajapati does not approve of her conduct. One should wed a girl who is not of the same pinda as the mother or the same gotra as the father.¹²⁸⁵ In this way, one follows the dharma that Manu spoke about.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “Some people offer a bride price and others speak of gifts. Some speak of their bravery, others exhibit their riches. O grandfather! Others accept the hand in marriage. Whom does the maiden belong to?”¹²⁸⁶ I wish to ask the truth about this. You are like my sight.”

‘Bhishma replied, “As long as men remain in their own station, whatever action they undertake is beneficial, regardless of whether it is with mantras or without mantras. However, a lie is a grave sin.¹²⁸⁷ Some people say that if a marriage takes place as the outcome of a falsehood, the wife, the offspring, the officiating priest, the preceptor, the disciple and the instructor, all of these deserve to be punished. But others do not agree. Manu does not approve of intercourse with a person one doesn’t desire. This is against fame and against dharma. This is a falsehood that causes violence to dharma.¹²⁸⁸ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whether there was a promise to give following dharma, or whether the girl was purchased, in such an instance, there is certainly no sin if the promise to bestow is not adhered to. With the sanction of the relatives, mantras and offerings should be resorted to. Without mantras, an act of bestowal is never successful. When the relatives take a pledge to the accompaniment of mantras, the offspring that are obtained through such a wife are regarded as superior.¹²⁸⁹ It is the injunction of dharma that a husband must regard his wife as having been given to him by the gods. Whether she is a goddess or whether she is human, one must not reject someone who is the victim of a falsehood.”¹²⁹⁰

‘Yudhishtira asked, “A bride price may have been obtained for a maiden. Thereafter, one may come across a superior groom. If the father looks at dharma, artha and kama, should he then make his words come false? In such instances, whatever one does seems to be inferior. In deciding on what is dharma for all of us, what are the views of those who have thought of dharma? I wish to ask you the truth about this. You are my vision. Therefore, tell me everything. I am not satisfied with what you have recounted.”

‘Bhishma replied, “One should not be firm in adhering to the bride price and the one who pays it, knows this.¹²⁹¹ Virtuous ones never bestow their daughters on the basis of a bride price. Relatives desire a bride price only when the groom doesn’t possess qualities. Many ornaments are willingly given. When these are given, that’s not a price, nor is this a sale. Receiving objects in this way has been eternal dharma. Some say, ‘I will bestow this maiden.’ Other say nothing. Still others say, ‘I will certainly bestow this maiden.’ Whether it is said or not said, doesn’t matter.¹²⁹² Therefore, there is marriage only when they accept each other’s hands. We have heard that earlier, this is the way the Maruts used to bestow their excellent daughters. The rishis have instructed that maidens should not be bestowed on those who are inappropriate. They are the foundation of desire and also the root of offspring. That is my view. Though the practice of purchase and sale of maidens has continued, on scrutiny, it is seen to be associated with many evils and cannot lead to marriage. Listen. Having defeated all the Magadhas, Kashis and Kosalas, I abducted two maidens for Vichitravirya.¹²⁹³ He accepted the hand of one, but not the other, because a bride price had been paid through the act of conquest. My father was of the view that even if her hand had been accepted, she should have been released.¹²⁹⁴ Kourava said that one should not marry this maiden. Since I doubted my father’s words, I went and asked others, thinking that my father was overly conscious about dharma. O king! Wishing to know the nature of good conduct, I also went to him and repeatedly addressed these words. ‘I wish to know the truth about good conduct.’ O great king! My father, Bahlika, supreme among the upholders of dharma, spoke to me in these words. ‘The issue is whether marriage is contracted when a bride price is accepted, or when the hand is accepted. If one holds that one becomes a husband from the act of accepting a bride price, this is shameless behaviour. The ones who know about dharma have said that there is no such proof in the sacred texts. Marriage results from accepting the hand and not from accepting the bride price. It is known that which is important is the act of bestowal and not purchase and sale. People who respect purchase through a bride price are not those who know about dharma. One should not bestow to those, nor have marriages with their likes. A wife should never be bought or sold. People who think that she can be bought and sold, like a servant-girl, follow the conduct of those who are wicked in intelligence and avaricious.’ In this connection, people had asked Satyavan about dharma. ‘A person may have paid a bride price for a maiden. But the payer subsequently dies. Can someone else then accept the maiden’s hand? We have a doubt on this score about dharma. O immensely wise one! You are revered by the wise. Please dispel our doubt about this. We are asking you about the truth. You are like our sight.’ Satyavan spoke these words

to all of them. ‘She should be bestowed on someone desirable. One should not reflect about this. Since this is true even when the payer is alive, there is no scope for doubt when he is dead.’ It is also held that if the girl is a virgin, she can torment herself through great austerities, or marry the husband’s¹²⁹⁵ younger brother, follow him and have intercourse with him. Some have written in this way, others have voiced their views strongly. The learned have not spoken firmly about this. Even if all the prenuptial rites have been performed, with all the auspicious mantras, there is no sin from uttering a falsehood.¹²⁹⁶ The act of accepting a hand in marriage concludes with the mantras uttered at the seventh step.¹²⁹⁷ The hand of the maiden is offered and accepted as a wife. A brother must give away that maiden and following the rites, there must be circumambulation around the fire. An excellent brahmana must not marry a maiden who is unwilling, or one who is not from a comparable family.”

Chapter 1726(45)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “There may be a situation where a bride price has been given for a maiden, but the prospective husband no longer exists.¹²⁹⁸ O grandfather! What should be done then? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “She must be maintained like a son, in case the husband returns. Alternatively, the bride price can be returned. If it is not returned, the maiden belongs to the one who has paid the price. Therefore, she is also capable of having offspring through means that have been sanctioned.¹²⁹⁹ However, no person can use mantras for this purpose.¹³⁰⁰ Instructed by her father, Savitri had herself done this.¹³⁰¹ Some people who know about dharma have praised this, but not others. There are some who have not acted in this way. There are some who do not hold this to be virtuous. There are those who hold that the best sign of dharma is the conduct of the virtuous. About this kind of conduct, Sukratu spoke the following words. He was the grandson of the king of Videha, the great-souled Janaka. ‘How can one praise conduct that is along a path followed by the wicked? There should be no questioning or doubt about the conduct of the virtuous. The dharma of the wicked is the confused dharma of asuras. We have not heard of anything like this in the lives of those who have come before us.’ The relationship between a wife and a husband is not comparable to mere intercourse between a woman and a man. The latter is the ordinary dharma of desire. This is what that king¹³⁰² said.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What are the rules whereby a man’s riches are inherited? For a father’s property, a daughter should be no different from a son.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The son is like one’s own self and the daughter is like the son. As long as these offspring are alive, no one else should inherit the riches. Unmarried daughters have a share in their mother’s *youtaka*.¹³⁰³ If a father dies without leaving any sons, then the daughter’s son inherits the ancestral property. He is the one who offers the funeral cakes to both his father and his maternal grandfather. The sacred texts of dharma have said that there is no special difference between a son and a daughter’s son. Even if offspring has been generated by someone else,¹³⁰⁴ he is said to be a son. There is no special difference between a son and a daughter’s son who has been generated by someone else. However, in cases where a daughter has been sold by the father, I see no reason in dharma that allows a daughter’s son to inherit. Such sons are malicious and addicted to adharma. They are deceitful and appropriate other people’s possessions. They are the result of an asura form of marriage, a conduct that is contrary to the dictates of dharma. There are those who are knowledgeable about the ancient accounts, devoted to dharma and the sacred texts of dharma, binding themselves down to the ordinances of dharma. They recount a chant that was sung by Yama. ‘In a desire for riches, if a man sells his own son, or bestows his daughter through a bride price for the sake of earning a living, he has to progressively pass through seven terrible hells known as Kalasavya. After death, he feeds on sweat, urine and excrement.’ There is a form of marriage called arsha. In this, a cow and a bull are given and some rishis have spoken of this as a bride price. O king! But whether it is small or large, this¹³⁰⁵ should not be regarded as a sale. However, though some people act in this way, it should never be regarded as dharma. Other kinds of marriage are seen, indulged in by those who are greedy. There are some who bring maidens under their subjugation and enjoy them. These are evildoers and have to lie down in hell. A man must never be sold, not to speak of one’s own offspring. If riches are obtained with adharma as a foundation, no artha can ever be gained from it.”’

Chapter 1727(46)

‘Bhishma said, “Those who know about the ancient accounts recite the words of Prachetas. ‘Gifts given to relatives cannot be regarded as a sale. Anyone who is not cruel should receive a maiden and, in particular, show her honour by giving the girl gifts.’ If they desire a great deal of welfare, the father, brothers, father-in-law and brothers-in-law should honour and sustain her in this way. If the wife does not appeal to a man or does not cause men pleasure, or if a man is not attracted to her, he should not have offspring. O lord of men! A wife must always be honoured and cherished. When women are not honoured, all the rites become unsuccessful. When daughters-in-law grieve, the family is destroyed. O king! When daughters-in-law curse a household, all the performed rites become undone. The houses do not dazzle and grow and their prosperity is destroyed. Before Manu ascended to heaven, he handed over women to men, since they were weak, lightly clad, kind and devoted to the truth.¹³⁰⁶ There are others who hold that they are jealous, desire honour, are fierce, lack affection and lack learning. However, women deserve to be honoured and men must show them respect. Dharma is in trusting women, not just in sex and pleasure. Tend to them, honour them and give them what they want. Behold. The generation of offspring, the nurturing of offspring and pleasure in the way of the world—all these are tied to women. By respecting and honouring them, one becomes successful in all the tasks. The daughter of the king of Videha sung a shloka. ‘There are no sacrifices for women. There are no funeral ceremonies they have to observe. Their dharma is to serve their husbands and that is the way they conquer heaven. The father protects her when a child, the husband protects her in youth. The son protects her when she is aged. A woman does not deserve to be independent.’ A person who desires affluence and prosperity must treat women well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whether she is nurtured or oppressed, a woman is like Shri and this is therefore reflected in one’s prosperity.”’

Chapter 1728(47)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You know the ordinances of all the sacred texts. You know the purport of the dharma of kings. You are famous on earth as someone who can dispel grave doubts. O grandfather! I have a doubt. Explain this to me. When we confront a difficulty, whom shall we ask, other than you? The task of men is to follow eternal dharma. O mighty-armed one! You should explain all of this. O grandfather! Four wives have been recommended for a brahmana—a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya and a shudra, if one desires sexual gratification. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Sons may be born through all of them. In due order, which of these deserves to inherit the father’s property? O grandfather! Which of them obtains the father’s riches? I wish to hear what has been said about their shares in the sacred texts.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas—these are the three varnas that are born twice.¹³⁰⁷ It is recommended dharma that a brahmana should marry these. O scorcher of enemies! Through error, greed and desire, a brahmana may marry a shudra, but this is not sanctioned in the sacred texts. If a brahmana lies down in a shudra’s bed, he will be afflicted. That is the reason rites of atonement have been laid down for situations like this. O Yudhishtira! If offspring results from this, the penance is doubled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the rules for distributing riches. The son who is born through a brahmana mother will obtain the best auspicious bull and the best vehicle from his father’s riches as his share. O Yudhishtira! What is left of the brahmana’s property must then be divided into ten parts. From this, the son born through a brahmana mother will obtain four parts as his share of the father’s riches. There is no doubt that the son who is born through a kshatriya mother has the same status as a brahmana. However, because the mother is different, he deserves to be given three parts. Though the son born through the vaishya has been born from the third varna, the father was a brahmana. O Yudhishtira! He should be given two parts of the brahmana’s property. It has been said that the son born through a brahmana father and a shudra mother should never be given any riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, a little bit can be given to the son born through the shudra mother.¹³⁰⁸ In this order, the riches are thus divided into ten parts. There may be several sons who have been born through the

same varna and they will obtain an equal share in the portion recommended for them. The son who has been born through a shudra mother should not be regarded as a brahmana. Those born through the other three varnas, with a brahmana father, are regarded as brahmanas. It has been said that there are only four varnas and there is no fifth one. The son born through a shudra will obtain a tenth share in the father's riches. But that share will be given to him if his father has given him the share. If his father has not given it, he will not get it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Subject to this, riches must certainly be given to the son of a shudra. Lack of cruelty is supreme dharma and that is the reason he must be given. Whenever there is compassion, it gives rise to good qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, irrespective of whether one has sons or does not have sons,¹³⁰⁹ under no circumstances should more than a tenth share be given to the son of a shudra wife. If a brahmana possesses more riches than are required to sustain him for three years, he should faithfully use these to perform sacrifices. Riches must not be acquired without reason. Out of the riches, three thousand coins must be given to the wife. When riches are given to her by her husband, she should enjoy them, without giving them away. When the husband dies without an heir, it has been said that the wife is entitled to enjoy all his riches. However, without asking him, a wife must never take her husband's riches. O Yudhishtira! If a brahmana lady possesses any riches that have been given to her by her father, these are inherited by her daughter, since a daughter is like a son. O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It has been decreed that she is equal to a son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! These are the instructions of dharma. If these instructions of dharma are remembered, any exercise in obtaining riches will not be rendered futile."

'Yudhishtira said, "It has been said that the son of a brahmana father and a shudra mother must be given riches. However, why must a tenth share be specifically given? There is no doubt that a son born through a brahmana father and a brahmana mother is a brahmana. That is also true of a kshatriya mother and a vaishya mother. O supreme among kings! In that case, why is there a differential in shares? After all, the sons of all three varnas have been said to be brahmanas."

'Bhishma replied, "O scorcher of enemies! All wives in the world are known by the single name of *dara*.¹³¹⁰ But though they are addressed by the same name, there are great differences between them. Even if a brahmana marries a brahmana wife after having already married three other wives, she is honoured as the eldest and is regarded as the seniormost. Objects for her husband's bath, cosmetics, washing the teeth, collyrium, havya, kavya and everything that is connected with dharma will be kept in her room. When she is present, no one else should think of performing those acts. O Yudhishtira! In the rites, the brahmana wife alone should aid the brahmana. Because she is the foremost, food, drink, garlands, garments and ornaments should be given by the brahmana wife to the husband. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This has been instructed by Manu in the sacred texts. O great king! Therefore, this has been seen as eternal dharma. O Yudhishtira! Out of desire, if a brahmana acts in a contrary way, it has already been said that he is like a chandala. The son born through a kshatriya wife is equal to the son born through a brahmana wife. O king! But even then, there is a difference in the varnas of the mothers. In this world, that is the reason why sons born through brahmana and kshatriya mothers are unequal. O supreme among kings! The son born through the brahmana mother is the foremost. O Yudhishtira! That is the reason he is regarded as the first in inheriting his father's riches. The sons born through a brahmana mother and a kshatriya mother are not equal. In that way, the sons born through a kshatriya mother and a vaishya mother are not equal. O Yudhishtira! Prosperity, kingdoms and stores of riches have been recommended for kshatriyas. O king! The earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, are seen to belong to them. If a kshatriya is established in his own dharma, he obtains a great deal of prosperity. The king is the wielder of the rod. O king! There can be no protection without the kshatriya. Brahmanas are extremely fortunate and are like gods among the gods. That is the reason, following the proper way, kings must worship them. Know that this is the eternal and undecaying dharma laid down by the rishis. When it decays, by adhering to their own dharma, kshatriyas protect subjects. Riches, wives and all the possessions of all the varnas would have been seized by bandits, had the king not existed as a protector. Thus, there is no doubt that the son of a kshatriya wife is superior to the son of a vaishya wife. O Yudhishtira! That is also the reason he deserves to have a greater share in the father's riches."

'Yudhishtira asked, "O king! O grandfather! You have talked about the rules laid down for brahmanas. What are the rules that have been laid down for the other varnas?"

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Two wives have been recommended for a kshatriya. There are instances of a third and shudra wife, but this is not sanctioned by the sacred texts. O Yudhishtira! This is the order that has been laid down for kshatriyas. O Yudhishtira! The property of a kshatriya must be divided into eight parts. The son of a kshatriya wife will obtain four of those parts from the father’s riches. He should also take that much from the father’s possessions as is required for engaging in warfare. The son of a vaishya will obtain three parts and the son of a shudra will obtain the eighth part. But the son of a shudra should only take what has been given by the father. He should not take what he has not been given. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! A vaishya should only have a single wife. Sometimes, a second shudra wife is seen. But this is not sanctioned by the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! When a vaishya has both a vaishya and a shudra wife, rules have been laid down for a division between the two. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The property of a vaishya must be divided into five parts. O lord of men! I will tell you how this must be divided among the offspring. The son of the vaishya should take four parts from his father’s riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The fifth part is the share for the son of the shudra. But the son of a shudra should only take what has been given by the father. He should not take what he has not been given. If the other three varnas have a son through a shudra wife, riches must be given to the son. A shudra can only have a wife from his own varna and not from any other. Even if he has one hundred sons, all of them will have an equal share in the shudra’s property. It has also specifically been said that if sons are born through the same varna, irrespective of the varna, all of them will have an equal share in the riches. However, the eldest son is the foremost and the eldest will therefore have one share more than the others. O Partha! This is the law of inheritance, as has been stated by Svayambhu earlier. O king! There is another difference in sons who have been born through the same varna. Especially at the time of marriage, the ones who have been born first must be married first. When the sons are equal, the eldest will obtain one share more. The son in the middle will obtain a medium share and the youngest a smaller share.¹³¹¹ Among wives of different varnas, the one who has the same varna as her husband is regarded as the foremost. This is what was stated by maharshi Maricha, the son of Kashyapa.”’

Chapter 1729(48)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “There is a mixture of the varnas and children of mixed parentage are born out of addiction to wealth, desire, uncertainty about varnas or plain ignorance. What are the rules for children of such mixed parentage? What is their dharma and what are their recommended tasks? O grandfather! Tell me this.”’ Bhishma replied, “Earlier, for the sake of performing sacrifices, Prajapati created the four varnas and there were only four kinds of tasks. A brahmana can have four wives and in two of them, he himself is born.¹³¹² The sons who are born from the two who are lower down are inferior and have the varna of their mothers. The son born through a brahmana father and a shudra mother is known as a *parashava*, because this is like offspring from a corpse.¹³¹³ He should not give up his own duty of servitude and should serve his own family. He should never abandon that kind of conduct. He must make every kind of effort to hold up the different strands of the family. Even if he is the eldest, he must devote himself to serving the younger ones who are brahmanas. A kshatriya can have three wives and he is himself born in two of these.¹³¹⁴ The third and shudra wife is inferior and the son born through this is known as *ugra*. A vaishya can have two wives and is himself born in both of these. A shudra can have only one wife and the son obtained through the shudra woman is also a shudra. Any birth outside the pale of the four varnas is condemned by the four varnas. Such a person is especially inferior and will oppress his preceptor’s wife. A kshatriya gives birth¹³¹⁵ to an outcast son known as a *suta*, who is not entitled to sacrifice, but is only entitled to sing praises and eulogies. A vaishya gives birth¹³¹⁶ to a *vaidehaka*, who earns a living through grass. A shudra gives birth¹³¹⁷ to a chandala, who is fierce, lives on the outskirts of habitations and acts as an executioner. These sons are born from brahmana mothers and are the worst of their lineages. O best among intelligent ones! O lord! These are the offspring of mixed parentage. The son born through a vaishya is a *bandi* or *magadha*¹³¹⁸ and earns a living through the use of words. If perversely, a shudra father has a son through a kshatriya mother, the son is known as a nishada and becomes a fisherman. If a shudra father has a son through a vaishya mother, the son is

known as *ayogava* and he dwells in a village or earns a living from the forests. Brahmanas should not accept gifts from them. If those with mixed parentage have offspring through women who are like them in status, the offspring have the same varna. But if the mother's status happens to be inferior, then the offspring that are born are inferior. For the four main varnas, the son has the same status as the father when the mother is of the same varna, or the one immediately below it. However, if the mother's varna is below this too, in general, the offspring is outside the pale of the father's varna. As long as parentage is from the same varna, the offspring also have the same varna. However, where the varnas have intercourse with each other, reprehensible categories are born. For example, a shudra father and a brahmana mother lead to offspring who are outcasts. In this way, those who are outside the four varnas can have offspring with those who are outside the four varnas and this leads to deterioration. There can be such repeated violations of varna, with outcast uniting with outcast. More and more inferior offspring are generated and there are fifteen in number. By having intercourse with someone one should not have intercourse with, a mixture of varnas results. The offspring of *vratyā* and *magadha* are *sairandhra*.¹³¹⁹ They are servants, earn a living through menial servitude and know about cosmetics and toiletries. The offspring of *vratyā* and *ayogava* are *suta* and they earn a living through words. The offspring of *maireyaka* and *vaidehaka* is *madhuka*. The offspring of *nishada* and *mudgara* is *dasha* and they earn a living as boatmen. The offspring of *mritapa* and *chandala* are *shvapaka* and they are extremely vile. The offspring of *chatura* and *magadha* are cruel and earn a living through deceit. They subsist by selling flesh, fragrances, tasty substances and by lending money. *Vaidehakas* are wicked and cruel and live off their wives. *Nishadas* give birth to *madranabhas* and they ride on vehicles drawn by asses. *Chandalas* give birth to *pulkasas* and they eat the flesh of asses, horses and elephants. These dress themselves in garments stolen from corpses and eat from broken vessels.¹³²⁰ Three inferior varnas are born from *ayogavas*—*kshudra*, *vaidehaka* and *andhra*. They reside outside the outskirts of a village. *Charmakaras* are born from *karavaras* and *nishadas*. *Pandusoupakas* are born from *chandalas* and they make objects of use from stripped cane. *Nishadas* and *vaidehakas* give birth to *ahindakas*. *Chandalas* and *soupakas* give birth to those who earn a living through *moudgalya*. *Nishadas* and *chandalas* have sons who live outside human habitations. These sons live in cremation grounds and are exiled outside. Depending on the transgressions of the father and the mother, many such children of mixed parentage are born. Whether they disclose this or do not disclose this, they should know their own tasks. There is no dharma other than that for the four varnas. There are no indications about dharma for those who are outside the four varnas. They have been born out of wilfulness. They are outside the pale of virtue and no sacrifices have been recommended for them. Outcastes and more outcastes have been born. They can dwell where they please and earn a living as they please. They reside at crossroads, in cremation grounds, in mountains, and even in trees. They wear ornaments and use many kinds of implements. There is no doubt that they act for the welfare of cattle and brahmanas. They have traits of non-violence, compassion, truthfulness in speech and forgiveness. O tiger among men! There is no doubt that by giving up their own lives to protect others, they can ensure success. I have recounted the instructions about how the intelligent ones have thought about men having offspring. One should not have offspring through a woman from a wrong varna. That would be like a stone sinking into the water. Irrespective of whether a man possesses intelligence or does not possess intelligence, he must not come under the subjugation of desire and anger and walk along an ignoble path. It is the nature of women to taint men. That is the reason learned people are not attracted to women."

'Yudhishtira asked, "There may be a man who is born of a wicked lineage, but his varna is unknown. O king! How does one discern whether he is noble or ignoble?"

'Bhishma replied, "Those who are born of mixed parentage have many different kinds of conduct. The purity of birth can be discerned from one's virtuous acts. Ignoble conduct, contrary behaviour, cruelty and not practising the rites—in this world, these are the signs of a man being born in a wicked lineage. A son inherits his father's conduct, his mother's conduct, or both. He will never be able to conceal his narrow nature. One is born with a form that is like that of the mother or the father. Just as a tiger's stripes reveal, a man will be constrained by his own nature. Even if the origin of the lineage is hidden, if one is born of mixed parentage, a man will reveal himself, depending on whether his good conduct is a lot or is limited. To achieve some purpose, one may walk along a path and adopt a conduct that is apparently noble. However, adherence to good conduct will enable one to determine whether that person is from a superior varna or an inferior varna. People have many kinds of conduct and under-

take many kinds of deeds. But in this world, there is nothing as important as good birth and good conduct. A man is affected by his body and his spirit. The spirit can be superior, middling or inferior. Depending on the spirit, one decides on what brings one pleasure. If a person has high birth, but lacks good conduct, he is not worshipped. And if a shudra has good conduct, he is worshipped by those who know about dharma. A man makes himself known through his own deeds. He shows his character through his conduct, good or bad. A man can destroy himself and his lineage, but he also makes it resplendent through his own deeds. That is the reason learned people avoid all those different kinds of women, where they are themselves not born.”¹³²¹

Chapter 1730(49)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Tell us about the different kinds of sons who are born in separate varnas. What kinds of sons are these? Who are they? Whose sons are they? We have heard that there have been many disagreements about these sons. O king! We are confused about this. You should sever our doubts.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Know that an *anantaraja* son is like one’s own self.¹³²² Know that a son who has been obtained through *niyukta* is called *prasritaja*.¹³²³ When a husband unites with his wife, despite knowing that she has gone astray, the son obtained in this fashion is known as *vadhyuda*. There are six kinds of sons known as *apadhvamsaja* and also the one known as *kanina*.¹³²⁴ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that these are the kinds that have been mentioned.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Who are the six kinds of sons known as *apadhvamsaja*? Who is the one known as an *apasada*?. You should explain the truth about all this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons that a brahmana obtains through the three lower varnas, the sons that a king obtains through the two lower varnas and the sons that a vaishya obtains through the lower varna are understood to be *apadhvamsajas*. Now hear about *apasadas*. *Chandala*, *vrata* and *vena*—these are seen to be the three kinds of *apasadas* and are respectively born through a shudra father and a brahmana, kshatriya or vaishya mother. A vaishya father is seen to have *magadha* or *vamaka* sons, depending respectively on whether the mother is a brahmana or a kshatriya. When a kshatriya father is seen to have a son through a brahmana mother, the offspring is known as *suta*. These are said to be *apasadas*. O lord of men! One is incapable of falsely asserting that these kinds of sons aren’t really sons.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Some say that the son is *kshetraja*. Others say that he is *shukraja*.¹³²⁵ Are both of these the same? Whom does the son belong to? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The son is said to be both *shukraja*¹³²⁶ and *kshetraja*. Listen to me. The sole exception to this principle is *adhyuda*.¹³²⁷

‘Yudhishtira asked, “We know that the son is *shukraja*. How can the son become *kshetraja*? We know about the one called *adhyuda*. However, in a violation of an agreement, why does the father abandon him?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He may have obtained another son, or there may be some other reason. In any event, ownership does not come from the seed, but from the field. O lord of the earth! The field is the proof. When a person desires to marry for the sake of a son and has a son, that son is his own. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But in other cases,¹³²⁸ the son is said to be *kshetraja*. The son cannot conceal his biological traits. They can be discerned.¹³²⁹ The son is sometimes known as the son of the father who has given him birth, or the one who has reared him. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, neither the seed, nor the field, is the complete proof.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “When is a son regarded as that of the biological father and when is he regarded as the son of the one who has reared him? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When is the seed, or the field, taken to be the proof?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A son may be found abandoned on the road by the mother and the father. Unable to find the mother and the father, someone may rear him. In this case, since he is no one’s son, he becomes the son of the person who has reared him. Just as a son obtains the varna of the person who has given him birth, this son obtains the varna of the person who has reared him.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “How are the sacraments¹³³⁰ of such a person performed? Who undertakes them? What kind of girl should he be married to? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The person who rears him should himself perform the sacraments. Having been abandoned by the mother and the father, it is his varna that the son has adopted. O undecaying one! The sacraments should be performed in accordance with the foster-father’s gotra and varna. O Yudhishtira! The maiden bestowed on him should thus be of the same varna. Such sacraments are performed without knowing the biological mother’s gotra and varna. Kanina and adhyuda are known to be tainted sons. Despite this, it has been determined that sacraments should be performed for them. Brahmanas and others should use the same kinds of sacraments for kshetrajnas, apasadas and adhyudas as they would for themselves. The sacred texts of dharma have determined injunctions for the different varnas. I have recounted all of this. What else do you wish to hear?”

Chapter 1731(50)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather! What kind of affection results from seeing someone or dwelling together? What is the great fortune that is associated with cattle? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely radiant one! I will tell you an ancient account, about a conversation between Nahusha and maharshi Chyavana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, maharshi Chyavana, from the Bhargava lineage, decided to observe an extremely great vow, characterized by residing in water. He destroyed his pride, anger, joy and sorrow. Firm in his vows, the sage dwelt in water for twelve years. He offered all the creatures there great and auspicious reassurances. To the creatures who lived in the water, the lord was like cool rays. He purified himself and was like a pillar. He bowed down before the gods. He entered the water at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. The currents of the Ganga and the Yamuna flowed with a loud and terrible roar. The force was as swift as that of the wind, but he received all this on his head. The Ganga and the Yamuna, and the other rivers that followed and flowed into them, passed by the rishi and did not cause him any affliction. The great sage was like a piece of wood and happily slept inside the water. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Sometimes, the intelligent one stood upright. The creatures that lived in the water thought that he was agreeable to look at. Cheerful in their minds, the fish sniffed at him. Thus, a long period of time elapsed. O immensely radiant one! On one occasion, some fishermen arrived at the spot, with fishing nets in their hands. Those many nishadas had made up their minds to catch fish. They were brave, strong and broad and were not scared of the water. They arrived at that spot, determined to cast their nets. O lord of men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! They tied all their nets together and readied themselves to catch fish in the water. Desiring to catch fish, those *kaivartas*¹³³¹ arrived at the banks of the Ganga and the Yamuna and covered a part of the water with nets that were joined together. These nets were made of new strands and covered a large space. They cast this large net at an appropriate place in the water. With great force, all of them then began to draw the net in from every side. They were cheerful and without fear and listened to each other. Many fish and other aquatic creatures got enmeshed. Chyavana, descendant of the Bhṛigu lineage, was surrounded by the fish. O great king! As they dragged in the net, as they wished, he too got enmeshed. His limbs were covered with moss. His beard and matted hair were tawny. Large numbers of conch shells and other kinds of shells had attached themselves to his body and made it multicoloured. As they dragged in the net, they saw the one who was accomplished in the Vedas. All those lower classes joined their hands in salutation, bowed their heads and prostrated themselves on the ground. When the net had been dragged in, the fish were distressed at having been brought in contact with the ground. They were terrified and lamented. The sage saw the carnage that had been done to the fish. He was overcome by compassion and sighed repeatedly.

“The nishadas said, ‘In our ignorance, we have committed this sin.¹³³² Show us your favours. O great king!¹³³³ What can we do to please you? Tell us.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Chyavana was thus addressed in the midst of the fish and spoke these words. ‘Listen with single-minded attention to my supreme desire now. Whether I have to give up my life, or whether I am sold, I wish to remain with the fish now. I have dwelt with them for a long time and cannot abandon them now.’

Having been thus addressed, the nishadas trembled in great fear. All their faces were distressed and they went and told Nahusha what had happened.”

Chapter 1732(51)

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing this, with his advisers and his priest, Nahusha swiftly arrived at the spot where Chyavana was. As is proper, the king purified himself, joined his hands in salutation and presented himself before the great-souled Chyavana. O lord of the earth! The king’s priest worshipped the one who was truthful in his vows, immensely fortunate and the equal of a god.

“Nahusha said, ‘You should tell me in detail what agreeable task I can perform for you. O illustrious one! I will do everything for you, even if it is something that is extremely difficult to accomplish.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘These kaivartas earn a living through fish and have made great efforts. Pay them a price for selling me and the fish.’

“Nahusha said, ‘Let the priest give one thousand coins to the nishadas as a price for purchasing such an illustrious one as the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘O king! I am worth more than one thousand coins. What do you think? Use your own intelligence to determine the appropriate price that should be given.’

“Nahusha said, ‘Let one hundred thousand coins quickly be given to the nishadas. Perhaps that is the appropriate price for you. What do you think?’

“Chyavana replied, ‘O bull among kings! I should not be purchased with one hundred thousand coins. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult your ministers and decide.’

“Nahusha said, ‘Let the priest give one crore coins to the nishadas. If you do not agree to this, let more be given to them.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘O king! O immensely radiant one! I do not deserve to be purchased with one crore coins, or even more. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult with the brahmanas and decide.’

“Nahusha said, ‘Let one half of my kingdom, or all of it, be given to the nishadas. I think that this should be a right price. O brahmana! Do you think differently?’

“Chyavana replied, ‘O king! I do not deserve to be purchased with one half of the kingdom, or with all of it. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult with the rishis and decide.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing the maharshi’s words, Nahusha was afflicted by grief. He began to think, consulting his ministers and his priest. At that time, a forest dweller who survived on roots and fruits arrived before Nahusha. He was a sage, but had been born from a cow. The supreme among brahmanas addressed the king. ‘I will ensure that the brahmana is satisfied. I do not utter a lie, even in jest. How can it be otherwise? Without any doubts, you should do exactly what I tell you.’

“Nahusha said, ‘O illustrious one! Tell me a price that is appropriate for the maharshi descended from the Bhrigu lineage. Save me, my kingdom and my lineage. If the illustrious one is angry, he can destroy the three worlds, not to speak of someone like me, who is devoid of austerities and only possesses the valour of his arms. With my advisers and my officiating priest, I have now been submerged in fathomless waters. O maharshi! Become my boat and determine the price.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing Nahusha’s words, the powerful one who had been born from a cow spoke, thereby delighting all the advisers and the king. ‘O great king! Brahmanas are supreme among varnas and there can be no price for them. O lord of the earth! However, cows are also priceless. Suggest a cow as a price.’ O king! Hearing the maharshi’s words, Nahusha, and his advisers and his priest, were filled with great delight. They went to Chyavana, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, who was devoted to his vows. Wishing to satisfy him, the king spoke these words. ‘Arise. O brahmana rishi! Get up. O Bhargava! I have purchased you with a cow. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! I think that this is your price.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘O Indra among kings! I am getting up. O unblemished one! You have indeed purchased me properly. O one without decay! I do not see any riches that are equal to a cow. O king! O brave one! Talking about,

hearing about, giving and seeing cattle is praised. This is auspicious and cleanses all sins. Cows are always the foundation of prosperity. There are no sins in cattle. Cows are like food and represent the supreme oblation that can be offered to gods. Cows are always established in sounds of “svaha” and “vashatkara”. Cows are the ones who convey sacrifices. They are the mouth of a sacrifice. The undecaying and divine milk is borne by them and flows from them. It is like amrita. They are stores of amrita and are honoured by all the worlds. In energy and form, cows are like a fire on earth. Cows represent great energy and bring happiness to beings. When they are in a cow pen and can breathe without fear, that country is resplendent and sins are not attracted to it. Cows represent the ladder to heaven. Cows are worshipped in heaven. Cows are like goddesses that yield every object of desire. It is said that there is nothing superior to a cow. O bull among kings! I have thus recounted the greatness of cattle. I can only state some of the qualities and am not capable of repeating them in their entirety.’

“The nishadas said, ‘O sage! You have seen us and have spoken to us. O lord! The virtuous say that seven steps taken together lead to friendship. Show us your favours. The fire consumes all the oblations that are offered into it. O one with dharma in one’s soul! In that way, you are a man who is as powerful as the fire. O learned one! We are bowing down before you. Show us your favours. To show us your grace, take this cow back from us.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘The sight of a sage is like virulent poison and can burn down a niggardly person from his roots, just as a fire consumes dead wood. O kaivartas! I have accepted the cow. You have been freed from all sin. Swiftly go to heaven, with all the fish that have been caught in the net.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Because of the favours of the maharshi with the cleansed soul and because of his words, the nishadas and the fish went to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the fishermen ascend to heaven with the fish, King Nahusha was amazed. The sage born from the cow and Chyavana, extender of the Bhrigu lineage, delighted the king by giving him comparable boons, until he said enough. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely valorous King Nahusha, lord of the earth, was supremely delighted. The king was Indra’s equal and following dharma, received these. In great joy, he honoured the rishis back. Having completed his vow, Chyavana returned to his hermitage. The immensely energetic sage, descended from a cow, also returned to his hermitage. O lord of men! With the fish, the nishadas went to heaven. Having received the boons, Nahusha went to his own city. O son! O Yudhishtira! I have thus told you what you had asked me about, the affection that results from sight and from dwelling together. It is also the determination of dharma that cows are extremely fortunate. O brave one! What will I speak about next? What does your heart want to know?”’

Chapter 1733(52)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O immensely wise one! I have a doubt that is as large as the great ocean. Listen. O mighty-armed one! Having heard, you should explain this to me. O lord! I have a great curiosity about Jamadagni’s son, Rama, foremost among the upholders of dharma. You should explain this to me. How was Rama, with truth as his valour, born? Despite being born in a lineage of brahmana rishis, how did he come to practise the dharma of kshatriyas? O king! The entire world also recounts the story of Koushika. Despite being born in a lineage of kshatriyas, how did he become a brahmana? O tiger among men! The power of those two extremely great-souled ones, Rama and Vishvamitra, was exceedingly great. What sins skipped their sons and afflicted their grandsons? How did that happen? You should explain this to me.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Chyavana and Kushika is recounted. Bhargava Chyavana, immensely intelligent and a bull among sages, foresaw in advance a sin that would descend on his own lineage. He mentally thought about all its good and bad aspects, its strength and weaknesses. The store of austerities desired to burn down the entire Kushika lineage.¹³³⁴ Chyavana went to Kushika and spoke these words to him. ‘O unblemished one! I desire to dwell with you for some time.’

“Kushika said, ‘O illustrious one! The learned ones have held that the act of dwelling together is a dharma that should be practised only when a daughter has been given away in marriage. That is what learned people have al-

ways said. O store of austerities! Otherwise, the door to dharma will be barred. However, with your permission, I should do what you have asked me to.”

‘Bhishma continued, “Kushika instructed that a seat should be offered to the great sage, Chyavana. With his wife, he went and stood before the sage. The king took a vessel and offered him water to wash his feet. The great-souled one ensured that all the rites were observed. Following the prescribed rites, the king offered Chyavana madhuparka. He anxiously waited for the great-souled one, rigid in his vows, to accept this. Having shown the brahmana honour in this way, he spoke these words. ‘O illustrious one! We are waiting for your instructions. What should we do for you? O one who is rigid in vows! Is it the kingdom, riches, cattle or objects given in sacrifices? Tell us. I will give you everything. This house, this kingdom and this seat of dharma are yours. You are the king of everything, with the servants. Rule everything. I am also dependent on you.’ Having been thus addressed by Kushika in these words, Bhargava Chyavana was filled with great joy. He replied, ‘O king! I do not desire the kingdom, riches, women, cattle, the country, or objects offered at sacrifices. If it pleases both of you, I desire to observe a vow. While I am observing it, you should tend to me, without any doubts.’ Thus addressed, the couple was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They told the rishi that it would be that way. Cheerfully, the king led him to an excellent part of the palace, to a beautiful apartment and showed it to him. ‘O illustrious one! This is your bed. Live here, as you please. O store of austerities! We should do our best to please you.’ While they were conversing in this way, the sun set and the rishi instructed that food and drink should be brought. King Kushika bowed down and asked, ‘What kind of food do you desire? What will I present before you?’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Filled with great delight, he told the king, ‘Offer me appropriate food that is ready.’ Hearing these words, the king honoured him and agreed. The lord of men offered him appropriate food. Having eaten, the illustrious one, knowledgeable about dharma, told the couple, ‘O lord! I wish to sleep now. Sleep is getting in the way.’ The illustrious one, supreme among rishis, went to his bedchamber. The king and the queen also entered and waited. Bhargava said, ‘Do not wake me up while I am asleep. Remain awake and press my feet throughout the night.’ Kushika knew about dharma. Without doubting this, he agreed. Without waking him, they waited for night to be over. As they had been instructed by the maharshi, they tended to him in an excellent way. O great king! The couple tried its best to do this. As he had told the king, the illustrious brahmana slept. He did not turn in his sleep and slept for twenty-one days. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The king and his wife remained without food. They cheerfully remained engaged in tending to him and serving him. Eventually, Bhargava, the store of austerities, himself awoke. Without saying anything to them, the great ascetic left the house. The two of them were hungry and overcome with exhaustion. Husband and wife followed him. But the best among sages did not even glance at them. While they looked on, the extender of the Bhargava lineage vanished. O Indra among kings! At this, the king fell down on the ground. However, the immensely radiant one arose in a short while. With his queen, he made great efforts to again search for him everywhere.”’

Chapter 1734(53)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “When the brahmana disappeared, what did the king do? What did his immensely fortunate wife do? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When the rishi could no longer be seen, the king and his wife were tired. Ashamed and bereft of their senses, they returned. In distress, they entered the city and did not say anything. They only thought about what Chyavana had done. With an empty mind, the king entered his house and saw that the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage was lying down on his bed. They were amazed at seeing this and thought about this marvel. The sight of the sage removed their exhaustion. They remained in their places and again began to tend to him. However, this time, the great sage was sleeping on his other side. The valiant one arose after the same time span. Though they were scared, they did not display any of their agitation. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having awoken, the sage said, ‘Give me some oil for my limbs. I wish to have a bath.’ Despite being hungry and afflicted by exhaustion, they agreed. They presented him with some extremely expensive oil that had been boiled one hundred times. When the rishi was happily seated, they controlled their words and rubbed him with the

oil, until the immensely great ascetic, Bhargava, said that he had had enough. Bhargava noticed that they seemed to be indifferent. He suddenly arose and entered the bathroom. Everything required for taking a bath, befitting a king, had been kept there. Ignoring all this, while the king looked on, the sage disappeared again.

“O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, the couple was not disturbed at this. Kushika and his wife then saw the illustrious lord, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, seated on the throne, after having taken his bath. Cheerfully, King Kushika and his wife offered the sage some food that had been cooked, feigning complete indifference. The sage had told the king that food should be brought, and with his wife, the king served it. There were many kinds of meat and many kinds of vegetables. There were spices and condiments, and light drinks were served. There were succulent biscuits, colourful cakes and confectionery. There were many kinds of tasty items, including wild fare that sages feed on. There were varied kinds of fruit and piles of good. There were jujubes, *inguda* nuts, *kashmari* nuts and cashew nuts. There was food meant for householders and for forest dwellers. Fearing the sage’s curse, the king offered all kinds of food. All of this was brought and placed before Chyavana. Once this had been brought, a bed and a seat were offered to the sage. The food was placed in vessels and covered with white cloth. But Chyavana, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, burnt all this down to ashes. Engaged in their great vow, the couple did not exhibit any rage at this. While they looked on, he disappeared again. For the entire night, the rajarshi stood there, with his wife. The prosperous one did not say anything. Nor did he allow rage to penetrate him. Every day, in the king’s abode, he was honoured with many kinds of mantras, given the best of beds and all the expensive requirements for having a bath. There were large piles of garments that were offered. Chyavana was incapable of detecting any change in their behaviour.

“The brahmana rishi again spoke to King Kushika. ‘You and your wife get yoked to a chariot and quickly bear me to wherever I ask you to.’ Without showing any doubt, the king agreed to what the store of austerities had said. He only asked, ‘Should it be a chariot for pleasure or a chariot for fighting?’ The king cheerfully spoke these words to the sage. Chyavana cheerfully replied to the destroyer of enemy cities. ‘Swiftly prepare a chariot that is used for warfare. Equip it with weapons, flags, spears, spikes and staffs. Let it roar with hundreds of bells. Stock it with javelins. Let it also be stocked with clubs and swords and armed with the best of weapons.’ He agreed and prepared a giant chariot. His wife was yoked to the left and he was himself yoked to the right. A three-pointed goad was placed on the chariot. It was as hard as the vajra and as sharp as a needle. Having equipped it in this way, the king spoke these words. ‘O illustrious one! The chariot is ready. Where does the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage want it to go? O brahmana rishi! The chariot will go wherever you ask it to.’ The illustrious one told the king, ‘Let it proceed one step at a time, gently. The two of you should drag it so that I am not exhausted and the rhythm does not break. While all the people look on, I should be borne pleasantly. If any passer-by approaches me, I will give him riches. Along the way, there may be brahmanas who desire riches. Without retaining anything, I will give them all the riches and the gems. O king! Without any reflection, act entirely in this way.’ Hearing these words, the king summoned his servants and said, ‘Without any doubts, give the sage everything that he has asked for.’ Many kinds of riches, women, pairs of sheep, raw and polished gold, large elephants that were like elephants and all the king’s advisers were made to follow the rishi’s chariot. Lamentations arose from every part of the afflicted city. The king and the queen were violently struck on their backs and flanks by the pointed goad. However, they displayed no signs of agitation. They trembled, because they were hungry and had not eaten for fifty nights. But the brave couple managed to drag along that excellent chariot. They were severely struck in many places and blood began to flow from their wounds. O great king! They looked like flowering kimshuka trees. On seeing them, the citizens were overcome by great grief. However, afraid of being cursed, no one said anything. They gathered in groups of two and said, ‘Behold the strength of austerities. Though we are angry, we are incapable of looking at the best of sages. Great is the valour of the illustrious maharshi, who has cleansed his soul. But also behold the fortitude of the king and his wife. They are exhausted and afflicted. Nevertheless, they are dragging the chariot along. The descendant of the Bhrigu lineage cannot detect any signs of agitation in them.’ The extender of the Bhrigu lineage saw that they were indifferent. As if he was Vaishravana,¹³³⁵ he began to give away the riches. Despite this, the king remained cheerful in his soul and did all that he was asked to do.

“The illustrious one, supreme among sages, was pleased. He descended from the best of chariots and released the couple. Having released them in the proper way, he spoke these words. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Bhargava was extremely happy and spoke these gentle and deep words. He said, 'I wish to grant you the best of boons.' The learned one, the best of sages, rubbed their delicate bodies with his hands. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The touch of his affection was like that of amrita. The king spoke these words. 'We have not suffered from any exhaustion.' Their exhaustion was dispelled through Bhargava's powers. Cheerfully, the illustrious one said, 'I have never spoken a falsehood. What I say will happen. This is an auspicious and beautiful spot on the banks of the Ganga. O king! Devoted to my vow, I will dwell here for some time. O son! You are exhausted. Return to your own city. O lord of men! Come here with your wife tomorrow and you will see me. You should not yield to rage. A beneficial time is imminent. Everything that is in your heart will be accomplished.' Thus addressed, Kushika was cheerful in his mind. He spoke these words, which were full of purport, to the tiger among sages. 'O immensely fortunate one! I have no anger. O illustrious one! We have been purified by you. Our bodies have become young and strong. I and my wife no longer see any of the wounds that were caused by the goad on our bodies. With my wife, I am hale. O sage! I see that this queen looks like a divine apsara. She possesses great beauty, just as I have seen her in earlier times. O great sage! All of this has become possible because of your favours. O illustrious one! O one with truth as one's valour! There is no marvel in your having accomplished this.' Thus addressed, Chyavana told Kushika, 'O lord of men! With your wife, come here tomorrow.' Hearing this, the rajarshi honoured him and took his permission. With a body that was like that of the king of the gods, he returned to the city. The advisers and priests came out to meet him. So did all the soldiers, the courtesans and the ordinary people. King Kushika blazed in his supreme prosperity and they surrounded him. He happily entered his city and was praised by the bards. Having entered the city, he performed all the ablutions. With his wife, the king ate and spent the night. They looked at each other. Their old age was gone and it was as if their youth had just bloomed. They were like immortals. They were delighted with these new bodies and went to sleep. Because of the boon granted by the brahmana, they had become extremely handsome. The rishi was an extender of the fame of the lineage of the Bhrigus. The store of austerities changed that forest into a prosperous spot. The learned one adorned it with many kinds of jewels. This was a beauty that Shatakratu's abode didn't possess.'"

Chapter 1735(54)

'Bhishma said, "When night was over, the extremely intelligent king awoke. Having performed the morning ablutions, with his wife, he headed for the forest. There, the king saw a palace that was completely made out of gold. There were a thousand pillars covered with jewels and it was like a city of the gandharvas. Kushika saw that everything seemed to have been divinely designed. There were hills with beautiful peaks and valleys. There were lilies and lotuses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were galleries with many kinds of gates. The ground was verdant, as if the fields were made out of gold. There were blossoming *sahakaras*, *ketakas*, *uddalakas*, *dhavas*, *ashokas*, *muchukundas*, flowering *atimuktas*, *champakas*, *tilakas*, *bhavyas*, *panasas*, *vanjulas* and flowering *karnikaras*.¹³³⁶ This is what he saw there, here and there. There were dark *varanapushpas* and *ashtapadika* creepers. The king saw that these had been properly trimmed. There were trees on which there were lotuses and lilies and there were flowers from every season. He saw many mansions that were as beautiful as celestial vehicles and mountains. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some of the water was cool and some was warm. There were colourful seats and the best of beds. The beds were made completely out of gold and were strewn with expensive covers and cushions. Large quantities of food and drink had been prepared and were properly laid out. There were parrots that spoke, she-parrots, fork-tailed shrikes, cuckoos, woodpeckers, lapwings, wild cocks, peacocks, domestic cocks, *putrakas*,¹³³⁷ partridges, Greek partridges, monkeys, swans, cranes and ducks. There were beautiful sounds and sights on every side. O king! In some places, there were large numbers of apsaras and gandharvas. He saw that they were sporting with their loved ones. Sometimes, the king was able to see them and sometimes, he was unable to see them. There was the extremely beautiful sound of singing and also the sounds of teaching going on. The king also heard the melodious sound of geese. On seeing this extraordinary sight, the king began to think. 'This must be a dream. Perhaps my mind has gone. Is this for real? In my body, have I attained the supreme end?

This must be the sacred land of Uttara Kuru or Amaravati. What is this wonder that I have seen?’ He thought in this way.

“While he was thinking, he saw the bull among the sages. He was in a celestial vehicle made out of gold and its pillars were encrusted with jewels. The descendant of the Bhrigu lineage was lying down on an expensive and divine bed. With great delight, the king and his wife approached him. Chyavana would be seen to disappear and would then appear again. He next saw him in a part of the forest. He was seated on a mat made out of kusha grass and was meditating, engaged in a great vow. Through his powers of yoga, the brahmana confounded the king. In an instant, the forest, the large numbers of apsaras, the gandharvas and the trees—all of these vanished. O king! The banks of the Ganga became silent again. As had been the case earlier, it was again covered with kusha grass and termite hills. King Kushika and his wife were supremely astounded at these deeds. They thought it was a great wonder that everything had disappeared. Kushika was filled with delight and spoke to his wife. ‘O fortunate one! Behold. The colourful sight that we have witnessed is extremely difficult to see. This is because of the favours of the foremost one of the Bhrigu lineage. Other than the strength of austerities, what can this be? These things can be obtained through austerities, not merely by wishing for them. Austerities are superior to the kingdoms of the three worlds. The store of austerities has tormented himself with extremely great austerities and is sporting. Through the valour of his austerities, he is even capable of creating other worlds. Brahmanas are born to perform auspicious deeds and use their intelligence. Who other than Chyavana could have endeavoured to do this? A kingdom is very easy for a man to obtain. However, in this world, the status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. It is because of the brahmana’s powers that we were yoked to the chariot, like beasts of burden.’ Chyavana got to know about these thoughts of his. He glanced at the king and said, ‘Come here quickly.’ Thus addressed, he and his wife advanced towards the great sage. The king bowed his head down and they worshipped the one who should be revered. The sage pronounced a benediction over the king. O bull among men! The intelligent one comforted him and asked him to be seated. O king! Assuming his natural form, Bhargava comforted the king. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To reassure him, he spoke these gentle words. ‘O king! You have properly controlled the five senses, the five organs of action and the sixth sense of the mind. That is the reason you have escaped from the hardship. O supreme among eloquent ones! O son! You have honoured me properly. I have not been able to detect the slightest bit of taint in you. O king! With your permission, I will now return to wherever I had come from. O Indra among kings! I am pleased with you. Accept a boon from me.’

“Kushika replied, ‘O illustrious one! In your presence, I have been like one who is in the midst of a fire. O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! It is sufficient that my lineage and I have not been burnt down. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! This is the best of boons and I have already obtained it. O unblemished one! If you are pleased with me, let the conduct of my lineage be auspicious. O brahmana! If you grant me this, the purpose of my life will have been accomplished. This is the fruit of my kingdom and this is my supreme austerity. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! However, I have a doubt. If you are pleased with me, you should explain this to me.’”

Chapter 1736(55)

““Chyavana said, ‘Accept a boon from me. What is the doubt in your heart? O foremost among men! Tell me what it is and I will explain everything to you.’

“Kushika said, ‘O illustrious one! O Bhargava! If you are pleased with me, tell me something. I wish to hear the reason why you decided to reside with me. What was the reason for sleeping on the bed for twenty-one days, without changing sides? O bull among sages! Why did you depart, without saying anything? Why did you suddenly disappear and again reveal yourself? O brahmana! You again slept for twenty-one days. After having been rubbed with oil, you left my house, without having eaten. There were many kinds of food that were brought, but you burnt them down with fire. Why did you suddenly and swiftly depart on a chariot? Why did you give away the riches? Why did you show us the forest? O great sage! There were many golden palaces there. You showed us beds where the bed posts were decorated with jewels. Then you made them disappear again. I wish to hear the rea-

son for this. I am extremely confused by this and have thought about this day and night. But I have been unable to understand anything about this. O store of austerities! I wish to hear the entire truth about this.’

“Chyavana replied, ‘Listen in detail to all the reasons. O king! Since you have asked me, I cannot refuse to tell you. Earlier, in an assembly of the gods, the grandfather said something. O king! I heard that and will tell you. Listen. Because of a conflict between a brahmana and a kshatriya, my lineage will become mixed up and tainted. O king! Your grandson will be full of energy and valour. That is the reason I have come to you, to save my lineage. O Kushika! I desired to exterminate and burn down your lineage. O lord of the earth! Earlier, that is the reason I came to you and said, “I am observing a vow. You should serve me. However, while I resided in your house, I could not detect any signs of wicked conduct. O rajarshi! That is the reason you are still alive. Otherwise, you would no longer have been here. That is the reason I decided to sleep for twenty-one days. O king! I was hoping that someone would wake me up. But you and your wife allowed me to sleep and did not wake me. O supreme among kings! That is when my mind became pleased with you. O lord of the earth! O lord! I awoke and departed. I was hoping that you would restrain me, so that I could curse you. I repeatedly disappeared in your house. For twenty-one days, I again immersed myself in yoga. O lord of men! You were hungry and exhausted and I was hoping that you would show your anger. That is the reason I afflicted you with hunger. O king! However, I could not detect the slightest bit of anger in your mind. O best among men! I became pleased with you and your wife. When I had the food brought and burnt it down, I was hoping that you would be overcome by anger. But you tolerated that. O lord of men! That is when I ascended the chariot and told you and your wife to drag me along. But you did what I had asked you to. O lord of men! You did not show any doubts and I was pleased with you. You were not overcome with rage when I gave away the riches. O king! O lord of men! While I was pleased with you, for you and your wife, I created the forest that you saw. To please you, I showed you heaven. O king! In that forest, you saw some signs of heaven. O king! You saw a little bit of heaven in your physical body. O king! O supreme among kings! For a short while, you and your wife witnessed that. O lord of men! This was to demonstrate to you the dharma of austerities. O king! I am aware of the desire that there is in your heart. O lord of the earth! Through your austerities, you desire to obtain the status of a brahmana. O king! You have no interest in being a king on earth or being a king of the gods. O son! However, the status of a brahmana will be extremely difficult for you to obtain. Having become a brahmana, it is difficult to become a rishi. Having become a rishi, it is difficult to become an ascetic. O Kushika! But your desire will come true. There will be a Koushika¹³³⁸ who will become a brahmana. He will be third in descent from you and he will obtain the status of a brahmana. O best among kings! He will be born in your lineage, but he will possess the energy of the Bhrigus. Your grandson will become a brahmana. He will be an ascetic, with the resplendence of the fire. He will be one who will cause fright to gods and men and to the three worlds. I tell you this truthfully. O rajarshi! Ask for the boon that is in your mind. A long period of time has elapsed and I wish to proceed on a visit to the tirthas.’

“Kushika said, ‘O great sage! This is enough of a boon, since you are pleased with me. O unblemished one! Let my grandson become a brahmana through his austerities. O illustrious one! Grant me the boon that my lineage should always have that status. O illustrious one! Once again, I wish to ask you about this in detail. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! How will my lineage obtain the status of a brahmana? Who will be my relative? Whom will I honour?’”

Chapter 1737(56)

“Chyavana said, ‘O bull among men! I should certainly tell you this. O lord of men! That is the reason I came here, wishing to exterminate your lineage. O lord of men! Kshatriyas always have the assistance of the Bhrigus in the performance of sacrifices. However, because of reasons determined by destiny, there will be conflict between them. O lord of men! The kshatriyas will slay all the Bhrigus. Struck by the rod of destiny, they will not even spare those who are in the wombs. Then, in our lineage, a person will be born to extend the line. His name will be Ourva and he will be greatly energetic. His resplendence will be like that of the blazing fire. The flames of his anger will be such that they will be capable of destroying the three worlds. He will be capable of reducing the

earth, with its mountains and oceans, to ashes. He will control the fire of his anger for some time. That supreme of sages will hurl it into the ocean, in the form of the subterranean fire. However, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage will have an immensely fortunate son named Richika. O unblemished one! The entire dhanurveda will present itself before him. Because of reasons determined by destiny, so as to destroy the kshatriyas, he will receive it and pass it on to his son, Jamadagni, who will be immensely fortunate and will cleave his soul through austerities. But that tiger among the Bhrigu lineage will still hold that knowledge. O supreme among kings! The one with dharma in his soul will unite with a maiden from your lineage, for spreading that knowledge on. The great ascetic will obtain your granddaughter and Gadhi's daughter. He will give birth to Rama, who will be a brahmana, but will follow the dharma of kshatriyas. In your lineage will be born Visvamitra, as Gadhi's son. He will be extremely devoted to dharma and will be like Brihaspati in his energy. He will be a kshatriya, but will follow the dharma of brahmanas. O immensely radiant one! Gadhi will have this son, who will be devoted to great austerities. There will be a mixing up because of women.¹³³⁹ This has been determined by the grandfather. It will happen and there can be no reversal. In the third generation from you, there will be a brahmana. The Bhrigus, cleansed in their souls, will be your matrimonial allies.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing the words of the sage, the great-souled Chyavana, Kushika was delighted. The king, with dharma in his soul, replied in the following words. 'Let it be this way.' O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The greatly energetic Chyavana again spoke to the king. He urged the king to ask for a boon, who said, 'O great king! I will accept it and let my desire truly come true through you. Let my lineage have the status of brahmanas and let their minds always be fixed on dharma.' The sage, Chyavana, replied that it would indeed be this way. Having taken the king's permission, he then departed for a visit to the tirthas. O king! I have told you everything, exactly as it occurred. This is the reason for the matrimonial alliance between the Bhrigus and the Kushikas. O king! Everything happened exactly as the sage had said. The births of Rama and the sage, Vishvamitra, occurred in that way.'"

Volume 9 ends here. Section 87 will be concluded in Volume 10.

The final volume ends the instructions of the Anushasana Parva. The horse sacrifice is held, and Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Kunti, Vidura and Sanjaya leave for the forest. Krishna and Balarama die as the Yadavas fight among themselves. The Pandavas leave on the great journey with the famous companion—Dharma disguised as a dog. Refusing to abandon the dog, Yudhishtira goes to heaven in his physical body and sees all the Kurus and the Pandavas are already there.

Chapter 1738(57)

‘Yudhishtira said, “On listening to your words now, I am confused and am thinking repeatedly. The earth has been deprived of a large number of kings who were prosperous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have conquered the earth and have obtained hundreds of kingdoms. O grandfather! I am tormented because I have killed crores of men. What will now happen to the best of women? They are deprived of their husbands, sons, maternal uncles and brothers. We have slain our seniors, our kin and our well-wishers. There is no doubt that we will descend into hell, with our heads facing downwards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to yoke my body to fierce austerities. O lord of the earth! I desire that you should instruct me about the truth.”’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Hearing what Yudhishtira had said, the great-minded Bhishma used his accomplished intelligence to examine them. He then spoke to Yudhishtira. “This is wonderful and a mystery. Listen. I will tell you the truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is about the ends that are obtained after death. Heaven is obtained through austerities. Fame is obtained through austerities. O lord! A long life and objects of pleasure are obtained through austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! *Jnana*, *vijnana*,¹ recovery from disease, beauty, wealth and good fortune are obtained through austerities. Riches are obtained through austerities. Refraining from speech provides knowledge. Through donations, one obtains objects of enjoyment. One obtains life through brahmacharya. The fruits of non-violence are beauty. Through an act of initiation, one obtains birth in a good family. Those who subsist on fruits and roots obtain kingdoms. Those who subsist on leaves obtain heaven. A person who only drinks water goes to heaven. By bathing, one obtains even greater riches. Through serving the preceptor, one obtains knowledge. Through always performing funeral ceremonies, one obtains offspring. Through initiating one-self into a vow that one will only eat vegetables, one obtains a large number of cows. One is said to obtain heaven by subsisting on grass. By bathing thrice a day, one obtains women. If one only subsists on air, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice. A brahmana who bathes every day and performs meditation in the morning and the evening, becomes like Daksha. One obtains kingdoms by observing austerities in a desert. A person who fasts to death obtains the vault of heaven. If one lies down on the bare ground, one obtains beds and houses. If one is attired in bark and tattered rags, one obtains garments and ornaments. Those who are rich in austerities and engaged in yoga obtain beds, seats and vehicles. It has been said that a person who enters the fire goes to Brahma’s world. By refraining from savouring good tastes, one obtains good fortune. By refraining from flesh, one obtains offspring who have long lives. If a person dwells in *udvasa*,² he becomes a lord of men. O best among men! A person who speaks the truth finds delight with the gods. Fame results from donations. Non-violence results in recovery from disease. By serving brahmanas, one obtains a kingdom and the status of becoming a brahmana. By donating things to drink, one obtains eternal fame. By donating food, one satisfies all the desires that one possesses. A person who assures all beings is freed from all kinds of sorrow. Through serving the gods, one obtains kingdoms and celestial beauty. By offering the light of lamps, a man obtains vision. If one gives beautiful objects, one obtains memory and intelligence. By refraining from fragrances and garlands, one obtains great fame. Those who sport long hair and beards obtain offspring. O king! If a person is initiated and consecrated in a vow that involves fasting for twelve years, he obtains the special region meant for heroes. O bull among men! If one bestows one’s daughter according to the *brahma* form of marriage,³ one obtains female servants, male servants, ornaments, fields and houses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person performs sacrifices and fasts, he goes to heaven. A man who renders offerings of flowers obtains the eternal spot. A man who gives away one thousand cows whose horns have been decorated with gold, obtains the auspicious world of the gods in heaven. This was stated in an assembly of the sages and the gods. A man may give away a *kapila*⁴ cow and her calf, with gold entrusting the tips of her horns and with a brass vessel to milk her. Because of the qualities of the cow, he will obtain all the objects that he desires. A person who donates a cow in this way obtains fruits as long as she possesses hair on her body. In the world hereafter, he saves all the sons and grandsons of his lineage, for seven generations.⁵ With *dakshina*, a person may give away a cow with beautiful horns that are decorated with gold, along with a brass vessel to milk her, an expensive upper garment and sesamum seed to a brahmana. Such a person obtains the world of the Vasus with ease. In the world here-

after, a man may be tied down by his own deeds in this world and descend into the terrible darkness of hell. The donation of a cow saves him, like a boat with the wind saves in the great ocean. A person who bestows his daughter according to the brahma form of marriage, donates land to a brahmana, or donates food in the proper way, obtains Purandara's world. A person who donates a house with all the qualities to a brahmana who is engaged in studying and possesses the qualities and character, obtains the world of Uttara Kuru. By donating bulls that can bear the burden, a man obtains the world of the Vasus. It is said that heaven can be obtained through donations of gold, though the gift of pure gold is superior to this. By donating an umbrella one obtains an excellent house. By giving shoes one obtains a vehicle. By giving clothes one obtains the fruits of excellent beauty. By giving fragrances a man becomes famous among the gods. If a person touches a tree full of flowers or a tree full of fruits and gives it to a brahmana, he obtains an excellent house that is full of many jewels and beautiful women.

A person who donates food, drink and juices obtains all the kinds of fruits that he desires. There is no doubt that a person who gives houses and covers gets those objects back. If a man gives garlands, incense, fragrances, unguents, objects required for a bath and wreaths to a brahmana, he is without disease and obtains a place in the worlds meant for kings. O king! A man who gives a house full of seeds and beautiful beds to a brahmana, obtains an excellent and auspicious house that is full of many jewels. A man who gives a fragrant bed, covered with a colourful spread, to a brahmana, easily obtains a beautiful and pleasant wife who is faithful. A man who lies down on a bed of heroes follows the grandfather.⁶ There is nothing superior to this. This is what the supreme rishis have said." On hearing these words, the descendant of the Kuru lineage was delighted. He desired the path meant for brave ones and no longer found the *ashrama* of a householder disagreeable. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O lord! Yudhishtira spoke to the other Pandavas. "You should find the grandfather's words acceptable." All the Pandavas and the illustrious Droupadi agreed and applauded Yudhishtira's words.'

Chapter 1739(58)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Kurus! Outside of the Vedas, there are other kinds of gifts that have been mentioned. In your view, out of these, which one is special? O lord! I have a supreme curiosity about this. When a giver gives a gift, how does that gift follow him?⁷ Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Assurance towards all creatures, compassion towards someone who is suffering, giving what is desired to someone who is thirsty and asking for it and gifts that are given without thinking of them as gifts—such gifts are said to be the best. These gifts follow the giver. Gifts of gold, gifts of cattle and gifts of land are regarded as purifying. These liberate from evil acts. O tiger among men! Always donate these to virtuous people. There is no doubt that gifts save men from sins. A person who wishes to make his gifts eternal must always give what is desired in this world and what is loved in his house to recipients who possess the qualities. A person who does what is agreeable obtains what is agreeable and is loved in this world. He is loved by beings, in this world and in the next. O Yudhishtira! If a person is proud and does not honour through gifts someone who is hopefully asking, despite possessing the capacity, is cruel. A person who shows favours towards an enemy who has fallen on hard times and has sought refuge, is supreme among men. O son! There is no man equal to a person who satisfies the hunger of a learned person who is emaciated and suffering because his means of subsistence have been disrupted. O Kounteya! One must use every means possible to aid a humble, self-controlled and virtuous person who does not have sons and wives and is suffering, even if he doesn't ask. There are those who subsist on whatever they have been able to obtain and do not pronounce benedictions on gods and humans.⁸ They deserve to be worshipped and are always spirited. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are like virulent serpents and protect yourself from them.⁹ Use spies to test if they are the best among brahmanas. O Kouravya! They must always be honoured with good houses that have servants and garments and with all the objects of desire that bring happiness. O Yudhishtira! Those who follow dharma and are the performers of auspicious deeds think that such tasks have purified their devotion, if those gifts are accepted. There are brahmanas who have bathed in learning and have bathed in vows. They do not depend on anyone else for a living. They are rigid in their vows, study quietly and resort to austerities. They are pure, self-controlled and satisfied with their

own wives. Anything good done to them follows the donor in future worlds. Brahmanas obtain merits by offering oblations into the *agnihotra* fire, morning and evening. The same merits are obtained by giving to brahmanas who have cleansed their souls. This is like a sacrifice with dakshina, purified by devotion. O son! Perform this sacrifice through giving, since it is superior to all sacrifices. O Yudhishtira! When one touches water and gives gifts, it is like a sacrifice. It is like touching water and performing worship and one is freed from all debts.¹⁰ There are people who are not prone to anger and do not desire even a blade of grass. They, and others who are pleasant in speech, are the ones who should be worshipped. They do not prize gifts highly, nor do they solicit them. But they must be protected like sons and I bow down before them. They provide freedom from fear. Officiating priests, priests and preceptors may be mild, but they hold the *brahman*. Those brahmanas can pacify the energy created by any kshatriya. O Yudhishtira! Since you are a king, you may think yourself to be powerful. However, without giving to brahmanas, you will not enjoy that prosperity. O unblemished one! Remain established in your own dharma. For the sake of your prosperity and for the sake of your power, use whatever riches you possess to honour brahmanas. Wherever the brahmanas may be, bow your head down before them. Depending on their happiness and inclination, let them take delight in you, as does a son. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! They are extremely favourably inclined and are your well-wishers. They are satisfied with only a little. Who other than you can look towards ensuring a means of subsistence for them? In this world, the eternal dharma of a woman is to depend on her husband. He is like a god and she has no other objective. For us, the brahmanas are like that. O son! If the brahmanas see that they are dishonoured and that the kshatriyas always base themselves on terrible deeds, they will abandon us. In this world, we will then be without the Vedas, without name, without fame, without health and without sacrifices. Without resorting to brahmanas, what is the purpose of our remaining alive? This is the way eternal dharma has been followed. O king! In earlier times, kings used to serve brahmanas. It has been heard that vaishyas used to serve kings and shudras served vaishyas. The brahmana was like a blazing fire. Without being able to approach or touch, the shudra used to worship him from a distance. But the vaishya and the kshatriya could approach and touch. Brahmanas are mild in character. They are truthful in conduct and protect the true dharma. However, when they are enraged, they can behave like venomous serpents. They are superior to what is inferior. But they are also superior to what is superior. Kshatriyas can torment with their energy and strength. However, they are pacified through the energy and austerities of brahmanas. My father is not loved more by me.¹¹ My son is not as loved. O king! My grandfather is not as loved, nor the life in my body. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is the truth that there is nothing I love more on earth than you. But it is also the truth that I love brahmanas more. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! I am telling you this truthfully. Through this truth, I will go to the world where Shantanu has gone. I can see that virtuous and pure world, with Brahma at the forefront. O son! I will go there and live there for an eternal number of days. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! I have seen those worlds, which I will obtain because of what I have done for brahmanas. I am not tormented.”

Chapter 1740(59)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “There may be two¹² who are equal in conduct, purity, learning and birth. Between donating to either, which is superior, giving to the one who asks or giving to the one who does not ask?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Partha! It has been said that giving to the person who does not ask is superior. In a miserable state, one who has fortitude deserves greater worship than one who does not have fortitude. A kshatriya’s fortitude is in protection. A brahmana’s fortitude is in not asking for riches. A brahmana who has fortitude, learning and contentment pleases the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An effort made to solicit has been said to show lack of control. A person who solicits always acts like a bandit towards beings. A person who solicits confronts death, though a person who gives does not confront death. O Yudhishtira! Through the act of giving, a donor revives and also revives his own self. Compassion is supreme dharma and one should give to those who seek. However, for those who are suffering and do not solicit, one should respectfully use every possible means to make them accept. If such supreme among brahmanas reside in your kingdom, they must be regarded as fire covered with ashes and efforts must be made to treat them accordingly. They can even consume the earth through the

fire of their austerities. Possessing jnana, vijnana, austerities and yoga, they should be worshipped. O scorcher of enemies! Such brahmanas deserve to be worshipped in every way. They must be given many kinds of gifts, even if they do not ask and do not solicit. There are fruits that are obtained from properly offering oblations into the agni-hotra fire in the morning and the evening. It is said that the fruits obtained from giving to brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and follow the vows are equal. There are brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and have bathed themselves in the vows. They do not depend on anyone else for a living. They are rigid in their vows, study privately and observe austerities. O Kounteya! Such brahmanas must be invited and be given excellent houses with servants and garments and all the other objects of desire. O Yudhishtira! They know about dharma and are subtle in their insight. They will think that it is their duty to receive such gifts that have been purified with devotion. There may be brahmanas who are away from home, with their wives waiting for their return, like farmers waiting for the rain. The wives must be fed and food given for the other dependents at home. O son! If a brahmana *brahmachari* with self-control takes food at your house in the morning, it is as if he satisfies the three sacrificial fires. O son! If the act of feeding takes place at midday, donate cattle, gold and garments and Indra will be pleased with you because of this. O Yudhishtira! This is the third sacrifice, in which, gifts are given to the gods, the ancestors and brahmanas and is for the Vishvadevas.¹³ Non-violence towards all creatures, giving everyone a proper share, self-control, renunciation, fortitude and truthfulness are like the bath at the end of a sacrifice. This is the way this sacrifice is conducted, purified by devotion and with dakshina. O son! It is superior to all sacrifices and should always be performed.”

Chapter 1741(60)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to know the truth about the great fruits obtained from donations and sacrificial rites. Where are those fruits obtained, in this world or in the next? Which is superior and what is the nature of the fruits? You are learned and I am asking you. Tell me about dana dharma. O father!¹⁴ Tell me which is better, that which is done from inside the sacrificial altar, or that which is done with faith and non-violence.¹⁵ O grandfather! Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! A kshatriya is always engaged in terrible deeds. For him, sacrifices are the duty and donations purify him. But virtuous people do not receive from kings who perform wicked deeds. That is the reason kings perform sacrifices with a lot of dakshina. Gifts are received from a king who donates with devotion and this is supreme and a great cleanser. One must therefore be devoted to the vows of sacrifices and give objects to brahmanas who are friendly, virtuous, knowledgeable about the Vedas and possessing good conduct and austerities. The outcome is dependent on the way one acts. Perform sacrifices and give tasty food and dakshina to virtuous people. When you give, think that in that task of giving, you are performing a sacrifice. If you honour officiating priests, you will also obtain a share in their merits. You must sustain brahmanas who bear the burden of many offspring. You will then obtain as many offspring as the creator.¹⁶ Those who are virtuous in pursuit of dharma always nurture those who are righteous. In every way, you must support men who suffer from many burdens. O Yudhishtira! You are prosperous. Therefore, you must give brahmanas cattle, bulls, food, umbrellas, garments and footwear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Give clarified butter to those who perform sacrifices and also horses, vehicles, houses and beds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are easy to do and bring prosperity to the giver. One must search out brahmanas who are not liked and whose means of subsistence has suffered.¹⁷ Directly or indirectly, their livelihood must be ensured. For kshatriyas, this is superior to performing royal sacrifices and horse sacrifices. In this way, you will be cleansed of sin and purified, and you will obtain heaven. You will be able to replenish your treasury again and rule the kingdom. You will obtain a great deal of riches and become a brahmana.¹⁸ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Protect your own means of subsistence and that of other people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Always support brahmanas in their yoga and *kshema*.¹⁹ If they are not protected and are killed, then this will lead to the destruction of all pleasure. The king will suffer decay. All the subjects will be killed and destroyed. A king who says that he is the protector, but does not protect, should be collectively killed, like a dog that is diseased and mad. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king does not protect and the subjects com-

mit wicked deeds, one-fourth of those sins are vested in the king. Some have said that they vest in him in entirety. Others have determined it as half. However, we have heard Manu's instructions and hold it to be one-fourth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king protects the subjects properly, one-fourth of all the good and auspicious deeds that they do vests in the king. O Yudhishtira! As long as you live, make the lives of all the subjects depend on you. Be like Parjanya to beings and like a giant tree to birds. Be like Kubera to the *rakshasas* and like Shatakratu to the immortals. O scorcher of enemies! Let the lives of kin and well-wishers depend on you."

Chapter 1742(61)

‘Yudhishtira said, “The sacred texts urge us—give this, give that. The kings give many things. Which of these is the best donation?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Among the many gifts, the earth is said to be the first. It does not move and is indestructible. Land yields all the supreme objects of desire. It yields garments, jewels, animals, grain and barley. Among all beings, a giver of land prospers for an eternal number of years. As long as the land lasts, a giver of land earns prosperity. O Yudhishtira! There is nothing that is superior to giving land. We have heard that earlier, everyone gave a little bit of land. Since all of them gave a little bit of land, everyone enjoys the earth. In this world and in the next, a man sustains himself on the basis of his deeds. The earth is prosperity and is a great goddess. She does agreeable things for a person who gives her. A lord of the earth who gives the indestructible earth as *dakshina* is again born as a man and becomes a king. Enjoyment is dependent on what one has given. That is the determination of dharma. One must give the earth or give up one's body in battle. It is said that this is supremely beneficial for kshatriyas and their relatives. We have heard that donating the earth purifies the giver. If a man is wicked in conduct, has killed a brahmana or has indulged in falsehood—all these sins are cleansed. One is freed from these sins. If a king has performed wicked deeds, the virtuous wish to accept only land from him and nothing else. The earth purifies, like a mother. There is an eternal and sacred name of the goddess and that is Priyadatta.²⁰ This is a name known to both the giver and the recipient, because it is supremely loved. A king who gives the earth to a brahmana obtains it back. However, an owner of land must never give that prosperous gift of land to an unworthy recipient. If he acts in this way, that gift vanishes. There is no doubt that a person who desires land should act in this way and no other. A person who takes away a virtuous person's land will never get any land. A person who gives land to virtuous people will get land. After death, such a person, with dharma in his soul, will obtain great fame. O king! The brahmanas always praise a person who gives land to righteous people. He has no enemies and the entire earth praises him. In an attempt to ensure subsistence, if a man commits any wicked deeds, all those are cleansed by giving away as much of land as can be covered by a cow hide. Kings who are narrow in their deeds and terrible in their deeds should be told that they can be purified by making the supreme gift of land. The ancient ones thought that there was little difference between a person who performs a horse sacrifice and one who gives land to virtuous people. Learned ones may have doubts about other kinds of good deeds. But they are incapable of entertaining doubts about the supreme gift of land. An immensely wise person gives land, since this is the same as giving gold, silver, garments, jewels, pearls, riches and everything else. Austerities, sacrifices, learning, good conduct, lack of greed, devotion to the truth and worship of seniors and the gods—all these are vested in a person who gives away land. There are those who are engaged in what brings benefit to their masters and cast aside their lives in the field of battle. They are successful and go to Brahma's world. However, even they are surpassed by those who give away land. The mother nurtures her son with her milk. In that way, all the tastes on earth favour a person who gives away land. If a person gives away land, Yama's servants, the staff of punishment, heat, extremely fierce fires and Varuna's terrible noose are unable to touch him. If a person is tranquil in his soul and gives away land, the ancestors in the world of the ancestors and the gods in the world of the gods are satisfied. If a man gives away land to someone who is emaciated, about to die and suffering from a means of subsistence, thereby granting him sustenance, this is like performing a sacrifice. With her udders overflowing with milk, a cow rushes towards her calf. O immensely fortunate one! In that way, the earth runs towards someone who gives away land. If a person gives away land tilled by the plough, or sown, or with crops, and thereby provides the greatest refuge, all his desires are

met. If a man persuades a brahmana, who has good conduct, sacrifices to the fire and is pure in vows, to accept land, he doesn't go to Yama's abode. From one day to another, the moon waxes. In that way, every time the land given by someone yields crops, his own crops increase.

“In this connection, those who know about the ancient accounts chant a song about land. On hearing this, Jamadagni's son²¹ gave away the earth to Kashyapa. ‘Accept me.²² Donate me. By giving me, you will obtain me. Anything given away in this life will be obtained later in the next life.’ A brahmana who bases himself on the brahman and recites this at a funeral ceremony, merges with the brahman. Those who cause great injuries in the course of undertaking a wicked sacrifice can obtain atonement in this way and save ten generations.²³ A person who knows this injunction of the Vedas also benefits in that way. It has been held that the earth is the eternal origin of all creatures. After a king has been consecrated, he should be made to hear this. On hearing this, he should give land to virtuous people and not take it away from them. There is no doubt that all of a king's riches are meant for brahmanas. The first sign of prosperity in a kingdom is a king who is knowledgeable about dharma. If their king doesn't know about dharma and is a non-believer, they will not awake in happiness. Nor will they sleep happily. Because of his wicked acts, the men will always be anxious. The many kinds of yoga and kshema will then be non-existent in the kingdom. However, if the king is wise and follows dharma, they will awake in happiness. They will also sleep happily. The subjects will also be restrained through the king's auspicious deeds. Yoga and kshema will shower down and they will prosper in their own tasks. A person who donates the earth is truly a man. He is born in a noble lineage. He is a friend and is a performer of auspicious deeds. He is benevolent and valorous. Men who give prosperous tracts of land to brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas blaze in their energy on earth, like suns. When they are sown on the ground, seeds sprout into crops. In that way, objects of desire are the crops for those who give away land. Aditya, Varuna, Vishnu, Brahma, Soma, Hutashana²⁴ and the illustrious wielder of the trident²⁵ find delight in a person who gives away land. Men are born on earth and it is on earth that they faithfully wander. There are four kinds of creatures that have the qualities of the earth.²⁶ O lord of the earth! The earth is the mother and the father of the universe. O lord of men! There is no other element that is its equal.

“O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Brihaspati and Indra. Maghavan performed one hundred sacrifices, giving away copious quantities of dakshina. He then asked Brihaspati, the supreme among eloquent ones, ‘O illustrious one! What is the single gift that ensures bliss in heaven? What grants inexhaustible and excellent fruits? O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me this.’ Thus addressed by Indra of the gods, the immensely energetic Brihaspati, the priest of the gods, replied to Shatakratu. ‘O slayer of Vritra! An immensely wise person who gives gold, gives cattle and gives land is freed from all sins. O Indra of the gods! O lord! But there is nothing that is superior to giving away land. I think it is superior and the learned ones have also said this. O best of the gods! Among the brave ones who are killed in battle and among the ones who give to those who solicit gifts, there is no one who is superior to the one who gives away land. There are those who are engaged in ensuring the welfare of their masters and give up their lives in battle. Those brave ones go to Brahma's world. But they cannot surpass the ones who give away land. A man who gives away land saves eleven generations of his lineage, the five generations that will follow and the six generations that have gone to the nether regions. O Purandara! A man who gives away the earth, with all its riches, is freed from all sins and obtains greatness in the world of heaven. A king who gives away the prosperous earth, with qualities that satisfy all the objects of desire, becomes the king of kings because of that supreme gift. O Vasava! When the earth, with all its objects of desire, are given to someone like Kashyapa, all the creatures think that it has been given to them. O one with the thousand eyes! It is like a cow that yields all the objects of desire and satisfies the best of wishes. A man who gives this, goes to heaven. O Indra of the gods! It has flows of honey. The flows of water in the rivers are like milk and curds. The donation of land satisfies everything. O king! By giving away land, a king is said to be freed from all sins. There is no other gift that is superior to the giving away of land. If a man uses his sword to conquer the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, and then gives it away, men in this world talk about him as long as fame is talked about. O Purandara! If a man gives away the earth with all its sacred juices, then the qualities that he has obtained by donating land are never destroyed in this world. O Shakra! A king who desires his own prosperity and desires his own happiness must always follow the proper rites and give away land to worthy recipients. If a man commits sins and then gives away land to brahmanas, he abandons all those sins, like a snake casts aside old skin. O

Shakra! If a man gives away the earth, with its oceans, rivers, mountains and groves, that is like giving away everything. The donation of the earth is like giving away lakes, wells, streams and rivers. Because of the earth's moisture, it is like giving away the best of juices. The donation of the earth is like giving away herbs full of juices, trees that are covered with flowers and fruits and groves and hills. There are sacrifices like *agnishtoma*, performed with the giving away of a lot of dakshina. However, the fruits obtained from those are nothing compared to those obtained from giving away land. The giver of land saves ten generations.²⁷ However, having given land, if one subsequently takes that away, ten generations are cast into hell. If a person promises to give, but does not give later, or having given, if he takes it back, on the instruction of Death, such a person is bound up in Varuna's nooses. Those who offer oblations into the fire, always perform sacrifices, tend to their beloved guests even if they lack servants and sustain the best of brahmanas—are not approached by Yama. O Purandara! The king must repay the debt that he owes to brahmanas. That apart, he must save the weak and the distressed among other varnas. O lord of the gods! O best among the gods! One must never touch land that belongs to someone else, especially to a brahmana who lacks a means of subsistence. If tears fall from the eyes of such miserable and suffering brahmanas because the land has been taken away, then three generations of the lineage are destroyed. O one with the thousand eyes! If a person re-establishes a king who has been dislodged from his kingdom, such a person obtains greatness in the vault of heaven. There may be a person who conquers the earth with the valour of his arms and that land is always full of sugar cane, barley, wheat, cattle, horses and other kinds of mounts, being covered with jewels above the surface, as well as all kinds of riches under the surface. If he gives this away, that is known as a land sacrifice and earns the inexhaustible regions. All his sins are washed away. He is radiant, revered by the virtuous. If he gives away the earth to virtuous people, he obtains greatness in this world. O Shakra! If a drop of oil falls on water, it extends on every side. In that way, if land is given away, the fruits are enhanced on every side. O Shakra! There are brave kings who are the ornaments of assemblies. Without retreating, they are slain on the field of battle and obtain Brahma's world. Noble women, adorned in divine garlands and well versed in dancing and singing, tend to them there. O Indra of the gods! Those who give land always obtain heaven.²⁸ They obtain bliss in heaven and are worshipped by the gods and the gandharvas. This happens to those who properly give away land to brahmanas. O Indra of the gods! If a man gives away land, one hundred apsaras, adorned with divine garlands, always serve him. If a person gives away land, he obtains a conch shell, an excellent seat, an umbrella, excellent horses, excellent elephants, flowers and stores of gold. His commands are never disobeyed and he is greeted with sounds of victory. O Purandara! Heaven constitutes the flowers and fruits of giving away land. A man who gives away land, the origin of immortality, obtains gold, flowers, herbs, *kusha* grass, refined gold and pastures. There is no gift that is equal to giving away land. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother. There is no dharma equal to the truth. There is no wealth equal to donations.' Having heard this from the son of Angiras, Vasava gave the son of Angiras the earth, with its riches and jewels. If these chants about the merit of giving away land are recited at funeral ceremonies, rakshasas and asuras will not take away any of the shares. There is then no doubt that anything offered to the ancestors will become inexhaustible. Therefore, on the occasion of a funeral ceremony, a learned brahmana must make other brahmanas listen to this, while they are engaged in the act of eating. O unblemished one! O tiger among the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the best of gifts. What do you wish to hear again?"

Chapter 1743(62)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! In this world, when a king wishes to give away gifts to brahmanas, which are the ones with superior qualities? What satisfies them instantly? What follows when they are satisfied? O mighty-armed one! Instruct me about the great fruits of auspicious deeds. O king! In this world and in the world hereafter, what are the fruits of donations? I wish to hear about this from you. Tell me in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Earlier, I asked Narada, who has the form of a celestial being, these questions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you what he told me. Listen.

“Narada said, ‘In ancient times, the gods and the rishis praised food. The sustenance of beings and all the sacrifices are based on food. There is no donation that is equal to food. There has not been and there will not be. Therefore, men especially wish to donate food. In this world, food provides energy and life is based on food. O lord! It is food that holds up everything in the world and in the universe. In this world, householders and mendicants sustain themselves on food. There is no doubt, and it is evident, that life depends on food. If one desires for one’s own prosperity, even if this means causing suffering to the family, one should donate food to great-souled brahmanas who are begging for alms. If a person donates food to an accomplished brahmana who asks for it, then, in the world hereafter, the donor ensures the best riches for himself. There may be an aged guest who arrives at a house, exhausted and far from home. If the householder desires his own prosperity, he should worship him. O king! If a person casts aside anger, is without anger and is extremely good in conduct, donating food in this way, then he obtains happiness in this world and in heaven. A guest who has arrived must not be disrespected or refused. Gifts to even *shvapakas*²⁹ and bitches aren’t destroyed. There may be a person who is exhausted and has never been seen before.³⁰ If clean food is given to such a person, then great dharma is obtained. O lord of men! A man who affectionately offers food to ancestors, gods, rishis, brahmanas and guests obtains great and auspicious fruits. If a person has committed wicked deeds and donates food to someone who asks for it, then his sins are destroyed, especially if the recipient happens to be a brahmana. A gift of food to a brahmana becomes inexhaustible and that to a shudra yields great fruits. This is the difference between donating food to brahmanas and to shudras. When a brahmana solicits food, he should not be asked about his *gotra*, conduct, learning, country of residence or birth. Food must be given to this alms-seeker, even if he doesn’t ask for it. O king! There is no doubt that if a man gives food, he plants a tree of food that provides all the objects of desire, in this world and in the next. Like farmers who wait for excellent rains, the ancestors hope that their sons and grandsons will donate food. The brahmana is a great creature. If he himself comes and asks to be given, whether one gives voluntarily or involuntarily,³¹ one obtains auspicious merits. For all creatures, the brahmana is a guest. He is the one who eats first. When a brahmana seeks alms at a house and returns after being treated well, the householder’s prosperity increases. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After death, he is born in a family that enjoys great objects of desire. If a man gives food in this world, he obtains the supreme objective. A person who gives sweetmeats and sweet food resides in heaven and is honoured there. Food is the life of men. Everything is established on food. A person who donates food gets animals, daughters, riches and objects of pleasure. In this world, a person who donates food is described as a giver of life and he is said to be someone who has given everything. If a person follows the proper rites and gives food to guests and brahmanas, then the donor obtains happiness and even the gods worship him. The brahmana is a great being. He roams around on foot, but is like a field. Any seed that is sown there leads to great and auspicious fruits. A gift of food directly leads to delight in the giver and the recipient. The fruits of all other kinds of gifts are felt indirectly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that birth results from food. Desire results from food. Know that dharma and artha result from food. It is food that cures disease. In an earlier *kalpa*, Prajapati said that food is amrita. Food is the earth, heaven and the sky. Everything is established in food. When food is destroyed, the five elements in the body are adversely affected. When food is destroyed, even the strongest of the strong is destroyed. In the absence of food, invitations, marriages and sacrifices vanish. O foremost among men! Even the brahman³² is destroyed. Everything, mobile and immobile, is based on food. For dharma and artha in the three worlds, the learned give away food. O king! If a man donates food, in the three worlds, his strength, energy, fame, happiness, deeds and breath of life increase. The auspicious wind, the lord of the breath of life, accumulates water in the clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shakra showers down rain from the clouds. Using his rays, the sun in the sky sucks up those juices from the earth. For the juices, the god, Prajapati, uses the sun and the wind in this way. From the clouds, rain pours down on the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That makes the goddess Vasumati gentle.³³ Crops are sown then and these sustain the universe. Flesh, fat, bones and semen result again. O lord of the earth! The creatures are generated from the semen. Agni and Soma create the semen and nurture it. In this way, the sun, the wind and semen are dependent on food. These are said to be parts of the same accumulation and creatures are generated from this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a person swiftly gives food to someone who comes to his house and asks for it, then he gives life and energy to creatures.”

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Having been thus addressed by Narada, I have always given food. Therefore, do not be malicious. Give food without any anxiety. O king! O lord! If you follow the rites and give food to brahmanas in the proper way, then you will obtain heaven. O lord of men! Hear about the worlds that are obtained through donations of food. In heaven, the abodes of those great-souled ones are resplendent. They are in many places, have many kinds of forms and possess many pillars. They are as white as the lunar disc and have nets of bells. Those abodes are both stationary and mobile and possess the complexion of the rising sun. They are populated by many hundred creatures that dwell on land and in the water. They dazzle like lapis lazuli and are decorated with silver and gold. Trees that yield all the objects of desire are placed in those abodes. There are tanks, roads, plains, wells and lakes everywhere. The roar of thousands of yoked vehicles can be heard. There are mountains of food to be tasted and swallowed and garments and ornaments. There are rivers overflowing with milk and mountains of food. The palaces have the hue of white clouds and the beds shine in gold. Those who donate food obtain these. Therefore, give food. For great-souled ones who give food, these are the worlds obtained, meant for the performers of auspicious deeds. Therefore, on earth, men must specially donate food.”’

Chapter 1744(63)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I have heard the words you have spoken about the ordinances on giving food. But tell me about the conjunctions of *nakshatras*,³⁴ under which, different kinds of gifts must be thought of.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Devaki and *devarshi* Narada. Narada, with a divine form, arrived in Dvaraka. Devaki, who had insight about dharma, asked him this question. Thus asked, *devarshi* Narada told her everything about the ordinances. O lord of the earth! Listen.

“Narada said, ‘O immensely fortunate one! Under Krittika, if one satisfies brahmanas with *payasam*³⁵ and *ghee*, then one obtains the supreme among the worlds meant for the virtuous. Under Rohini, to free oneself from debts, one must give brahmanas the meat of deer, food, ghee, milk and other objects of food and drink. Under Somadai-vata,³⁶ if one gives a cow and a calf, one goes from the world of men to the supreme world of heaven. Under Ardra, if a man fasts and gives *krisara*³⁷ mixed with oil, then he is freed from all difficulties, including those that are as razor-sharp as the edges of mountains. O beautiful one! Under Punarvasu, if one gives sweet cakes and food, one is reborn in a family that has a lot of food and one is also famous and handsome. Under Pushya, if one gives gold, whether it is worked or unworked, one obtains a world where one shines like Soma, though the world itself is dark. Under Ashlesha, if one gives a bull decorated with silver, one is freed from all fear and obtains prosperity. Under Magha, if a man fills vessels with sesamum, one obtains sons and animals in this world and happiness after death. Under Purva Phalguni, if a person desires prosperity, he should fast and give food and fermented sugar cane juice to brahmanas. Under Uttara Phalguni, if one follows the rites and gives rice³⁸ mixed with ghee and milk, one obtains greatness in heaven. It has been determined that any gifts made by a man under Uttara Phalguni lead to great and infinite fruits. Under Hasta, if a man fasts and gives a chariot yoked to four elephants, he obtains the supreme and auspicious worlds that satisfy every kind of desire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Under Chitra, if one gives a bull and auspicious fragrances, one roams around in delight in this world, like the *apsaras* do in Nandana. Under Svati, if one gives riches, one obtains the auspicious worlds that one desires and also obtains great fame. Under Vishakha, if one gives a bull, a milk-yielding cow, a basket, a wagonload of paddy and garments, then one pleases the ancestors and the gods. After death, one obtains the infinite. He does not face any hardships and goes to the world of heaven. By giving what has been stated to brahmanas, one obtains whatever vocation one desires. It has also been determined that the donor is saved from hell and other hardships. Under Anuradha, if a man fasts and gives embroidered cloth and garments, then he obtains greatness in heaven for one hundred *yugas*. If a person desires prosperity, under Jyeshtha, he should give brahmanas the herb known as *kalashaka*, with earth still clinging to the roots. He will then obtain the desired objective. Under Mula, if a person is controlled and gives roots and fruits to brahmanas, he pleases the ancestors and goes to the desired destination. Under Purva Ashadha, if a person fasts and gives vessels full of curd to a brahmana who has good lineage and conduct and is learned in

the Vedas, then after death, the donor is born in a family that has an extremely large number of cattle. Under Uttara Ashadha, if one gives jars filled with barley, ghee and large quantities of fermented liquor, one obtains all the objects that one desires. Under Abhijit, by giving milk, honey and ghee to learned men who are always devoted to dharma, one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. Under Shravana, by giving blankets and thick cloth, one roams around the worlds on white vehicles. Under Dhanishtha, if a person is controlled and gives a vehicle yoked to bulls and garments with fine strands, immediately after death, he obtains a kingdom. Under Shatabhisha, if one gives fragrances, aloe and sandalwood, after death, one obtains a world with apsaras and eternal fragrances. Under Purva Bhadrapada, if a person gives *rajamasha*,³⁹ he is happy after death and obtains all kinds of food and fruits. Under Uttara, if a person gives goat meat, he pleases the ancestors and obtains the infinite after death. Under Revati, if a person gives a cow and a brass vessel for milking, after death, the cow presents itself before the donor and satisfies every desire. Under Ashvini, if a supreme among men gives a chariot yoked to horses, after death, one is radiant and is born in a family that possesses elephants, horses and chariots. Under Bharani, if a man gives brahmanas sesamum and a cow, after death, he obtains fame and a large number of cows.”

‘Bhishma continued, “These are the signs associated with the nakshatras that have been indicated. Narada told Devaki about these and she told her daughters-in-law.”

Chapter 1745(64)

‘Bhishma said, “The illustrious Atri, the son of the grandfather, said that those who give gold give all the objects of desire. Harishchandra, Indra among men, spoke about gold as something that is pure, cleansing the donor and providing indestructible benefits to his forefathers. Manu said that the gift of a drink is a supreme gift. Therefore, tanks, wells and ponds must be dug. If a man undertakes the task of digging a well and always follows good conduct, then half of his sins are taken away. If cattle, brahmanas and virtuous people always drink from a waterbody dug by a man, then his entire lineage is saved. If a person offers an unrestricted supply of water during the summer, then he never faces any calamity or hardship. The illustrious Brihaspati, Pushan, Bhaga, the Ashvins and the fire god are satisfied with ghee. It is a supreme medication and this is supreme knowledge. It is a supreme liquid and leads to supreme fruits. A man who desires fruits, fame and nourishment must always purify himself and give ghee to brahmanas. If a person gives ghee to brahmanas in the month of Ashvina, then the gods, the two Ashvins, are pleased with him and confer beauty on him. If a person gives payasam mixed with ghee to brahmanas, rakshasas never attack his house. If a person gives vessels filled with water, he doesn’t die from thirst. He doesn’t face a hardship and isn’t seen to suffer from a difficulty. If a person is controlled and with supreme devotion gives to a best among brahmanas, then he obtains one-sixth of the brahmana’s merits. O Indra among kings! If a man gives a brahmana wood for the successful completion of his rites or for purposes of heating, he is always successful in his efforts. All of his different kinds of efforts are always successful. His form is seen to be progressively more radiant than that of the enemy. The illustrious fire god is always extremely pleased with such a person. He is never separated from his animals. Nor is he separated from victory in battle. If a person gives an umbrella, he obtains sons and prosperity. He doesn’t suffer from any disease of the eyes and obtains a share in the sacrifices. If a person gives an umbrella during the summer or when it is raining, he never suffers from any mental anxiety. O brahmana!⁴⁰ He is freed from all hardships and difficulties. Among all the kinds of gifts that can be given, a cart is the best. O immensely fortunate one! This was said by the illustrious rishi, Shandilya.”

Chapter 1746(65)

‘Yudhisthira asked, “O grandfather! If a brahmana’s feet are being scorched by the heat and one gives him footwear, what fruits are obtained? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person is controlled and donates footwear to brahmanas, he is able to overcome all thorns and difficulties. O Yudhishtira! He is always placed above his enemies. O lord of the earth! His sparkling vehicle is yoked to mules and is decorated in silver and in gold. O Kounteya! He is stationed atop that. The merit is like that of donating a cart with well-trained mounts.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O Kourava! Tell me once again about the fruits from donating sesamum, donating land, donating cattle and donating food, though you have already recounted it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kounteya! Hear about the fruits from donating sesamum. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! It has to be given properly. Listen. Svayambhu created sesamum as the first food for the ancestors. Therefore, the party of the ancestors is delighted when sesamum is donated. If a person gives sesamum to brahmanas in the month of Magha,⁴¹ then he does not have to see hell, which is populated by all kinds of unholy creatures. Offering sesamum to the ancestors is like performing all the sacrifices, with a desire for the fruits. Without a desire for the fruits, one should never perform a funeral ceremony where sesamum is offered. Sesamum was created from the body of *maharshi* Kashyapa. O lord! That is the reason the offering of sesamum has divine attributes. They provide nourishment and beauty and destroy sins. That is the reason the gifting of sesamum is superior to all other donations. The intelligent Apastamba,⁴² Shankha, Likhita and maharshi Goutama went to heaven after donating sesamum. Brahmanas who are devoted to offering oblations of sesamum, control the urge towards sexual intercourse and perform acts of *pravritti* where oblations of cattle products are offered, are regarded as equal. It has been said that the donation of sesamum is superior to all other kinds of gifts. It has also been said that among all kinds of gifts, the gift of sesamum leads to inexhaustible fruits. O scorcher of enemies! On an earlier occasion, oblations of clarified butter weren’t available. Having offered sesamum seeds, the rishi Kushika went to the supreme destination. O best among the Kuru lineage! I have thus spoken to you about the supreme gift of sesamum. I have also told you about the rules. It is because of those rules that the gift of sesamum is praised.

“After this, listen to what I have to say about the gods desiring to perform a sacrifice. O great king! They went and met Svayambhu Brahma. The gods went and met Brahma, desiring a part of the earth where they might perform the sacrifice. O king! They said, ‘We desire an auspicious spot where we can perform the sacrifice. O illustrious one! You are the lord of the earth and of heaven. O immensely fortunate one! With your permission, we wish to undertake a sacrifice. If the ground is used without permission, the fruits of the sacrifice aren’t obtained. You are the lord of everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. Therefore, we are seeking your permission.’ Brahma replied, ‘O bulls among the gods! O descendants of Kashyapa! I will give you a part of the earth. You can perform your sacrifice at that spot.’ The gods said, ‘O illustrious one! Our wishes have been satisfied. We will perform our sacrifice and give away large quantities of dakshina. Let this spot always be worshipped by the sages.’ Agastya, Kanva, Bhrgu, Atri, Vrishakapi, Asita and Devala came to the sacrifice performed by the gods. O undecaying one! The great-souled gods performed their sacrifice. At the right time, the bulls among gods completed the sacrifice. The gods performed their sacrifice on the slopes of the Himalayas. They earmarked one-sixth share of their sacrifice for those who would donate land. If a person donates a small bit of land reverentially, he does not suffer from any hardships and does not have to face any difficulties. If a person donates some land with a well-constructed house that is capable of withstanding heat, cold and wind, then even when his merits are exhausted, he is not dislodged from the world of the gods. O king! A wise person who gives such a refuge resides happily with Shakra and obtains greatness in heaven. There may be a learned brahmana who is in control of his senses and has been born in a family of preceptors. If he is given a house in which he resides happily, the donor obtains the best of worlds. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! If a person donates a shelter for cows that is strong and is capable of withstanding cold and rain, then the donor saves seven generations of his lineage.⁴³ O son! By donating arable land, one obtains prosperous worlds. By donating land that is rich in wealth, one extends one’s family and lineage. One should never donate land that is barren or scorched. Nor should one donate land that is near a cremation ground or is populated by wicked people. If a person performs a funeral ceremony for the ancestors in land that is owned by someone else, then the gift of that land and the fruits of the ceremony are both destroyed. Therefore, a learned person will purchase a plot of land and then donate it, even if it is small. The funeral cakes offered to the ancestors then become inexhaustible. Forests, mountains, rivers and *tirthas* are not owned by anyone. Therefore, ceremonies can be performed there. O lord of the earth! I have spoken to you about the fruits from donating land.

“O unblemished one! I will next tell you about the donation of cattle. Cows are superior to all ascetics. That is the reason the god Maheshvara performed austerities in their company. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with Soma, they dwell in Brahma’s world. That is the supreme destination that successful brahmana rishis seek. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They provide milk, clarified butter, curds, dung, hides, bones, horns and hair. They tolerate cold and heat and always work. They tolerate the difficult hardships of the monsoon season. With brahmanas, they go to the supreme destination. That is why the learned say that cows and brahmanas are equal. In ancient times, Rantideva performed a sacrifice where animals were slaughtered. It is because of the hides of cattle that the river formed came to be known as Charmanvati.⁴⁴ O lord of the earth! However, animals are no longer slaughtered and are thought of as gifts. O king! A person who donates them to the best of brahmanas is saved from calamities, hardships and difficulties. A person who donates one thousand cows does not have to see hell after death. O lord of men! Such a person obtains victory everywhere. The lord of the thirty gods has spoken of the milk of cows as amrita. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates amrita. Those who are knowledgeable about the Vedas say that ghee obtained from such milk is the best oblation offered to a fire. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates oblations. A bull is like the direct manifestation of heaven. A person who donates it to a brahmana who possesses the qualities obtains greatness in heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A cow is said to be the breath of life among creatures. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates the breath of life. Those who are knowledgeable about the Vedas have said that a cow is the refuge of creatures. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates refuge. A cow must not be donated for slaughter, to someone who kills animals, or to a non-believer. O bull among men! A cow must not be given to someone who earns a living from cattle. Learned ones have said that if a man gives a cow to such perpetrators of wicked deeds, he goes to ever-lasting hell. A cow that is given to a brahmana should not be lean, barren, diseased, defective in limb, exhausted, or one that does not easily calve. A man who properly donates ten thousand cattle enjoys delight with Shakra. A man who donates one hundred thousand cattle obtains the eternal worlds. I have talked about donating cows, donating sesamum and donating land.

“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Now hear about gifts of food. O Kounteya! The donation of food is said to be the best. After donating food, Rantideva went to heaven. O lord of the earth! O lord of men! If a person gives food to someone who is exhausted and hungry, the immensely fortunate one sees Svayambhu’s world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! By donating gold, garments and horses, a man doesn’t obtain the benefit that can be obtained by donating food. Food is the supreme object. It has been held that food is supreme prosperity. Life, power, energy, valour and strength result from food. If a man always donates food single-mindedly, then he does not suffer from any hardship. Parashara said that. O king! After worshipping the gods in the proper way, food must be offered to them. A man offers the gods the food that he himself partakes. If a man donates food in the *shuklapaksha* of Koumudi,⁴⁵ then he can tide over all hardships. After death, he obtains the infinite. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a person is controlled and offers food to a hungry guest, he obtains the worlds that are meant for those who know about the brahman. A man who donates food manages to cross over every difficulty and hardship. He overcomes his sins and cleanses all his wicked deeds. I have thus spoken about the fruits from donation of food, donation of sesamum, donation of land and donation of cattle.”

Chapter 1747(66)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O father! You have recounted the fruits of donations and I have heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Food has specially been praised. What are the great and supreme fruits obtained from donating drinks? O grandfather! I wish to hear about this in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among Bharatas! I will accurately tell you about this. O one with truth as his valour! I will tell you about this now. Listen. O unblemished one! I will tell you everything about gifts of drinks. I think that the benefit that a man obtains from donating food and drinks is supreme and there is no other gift that is equal to these. O son! In every way, life is upheld through food. Therefore, in this world, it is held to be the supreme donation. It is through food that the energy and strength of creatures are always increased. Therefore, Prajapati has said

that the donation of food is supreme. O Kounteya! Savitri's auspicious words about this have also been heard. O immensely intelligent one! They were uttered on the occasion of a sacrifice of the gods. 'If a man donates food, he donates life. There is no gift in this world that is superior to granting life.'⁴⁶ O mighty-armed one! You have also heard Lomasha's words, spoken in earlier times, when Shibi granted life to the pigeon.⁴⁷ O lord of the earth! If a person donates food to a brahmana, he grants life and obtains a superior end. That is what we have heard. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Drinks are superior to food. Without water, nothing can exist. The illustrious Soma, the lord of the large number of planets, was created from water. O great king! Amrita, *sudha*,⁴⁸ *svaha*, *vashat*, food, herbs and medicinal plants have originated from water. O lord of the earth! The breath of life of creatures results from this. Amrita is food for the gods and *sudha* is food for the serpents. *Svadhya* is said to be food for the ancestors and plants and herbs are food for animals. The learned have said that food is the breath of life for humans. O tiger among men! All of these have resulted from drink. Therefore, there is nothing superior to a gift of drink. A man who desires his own prosperity must always gift it. O lord of the earth! A gift of drink ensures praise, fame and long life. O Kounteya! One who gives water is always established above his enemies. He obtains all the objects of desire and eternal fame. He is freed from sins. After death, he obtains the infinite. O tiger among men! O immensely radiant one! A person who gifts water goes to heaven. He obtains the indestructible and eternal worlds. This is what Manu has said.'"

Chapter 1748(67)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Tell me again about gifts of sesamum, lamps, food and garments.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a brahmana and Yama. In the middle region, in the land between the Ganga and the Yamuna, there was a large village of brahmanas, at the foot of the mountains known as Yamuna.⁴⁹ O lord of men! That beautiful village was known as Parnashala. Many learned brahmanas resided there. One day, Yama instructed a man.⁵⁰ He was attired in black garments. His eyes were red and his body hair stood erect. His feet, eyes and nose were like that of a crow. ‘Go to the village of brahmanas. Having gone there, bring the one who is named Sharmina. He belongs to Agastya's lineage. He is learned and self-controlled. He is a revered and well-known preceptor. Do not bring anyone else, even if that person lives near him and is from the same gotra. That other person is his equal in qualities, studying and birth. He is also the intelligent one's⁵¹ equal in offspring and conduct. Bring the one I have spoken about. It is my duty to honour him.’ Having gone there on Yama's instructions, he did the opposite of what he had been asked to. Though restrained by Yama, he attacked and brought the other one. At this, Yama arose and worshipped the valiant one. He said, ‘Take this one away and bring the other one instead.’ When Dharmaraja⁵² spoke these words, the brahmana replied to Dharmaraja. ‘I am tired of studying. O undecaying one! Whatever be the time that is left for me, I wish to dwell here with you.’⁵³ Yama said, ‘I cannot accept anyone until his ordained time has come. I only know about the acts of dharma that people have performed.’⁵⁴ O brahmana! O immensely radiant one! Return to your own house. Tell me if there is anything else that I can do for you.’ The brahmana replied, ‘Tell me about extremely great and beneficial acts. O excellent one! You are the yardstick for everything in the three worlds.’

“Yama said, ‘O brahmana rishi! Listen to the excellent ordinances that have been laid down for donations. Sesamum is a supreme gift and leads to eternal merits. O bull among brahmanas! Depending on capacity, one must always donate sesamum. If one donates sesamum every day, one obtains all the objects of desire. A funeral ceremony with sesamum is praised and it is the supreme gift. Following the ordinances laid down for rites, give it to brahmanas. Whenever sesamum is obtained, sesamum must always be eaten. If a virtuous person desires prosperity, he must always do this in his house, with all his soul.’⁵⁵ There is no doubt that drinks also figure among all gifts. Lakes, ponds and wells must be constructed. O supreme among brahmanas! Such tasks are extremely rare in the world. Water must always be given, since it brings supreme merits. O supreme among brahmanas! For the sake of drinking water, reservoirs must always be constructed. In particular, after a person has eaten, water must be offered.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having been instructed, Yama’s messenger then took him back to his residence. Once he⁵⁶ had been taken there, he followed all of Yama’s instructions. Having taken him there, Yama’s messenger seized Sharmina and went and conveyed him to Dharmaraja. Dharmaraja, who knew about dharma, worshipped the powerful one. Having conversed with him, Yama also instructed him about everything and said that he should be taken back to where he had been brought from. Having returned, he also did everything that Yama had asked him to. For the benefit of the ancestors, Yama praised the donation of lamps. Therefore, to enable the ancestors to cross over, lamps must always be given. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One must always give lamps. O lord! These have been held to constitute eyes for the gods and the ancestors. O lord of men! It has been said that the donation of jewels brings extremely great merits. If a brahmana receives these, and then sells them for undertaking a sacrifice, he doesn’t do anything terrible. Having received these, if a brahmana donates them to other brahmanas, both the donor and the recipient obtain inexhaustible benefits. Manu knew about dharma and said that as long as the donor and the recipient follow the appropriate rites, both of them obtain eternal dharma. A man who is devoted to his own wife must always give garments. He will then obtain excellent garments and excellent attire. O tiger among men! These are the proofs enunciated and described in the Vedas about the many benefits from donating cattle, gold and sesamum. One must marry and generate offspring. O Kouravya! The obtaining of a son is superior to all kinds of gains.”’

Chapter 1749(68)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Tell me again about the supreme ordinances associated with donations. O immensely fortunate one! Especially tell me about gifts of land. Through his own deeds,⁵⁷ a kshatriya must donate the earth to brahmanas and they must receive it, following the rites. No one else⁵⁸ should donate it. Desiring the fruits, all the varnas must donate according to their capacities. The Vedas have enumerated this and you should explain it to me.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “There are three gifts that have the same name and lead to the same kind of fruits. They lead to all the fruits of desire being met and they are a cow, the earth and Sarasvati. A person who tells his disciple about the dharma of Brahmi Sarasvati obtains fruits that are equal to those obtained from donating the earth and cows.⁵⁹ Cows are also praised in that way and there is no gift that is superior. O Yudhishtira! From their donation, one can also reap the best fruits. Cattle are the mothers of all creatures and yield all kinds of happiness. A person who desires his prosperity must always give cows as dakshina. They are the auspicious abodes of divinity and must always be worshipped. Earlier, when gods used cattle to till the land, they goaded them. Therefore, it is permissible to goad them in such a task, but never for anything else. When cows are grazing, drinking water or lying down, they must not be disturbed. When they are thirsty, even by looking at a man, they are capable of killing him and his relatives. The seats of the ancestors and the seats of the gods are purified with cow dung. What can be more pure than them? Before he himself eats, if a person gives someone else’s cow a handful of grass daily, for an entire year, that is like performing a vow that satisfies all the objects of desire. He obtains sons, fame, riches and prosperity. Everything inauspicious is destroyed and his nightmares melt away.”’

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What are the signs of cattle that can be given and which are the ones to be avoided? Who is a good recipient and who are the ones to whom one shouldn’t give?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “A cow must never be given to a person who is wicked in conduct, sinful, greedy, untruthful in speech and one who does not render offerings to the ancestors and the gods. If a person gives ten cows to a learned brahmana who seeks alms, has many sons and makes offerings to the fire, the donor obtains supreme worlds. If a person performs acts of dharma with possessions he has obtained from someone else, then both the actor and the original owner get a share of the auspicious merits. A person who is the biological father, a person who saves from great fear and a person who provides means of subsistence—these are the three types of fathers. Sins are destroyed by serving a preceptor. Insolence destroys great fame. If one has three sons, then one is no longer a person without a son.⁶⁰ Ten cows ensure a means of subsistence. Means of sustenance must be created for a brahmana who is devoted to Vedanta, is extremely learned, is content in his wisdom, has conquered his senses, is virtu-

ous and self-controlled, is pleasant in speech towards all beings, is one who will not perform a perverse deed out of a minor fear, is mild and generous, is always attentive towards guests, has sons and wives and is equal in conduct.⁶¹ The merits obtained from giving a cow to a recipient who possesses the qualities are equal to the demerits subtracted if one seizes a brahmana's possessions. In every situation, one must avoid taking away a brahmana's possessions and one must maintain a distance from his wives.”

Chapter 1750(69)

‘Bhishma said, “O extender of the Kuru lineage! In this connection, there is the recital of the extremely difficult hardship Nriga had to face when he took away the possession of a virtuous brahmana. O Partha! On an earlier occasion, it has been heard that some people entered the city of Dvaravati and saw a giant well that was covered with grass and creepers. They made efforts, seeking to obtain water from the well. Since the water was extensively covered, they had to struggle a lot. After clearing this, they saw a giant lizard there. They made thousands of attempts to remove it from that place. It was as large as a mountain and they used ropes made of leather to bind and drag it away. However, not succeeding in these attempts, they went to Janardana. ‘There is a giant lizard that has completely covered the mouth of the well. We have been unable to remove it.’ They reported this to Krishna.

“Vasudeva removed it from there and wished to know who it actually was. Thus asked, it reported itself to be King Nriga, who, in earlier times, had performed one thousand sacrifices. When it answered in this way, Madhava said, ‘You performed auspicious deeds, not wicked ones. Why did you then face this hardship? O Indra among kings! Tell me. How did you attain this state? We have heard that in ancient times, you repeatedly gave brahmanas hundreds of thousands of cows one hundred times. Then you again gave hundred and eight thousand of cows a hundred thousand times. Why did this happen to you?’ Nriga told Krishna, ‘There was a brahmana who practised agnihotra. While he was away, it was led astray and mixed with my herd of cows. That animal got included in thousands of cattle I possessed. Desiring prosperity after death, I gave it away to a brahmana. The brahmana returned and saw that his wayward cow was in another brahmana's house. He said, “This belongs to me.” They disputed the matter and, extremely anxious, appeared before me. Both of them spoke to me. One said, “You gave me this.” The other said, “You stole this from me.” I told the one I had given the cow to, “In exchange for this cow, accept these hundreds and hundreds of cows.” However, he replied, “The one I got is appropriate for the time and the place. She yields a lot of milk. She is quiet and affectionate. Her milk is sweet. She has always been praised in my house. I have a weak son who has just been weaned and this cow has nourished him. I am incapable of giving her away.” Having said this, he left. So I spoke to the other brahmana and proposed an exchange. “Instead of this cow, accept these hundred thousand other cows.” But the brahmana replied, “I am established on my own path and am incapable of accepting gifts from kings. Therefore, swiftly return the cow that is mine.” O Madhusudana! I offered him gold, horses, silver and chariots. However, the bull among brahmanas did not accept these. Meanwhile, urged by the dharma of time, I obtained the world of the ancestors⁶² and was brought before Dharmaraja. Yama worshipped me and spoke these words. “O king! There is no end to the number of auspicious deeds you have performed. But there is a sin, even if you committed it inadvertently. Do you wish to suffer for the sin earlier or later? It shall be as you wish. You promised that you would protect. You took a false pledge. You seized the possession of a brahmana. These are the three aspects to the sin you committed.” I replied, “O lord! I shall suffer from the sin first. Let the auspicious benefits come later.” As soon as I said this to Dharmaraja, I fell down on the surface of the earth and could hear the words that Yama spoke to me. O Janardana! He said, “Vasudeva will save you. When one thousand years are over, the fruits of your evil deed will wear thin. Because of the other deeds that you have yourself performed, you will then conquer and obtain the eternal worlds.” I fell down, head downwards, and found myself inside this well. Though I was born as an inferior species, my memory did not desert me. You have saved me today. This can be nothing other than the strength of your austerities. O Krishna! Grant me permission. I wish to go to heaven now.’ O scorcher of enemies! He took Krishna's permission. He bowed down to Janardana and ascending a celestial vehicle, went to heaven. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After Nriga reached heaven, Vasudeva recited this shloka. ‘No man should willingly seize something that belongs

to a brahmana. If seized, a brahmana's property causes destruction, just as the brahmana's cow destroyed Nriga.' O Partha! A meeting with the virtuous is never fruitless. Behold Nriga's encounter with a virtuous person. He was freed from hell. There are fruits from donations. There are also evil fruits from violence. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, you should avoid acts of injury towards cows.'"

Chapter 1751(70)

“Yudhishtira said, “O unblemished one! O mighty-armed one! Tell me in detail about the fruits that can be obtained from donating cattle. I am not satisfied with what you have said.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the words the rishi Uddalaki and Nachiketa spoke to each other. Having initiated himself for a rite, the rishi Uddalaki told his son, Nachiketa, ‘Serve me.’ When those rituals were completed, the maharshi again told his son, ‘I have been engaged with my ablutions and have focused on studying. Since my mind was on those, I have forgotten to bring the firewood, the *darbha* grass and the pot full of water that I had collected. They are on the banks of the river. Go and bring them.’ However, having gone there, he saw that all these had been washed away by the force of the river’s current. The sage went and told his father, ‘I did not see them there.’ At that time, the sage Uddalaki was overcome by hunger, thirst and exhaustion. The immensely ascetic one cursed his son, ‘You will see Yama.’ Struck by the *vajra* of his father’s words, he joined his hands in salutation and asked for pacification. However, he lost his life and fell down on the ground. His father saw that Nachiketa had fallen down and became senseless with grief. He exclaimed, ‘What have I done?’ He also fell down on the ground. He was overcome with supreme grief at his son having been killed through his own acts. The day passed and the terrible night arrived. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Nachiketa lay down on a mat of kusha grass. As his father’s tears fell on him, he began to move, like crops reviving when they are showered with rain. His body was smeared with divine fragrances and he was still weak, as if he had woken up from sleep. His father praised this phenomenon of his son reviving and asked, ‘O son! Have you conquered the worlds through your auspicious deeds? It is good fortune that I have got you back. Your body isn’t human any longer.’ The great-souled one had directly witnessed everything and was thus asked by his father.

“In the midst of the maharshis, he clearly told his father what had happened. ‘Following your instructions, I quickly went to Vaivasvata’s abode. It was large, beautiful and resplendent. I saw a multi-storeyed assembly hall that was golden and one thousand *yojanas*⁶³ wide. As soon as he saw me advance towards him, Vaivasvata instructed that a house and a seat should be given to me. He offered *arghya*⁶⁴ and the other signs of welcome. For your sake, he honoured me. I was thus surrounded and honoured by his attendants. I gently spoke these words. “O Dharmaraja! I have come to your dominion. Grant me the worlds that have been earmarked for me.” Yama told me, “O amiable one! You are not dead. Your ascetic father told you to see Yama. He is like a blazing fire in his energy. O brahmana! I am incapable of rendering his words false. O son!⁶⁵ I have seen you now. Return. The one who created your body is sorrowing. What can I give you? What does your mind desire? You are my beloved guest. I will grant the boon you desire.” Thus addressed, I replied, “I have obtained your dominion and it is extremely difficult to return from here. If you think that I am deserving of a boon, I wish to see the prosperous worlds meant for those who perform auspicious deeds.” The god asked me to ascend a vehicle. It was yoked to horses and was extremely radiant, like the sun. O Indra among brahmanas! He showed me all the worlds meant for the performers of auspicious deeds. There, I saw the dazzling residences meant for those who have cleansed their souls. They had different foundations and forms. They were full of many kinds of jewels. They sparkled like the lunar disc. They were decorated with nets of bells. There were hundreds that had many floors and there were lakes and groves inside them. They dazzled like lapis lazuli and were decorated with silver and gold. Everything there, mobile and immobile, possessed the complexion of the rising sun. There were mountains of objects to eat and swallow. There were garments and beds. In those residences, there were trees that granted all the objects of desire. Everywhere, there were rivers, roads, assembly halls, lakes and tanks. Thousands of vehicles were yoked and they thundered. There were rivers that flowed with milk. There were mountains of ghee. The water sparkled. With Vaivasvata’s permission, I saw many such countries that I had never seen before. Having seen all this, I addressed

the ancient and powerful Dharmaraja. “These rivers have eternal flows of milk and ghee. Whose food have these been decreed as?” Yama replied, “Know that these objects of food are for the virtuous ones who donate milk. There are other eternal and pervasive worlds, bereft of all misery, for the virtuous ones who are devoted to donating cows. The gifting of cows alone is not praised. There are ordinances about the time and the recipient. O brahmana! One should give after knowing these. Know that if a cow is kept inside a place where it suffers from the fire or the sun, this leads to hardship.⁶⁶ If a brahmana is firm in studying, is extremely ascetic and is devoted to sacrifices, he is a worthy recipient. Cows which have been rescued from a situation of distress and have thereafter been nourished, are especially praised. One should fast for three nights and sleep on the ground. After that, contented, one should give cows away. Cows should cheerfully be given away, with their calves, with all the other accompaniments. They should be ones that yield good calves. Having given them, for three days, the donor should only subsist on the milk of cows. One must donate a cow after following good vows. A brass vessel must be given for milking. It should be one that has easy birth and should also be one that does not run away. In that event, the donor enjoys the world of heaven for as many years as there are hairs on the cow’s body. A bull must be controllable and capable of bearing a burden. It must be strong and young. It must be large, brave and of noble birth. A donor who gives to a brahmana in this way, enjoys the worlds, like the donor of a cow. A forgiving and grateful person who has no means of subsistence and depends on cows for a living is said to be a worthy recipient. The donation of a cow is praised when there is fear about means of subsistence, for some great purpose, for the sake of agriculture, or for the sake of a sacrifice. The gift of a beloved cow is especially praised when it is for the preceptor or when it is for the sake of nurturing a child. The time and the place are important. Cows that are given should have been born internally,⁶⁷ purchased, obtained as a price for learning, obtained in exchange for other animals, conquered⁶⁸ or obtained in marriage.” Hearing Vaivasvata’s words, I spoke to him again. “If people do not own cattle, how can they go to worlds that are meant for the donors of cattle?” At this, the intelligent Yama replied, “By donating cattle, one goes to the supreme destination. In the absence of cattle, one can go to the regions where donors of cattle go, by giving what is regarded as equivalent to cows. In the absence of cows, one can carefully observe vows and create a cow made out of ghee. That flow of ghee is like a milk-yielding cow with a calf. In the absence of ghee, one can carefully observe vows and donate sesamum. Like a cow, that will save from all kinds of hardship and one will find delight, as with a river of milk. In the absence of sesamum, one can carefully observe vows and donate water. That will be like a flowing river of cool water and will satisfy all the objects of desire.” These were the instructions that Dharmaraja gave me then. O undecaying one! On seeing all this, I was filled with supreme delight. I will now report something that you will find agreeable. There is a great sacrifice that only requires a little bit of wealth. O father! It has been obtained by me and it will flow from me. It can also be observed by those who follow the ordinances of the Vedas. The curse that you imposed on me was actually a favour. Through that, I was able to see Yama. I witnessed the great gains that can be reaped through donations. Without any doubt, I will practise dana dharma. O brahmana rishi! This is what Dharmaraja repeatedly told me, cheerfully. “O son! A person who always donates, should specially gift cows. Be pure in pursuing this artha and do not ignore your own dharma. Depending on the time and the place, donate to a worthy recipient. Therefore, always donate cows. You should not entertain any doubts about this. In ancient times, there were those who were tranquil in their souls. They remained on the path of donations and always gave gifts. They were scared of engaging in terrible austerities. Hence, to the best of their capacities, they practised donations. In due course of time, they abandoned all malice. They purified their souls. They were faithful and good in conduct. Those performers of auspicious deeds tormented themselves through donations and obtained blazing worlds in the vault of heaven. Lawfully obtained objects must be given to brahmanas, after examining whether the recipient is worthy. They should be given on *kamyaashtami*.⁶⁹ After donating, for ten days, one should subsist on cow’s milk, cow dung and cow’s urine. The donor of a bull follows the vows of the Vedas. The donor of a couple of bulls becomes skilled in knowledge of the Vedas. By giving a vehicle yoked to cattle, one obtains the merit of bathing in tirthas. By giving a kapila cow, one is cleansed of all sins. If the owner of a kapila obtained through legitimate means gives it away, he is purified of all sins. There is nothing that is superior to the milk of cows. It is said that greatness is obtained from donating cows. Through their milk, cows hold up the world. Cows produce the food that sustains the worlds. Knowing about what cattle do, if a person oppresses them, he is evil in his consciousness and goes to hell. If a person donates one thousand cows, one hundred,

fifty or even ten, or even if one gives a single cow that properly gives birth to calves, to a virtuous brahmana, that cow becomes like a river that is full of sacred tirthas, yielding benefits. In prosperity, nourishment and protecting the worlds, cows are like the rays of the sun that descend on earth. The word is the same for both.⁷⁰ The donor of a cow enjoys extensive offspring. Therefore, a cow shines like the sun. In donating cows, for a disciple, the preceptor is the best recipient. He is the eloquent and controlled speaker who grants heaven. The knowledge of the ordinances is extremely great dharma. This is the first ordinance and all other ordinances result from this.⁷¹ Thus, legitimately earned objects must be given to brahmanas, after ascertaining the worthiness of the recipient. When praising, the immortals, men and we say, ‘May the auspiciousness of your deeds extend.’” O maharshi! This is what Dharmaraja told me. I bowed my head down before the one who has dharma in his soul. O illustrious one! Having taken Vaivasvata’s permission, I have returned here, at your feet.”

Chapter 1752(71)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O lord! When speaking about the rishi Nachiketa, you have told me about the greatness of donating cows and you have also instructed me about cattle. O grandfather! O immensely intelligent one! You have also told me about the hardship that the great-souled Nriga faced because of a single transgression. He had to dwell in Dvaravati for a long time. I have learnt how Krishna became the cause of his liberation. O lord! However, I still have a doubt about the world of cows. I wish to hear the truth about what is obtained by those who donate cows.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, there is an ancient history about what the god Shatakratu asked the one who was born from the lotus.

“Shakra said, ‘I have a doubt about the prosperity seen by those who reside in Goloka⁷² and it transcending that experienced by the residents of the world of heaven. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! What is the world of cows like? Tell me. I desire to know about where the donors of cows go and reside. What fruits do they obtain? What are the supreme qualities there? How do men go there, freed from anxiety? For how long does a donor of cows enjoy those fruits? Do they donate a lot, or do they donate a little? What is it for those who donate a lot? What is it for those who donate a little? How do those who donate none become like those who donate cows? Tell me. O lord! How do those who donate a lot become equal to those who donate a little? O lord! How do those who donate a little become like those who donate a lot? When cattle are given, what kind of dakshina is superior? O illustrious one! You should tell me the truth about this.’”

Chapter 1753(72)

“Brahma said, ‘O Shatakratu! You have asked me questions about the superiority of donating cows and there is no one else in the world who could have asked them. O Shakra! There are many kinds of worlds that you cannot see. I can see those worlds and so can women who have only one husband. Rishis who are excellent in their vows and extremely auspicious in their deeds go there, in their own bodies, and so do brahmanas who are virtuous in their conduct. Those who are excellent in their vows obtain emancipation and free themselves from their bodies.⁷³ With clear minds, they see those worlds in this world itself, as if in dreams. O one with the thousand eyes! Listen to the qualities that those worlds possess. There is no passage of time there. There is no old age. Nor is there sin. There is nothing that is inauspicious there. There is no disease or exhaustion. O Vasava! The cattle that dwell there obtain everything through their mental powers. I have directly seen this. They can go wherever they want. They roam around, wherever they wish. They enjoy one object of desire after another object of desire. Lakes, ponds, rivers, many kinds of groves, houses, mountains and all the objects that are agreeable to all beings—all these are seen there. Know that there is no world that is superior to this world. O Shakra! The best of men who tolerate everything, are forgiving and affectionate, follow their preceptors and are devoid of ego, go there. A man

who does not eat any kind of flesh, is always self-controlled, worships his mother and his father, is truthful, cheerfully serves brahmanas, does not exhibit anger towards cows or brahmanas, is devoted to dharma, serves his preceptors, is devoted to the truth for as long as he lives, is engaged in donations, is forgiving towards crimes, is mild and self-controlled, is devoted to gods and is compassionate towards all guests is a man who possesses the qualities to go to that eternal and undecaying world. A person who has intercourse with someone else's wife cannot see this world. Nor can a person who kills his preceptor, engages in futile boasting, or always engages in censuring peaceful brahmanas who are devoted to the Vedas. Evil-souled ones who possess other wickedness cannot go there either. Goloka is the residence of those who are the performers of auspicious deeds. Those who injure their friends, are ungrateful, deceitful, crooked, haters of dharma and slayers of brahmanas cannot see it, not even in their minds. O lord of the gods! I have thus skilfully told you everything.

““O Shatakratu! Now listen to the fruits obtained by those who gift cows. A person who donates a cow bought with the riches obtained through inheritance or bought with wealth that has been earned through dharma obtains worlds without decay. O Shakra! If a person buys a cow with riches won through gambling and then donates it, he enjoys the fruits for ten thousand divine years. If a person obtains a cow through inheritance, that is regarded as having obtained a cow lawfully. Such a gift can be received and the donor certainly obtains the undecaying worlds. O Shachi's lord! If a person receives a cow as a gift and then gives it away with an extremely pure heart, know that it is certain that he will obtain the eternal worlds. If a person speaks the truth from the moment of his birth, controls his senses, is forgiving and tolerates his preceptors and brahmanas, he goes to the destination meant for cows. O Shachi's lord! Words that should not be spoken should not be uttered towards a brahmana. One must not harm a cow, even mentally. One must follow the conduct of a cow.⁷⁴ One must be compassionate towards cows. O Shakra! Listen to the fruits obtained by those who are devoted to the truth. If he gives away a single cow, that is like giving away one thousand cows. Listen to the fruits obtained by kshatriyas who possess such qualities. If he gives away a single cow, it has been determined that this is like giving away one hundred cows. If a vaishya possesses such qualities, it will be like giving away fifty cows. For a humble shudra, the fruits are said to be one-fourth. There may be a person who is devoted to rites, devoted to the truth, engaged in service to the preceptor, self-controlled, forgiving, tranquil, pure in intelligence and devoted to dharma. He may worship gods and be free of egoism. If he follows the ordinances and gives a milk-yielding cow to a brahmana, he obtains great fruits. Always single-minded in devotion, one must always give, established in the truth and engaged in serving the preceptor. O Shakra! Listen to the fruits obtained by a person who studies the Vedas, is respectful towards cows, is always delighted at seeing cows and who, since birth, has bowed down before cows. He is said to obtain great fruits equal to those obtained by the performer of a royal sacrifice, or a sacrifice where a lot of gold is given. All the virtuous and successful rishis have said this. If a person practises great reverence, is truthful in speech, is tranquil and wise and always follows a vow towards cows, in the sense of giving cows something for an entire year, then he is auspicious in conduct and obtains fruits equal to those from donating one thousand cows. If a person eats only once a day and follows a vow towards cows, giving the remainder of the food to cows and showing compassion towards cows, he obtains the infinite for ten years. O Shatakratu! If a person devoutly gives away a single cow that has been bought, it is said that he obtains the fruits for many days, as if he had given away one hundred cows. These are the fruits obtained by a brahmana. Listen to what is said about the fruits obtained by a kshatriya. The fruits obtained by a kshatriya are said to last for five years.⁷⁵ It is said to be half that for a vaishya and a shudra's is half that for a vaishya. If one sells one's own person, buys a cow with this and then gives it away, it is said that the duration of the fruits enjoyed can be ascertained by touching the cow. O immensely fortunate one! It is said that there are as many eternal and indestructible worlds as there are hairs on the cow's body. O Koushika!⁷⁶ Know that if a cow is conquered in battle and then given away, the fruits are as eternal as those from selling one's own self. In the absence of a cow, if one is careful in vows and gives away a cow made out of sesamum, one can tide over all hardships. That cow's milk is like a river of bliss. The mere gift of a cow is not praised. The ordinances must be observed and the time and the place are important. One must donate a cow only at the right time and after ascertaining the nature of the brahmana. The cow must not suffer from fire and the sun in the recipient's residence. A person who is firm in studying, is pure of lineage, calm, is devoted to sacrifices, scared of sin, grateful, forgiving, is not too fierce, one whose subsistence has suffered and a person who will provide a refuge to cows is said to be a worthy recipient. The time and

the place are particularly superior for donating a cow when the recipient is excessively suffering because of the lack of a means of subsistence, when the cow is meant for agriculture, a sacrifice, a pregnant mother, for the sake of a preceptor or for rearing a child. If one knows about a cow's nature, if it has been obtained in exchange for knowledge, if it has been conquered through weapons, if it has been born in one's own house, if it has been saved from a distressful situation and if it has to be given because it can no longer be maintained—such cows are praised as gifts. Cattle that are strong, good in disposition and fragrant are always praised as gifts. Ganga is the best among rivers. Like that, a kapila is the best among cattle. For three nights, one must only subsist on water. One must sleep on the bare ground. After satisfying with other gifts, one must then give a cow. Healthy calves that have not been weaned must be given away with the cow. After giving the cow away, for three days, one must only subsist on milk. One must donate cows of a good disposition, ones that yield excellent calves. They must behave well and must not run away. If one gives away such a cow, in the world hereafter, one enjoys happiness for as many years as the cow possesses hair. For a brahmana, one must give a strong, young and truculent bull that is capable of bearing a burden. It must be great in courage and must be capable of carrying the plough. One then obtains worlds obtained by those who donate ten cows. O Koushika! If a person saves a brahmana or a cow from a desolate state, because of that act of conferring safety, he is freed. Listen to the good merits. Such a man obtains eternal fruits equal to a horse sacrifice. O one with the one thousand eyes! At the time of death, he obtains whatever status he desires.⁷⁷ He obtains many kinds of divine worlds and everything else that is there in his heart. Through that deed, the man obtains all these. With the permission of cattle, he obtains greatness everywhere. There may be a person who follows the ordinances and follows cows into the forest, surviving on grass, cow dung and leaves, free from desire, self-controlled and pure. O Shatakratu! Free from desire, he resides happily in my world with the gods, or in whatever other world he wishes for.”

Chapter 1754(73)

““I”ndra said, ‘I wish to know about the ends obtained by a person who steals a cow, or one who sells a cow because of the money.’

“Brahma replied, ‘Listen to the fruits obtained by a person who steals a cow to eat it, sell it, or gift it to a brahmana. Without following the restraints, if a man sells, causes injury and eats, or causes it to be slain, he does not do what is permissible. For as many years as there are hair, the slayer, the eater and the perpetrator of heinous deeds is submerged.⁷⁸ O lord! The sins from stealing and selling are said to be equal to the sins from destroying the sacrifices of brahmanas. If a person steals a cow and gives it to a brahmana, there are fruits from the act of donation, but he also has to suffer in hell. O immensely radiant one! When a cow is donated, gold has been said to be the dakshina. There is no doubt that gold is supreme for purposes of dakshina. By donating a cow, seven of the preceding and succeeding generations are saved. The gains are said to double if gold is given as dakshina. Gold is a supreme gift. Gold is a supreme dakshina. O Shakra! Gold purifies. Gold is said to be the supreme purifier. O Shatakratu! Pure gold is said to purify the lineage. O immensely radiant one! I have briefly told you about dakshina.”

‘Bhishma continued, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is what the grandfather⁷⁹ told Indra. Indra told Dasharatha and Rama learnt it from his father. Raghava told the illustrious Lakshmana, his beloved brother. O lord! While dwelling in the forest, Lakshmana told the rishis. Progressively, the rishis, rigid in their vows, sustained this, though it was difficult to sustain. And so did the kings who were devoted to dharma. O Yudhishtira! My preceptor told me about this. A brahmana who recites this at an assembly of brahmanas, or at a place where sacrifices and donations of cows are both being held, indeed obtains the undecaying worlds and is always with the gods. This is what the illustrious Brahma, the supreme lord, said.”

Chapter 1755(74)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O lord! I am reassured by what you have spoken about dharma. O grandfather! But I will relate the doubts that I have. Tell me about these. O immensely radiant one! What are said to be the fruits of vows and what is their nature? What are the fruits of rituals?⁸⁰ What are the fruits of studying on one’s own? What are the fruits of self-restraint and of sustaining the Vedas? What are the fruits of teaching? I wish to know about all these. O grandfather! In this world, what are the fruits of not accepting gifts? What are heard and seen to be the fruits for those who give? What are the fruits obtained by brave ones who are engaged in their own acts? What are said to be the fruits of truth? What are the fruits of *brahmacharya*?. What happens as a result of serving the father or serving the mother? What about serving the instructor or the preceptor? What about lack of anger and compassion? O grandfather! O one who knows about dharma! I desire to know the truth about all this, in detail. My curiosity is great.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A person who follows the instructions, commences a vow and completes it properly, obtains the eternal worlds. O king! The fruits of rituals are directly seen. You have obtained the fruits of rituals and sacrifices. The fruits of studying on one’s own are seen in this world and in the world hereafter. There is artha in this world and eternal bliss in Brahma’s world. O king! Listen in detail to the fruits of self-restraint. A self-restrained person is happy everywhere. A self-restrained person is detached everywhere. Self-restrained people can go wherever they wish and can destroy all their enemies. There is no doubt that self-restrained people obtain what they desire. O Pandava! Those who are self-restrained obtain all the objects of desire everywhere. Because of their valour and austerities, they find bliss in heaven. There are many kinds of sacrifices with donations. A self-restrained and forgiving donor is not enraged. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. If a person is enraged after the act of giving, his eternal worlds of giving are destroyed because of that rage. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. O great king! There are tens of thousands of invisible abodes in heaven. The rishis are conveyed to all those worlds and the gods go there. O king! The supreme rishis go there because of their self-restraint. As they wish, they can go to those great places. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. O lord of men! If an instructor follows the instructions and offers oblations into the fire, by virtue of his efforts, he obtains the fruits of Brahma’s undecaying world. Having studied the Vedas, if a person legitimately passes on that knowledge, having praised the deeds of his preceptor, he obtains greatness in heaven. If a kshatriya is engaged in studying, performs sacrifices, gives donations and saves others in battle, he too obtains greatness in heaven. A vaishya who donates and is engaged in his own tasks obtains greatness. A shudra who serves and is engaged in his own tasks goes to heaven. Many kinds of valiant ones have been spoken of, and listen to what is earmarked for them. There are indicated destinations for brave ones and fruits for brave ones. There are those who are brave in sacrifices, brave in self-restraint and brave in truth. Men are said to be brave in battle and brave in donating. Others are brave in intelligence and still others are brave in forgiveness. There are men who are brave in uprightness, or brave in tranquility. There are many other virtuous ones who are brave in rituals. There are those who are brave in studying the Vedas and those who are brave in teaching. There are those who are brave in serving preceptors and brave in serving fathers. Others are brave in serving mothers, or brave in begging for alms. There are many who are brave in practice of *sankhya*. There are others who are brave in practice of yoga. There are those who are brave in the forest, in the household and in worshipping guests. Because of the fruits they have conquered through their own deeds, all of them go to the supreme worlds. Upholding all the Vedas or bathing in all the tirthas may, or may not, always be equal to speaking the truth. One thousand horse sacrifices and truth were weighed on both sides of a balance and truth was superior to one thousand horse sacrifices. The sun heats because of truth. The fire blazes because of truth. The wind blows because of truth. Everything is established in truth. The gods, the ancestors and brahmanas are delighted by the truth. Truth is said to be the supreme dharma. Therefore, truth must not be violated. The sages are devoted to the truth. The sages possess truth for their valour. The sages pledge by the truth. Therefore, truth is superior. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A person who is devoted to the truth finds delight in the world of heaven. Self-restraint leads to the fruits of truth being obtained. Thus, with all my soul, I have spoken about it. There is no doubt that all those who are humble in soul obtain greatness in heaven. O lord of the earth! Hear from me about the qualities of brahmacharya. O lord of men! In this world, if a person practises brahmacharya from birth to death, know that there is nothing he cannot obtain. There are many crore of rishis who dwell in Brahma’s world. They have always been devoted to the truth. They have been self-restrained and have

held up their seed. O king! A person who follows brahmacharya destroys all sins. This is especially true of a brahmana. A brahmana is said to be like the fire. This fire is evident in an ascetic brahmana. If a brahmachari is enraged, even Shakra is terrified. Thus, the fruits of brahmacharya are seen in the rishis. Hear about the dharma that results from worshipping the mother and the father. O king! If a person serves the father without any malice, if he serves the mother, the preceptor or the instructor without any sense of ego, know that his fruits are a supreme state in the world of heaven. With a cleansed soul, if a person serves his preceptor, he doesn't have to see hell."

Chapter 1756(75)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I wish to hear the truth about the supreme ordinances that govern gifts of cattle. It is through those that one obtains all the eternal worlds.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of the earth! There is nothing that is superior to donating cows. If a lawfully obtained cow is gifted, the lineage is immediately saved. These⁸¹ were properly developed for the virtuous, but became appropriately applied to all subjects. They have been followed from ancient times. O king! Hear about the ordinances for gifting cows. In ancient times, cows were brought before Mandhata and he had doubts about what should be done when the cows were donated. He asked Brihaspati, who replied. ‘On the previous day, the donor should worship brahmanas and determine the appropriate time for making the gift, following the rituals. The cow should be of the Rohini type.⁸² The cows to be given should be addressed as *samanga* and *bahula*.⁸³ Entering amidst the cows, the following words from the sacred texts should be recited. “The cow is my mother. The bull is my father. Let them give me heaven and prosperity and status on earth. I seek refuge in the cow.” One should spend the night amidst the cows. Those words spoken by the sages must also be uttered when the cow is given away. The donor must spend the night with the cows, like a friend and following the vows they practise.⁸⁴ By reducing himself to their state, he instantly becomes cleansed of sins. When the sun rises, he must give away the cow, with a bull and a calf. When these three are given away, you will obtain benedictions and the objective of prosperity. “They⁸⁵ are the source of energy.⁸⁶ They are the energy of intelligence. They are the source of the immortality in sacrifices. The universe is established on them. They are the source of eternal prosperity on earth. They are spoken of as the source of all offspring. Let the cows drive all evil away. They have traits of Surya and Soma. Let them convey me to heaven. Like a mother, let them offer me refuge. Let them yield all the benedictions, even those that haven't been uttered. When I have completed this act of donation, let my body be freed. Like Sarasvati, let them envelope me with benefits. You are always the conveyors of auspicious deeds. I have sought refuge with you. Determine a desirable end for me. It is because of you that I am what I am today. By giving you away, I am giving myself away. From my mind, I have let you go. Through my mind, I have sought refuge in you. You are the one who ignites the peaceful form of Soma and the fierce form of Surya.” In this way, following the ordinances, the donor of the cow must utter the first part of the verse that has been indicated. When he has spoken, the brahmana who knows about the rituals concerning the donation of cows must receive and utter the second part of the verse.⁸⁷

““Instead of a cow, if a donor gives away an equivalent amount of garments and riches, he is regarded as the donor of a cow. The giver of garments and gold will ensure subsistence through these.⁸⁸ The names and number of what is being given must be enumerated. The fruits are entry for thirty-six thousand, eight thousand and twenty thousand respectively.⁸⁹ These are the ancient qualities, progressively described, of donating cows and other objects. These are equal to donating a cow only when the eighth step has been completed.⁹⁰ A person who gives a cow enjoys good conduct. A person who donates the equivalent enjoys freedom from fear. Whether a cow or riches are given, the donor does not suffer from misery. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who know about what has been recounted ascend upwards to the worlds of Vishnu and the moon. Having given a cow away, the donor must practise the vow of cattle for three nights. For one night, he should dwell alone, with cattle. For three nights after *kamyashtami*, he should only subsist on cow's milk, cowdung and cow's urine. The donor of a bull obtains merits obtained by one who follows the vows of the Vedas. The donor of a couple of cows becomes knowledgeable in the Vedas. If a person follows the rituals in giving away cows, he enjoys the best of worlds. However, this is not enjoyed by someone who doesn't know about the rituals. If a person gives away a single cow, he obtains

all the objects of desire on earth. That cow is like one which satisfies all desires with its milk. If one properly observes *havya* and *kavya*⁹¹ and gives away bulls, the benefits obtained are superior. The ritual must not be divulged to a person who is not a disciple, one who does not follow vows, one who lacks faith, or one who is crooked in intelligence. In all the worlds, this is indeed a secret dharma. This dharma must not be indiscriminately spoken about here and there. There may be men in this world who are virtuous and faithful. However, there are also inferior men, who are like rakshasas. If this is divulged to them, it will lead to injury. There will be evil ends if non-believers get to hear about this.

““There are kings who have listened to Brihaspati’s instructions and have donated cows. They have been auspicious in conduct and have followed excellent vows. They have obtained the worlds. O king! I will recount their names. Listen to me—Ushinara, Vishvagashva, Nriga, Bhagiratha, Yuvanashva’s famous son Mandhata, King Muchukunda, Bhuridyumna, Naishadha, Somaka, Pururava, Emperor Bharata, from whom all those of the Bharata lineage have descended, Rama, the brave son of Dasharatha, others who are famous for their deeds, and King Dili-pa, whose deeds were extensive. They knew about the rituals, donated cows and went to heaven. King Mandhata was engaged in sacrifices, donations, austerities, royal dharma and donation of cows. O Partha! That is the reason I have spoken to you about Brihaspati’s words. Bear them in mind. Cheerfully, give cows to the best of brahmanas. Having obtained the kingdom of the Kurus, you will then perform auspicious deeds.””

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Dharmaraja did everything that Bhishma had spoken to him about, following the ordinances about the donation of cows. The king properly upheld the dharma that the god of the gods⁹² had instructed Mandhata about. O king! He always gave cows and subsisted on barley and cowdung, drinking the urine of cows. He controlled his soul, slept on the ground and sported a tuft of hair on his head. He was like a bull and became a bull among kings. Controlled in his soul, the king always praised cows and tended to the calves. The king no longer used cows as beasts of burden. Wherever he had to go, he used excellent horses instead.’

Chapter 1757(76)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The intelligent King Yudhishtira again humbly asked Shantanu’s son about the details concerning gifts of cows.

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yet again, tell me properly about the qualities associated with donating cows. O brave one! I am not satisfied with hearing this, which is like amrita.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘O king! Thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Shantanu’s son again properly told him about the qualities associated with the donation of cows.

‘Bhishma said, “The cow must have a calf and possess all the qualities. It must be covered with a garment and must be young. By giving such a cow to a brahmana, one is freed from all sins. There are worlds where there is no sun. If one donates a cow that cannot drink water and eat grass, or one that does not yield milk or has had its senses destroyed, one goes there. A cow that is old and diseased is like a well that has dried up. By giving such a cow to a brahmana, one enters darkness and faces hardships. A cow that is wicked, wrathful, diseased, weak, or one for which the agreed price has not been given, should never be donated. If a cow causes hardship to the recipient brahmana, there are no fruits. There is no valour or fruits in the worlds thus obtained. A cow that is strong, fragrant and good in conduct is praised by everyone. Just as Ganga is the best among rivers, a kapila is the best among cattle.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “In acts of donating, all cows should be the same. Why then do the virtuous praise the gift of a kapila? O excellent one! I particularly desire to hear about this. You are capable of telling me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! The ancients spoke about this and I heard what they said. I will tell you the details about how a rohini was created. Earlier, Svayambhu instructed Daksha to create offspring. Desiring the welfare of the subjects, he first created a means for their subsistence. O lord! The residents of heaven subsist by resorting to amrita. Like that, the subjects exist on the basis of a means of subsistence. The mobile are superior to the immobile and men are best among the mobile. The brahmanas are best among men and sacrifices depend on them. Soma is obtained through sacrifices and sacrifices depend on cows. When a means of subsistence was first arranged for subjects, the gods were delighted.⁹³ When beings were created, they began to clamour for a means of subsistence.

Thirsty, and seeking a means of subsistence, they approached the one who was like a father and a mother.⁹⁴ Through his mental powers, he himself discerned what the various categories of beings desired. To obtain strength, Prajapati imbibed some of the amrita. When he was satisfied, a fragrance wafted out and Surabhi⁹⁵ was created from this. He saw the cow Surabhi, the daughter who had been born from his mouth. Surabhi had daughters who are known as the mothers of all the worlds. They had complexions like gold and they were kapilas. They were cows that provided a means of subsistence for the subjects. With a complexion like that of amrita, they began to flow with milk in all directions. As it flowed, there were waves, and froth was created in the flow that resulted from amrita. Some of this was dislodged from the mouths of calves and fell down on Bhava, who was then on earth. When it fell down on his head, the lord was enraged. With the eye that was in the middle of his forehead, he glanced at the rohinis, as if to burn them down. O lord of the earth! Like the sun tinging the clouds with many kinds of colours, that energy of Rudra's created hues in the bodies of the kapilas. Some among them escaped by seeking refuge with Soma. Those which managed to do this retained their own complexions. The others assumed other colours.

“Seeing that Mahadeva was angry, Prajapati⁹⁶ addressed him. ‘You have been sprinkled with amrita. This is not a leftover from the cows.⁹⁷ Soma drinks up amrita and showers it down again. In that way, the rohinis shower down milk and it has been created from amrita. The wind, the fire, gold and the ocean are never tainted. That is the way with the amrita from cows, once the calves have drunk the amrita. They sustain the world with the milk and the ghee. All of us enjoy that prosperity and the auspicious pervasiveness of amrita.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, Prajapati gave Rudra a bull and cows and pleased his heart. Pleased with this, Mahadeva made the bull his mount and placed it on his standard. Thus he became the one with the bull on his standard. Then the gods made Mahadeva Pashupati.⁹⁸ He became the lord of cattle and came to be known as Vrishanka.⁹⁹ The kapilas are extremely energetic and bear the original complexion. That is the reason why they are thought of first in any act of donation. They are the best among creatures, and the means of subsistence of creatures flows from them. They are placid and sacred. They grant life and all the objects of desire. A person who gifts a cow like that gives all the objects of desire. These are the supreme ordinances about the power of cattle. If a man desires the auspicious, is pure and always reads this, he is freed from all sins and taints. He obtains beloved sons and the wealth of animals. Havya, kavya, offerings of water, rites of pacification, gifts of vehicles and garments, the nurturing of the aged and the young—all of these qualities are obtained through donations of cows. O king! The donor always obtains those benefits.’”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing the grandfather’s words, King Ajamidha and his brothers followed what he had said and made gifts of gold, brass and cows. Partha gave these to excellent brahmanas. He gave brahmanas hundreds and thousands of cattle. He instructed that sacrifices with dakshina should be performed. He obtained fame and conquered supreme worlds.’

Chapter 1758(77)

‘Bhishma said, “There was a time when King Soudasa, born of the Ikshvaku lineage and supreme among generous ones, went to Vasishtha, supreme among sages, who was successful and could roam around in all the worlds. He was the eternal store of the brahman. Having honoured him, he asked his priest the following question.

“Soudasa asked, ‘O illustrious one! O unblemished one! What is sacred in the three worlds? Tell me. Recount to me the means whereby a mortal can always obtain the supreme benefits.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “He bowed down and spoke these beneficial words. The learned one instructed him about cattle, after having first purified himself by bowing down to cows. ‘Cows possess an excellent fragrance. They possess the fragrance of *guggula*.¹⁰⁰ Creatures owe their existence to cattle. Cows provide great blessings. Cows are the past and the future. Cows are eternal nourishment. Cows are the foundation of prosperity. Anything given to cows is not destroyed. Food always exists in cows. They provide supreme oblations for the gods. Svaha and *vashatkara* are always established in cows. Cows are the fruits of sacrifices. Sacrifices are established in cows. O immensely intelligent one! O bull among men! Morning and evening, and always at the time of oblations, cows

provide oblations to rishis. O lord! If a person gifts a cow, he tides over all the sins and evil deeds he has committed and all the hardships he faces. If a person possesses ten cows and gifts one, if he possesses a hundred cows and gifts ten, if he possesses a thousand cows and gifts one hundred—all of them obtain equal fruits. However, if the owner of one hundred cattle doesn't ignite the sacrificial fire, if the owner of one thousand cattle doesn't perform sacrifices and if a prosperous person acts like a miser—all three of them warrant no respect. If a person observes excellent vows and gifts a kapila and a calf, with a brass vessel for milking and a garment covering the cow, he conquers both this world and the next. O scorcher of enemies! There may be a young bull, an Indra among cows, among the hundreds that are in the herd, with all its senses intact. If a person ornaments its horns and gives it to a learned brahmana, he obtains prosperity when he is repeatedly born. One should not go to sleep without reciting the names for cows, or awake without remembering them. If one bows down to cattle morning and evening, one obtains prosperity. One must not hate cow dung and the urine of cows. One must not eat the flesh of cows. Thus, one will obtain prosperity. One must always recite the names of cows. One must never disrespect cows. If a man has bad dreams, he must recite the names of cows. One must always bathe in cow dung. One must sit on dried cow dung. One must not release spit, urine and excrement on cow dung. One must avoid obstructing cows. When one eats, one must sit on moistened cow hide, looking towards the west. Restrained in speech, one must eat ghee off the ground. One will then obtain the prosperity that cattle confer. Ghee is offered as an oblation into the fire. Benedictions must be pronounced with ghee. If one gives ghee and eats ghee, one will obtain the prosperity that cattle confer. One may also pronounce mantras on a cow moulded out of sesamum, taking it to assume the form of a cow. If a person gifts this, with tasty food and jewels, one does not sorrow from sins committed and not committed.¹⁰¹ Let cows that yield plentiful supplies of milk and have gold-encrusted horns approach me, like rivers approach the ocean. These are *surabhis* and the descendants of Surabhi. Let cows always look at me. Let me always look at cows. The cows belong to us and we belong to them. We exist where cows are. If a man chants this, day and night, in joy and misery, and even in times of great fear, he is freed from all fear.”

Chapter 1759(78)

‘Vasishtha said, ‘The cattle that were originally created tormented themselves with extremely difficult austerities for hundreds of thousands of years, so that they might obtain superiority. O scorcher of enemies! They said, “Among all kinds of dakshina, we will become the best. The slightest bit of taint will never attach to us. Our dung will always be used for purifying gods and humans. Those who smear themselves with it will never be deprived of their senses. O one who grants honours!¹⁰² Among all the mobile and immobile objects that are given, those who gift us will go to Goloka.” At the end of those austerities, the lord Brahma himself gave them that boon. The lord agreed and said that they would save the worlds. Having become successful in the attainment of their wishes, the mothers of the past and the future arose. O great king! At the end of those austerities, people became devoted to cattle. Therefore, the immensely fortunate cattle are said to be supremely sacred. It is for this reason that cows stand ahead of all creatures. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding kapila cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Brahma’s world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding rohini cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Surya’s world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding dappled cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Soma’s world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding white cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Indra’s world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding black cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Agni’s world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding smoky-complexioned cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Yama’s world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of foam on water with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains Varuna’s world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of the dust in the wind with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains greatness in Vayu’s world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of gold, with reddish-brown eyes, with a piece of cloth and gives

it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains Kubera's world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of smoky straw with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains greatness in the world of the ancestors. If a person gives away a fat cow with a white and ornamented throat, he easily obtains the best status with the Vishvadevas. If a person covers a well-behaved, milk-yielding and fair cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains the world of the Vasus. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of a white blanket with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains the world of the Sadhyas. If a person decorates a bull with a large hump with all the jewels and gives it away, he doesn't suffer from old age and goes to the world of the Maruts. If a man decorates a blue-limbed bull that is no longer a calf with all the jewels and gives it away, he obtains the world of the gandharvas and the apsaras. If a person decorates a handsome bull with a white throat with all the jewels and gives it away, he obtains Prajapati's world and suffers from no sorrow. O king! A person who is devoted to gifting cows shatters the clouds on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of the sun and becomes radiant in heaven. A man who gifts cows is best among men. He finds delight, served by thousands of excellent women, dressed in beautiful garments and with attractive hips. He awakes and sleeps to the sounds of the laughter of those deer-eyed ones and the sounds of veenas, lutes and anklets. He obtains greatness for as many years as there is hair on the cow donated. When he is dislodged from heaven and comes to the world of men, he is born in a family that owns cattle.'"

Chapter 1760(79)

““Vasishtha said, ‘Cows yield milk and ghee. They originate in ghee and provide ghee. They are rivers of ghee. They are whirlpools of ghee. Let them always remain in my house. Ghee is always in my heart. Ghee is always established in my navel. Ghee is in all my limbs. Ghee is established in my mind. Cows are always in front of me. Cows are also behind me. Cows are on all my sides. I dwell in the midst of cattle.’ Having performed the ablutions, a man must always recite this, morning and evening. He will then be cleansed of all the sins he has committed during the day. They who donate one thousand¹⁰³ go to places with golden palaces, with gandharvas and apsaras and a river of riches. They who donate one thousand go to places where rivers of milk flow, with butter as the mud and curds as the lichen. A person who follows the rituals and gives hundreds of thousands of cattle obtains supreme prosperity and greatness in Goloka. After death, he saves ten generations of his ancestors, both on his mother's side and on his father's side and gives them the worlds meant for the performers of good deeds. Such a man purifies his lineage. Among all objects that are the best, cattle are the foremost. If a person gives cows a trifle of food and water to drink, he does not suffer any misery in Yama's world. They are the foremost among all that is sacred. The universe is based on them. They are immeasurable and are the mothers of the residents of heaven. When one walks, one must keep them on one's right. Ascertaining the right time, one must give them to a worthy recipient. If a man gives away a kapila with large horns, along with her calf, a brass vessel for milking and an upper garment, even when he is submerged in Yama's assembly hall, which is so very difficult to tolerate, he will be free from fear. One must always recite, “Cows are beautiful in form. Cows have many forms. Cows are like mothers of the universe. Let cows approach me.” There is no gift more sacred than that of a cow. There are no fruits that are more auspicious. There has been nothing that is superior to a cow, nor will there ever be. The cow bears the burden of the sacrifice through the skin, the hair, the horns, hair on the tail, the milk and the fat. What can be better? I bow down my head and worship the cow. She is the mother of the past and the future. All the mobile and immobile objects of the universe are pervaded by her. O best among men! I have only recounted some of the qualities of the cow. There is no gift that is superior to donating a cow. There is no other refuge that is superior.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The great-souled lord of the earth¹⁰⁴ thought about the superiority that the supreme rishi had spoken about in his words. Controlled in his soul, he gave brahmanas a large number of cows and obtained the worlds.’”

Chapter 1761(80)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is the most sacred among all the sacred things in the world? What is best? What is supremely purifying? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Cows are extremely valuable and sacred and they save men. They sustain subjects through their milk and ghee. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! There is nothing that is more sacred than cattle. They are the most sacred among all the sacred and excellent objects in the three worlds. Cows dwell in a region that is superior to that of the gods. O lord of men! Learned donors¹⁰⁵ go to heaven. Yuvanashva’s son, Mandhata, Yayati and Nahusha always respectfully gave away hundreds of thousands of cattle. They went to the supreme destination, one that is extremely difficult for even the gods to obtain. O unblemished one! There is an ancient story about this and I will recount it. Shuka was an excellent and intelligent rishi. Having controlled his mind, he purified himself through his morning ablutions and worshipping his father, Krishna Dvaipayana, who possessed insight about the supreme worlds, questioned him. ‘What do you think is the best sacrifice among all sacrifices? What do learned ones do to obtain supreme heaven? O lord! Through what act of purification do gods obtain heaven? What makes a sacrifice a sacrifice? What are sacrifices established on? What is a supreme gift? What is a supreme sacrifice? O unblemished one! Also tell me what is most sacred among all the objects that are sacred.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hearing these words, Vyasa, supreme in his knowledge of dharma, told his son everything.

“Vyasa said, ‘Creatures are established on cattle and cows constitute the refuge. Cows are sacred and purify. They are the dharma that sanctifies. We have heard that, earlier, cows did not have horns. Indeed, for the sake of horns, they worshipped the undecaying lord. Brahma saw that cows were engaged in *praya*¹⁰⁶ near him. The lord gave each of those cows what they desired. Horns were created and they obtained horns. O son! With horns of many colours, they were beautiful. Having obtained boons from Brahma, they became the auspicious providers of *havya* and *kavya*. They are sacred, pure and extremely fortunate. They possess the signs of divine residence. The energy of cows is immensely divine. The gift of cows is praised. Virtuous people who, without malice, donate them, are spoken of as the doers of virtuous deeds, as if they have given all kinds of gifts. O unblemished one! They obtain the sacred Goloka. The trees produce sweet fruits there. The trees yield divine flowers and fruit. O supreme among brahmanas! The flowers possess excellent and celestial fragrances. The ground is covered with jewels everywhere. The sand is made out of fine gold. Everything is pleasant to the touch. There is no dust. It is auspicious and sparkling. There are groves of red lotuses and their stalks are made out of gems and gold. The waterbodies there are as radiant as the morning sun. There are lakes with many lotuses, mixed with blue lotuses. Their petals are made out of extremely expensive gems. Their filaments have a golden complexion. There are forests of blossoming red oleander, surrounded by thousands of creepers. There are also forests with trees adorned with blooming *santanakas*.¹⁰⁷ There are sparkling and extremely expensive rivers, with pearls and jewels along the colourful banks, decorated with gold. There are excellent and colourful trees, covered with gems everywhere. They are ornamented with gold and have the complexion of the fire. There are golden mountains and hills made out of gems and jewels. Because of the jewels everywhere, they exude radiance from their beautiful summits. The trees are covered with leaves and always yield flowers and fruit. O bull among the Bharata lineage!¹⁰⁸ The flowers and fruits possess divine tastes and fragrances. O Yudhishtira! The performers of auspicious deeds always find bliss there. They are devoid of sorrow and anger and are prosperous, with every object of desire satisfied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious performers of auspicious deeds find pleasure and delight in wonderful and beautiful celestial vehicles there. O king! They sport with large numbers of beautiful *apsaras*. O Yudhishtira! These are the worlds obtained by those who donate cows. Pushan and the Maruts, strongest of the strong, are the lords there. In prosperity, they become like King Varuna. Firm in vows, one must always recite the words spoken by Brahma Prajapati—“May Yugandhara, Surupa, Bahurupa, Vishvarupa and Matara save me.”¹⁰⁹ If a person respectfully serves cattle, they are satisfied and grant him boons that are extremely difficult to obtain. One must never injure cows, not even in one’s mind. They are the ones who provide happiness. One must always bow down before them and worship and honour them. If a self-restrained person always does this cheerfully, he obtains the benefits associated with cattle. There is a sacred object that the gods eat and it is supreme in the worlds. This is ghee and it is the most sacred among all the items that are sacred. This must be carried on the head. Ghee is offered as

oblation into the fire. Benedictions are pronounced with ghee. When ghee is consumed and ghee is donated, one obtains the benefits that are associated with cattle. For three days, one must drink warm cow's urine. For three days, one must drink warm milk. After having drunk warm milk, for three days, one must drink warm ghee. Having drunk warm ghee for three days, for three days, one must subsist on air. For one month, if one subsists on grains of barley that have been searched out from cow dung, one is cleansed from all sins, including that of killing a brahmana. When they were defeated by the *daityas*, the gods purified themselves in this way. The extremely powerful ones thus became successful and obtained divinity. Cows are sacred and auspicious. They are the great and supreme purifiers. Having donated them to brahmanas, a man obtains heaven. One must purify oneself by residing amidst cattle. In one's mind, one must meditate amidst cattle.¹¹⁰ One must do this after having purified oneself through ablutions first. One will then become pure and clean. A brahmana who is the performer of auspicious deeds and is learned in the Vedas and follows vows, must bathe and recite it¹¹¹ in the presence of the sacred fire, amidst cattle and in an assembly of brahmanas. Teaching the gomati to disciples is as revered as performing a sacrifice. If a person fasts for three nights and hears the gomati, he obtains a boon. A person who desires a son obtains a son. Others obtain riches. One who desires a husband obtains a husband. Men obtain all their objects of desire. There is no doubt that when cattle are served and are satisfied, they grant all this. In this way, these immensely fortunate ones provide all the objects of desire sought through sacrifices. Know that rohinis are like this and there is nothing superior to them.”

‘Bhishma continued, “The immensely energetic Shuka was addressed by his great-souled father in this way. He always worshipped cattle. Therefore, you should also worship them.”’

Chapter 1762(81)

‘Yudhishtira said, “I have heard that cow dung has Shri¹¹² in it. I have a great doubt about this and wish to hear about it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between cows and Shri. Shri assumed a beautiful form and entered amidst cattle. The cows were astounded on seeing her wealth of beauty.

“‘The cattle asked, ‘O goddess! Who are you? Where have you come from? How do you possess a beauty that is unmatched on earth? O immensely fortunate one! We are astounded at the wealth of your beauty. We wish to know who you are and where you will go. O one with the extremely beautiful complexion! Tell us the entire truth.’

“‘Shri replied, ‘O fortunate ones! I am loved by the worlds. I am famous by the name of Shri. When I abandoned the daityas, they were destroyed for eternity. Having obtained me, Indra, Vivasvat, Soma, Vishnu, the water¹¹³ and Agni have obtained prosperity and so have the rishis and the other gods. O cattle! Those who hate me are destroyed in every way. They suffer misery and are devoid of dharma, artha and kama. O cattle! These are my powers. Know that I am the one who grants happiness. I wish to always dwell in each of you. O unblemished ones! I have come here to pray that you should be united with Shri.’

“‘The cows replied, ‘You are temporary and fickle. You dwell with many ordinary people. O fortunate one! We do not desire you. Go wherever it pleases you. We think ourselves to be beautiful in every way. Why do we need you now? Go wherever you want. You have already made us successful.’

“‘Shri said, ‘O cattle! Pardon me, but shouldn't you welcome me? Why don't you accept me? I am extremely difficult to obtain. O ones who follow excellent vows in the world! It is certain that a saying in the worlds is true. “If one presents oneself voluntarily, one is refused.” Men, gods, danavas, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas get me after performing great and fierce austerities. O cattle! Pardon me and accept me. O amiable ones! I am not ignored by anything mobile and immobile in the three worlds.’

“‘The cattle replied, ‘O goddess! We are not disrespecting you. Nor are we slighting you. You are temporary and fickle. That is the reason we are forsaking you. What is the need to speak a lot? Go wherever you wish. O unblemished one! All of us possess beautiful forms. Why do we need you?’

“Shri said, ‘O ones who grant honours! Refused by you, I will be ignored in all the worlds. Show me your favours. O immensely fortunate ones! You offer protection to those who seek refuge. I am without blemish. Save the one who is always worshipped. O auspicious ones! I desire your respect and will always reside with you. I wish to dwell in any of your limbs, irrespective of how ugly it is. O unblemished ones! Indeed, I do not perceive that any of your limbs is ugly. You are sacred, auspicious and extremely fortunate. Grant me a place. You should indicate one of your limbs where I may dwell.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Thus addressed, the auspicious cattle were overcome with compassion. O lord of men! All of them consulted each other and spoke to Shri. ‘O illustrious one! It is indeed our task that we should show you respect. O auspicious one! Therefore, reside in our urine and dung. Both of these are sacred.’

“Shri replied, ‘It is through good fortune that you have shown me your favours and your grace. O fortunate ones! It shall be that way. O ones who grant happiness! I have been honoured by you.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was the agreement between Shri and the cattle. While they looked on, she disappeared. O son! I have thus described to you the greatness of cow dung. I will again tell you about the greatness of cattle. Listen to me.”’

Chapter 1763(82)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishtira! Those who donate cows and subsist on leftovers after oblations have been rendered into the fire are always regarded as having performed all the sacrifices. No sacrifice can be performed without curds and ghee. It is seen that these are the essence of a sacrifice and the foundation for a sacrifice. Among all kinds of gifts, the donation of cows is praised. Cows are best and sacred. They are the supreme purifiers. They must be served for the sake of sustenance and for the sake of peace. Their milk, curds and ghee can cleanse all sins. It is said that the energy of cows is supreme, in this world and in the next world. O bull among men! There is nothing that is superior to, and more sacred than, cattle.

“O Yudhishtira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between the grandfather and Indra. When Shakra defeated the daityas and became the lord of the three worlds, all the subjects were delighted and became devoted to true dharma. O Kouravya! On one occasion, the rishis, the gandharvas, the *kinharas*, the rakshasas, the gods, the asuras, the birds and the Prajapatis arrived before the grandfather and worshipped him. Narada and Parvata were there. Vishvasu, Haha and Huhu worshipped the lord by singing divine hymns. The wind bore the scent of celestial flowers. The seasons assembled, conveying their separate fragrances. All the creatures gathered together in that assembly of gods. Celestial musical instruments were sounded. The place was surrounded by celestial women and *charanas*. Indra, lord of the gods, bowed down before the lord of all the worlds. He asked, ‘O illustrious god! O grandfather! I wish to know why cattle are supreme in the worlds. O great lord! What are the austerities and brahmacharya that cattle have performed? Why do they happily reside in a region that is above that of the gods?’ At this, Brahma replied to Shakra, the slayer of Bala. ‘O slayer of Bala! You have always shown cattle disrespect. That is the reason you do not know about their greatness. O lord! Listen. O bull among gods! Hear about the supreme greatness and power of cattle. O Vasava! Cows are said to constitute the limbs of a sacrifice. They represent fame. Without resorting to them, sacrifices can never be undertaken. They sustain subjects through their milk and ghee. That apart, their male offspring are yoked for agriculture. That is the way grain and many other kinds of seeds are generated. All the havya and kavya used in sacrifices flow from them. O lord of the gods! Milk, curd and ghee are pure. Even when they are hungry, thirsty and afflicted, they bear many kinds of burdens. Through their deeds, they sustain sages and subjects. O Vasava! They do not show any deceit in bearing the burdens. They are the performers of good deeds. That is the reason they always reside above us. O Shakra! O Shatakratu! I have now explained to you the reason why cattle have obtained an abode that is above that of the gods. O Vasava! They are the ones who grant boons. They are the granters of boons. Surabhis are the performers of auspicious deeds. They have sacred marks and are purifiers. O supreme among the gods! Listen to the reason why the descendants of Surabhi, the cows, have come down.¹¹⁴ O slayer of Bala! I will tell you the entire reason. Listen. O son!’¹¹⁵ In ancient times, in the yuga of the gods, there was a great-souled Indra among the daityas

who subjugated the three worlds. O best among the immortals! To obtain a son through Vishnu, Aditi¹¹⁶ performed extremely difficult and terrible austerities. She always stood only on one leg. Daksha had a daughter, the goddess named Surabhi. On seeing that the great goddess¹¹⁷ was tormenting herself through great austerities, she too cheerfully decided to torment herself through terrible austerities. Devoted to dharma, she did this on the beautiful summit of Kailasa, frequented by the gods and the gandharvas. She stood on one leg and resorted to supreme yoga. She spent eleven thousand years in this way. The gods, the rishis and the great serpents were scorched through her austerities. With me, they went there and worshipped the auspicious one. O Purandara! I spoke to the goddess who was engaged in austerities. “O goddess! O unblemished one! Why are you tormenting yourself through these terrible austerities? O immensely fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased at your austerities.

O goddess! Ask for a boon and I will grant it to you.” Surabhi replied, “O illustrious one! O grandfather of the worlds! I do not desire any boons. O unblemished one! Since you are pleased with me, I have already got the boon I want.” O lord of the thirty gods! This is what the goddess Surabhi told me. O Indra of the gods! O Shachi’s consort! Hear what I told her in reply. “O goddess! I am pleased at your lack of desire and auspicious austerities. Since I am pleased with you, I am granting you the boon of immortality. Your abode will always be above the three worlds. Through my favours, this will be famous as Goloka. Your sons will dwell among men and will always perform tasks for the subjects. O immensely fortunate one! Your daughters will also reside there. All the divine and human objects of pleasure you think of will be yours. O goddess! O fortunate one! Divine happiness will also be yours.” O one with the thousand eyes! Her world has all the objects of desire. Death, old age and fire does not cause any suffering there. O Vasava! There is nothing miserable or inauspicious there. There are divine forests and celestial residences there. O Vasava! There are celestial vehicles that can go wherever they wish. O lotus-eyed one! Through observing many kinds of auspicious vows, through frequenting tirthas, through great austerities and through good deeds, one is capable of going to Goloka. O Shakra! I have thus told you everything that you asked me about. O slayer of enemies! You should never show disrespect to cattle.’ O Yudhishtira! Hearing these words, the one with the thousand eyes always worshipped cows and always showed them a great deal of respect.

“O immensely radiant one! I have thus told you everything about their purifying nature. Cows are sacred and supreme. They possess excellent greatness. O tiger among men! They destroy all sins and I have told you about this. If a person controls himself and always recounts this to brahmanas on occasions where havya and kavya are offered, sacrifices performed and rites observed for the ancestors, he establishes his ancestors in a place that is inexhaustible, one that satisfies all the objects of desire. A man who is devoted to cows obtains everything that he wishes for. Women who are devoted to cows also obtain everything that they desire. One who desires a son obtains a son. A maiden obtains a husband. One who desires riches obtains wealth. One who desires dharma obtains dharma. One who desires learning obtains learning. One who desires happiness obtains happiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For someone who is devoted to cows, there is nothing that is difficult to obtain.”

Chapter 1764(83)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! You have spoken to me about the supreme donation of cows. This is especially true of kings who look towards dharma. A kingdom is always full of misery. It cannot be sustained by a person who is ignorant. A family is the source of misery. It is difficult for a person who has not cleansed his soul to bear that burden. Most kings fail to obtain an auspicious end. However, by donating the earth, they can always purify themselves. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You have spoken to me about dharma earlier. In that way, you have told me about the gift Nriga made of cattle. You have told me about the earlier instructions of rishi Nachiketa. The Vedas and the Upanishads have instructed that in all rites and in all sacrifices, dakshina must be in the form of land, cattle or gold. But the sacred texts have also said that gold is the supreme dakshina. O grandfather! I wish to hear the truth about this. What is gold? How was it created and when? What is its nature? What are the fruits from donating it? Why is it said to be supreme? Why do learned people revere the gift of gold? Why is it praised as dakshina in the rites associated with sacrifices? Why is gold regarded as a better purifier than land and cattle? Why is it a supreme dakshina? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! I will recount in detail the many reasons. Listen attentively to the origin of gold, as I have understood it. When Shantanu, my greatly energetic father, died, I went to Gangadvara, wishing to perform his funeral ceremony. O son! Having gone there, I commenced the funeral rites for my father. My mother, Jahnavi, helped me. I placed many rishis, who had obtained success through fierce austerities, at the forefront and asked them to be seated. I began the offering of water and the other rites. As instructed, I controlled myself and completed the preliminary rites. In the proper way, I then started to offer the funeral libations. O lord of the earth! At that time, an arm pierced through the darbha grass that had been spread out and rose up. It was adorned in beautiful armlets. On seeing it rise, I was struck by great wonder. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I thought that my father had himself come to receive what was being offered. When I regained my senses, I began to think about the sacred texts. O lord! The ordinances of the Vedas decree that a man must not render the funeral cake into a hand. That was my view. The ancestors are invisible. They do not appear before a man in visible form. It is said that the funeral cake must be offered on a mat of kusha grass and that it will be received from there. Therefore, I ignored what seemed to be my father’s hand. O king! I remembered the subtle rituals that are laid down in the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O bull among men! Know that I followed the method indicated in the sacred texts and offered everything on the mat of darbha grass. O lord of men! At this, my father’s arm disappeared. When I slept,¹¹⁸ my ancestors appeared before me and told me, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! We are pleased and delighted with you for your knowledge. You have not been confused about dharma. O king! You have acted in accordance with the proofs laid down in the sacred texts. You have maintained yourself, dharma, the sacred texts, the Vedas, your ancestors, the maharshis, Brahma, the grandfather, the preceptors and Prajapati. There has been no deviation from the proofs that have been laid down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Today, you have completed everything in the proper way. But to accomplish the purpose, what will be achieved with land and cattle? Donate gold. It is supremely cleansing. By following this act of dharma, we and all our ancestors will be purified. If you donate gold, ten generations of your ancestors and descendants will be saved.’ My ancestors spoke in this way. O king! O lord of the earth! I was astounded and woke up. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I turned my mind towards donating gold. “O king! O lord! Listen to this ancient history about Jamadagni’s son, which is praiseworthy and leads to an increase in the lifespan. In ancient times, Rama, Jamadagni’s son, was overcome by great rage and exterminated all the kshatriyas from earth twenty-one times. Having conquered the entire earth, the brave and lotus-eyed Rama made arrangements for a sacrifice that was honoured by brahmanas and kshatriyas. O great king! This was a horse sacrifice that grants all the objects of desire. It purifies all creatures and leads to the enhancement of energy and resplendence. Because of the fruits of that sacrifice, that energetic one was cleansed of his sins. However, despite performing that supreme sacrifice and offering dakshina, Jamadagni’s great-souled son still did not obtain lightness of heart. Bhargava met the gods and the rishis and asked them. He said, ‘For men who have indulged in fierce deeds, what is the supreme purifier? O ones without decay! O immensely fortunate ones! Tell me.’ Overcome by compassion, this is what he asked. The maharshis who knew about the sacred texts and the Vedas replied. Vasishtha said, ‘Give gold to the gods. All the gods are nothing but fire and gold is its essence. Therefore, donate gold. Give it to all the gods. O tiger among men! The learned know that there is nothing superior to it. O brahmana rishi! O supreme among all the bearers of weapons! Listen to me. I will again¹¹⁹ tell you about the greatness of gold. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Earlier, I heard about this in the ancient accounts. Prajapati spoke about this to Svayambhu Manu. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! The marriage of the great-souled and illustrious Rudra, the wielder of the trident, and the goddess Rudrani was completed on the slopes of the excellent Himalaya mountains. The illustrious and great-souled one was about to unite with the goddess. Everyone was anxious and approached the illustrious one. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Mahadeva was seated with the goddess Uma, the granter of boons. All of them bowed down their heads and spoke to Rudra. “O god! O unblemished one! This union of yours with the goddess is of one ascetic with another ascetic, of one energy with an extremely greater energy. O god! Your energy, and that of the goddess Uma, are both invincible. O god! O lord! Your offspring will be powerful. There is no doubt that he will leave nothing left in the three worlds. O large-eyed one! The gods are bowing down before you. O lord of the worlds! For the welfare of the three worlds, grant them a boon. Withdraw your supreme and blazing energy, which will give rise to offspring.” Hearing their words, the illustrious one, with the bull on his banner, agreed and accordingly replied to the

gods and the brahmana rishis. Having said this and having held up his seed, the one with the bull as his mount came to be known as Urdhvareta.¹²⁰ Since then, he has held up his seed. However, Rudrani became angry at this termination of offspring. Though she was a woman, she used harsh words and spoke to the gods. “You have restrained my husband’s desire to have offspring. Therefore, all of you gods will no longer have offspring. Since you have stopped me from having offspring, you will also be restricted in that way.” Therefore, the residents of heaven no longer have offspring. O extender of the Bhṛigu lineage! But at the time when this curse was imposed, the fire god was not present. Because of the curse imposed by the goddess, the gods no longer had offspring. A little bit of Rudra’s unsurpassed energy was dislodged and fell down on the earth, which held it up. That fell into the fire and a wonderful being began to grow. With energy having come into contact with another energy, an embryo was formed. At this time, with Shakra at the forefront, the gods were severely tormented by the asura named Taraka. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Maruts, the Ashvins and all the Sadhyas were terrified by the daitya’s valour. The asuras seized the regions of the gods, their celestial vehicles, their cities and the hermitages of the rishis. All the gods and the rishis were distressed in their minds. They sought refuge with the lord and god, the undecaying Brahma.”

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“The gods said, ‘O lord! The asura Taraka has obtained boons from you and is causing suffering to the gods and the rishis. Determine a method for his death. O grandfather! A great fear has been generated in us. O god! Save us. We have no other refuge.’

“Brahma replied, ‘I am impartial towards all beings, but *adharma* doesn’t please me. Let Taraka, the impediment to large numbers of gods and rishis, be quickly destroyed. O supreme among gods! The dharma of the Vedas must not be uprooted. I have already determined what must be done. Dispel your anxiety.’

“The gods said, ‘O illustrious one! Since you gave him a boon, that daitya is proud of his strength. The gods are unable to slay him. How can he be pacified? O grandfather! The boon he obtained from you was that he couldn’t be killed by gods, asuras and rakshasas. O lord of the entire universe! Earlier, at the time of procreation, the gods have also been cursed by Rudrani and they will not have offspring.’

“Brahma replied, ‘O best among gods! Agni was not present at the time. To kill the one who hates the gods, he will have a son who will surpass all the gods, danavas, rakshasas, men, gandharvas, serpents and birds. He will kill him with the invincible weapon of a spear. He will destroy the one who has led to your fear and all the other enemies of the gods. Resolution is eternal and is known as kama. Rudra’s energy fell down into the fire. That energy is like a second fire. For killing the enemies of the gods, Agni will fling it into the Ganga and a son will be born. Since Agni wasn’t present, that seed has not been affected by the curse. Thus, to remove the fears of the gods, Pavaki will be born.¹²¹ Search out the fire god and employ him for this task. O unblemished ones! I have told you about the means for Taraka’s death. The energy of the curse will have no effect on this energy. When strength encounters a greater strength, it is rendered weak. Ascetics are capable of slaying the granters of boons, ones who are indestructible.¹²² Resolution, inclination and kama are eternal. Agni has been ordained as the lord of the universe. He can go everywhere and is the creator of everything. He is in the hearts of all beings. The lord is older than even Rudra. Swiftly search out Agni, the mass of energy. O gods! He will accomplish the desire that there is in your hearts.’

“Vasishtha continued, ‘Hearing the words of the great-souled one, the gods thought that their wishes had been accomplished and began to search for Agni. The gods and the rishis searched everywhere in the three worlds. Single-mindedly, all of them looked for Agni. O extender of the Bhṛigu lineage!¹²³ They were supreme in austerities, handsome and famous in the worlds. Those successful ones could roam around in all the worlds. But since Agni had hidden himself in his own self, they couldn’t search him out.¹²⁴ There was a frog that dwelt in the water. Since it was scorched by Agni’s energy, the frog arose from the nether regions and spoke to the gods. “O gods! The lord Agni is residing in the nether regions. I have come here, having been consumed by Agni’s power. O gods! The illustrious bearer of oblations is sleeping in the water. The energy that has been released in the water has scorched

all of us. O gods! If you wish to see Agni and if you have anything to do with Agni, go there. O gods! Because of our fear of Agni, we will try to leave this place.” Having said this, the frog quickly entered the water again. The bearer of oblations got to know about the frog’s treachery and cursed it that it would no longer have any sense of taste. Having thus cursed the frog, the lord Agni departed, so that he could reside elsewhere and would not have to show himself to the gods. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! But the gods showed their compassion towards frogs. O mighty-armed one! I will tell you everything. Listen.’

“The gods said, ‘Because of Agni’s curse, your tongues will no longer have any sensation of taste. But you will be able to utter many kinds of sound. You will dwell in holes, without food and without any sensation. When the ground is dry and without any sign of life, you will still be able to sustain yourselves. You will roam around in the night, when darkness has enveloped everything.’

“Vasishtha continued, ‘After saying this, the gods wandered around the earth again, looking for Agni. But they couldn’t find Agni. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! There was an elephant that was like the elephant that belonged to Indra of the gods. It told the gods, “Agni is inside an *ashvattha* tree.” Senseless with rage, Agni cursed all the elephants. “Your tongues will bend backwards.” O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Having said this, since he had been singled out by the elephant, Agni left the ashvattha tree. Wishing to sleep, Agni entered inside a *shami* tree. O lord! O best among the Bhrigu lineage! However, the gods, with truth as their valour, were pleased with elephants and showed them their compassion. Listen.’

“The gods said, ‘Though your tongues will bend backwards, you will be able to eat everything. And you will still be able to utter words, though the syllables will be indistinct.’

“Vasishtha continued, ‘After saying this, the residents of heaven began to search for Agni again. Agni had left the ashvattha tree and was now inside a shami tree. O brahmana! A parrot told the gods about this and they went there. Agni cursed parrots, “You will no longer have the power of speech.” Because of what the bearer of oblations had said, their tongues became that way. The gods saw Agni at the place that the parrot had indicated and did not wish that the bird should be completely destroyed. They said, “Though your tongue is concealed, you will utter beautiful words. Though indistinct, they will be wonderful, like those spoken by old people and children.” Having said this, the gods saw Agni inside the shami tree and ordained that the shami tree would be regarded as an abode for the gods, with its sacred wood used in all the rites. Since then, Agni has always been found inside a shami tree and men have used it to ignite a fire.¹²⁵ The water in the nether regions came into contact with Agni. O Bhargava! Those heated waters are released through mountain springs. Since Agni resided in them, they became heated through his energy. On seeing the gods, Agni was distressed. Agni asked, “Why have you come here?” They replied, “O illustrious one! You should accomplish a task for us. You possess extremely great qualities and you should do this for us.” Agni said, “O gods! Tell me what the task is and I shall do everything for you. You should not think about it. Employ me for the purpose.” The gods replied, “There is an asura named Taraka. Because of a boon received from Brahma, he has become insolent. He counters us through his energy. You must arrange for his destruction. O father!¹²⁶ O immensely fortunate one! O Pavaka! Save this large number of gods, large number of Prajapatis and the rishis. O lord! Give birth to a brave son who is full of energy. O bearer of oblations! He will destroy our fear from the asura. We have been cursed by the great goddess and no one else can be a refuge. Barring your energy, there is nothing else that can save us now.” Thus addressed, the illustrious devourer of havya and kavya agreed.

““The invincible one went to Ganga Bhagirathi. He united with her and caused the conception.¹²⁷ The embryo began to grow, just as the one with the black trails¹²⁸ grows in the presence of deadwood. Because of the energy in the womb, Ganga was bereft of her senses. She suffered from terrible torment and was incapable of bearing it. When the lord Agni placed the energy in Ganga’s womb, there was an asura who emitted a terrible roar. Because of that loud roar, she lost her senses. Ganga was terrified and her eyes rolled in fear. She looked around in agitation. Bereft of her senses, she was no longer capable of bearing herself or the embryo. With the energy pervading all her limbs, Jahnavi trembled. O brahmana! Struck by the strength of the embryo, she told Agni, “O illustrious one! I am incapable of bearing this energy any longer. I am confounded and am suffering from great ill health. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! I am distracted and your energy has destroyed me. O supreme among those who heat! I am no longer capable of bearing this embryo. Though I do not desire it, because of the misery, I will

have to cast it off. O god! O Vibhavasū! I did not voluntarily wish this union with you. O immensely radiant one! Our extremely subtle relationship arose because of the disaster. O Agni! Any qualities that result from this relationship are because of you. The dharma and adharma belong to you alone. That is what I think.” However, Agni replied, “Bear what must be borne. The embryo is the outcome of my energy and it will lead to great qualities and fruits. You are capable of bearing the entire earth. There is nothing that you will gain by not holding onto this seed.” The best among rivers was restrained by Agni and also by the gods.

““However, she released the embryo on Meru, best among mountains. Though she was capable of bearing it, she suffered from Rudra’s energy. Therefore, she was incapable of bearing the embryo and the associated energy. Overcome by misery, she released it and it blazed, like the fire in complexion. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Agni saw Ganga and asked the best among rivers, “Is the embryo well? O goddess! What is its complexion? What is seen to be its form? What kind of energy does it possess? Tell me everything.” Ganga replied, “O Agni! With your energy, the embryo has the complexion of gold. It is golden, sparkling and blazing and has illuminated the mountain. O supreme among the ones who heat! Its fragrance is like that of the *kadamba* flower, mixed with that of lotuses from the cool lakes. Every object that has been touched by the energy of the embryo, on earth and in the mountains, is like the rays of the sun. In every direction, everything is seen to have turned into gold. That energy has descended on mountains, rivers, streams and the mobile and immobile objects in the three worlds and illuminated them. O illustrious one! O bearer of oblations! This is the form of that son. His beauty is like that of the sun or the fire, or like that of the moon.” Having said this, the goddess vanished. The energetic Pavaka had also accomplished the task of the residents of heaven. O descendant of the Bhargava lineage! Therefore, he also left the spot. It is because of the qualities of his deeds that the rishis and the gods conferred a name on Agni and it is recited in the worlds. This is Hiranyareta.¹²⁹ The goddess earth came to be known as Vasumati.¹³⁰ Ganga’s immensely energetic embryo was generated through Agni. It fell on a divine clump of reeds and began to grow there, assuming a wonderful form. The Kritikas¹³¹ saw it there and it was like the young sun in radiance. Their affection being stirred, they nourished the child at their own breasts. That is how the extremely radiant one came to be known as Kartikeya. Since the seed had fallen down, he came to be known as Skanda.¹³² Since he resided in secrecy, he came to be known as Guha. This was the way gold was born from Agni. That is the reason gold is the best ornament for the gods. That is the reason it is spoken of as *jatarupa*.¹³³ Gold is nothing but the illustrious Girisha and Prajapati. O supreme among brahmanas! Gold is the most sacred among everything that is sacred. *Jatarupa* is said to possess the essence of Agni and Soma. It is the best jewel among all jewels. It is the supreme ornament. It is the most sacred among all things sacred. It is the most auspicious among all things that are auspicious.””

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‘Vasishtha said, ‘O Rama! In ancient times, I heard this from Brahma. This is about the conduct of the grandfather, identical with the brahman and the *paramatman*. O son! The gods performed a great sacrifice of *varuni*.¹³⁴ O Rama! The lord Rudra assumed a resplendent form and went to that great *varuni*. All the sages and gods came there, with Agni at the forefront. All the limbs of sacrifices and vashatkara were there in personified form. Thousands of hymns from the Sama and Yajur Vedas were there in personified form. There were parts of the Vedas, arranged in the proper order of verses. There were the divisions of signs, vowels, chants and distinct and indistinct syllables. Omkara was there, with techniques of *nigraha* and *pragraha*.¹³⁵ There were the Vedas, the Upanishads, all kinds of learning and Savitri. The illustrious Shiva upheld these and the past, the present and the future. The lord offered the oblations himself. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Delighted that the *varuni* sacrifice was being conducted by the great-souled Pashupati, the wives and daughters of the gods and the mothers of the gods came there. On seeing them, Brahma’s semen fell down on the ground. When that semen fell down on the ground, Pushan seized it with his hands and flung it into the fire. The sacrifice continued, with the fire blazing away. Brahma was offering oblations into the fire. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! He picked up some of the dislodged semen in a sacrificial ladle, and uttering the mantras, offered it as a libation into the fire. Through this, the valiant one generated categories of beings. From that energy was generated all the energy in the world. The ig-

norance of *tamas* and *sattva*¹³⁶ pervaded everything. The energy of *sattva* is eternal and *tamas* characterizes space. The energy of *sattva* and *tamas* exist in all creatures. O lord! From the semen that was offered as a libation into the fire, three beings manifested themselves. These were men, endowed with the qualities from which they had been generated. The one from *bhrig*¹³⁷ was known as Bhrigu. The one from *angara* was called Angiras. Yet another, based on *angara*, was called Kavi.¹³⁸ The one born with flames and *bhrig* was called Bhrigu. Marichi was born from *marichi*¹³⁹ and Kashyapa was born from Marichi. O son! Angiras was born from *angara*. The Valakhilyas were born from the sacrificial stones. It has been said that Atri was also born from that. The large number of revered brahmana rishis was generated from the ashes. The Vaikhanasas were born, with the qualities of austerities and learning. The handsome Ashvins were born from his¹⁴⁰ ears. Finally, the Prajapatis were born from his ears. The rishis were born from his pores and the metres from his unclean sweat. That is the reason Agni is said to represent all the gods and the learned rishis, who possess insight about the proofs of the Vedas. The months are the wood.¹⁴¹ The essence of the kindling constitutes the *pakshas*. Day and night are from the bile. The light from the *varuni* constitute the *muhurtas*. The Rudras are said to come from his blood, as do the red and golden Maitras. Know that the Vasus are said to come from the smoke. The immensely radiant Rudras and Adityas arose from the flames. The benevolent gods located in the firmament¹⁴² arose from the *angara*. He¹⁴³ is the original lord of the worlds. Brahma is spoken about later. The bearer of oblations is said to be the one who satisfies all the objects of desire. With the *varuni* as part of his supreme soul, Mahadeva said, “This is my divine sacrifice. I am the *grihapati*.¹⁴⁴ There is no doubt that the three earlier offspring¹⁴⁵ are mine. O those roaming in the sky! Know that these are the fruits of the sacrifice.” Agni responded, “They have been generated from my limbs and they have depended on me. They are my offspring and the one who is in the form of *varuni*¹⁴⁶ is wrong.” Brahma, the preceptor of the worlds and the grandfather of the worlds said, “They are my offspring. It was my semen that was offered as a libation. I am the one who uttered the mantras. I am the one who offered the semen as a libation. The fruit belongs to the one whose seed it is. It is my view that the semen was the source.” At this, the large number of gods approached the grandfather.

““All of them bowed their heads down and worshipped him. They said, “O illustrious one! We, and all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe, were generated from you. However, let Agni Vibhavas and the lord god who is in the form of *varuni* get what they wish.”¹⁴⁷ Though Brahma was the original lord of all creation, the one who was in the form of *varuni* accepted the firstborn, Bhrigu, with a radiance like that of the sun, as his son. The lord¹⁴⁸ determined that for purposes of deciding a son, Angiras should be Agni’s. Kavi, who knew about the truth, was accepted as the grandfather’s son. Bhrigu, of terrible fame, engaged himself in the act of procreation. The handsome Angiras was regarded as Agni’s and the immensely illustrious Kavi as Brahma’s. In this world, Bhrigu and Angiras are regarded as the ones who have had descendants. All the best among brahmanas are the offspring of these three. All the descendants were reared and nurtured by them. Bhrigu had seven sons who were like Bhrigu in qualities. They were Chyavana, Vajrashirsha, Shuchi, Urva, the revered Shukra, Vibhu and Savana. These were the seven. All of them are known as Bhargavas and Varunas and this is your lineage too. Angiras had eight sons and they are also known as Varunas.¹⁴⁹ They are Brihaspati, Utathya, Vayasya, Shanti, Ghora, Virupa, Samvarta and Sudhanva. These are said to be the eight. All of them were generated through Agni. They were free from disease and were devoted to learning. The sons of the brahmana, Kavi, are also known as Varunas. There were eight of them and they possessed the qualities. They were sacred and knowledgable about the brahman. Their names were Kavi, Kavya, Vishnu, the intelligent Ushanas, Bhrigu, Viraja, Kashi and Ugra, who was devoted to dharma. These are the eight sons of Kavi. Everyone in the universe has descended from them. They are Prajapatis and all these offspring have resulted from them. In this way, Angiras and Kavi also had descendants. O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! All the offspring on earth come from their lineage and that of Bhrigu. O brahmana! O son! In the form of *varuni*, the lord and god¹⁵⁰ originally accepted Bhrigu and Kavi. That is the reason they are known as Varunas. The crested bearer of oblations accepted Angiras. That is the reason all the others are known as the descendants of Angiras.

““In ancient times, the grandfather, Brahma, was pleased by the gods. They said, “Let these lords and offspring save us. Let these offspring have more offspring. Let all of them be extreme ascetics. Through your favours, let them eternally save the world. Let them be the creators of your lineage and let them extend your energy. Let them

possess knowledge of the Vedas and let them be the lords of speech. Let them be amiable and on the side of the gods. Let them be Prajapatis and maharshis. Let them obtain austerities and supreme brahmacharya. O lord! All of us and they are your offspring. O grandfather! You are the creator of the gods and the brahmanas. Marichi is your original son. But so are all the Bhargavas. O grandfather! Considering all your offspring, forgive us.¹⁵¹ In their own ways, they will generate offspring. At the end of the destruction and the beginning of a new yuga, they will establish themselves again.” At the time of the origin of the worlds, this is what happened at the sacrifice of the great-souled one, the best of the gods who assumed the dazzling form of varuni. Agni is Brahma, Pashupati, Sharva, Rudra and Prajapati.

““It is held that gold is the offspring of Agni. When fire is not available, gold can be used instead of fire. O Jamadagni’s son! O one who knows about proof! The learned texts and the Vedas are proof of this. Gold can be placed on a mat of kusha grass and oblations to the fire offered there. It is thought that the illustrious one will be pleased at these oblations and will ensure prosperity. We have thus heard that Agni is supreme among the gods. Agni was created from Brahma and gold from Agni. Therefore, those who possess insight about dharma donate gold. We have heard that this is like making gifts of all the gods. O Bhargava! Such a donor leaves the world of darkness and obtains the supreme objective. He is consecrated as a king of kings in the world of heaven. When the sun rises, if a person observes the rituals and recites the appropriate mantras first, thereafter donating gold, he destroys all his bad dreams. If he donates as soon as the sun has risen, he cleanses all his sins. If he donates gold at midday, he destroys all the future sins. If a person is firm in his vows and donates gold at the time of the western *sandhya*,¹⁵² he obtains the worlds of Brahma, Vayu, Agni and Soma. With Indra, he obtains an auspicious status in those worlds. He is tranquil in his soul and obtains happiness and fame in this world too. He always obtains many other unmatched worlds. There are no obstructions in his path and he can roam around as he wills. He obtains an eternal greatness that is never dislodged. By donating gold, a person obtains all the indestructible worlds. At the time of sunrise, if a person ignites a fire and donates,¹⁵³ after having followed all the indicated vows, he obtains all the objects of desire. It has been said that it¹⁵⁴ is like Agni and its donation brings happiness. For those who follow rites, it is said to possess all the qualities.”

‘Bhishma continued, “This is what Vasishtha told Jamadagni’s powerful son. He gave gold to brahmanas and was freed from all sins. O lord of the earth! I have told you everything about gold, about the fruits from its donation and its supreme birth and origins. Therefore, give a lot of gold to brahmanas. O king! If you donate gold, you will be freed from sins.”’

Chapter 1767(86)

“Yudhishtira said, “The grandfather talked about the ordinances connected with gold and you have told me these. You have explained in detail the qualities and signs associated with donating it, as described in the sacred texts. You have also recounted the reason behind the origin of gold. But tell me how that Taraka met with his destruction. O king! You have said that he was unslayable, so far as the gods were concerned. However, you have not yet told me the details about his death. O extender of the Kuru lineage! I wish to hear the truth about that. Tell me everything about the slaying of Taraka. My curiosity is great.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! The gods and the rishis thus faced distress. They urged the Krittikas to rear that divine offspring. Among the gods, there was no one who would have been able to rear Agni’s embryo alone. It was too full of energy. However, Pavaka was pleased that each of the six had agreed to nurture the embryo. He released his own energy and the supreme seed. Each of the six Krittikas nurtured a part of Agni’s embryo. O lord! Agni’s energy was divided into six parts and all of them carried it together. The great-souled Kumara began to grow in this way. However, their limbs were overwhelmed with his energy and they could not find any peace. While their limbs were overwhelmed with this energy, the time for delivery arrived. O bull among men! All the Krittikas delivered at the same time. Though the six parts of the embryo had been delivered separately, they came together and united. The earth received him and placed him in a beautiful spot. The child was divine in form and blazed with the complexion of the fire. Having been placed in a divine clump of reeds, the one who was hand-

some in appearance began to grow. The Kritikas saw the child, who possessed the resplendence of the fire. Their affection and love was stirred and they nurtured him with milk from their breasts. That is the reason why, among the mobile and immobile objects of the three worlds, he came to be known as Kartikeya. Because the seed trickled down, he was known as Skanda. Because he was reared in secrecy, he was known as Guha. The thirty-three gods, the lords of the directions, Rudra, Dhatri, Vishnu, Yajna,¹⁵⁵ Pushan, Aryama, Bhaga, Amsha, Mitra, the Sadhyas, the Vasus, Vasava, the Ashvins, the water, the wind, the sky, the moon, the nakshatra, the planets, the sun and all the separate objects that are offered to the gods¹⁵⁶ went there to see Kumara, Agni's son. The rishis chanted words of praise and the gandharvas sang. Kumara possessed six faces and twelve eyes and loved brahmanas. His chest was broad and he possessed twelve arms. His radiance was like that of the fire and the sun. The gods and the rishis saw him, as he lay down on that clump of reeds. They were extremely delighted, thinking that the asura had already been killed. The gods brought everything that would bring him pleasure. Since he was still engaged in playing, they gave him dolls and a large number of birds. Suparna¹⁵⁷ gave him a feathered peacock with colourful plumage. The rakshasas gave him a boar and a buffalo. Varuna himself gave him a cock that was like the fire in complexion. The moon gave him a sheep and the sun gave him dazzling rays. The goddess who is the mother of cows¹⁵⁸ gave him hundreds and thousands of cattle. Agni gave him a goat that possessed many qualities and Ila gave him many flowers and fruit.¹⁵⁹ Sudhanva¹⁶⁰ gave him a cart and a chariot with a large frame. Varuna gave him many of Varuna's celestial objects and some sacred serpents. Indra of the gods gave him lions, tigers, leopards, many other carnivorous, predatory and terrible beasts and diverse umbrellas. Large numbers of rakshasas and asuras began to follow the lord.

“On seeing the lord grow up, Taraka tried many kinds of methods to try and kill him. But he wasn't successful. The gods honoured the one who had been reared secretly and made him their general. They also informed him about the depredations that had been caused by Taraka. The immensely valorous one, the general of the gods, grew up. With an invincible spear, Guha slew the danava Taraka. As he killed the asura, it was as if Kumara was playing. The lord again established Indra of the gods in the kingdom of the gods and he made the powerful Skanda the general. The lord¹⁶¹ protected the gods and did what would bring Shankara pleasure. The illustrious Pavaki¹⁶² is golden in form. Kumara has always remained the general of the gods. It is held that gold is Agni's supreme energy, born with Kartikeya. That is the reason it is auspicious and is a supreme and indestructible jewel. O Kouravya! This is what Vasishtha told Rama in ancient times. O lord of men! Therefore, you should make efforts to donate gold. Having gifted gold, Rama was freed from all his sins. He obtained a great spot in heaven, which is extremely difficult for a man to obtain.”

Chapter 1768(87)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O one with dharma in his soul! O unblemished one! You have spoken to me about the dharma of the four varnas. O king! In that fashion, tell me everything about the rites to be followed in funeral ceremonies.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Thus addressed by Yudhishtira, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, sought to explain to him everything about the rites to be followed in funeral ceremonies.

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen attentively to the sacred rites that have been prescribed for funeral ceremonies. O scorcher of enemies! These sacrifices for the ancestors are praised and lead to fame and sons. Gods, asuras, humans, gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas, *pishachas* and kinnaras always worship their ancestors. The ancestors are worshipped first and the gods are satisfied next. Therefore, a man must undertake every kind of effort for such a sacrifice. O great king! It is said that a funeral ceremony for the ancestors can be undertaken later. But that general rule is countered by the rule that it must be performed first.¹⁶³ The grandfathers are pleased with a funeral ceremony that is performed on any day. But I will tell you about the qualities and demerits of specific tithis. O unblemished one! Funeral ceremonies performed on different days yield different fruits. I will tell you everything. Listen attentively. If one worships the ancestors on the first day of shuklapaksha, one obtains beautiful wives in one's own house and they give birth to many beautiful sons. On the second day, one obtains daughters. On the

third day, one obtains minstrels who praise. On the fourth day, one obtains many small animals in one's house. O king! On the fifth day, many sons are born. A man who performs it on the sixth day gets radiance. O king! By performing a funeral ceremony on the seventh day, one gains through agriculture. By performing it on the eighth day, one gains through trade. By performing a funeral ceremony on the ninth day, one obtains many animals with uncloven hooves. By performing a funeral ceremony on the tenth day, the cattle prosper. O king! By performing it on the eleventh day, one obtains vessels made out of earth and base metals. Sons with the radiance of Brahma's rays are born in the household. It is always seen in this world that if it is performed on the twelfth day, there are many colourful and beautiful objects of silver and gold. If a funeral ceremony is performed on the thirteenth day, one becomes superior to one's relatives. If a man performs a funeral ceremony on the fourteenth day, he has to take part in battles on earth. There is no doubt that the young men in his household will die. If it is done on the day of the new moon, all the objects of desire are satisfied. In krishnapaksha, it can be done from the tenth day onwards, but avoiding the fourteenth. The other tithis are not praised for funeral ceremonies. The subsequent paksha is superior to the earlier paksha.¹⁶⁴ For a funeral ceremony, the afternoon is also superior to the forenoon.”

Chapter 1769(88)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O lord! Which is the object that, if donated to ancestors, becomes inexhaustible? What oblation lasts for many nights? Indeed, what is thought to last for an eternity?” ‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishtira! Those who are learned about funeral ceremonies have thought of oblations for funeral ceremonies. Listen to the desirable fruits associated with each. O king! If sesamum, rice, barley, kidney beans, roots and fruits are given at funeral ceremonies, the ancestors are satisfied for a month. Manu has said that if a large quantity of sesamum is given at a funeral ceremony, it becomes inexhaustible. Among all the objects that are eaten, sesamum is said to be the best. When fish is offered, the large number of ancestors is satisfied for two months. Lamb is said to satisfy for three months and rabbit meat for four months. O king! With the meat of goats, the ancestors are delighted for five months. It is six months with the meat of boar and seven months with the flesh of birds. With the meat of *parshata*,¹⁶⁵ it is eight months. It is nine months with the meat of *ruru*. With the meat of *gavaya*,¹⁶⁶ they are content for ten months. With the meat of buffaloes, the ancestors are delighted for eleven months. If the product from a cow¹⁶⁷ is given at a funeral ceremony, the satisfaction is said to last for an entire year. The product from a cow can be mixed with payasam and ghee. With the flesh of *vardhinasa*,¹⁶⁸ the satisfaction lasts for twelve years. When the flesh of a rhinoceros is offered to the ancestors, the fruits are infinite and indestructible. The fruits of basil, the petals of the *kanchana* flower and goat meat are also said to be eternal. O Yudhishtira! In this connection, there are some hymns and chants sung by the ancestors. In earlier times, the illustrious Sanatkumara told me about these. ‘In the month of Magha,¹⁶⁹ during *uttarayana*, on the thirteenth day, a person who has been born in our lineage must give us payasam mixed with ghee. When the nakshatra Magha is in the ascendant, he must observe the vows and offer us petals of the *kanchana* flower, with goat meat. When the nakshatra Hasta is in the ascendant,¹⁷⁰ he must offer this in accordance with the rites, using whisks made from the leaves of the Indian laburnum tree. Many sons are desired so that at least one of those can go to Gaya and render offerings at the banyan tree there, famous in the worlds as one that makes the fruits inexhaustible. On the anniversary of a father's death, even if a little bit of water, roots, fruits, meat and rice are offered, mixed with honey, that is thought of as becoming inexhaustible.”’

Chapter 1770(89)

‘Bhishma said, “Yama spoke about funeral ceremonies to Shashabindu.¹⁷¹ Hear about the desirable acts under separate nakshatras. With his offspring, if a man always ignites the fire and performs a funeral ceremony at the conjunction of Krittika, he becomes devoid of anxiety. One who desires offspring should do it under Rohini. One who desires energy should do it under Mrigashira. If a man performs a funeral ceremony under Ardra, he be-

comes the perpetrator of cruel deeds. A mortal who performs a funeral ceremony under Punarvasu makes gains through agriculture. A man who desires prosperity should perform a funeral ceremony under Pushya. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Ashlesha gives birth to brave sons. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Magha becomes superior to the relatives. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Purva Phalguni obtains good fortune. Uttara Phalguni leads to offspring. Hasta leads to fruits being obtained. If a person performs a funeral ceremony under Chitra, he obtains handsome sons. If a person worships the ancestors under the conjunction of Svati, he earns a living through trade. A man who desires many sons should worship the ancestors under Vishakha. If he does it under Anuradha, he becomes an emperor. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! If a mortal is devoted and self-controlled and does this under Jyeshtha, such a man avoids difficulties and becomes a sovereign. Under Mula, one recovers from disease. Under Purva Ashadha, one obtains excellent health. Under Uttara Ashadha, one roams around the earth, devoid of sorrow. A person who undertakes a funeral ceremony under Abhijit obtains supreme learning. If a person undertakes a funeral ceremony under Shravana, after death, he goes to the supreme destination. A man who does it under Dhanishtha obtains the status of getting a kingdom. If one does it under Varuna's nakshatra,¹⁷² one becomes successful as a physician. If one does it under Purva Proshthapada,¹⁷³ one obtains many goats and sheep. If one does it under Uttara Proshthapada, one obtains thousands of cattle. If one does it under Revati, one obtains the prosperity and wealth of a large amount of silver. If one does it under Ashvini, one obtains many horses. Under Bharani, one obtains an excellent lifespan. Having heard about these rites of funeral ceremonies, Shashabindu acted accordingly. He conquered the earth easily and ruled it.”

Chapter 1771(90)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O tiger among the Kurus! You should explain to me about the kinds of brahmanas who should get gifts at funeral ceremonies.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A kshatriya who knows about dana dharma must examine brahmanas. It has been said that in rites connected with the gods and the ancestors, one must lawfully undertake this scrutiny. When the gods are worshipped, it is the energy of the gods that is used. A man receives this and uses it to worship the gods. O great king! At a funeral ceremony, one must examine the brahmanas for lineage, conduct, age, beauty, learning and nobility. There are some who are polluted and tainted. Others purify taints. O king! Listen. I will recount the ones who should be barred from the line¹⁷⁴—one who is deceitful; one guilty of foeticide; one with tuberculosis; one engaged in animal husbandry; one who has not read the Vedas;¹⁷⁵ one who works as a servant in a village; one who lives on the interest of moneylending; one who is a singer; one who sells everything; an arsonist; a poisoner; a pimp; one who sells soma; a palmist; one who is the servant of a king; a seller of oil; a cheat; one who quarrels with his father; one who allows his wife's lover to dwell in his own house; one who has been cursed; a thief; one who earns a living as an artisan; one who sells baskets on festive occasions; one who injures his friends; one who has intercourse with someone else's wife; one who teaches those who don't observe vows; the husband of a courtesan;¹⁷⁶ one who roams around in the company of dogs; one who has been bitten by a dog; one who has married before his elder brother; a leper; one who has had intercourse with his preceptor's wife; an actor; one who makes a living off idols; and one who makes a living by studying the nakshatras. Know that such brahmanas are inferior and should not be allowed to sit in the same line. In addition, there are those of limited intelligence who offer instructions to shudras. O king! If they are seated alongside, the entire line is polluted. A one-eyed¹⁷⁷ person pollutes sixty,¹⁷⁸ an impotent person pollutes one hundred and one with white leprosy pollutes as many as he looks at. If a person eats¹⁷⁹ with his head covered in cloth, if he eats facing a southern direction, or if he eats with his footwear on, all the resultant learning is obtained by the asuras. If anything is given with malice and if anything is given without devotion, Brahma has thought of all of these as shares belonging to Indras among the asuras. The spot where funeral offerings are given should be surrounded and covered with sesamum seeds. Dogs and brahmanas who are not allowed to sit in the same line should not look at these. If this is not done, all the sesamum seed and oblations are stolen by predatory beasts, *krodavashas*, *yatudhanas* and *pishachas*.¹⁸⁰ If a brahmana is not allowed to sit and eat in

the same line, but does it, then the fruits of the foolish donor are destroyed, proportionate to the number of individuals along the line that the offending brahmana looks at.

“O best among the Bharata lineage! Know that these are the ones who sanctify the line.¹⁸¹ I will tell you the truth about this. Examine brahmanas. All the brahmanas who possess learning about the Vedas and have bathed themselves in vows are ones who can eat in the same line. I will tell you about them. Know that they are the sanctifiers of the line—one who knows about the three Nachiketa fires;¹⁸² one who knows about the five sacrificial fires; one who knows the three Suparnas;¹⁸³ one who knows the six Vedangas; one who is the descendant of ancestors who knew about the brahman; one who knows about metres; one who knows about Jyeshtha Sama;¹⁸⁴ one who is obedient to his mother and his father; one whose ancestors have been learned for ten generations; one who always has intercourse with his lawful wife when she is in season; one who is learned in the Vedas; and one who has bathed himself in vows. Such a brahmana deserves to sit in the line. A person who has studied *Atharvashirasa*,¹⁸⁵ a brahmachari, a person who is rigid in his vows, one who is truthful in speech, one who possesses dharma and good conduct, one who is devoted to his own tasks, one who has made the efforts to bathe in the sacred tirthas, one who has successfully bathed after having completed a sacrifice with mantras, one without anger, one who isn't fickle, one who is forgiving, one who is self-restrained, one who has conquered his senses and one who is engaged in the welfare of all beings—this is the kind of person who should be invited to a funeral ceremony. These are the ones who sanctify the line. If one donates to them, the fruits are inexhaustible. O great king! In addition, know that there are others who also sanctify the line—ascetics, those who know about the dharma of moksha, those who follow the vows of yoga well, those who make efforts to make the best of brahmanas listen to *itihasa*, those who know about commentaries, those who are devoted to studying grammar, those who have studied the Puranas and the sacred texts of dharma, those who have studied *nyaya*, those who follow the rituals properly, those who have lived in the households of their preceptors, those who are truthful, those who have donated to thousands and those who are foremost in their knowledge of all the Vedas and all the aphorisms. They are the sanctifiers of the line. They are said to sanctify the line for as far as they can see. Learned ones who know about the brahman and are the descendants of those who know about the brahman sanctify for a distance of one-third of a *krosha*.¹⁸⁶ If a person is not an officiating priest or an instructor and takes the front seat, even if this is with the permission of the officiating priests, then he appropriates the evil deeds of all the people who are seated along that line. O king! However, if he is knowledgeable about all the Vedas and is devoid of taints that cause pollution to the line, he is not regarded as fallen. He is one who sanctifies the line. Therefore, before inviting brahmanas, every effort must be made to examine them to see that they are engaged in their own tasks, are self-controlled, born in noble lineages and are extremely learned.

“A person who performs a funeral ceremony and primarily feeds the offerings to his friends does not please the ancestors and the gods. He does not go to heaven. If a person performs a funeral ceremony only for the purpose of getting some people together, he does not walk along the path of the gods. If a person performs a funeral ceremony for the sake of his friends, he is not freed from the bondage of the senses. He is dislodged from the world of heaven. Therefore, friends must not be honoured at funeral ceremonies. The stored riches can be given to them on other occasions. Food, havya and kavya should be offered to those who are neutrals, not to those who are thought of as enemies or friends. Seed that is sown on barren ground does not sprout. Nor does a person who hasn't sowed, benefit from the sprouting of the seed. In that way, if undeserving people eat at a funeral ceremony, no fruits are obtained, in this world or in the next. A brahmana who doesn't study is like a fire that is kindled with straw. It is pacified. Similarly, at a funeral ceremony, one shouldn't give to the undeserving. That is like libations poured onto ashes. There is something named *sombhajani*.¹⁸⁷ That is like giving dakshina to pishachas. The gods or the ancestors do not receive anything from it. Instead, it¹⁸⁸ wanders around on earth, like a cow that has lost its calf and is wandering around from one pen to another, searching. The gods and the ancestors receive nothing, like ghee that has been poured into a fire that has been pacified. It is no different from dakshina given to dancers and actors, or to those who are inferior. When dakshina is given to an inferior person, both the donor and the recipient suffer. These are censured and lead to misfortune and downfall of the ancestors from their divine states. O Yudhishtira! The learned know that brahmanas are those who always follow the injunctions laid down by the rishis. They are certain in their knowledge of all kinds of dharma and the gods. They are devoted to studying. They are devoted to learn-

ing. They are devoted to austerities. They are devoted to rites. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They should be understood to be rishis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For benefit, the *kavya* should be given to those who are devoted to knowledge. Those brahmanas are supreme and should never be censured. Those who censure them and slander them should not be fed at funeral ceremonies. O king! A person who censures such brahmanas destroys three generations of his lineage. O king! This has been heard to be the words of the Vaikhanasa rishis. Brahmanas should be examined from a distance to see whether they are learned about the Vedas. Whether one likes them or dislikes them, they are the ones who should be invited to a funeral ceremony. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is better for a man to cheerfully feed a single brahmana who knows about the mantras than thousands and thousands of inferior ones.”

Chapter 1772(91)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Who thought of funeral rites and when? What is its essence? During the age of the Bhri-gus and the Angirases, which sage thought of them? Which acts should be avoided at funeral ceremonies? What about roots and fruits? What kinds of paddy should not be used? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of men! I will tell you about how funeral rites were started, when, by whom, and about their essence. Listen. O Kouravya! From Svayambhu was born the powerful and supreme rishi Atri. O great king! In his lineage was born the one known as Dattatreya. Dattatreya had a son named Nimi and he was rich in austerities. Nimi had a son named Shrimat and he was extremely handsome. He performed extremely difficult austerities for a full one thousand years. When this was completed, he succumbed to the dharma of time and died. Nimi performed the instructed rites of purification. However, overwhelmed by sorrow on account of his son, he suffered from severe torment. On the fourteenth lunar tithi, the immensely intelligent one brought together various ingredients. He was full of grief and slept during the night. With his mind still overcome with grief, he arose in the morning. He focused his mind and controlled his intelligence from wandering away. Having controlled himself, he conceived of funeral rites. He was rich in austerities. He mentally thought of food, roots and fruits and all the other objects that would bring benefit. On the day of the new moon, the immensely wise one invited some revered brahmanas. He himself made all of them sit down on mats of kusha grass and circumambulated them. He brought together seven such brahmanas and gave them food. The lord offered them *shyamaka* rice,¹⁸⁹ cooked without salt. Mats of darbha grass were spread out near the feet of the brahmanas, once they were seated, with the tips of the blades pointing to the south. They ate off these. Controlling himself, he spread out the darbha grass, with the tips of the blades pointing to the south. He then offered the funeral cakes to Shrimat, citing his name and gotra. Having done this, the best among sages confronted a conflict of dharma in his mind.¹⁹⁰ As he thought about it, he was tormented by repentance. ‘What have I done? This has not been done by sages earlier. How can I avoid being scorched by the curses of brahmanas?’ He thought about the original creator of his lineage. As soon as he thought of him, Atri, rich in austerities, arrived there.

“On seeing that he was severely afflicted by grief on account of his son, the undecaying and eloquent Atri reassured him. ‘O Nimi! O one who is rich in austerities! The sacrifice you have thought of is for the ancestors. Do not be anxious about this. Earlier, Brahma himself instructed that this is dharma. What you have thought of has been ordained by Svayambhu to be dharma. Who but Svayambhu could have laid down the ordinances for a funeral ceremony? I will again tell you about the supreme rites for a funeral ceremony. O son! These have been ordained by Svayambhu. Act in accordance with those. Listen to me. O one rich in austerities! First, chant mantras and follow the rites for igniting the fire. Then always offer oblations to Aryama, Soma, Varuna, the Vishvadevas, the ancestors and all their respective domains. These shares have been thought of by Svayambhu himself. The earth is the one who sustains the oblations. Therefore, she must be praised as Vaishnavi, Kashyapi and the indestructible one. When water is brought, the lord Varuna must be praised. O unblemished one! After this, Agni and Soma must be invoked. The divinities known as the ancestors were created by Svayambhu. He also thought of shares for the extremely fortunate ones known as the Ushmapas.¹⁹¹ If one worships them at funeral ceremonies, one is freed from sins. Earlier, Svayambhu instructed that there are seven generations of ancestors. I have enumerated the Vish-

vadevas earlier and they have Agni as their mouth. I will now recount the names of the great-souled ones who deserve to be given shares—Saha, Kriti, Vipapma, Punyakrit, Pavana, Gramni, Kshema, Samuha, Divyasanu, Vivasvat, Viryavat, Hrimat, Kirtimat, Krita, Vipurva, Somapurva, the one named Suryashri, Somapa, Suryasavitra, Datatman, Pushkariyaka, Ushninabha, Nabhoda, Vishvayu, Dipti, Chamuhara, Suvesha, Vyomari, Shankara, Bhava, Isha, Kartri, Kritidaksha, Bhuvana, Divyakarmakrit, Ganita, Panchavirya, Aditya, Rashmimat, Saptakrit, Somavarcha, Vishvakri, Kavi, Anugopta, Sugopta, Napta, Ishvara, Jitatman, Munivirya, Diptalobha, Bhayamkara, Atikarma, Pratita, Pradata, Amshumat, Shailabha, Paramakrodhi, Dhiroshni, Bhupati, Sraji, Vraji, Vari and the eternal Vishvadevas. These immensely fortunate ones, who know about the progress and dominion of time, have been enumerated. The paddy known as *kodrava* and *pulaka*,¹⁹² asafoetida mixed with the vegetables, onions and garlic should not be offered at funeral ceremonies. Nor should one use onions,¹⁹³ drumsticks, *grinjana*,¹⁹⁴ all varieties of pumpkins and bottle gourds, black salt, meat of domesticated pigs, the flesh of animals not killed at sacrifices, fennel, rock salt and *shitapaki*.¹⁹⁵ All objects that sprout and *shringatakas*¹⁹⁶ should be avoided. All kinds of salt and the *jamun* fruit must be avoided. Items on which tears and spit have fallen must not be offered at funeral ceremonies. Something that a dog has looked at must not be offered as havya and kavya. The ancestors and the gods are not pleased at such oblations. Some people should be barred from places where oblations are being offered—chandalas, shvapakas, those attired in yellowish-red garments, those with leprosy, those who are outcasts, those who have killed a brahmana, a brahmana born from an inferior lineage¹⁹⁷ and those who are the relatives of those who are outcasts. The learned shun their presence at funeral ceremonies.’ In ancient times, having said this to the rishi who has descended from his own lineage, Atri, rich in austerities, left for the grandfather’s divine assembly hall.”

Chapter 1773(92)

‘**B**hishma said, “All the maharshis began to follow these rites and observing the rituals, began to undertake the indicated tasks at funeral ceremonies for the ancestors. The rishis always acted in accordance with dharma. Firm in their vows, after the ceremony, they started to offer water at the tirthas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satisfied with the oblations offered by the four varnas, the ancestors and the gods were content and began to eat the food. However, the gods and the ancestor suffered because the food wasn’t digested. Afflicted by indigestion, they went to Soma. The ancestors, suffering from indigestion, approached Soma and said, ‘We are oppressed because of this indigestion. Determine what is best for us.’ Desiring what was good for the gods, Soma replied, ‘Go to Svayambhu’s abode. He will determine what is best for you.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hearing Soma’s words, the gods and the ancestors went to the grandfather, who was seated on the summit of Meru. The ancestors said, ‘O illustrious one! We are suffering from not being able to digest the food. O god! Show us our favours and determine what will be good for us.’ Hearing their words, Svayambhu told the ones who were suffering from the excess. ‘This Agni is by my side. He will determine what is good for you.’ Agni said, ‘O fathers! When the oblations are presented before us, we will eat together. If you eat with me, there is no doubt that you will be able to digest the food.’ On hearing this, the anxiety of the ancestors was dispelled. O king! O bull among men! That is the reason why, when oblations are offered at funeral ceremonies, a share of the oblations is first offered to Agni. *Brahma-rakshasas*¹⁹⁸ are then unable to cause any harm at a funeral ceremony. Seeing that Agni is there, the rakshasas run away. The funeral cake must first be offered to the father and next to the paternal grandfather. It should then be offered to the paternal great grandfather. This is said to be the ritual connected with a funeral ceremony. While controlled, one must utter the *savitri* mantra over each funeral cake that is offered. One must also state that the soma is being offered for the sake of the ancestors. A woman who is in her season or a woman with mutilated ears should not be present at a funeral ceremony. Nor should a woman from some other family be present. When one traverses a body of water, one must mention the names of the ancestors. Having approached a river, one must offer oblations of water to the ancestors. Once one has offered oblations of water to those from one’s own family, one should then offer oblations of water to groups of well-wishers and relatives.¹⁹⁹ When one crosses a body of water on a cart that is yoked to two black²⁰⁰ bulls, or astride a boat, the ancestors desire obla-

tions. Those who know this, always offer water in a controlled way. The funeral ceremony must be performed in that half of the month that is krishnapaksha. If one is devoted to the ancestors, nourishment, long life, valour and prosperity follow. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! The grandfather, Pulastya, Vasishtha, Pulaha, Angiras, Kratu and the great rishi, Kashyapa—these are known as the great lords of yoga. These are also ancestors. O king! This is the supreme ritual of a funeral ceremony. Through the act of offering funeral cakes to the deceased relatives, they are freed. O best among men! I have thus told you how the funeral ceremony originated. It was established through the ancient ordinances. I will next tell you about donations.”

Chapter 1774(93)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! There may be a brahmana who is observing a vow. If he is invited by another brahmana and eats the food offered as an oblation, what happens?”²⁰¹

‘Bhishma replied, “If the vow is not in conformity with the Vedas, eating is not a perverse act. O Yudhishtira! However, if it is in conformity with the Vedas, he has deviated from his vow.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “There are some people who say that fasting is a vow. Is fasting really an austerity? Are there any other kinds of austerities?”

‘Bhishma replied, “People think that fasting for a month, or for half a month, is an austerity. However, a person who causes harm to his own body is not an ascetic. Nor does he know about dharma. Renunciation is excellent and has been said to be the supreme austerity. A brahmachari is a person who always fasts in that way. A brahmana must always behave like a sage and always perform sacrifices for the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage. Desiring dharma, he must always have a family and never sleep.²⁰² He must always subsist on amrita and always be pure. He must always be truthful in speech. He must always be self-restrained. He must always eat leftovers.²⁰³ He must always be affectionate towards guests. He must never eat meat. He must always be pure.”

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O king! What is regarded as fasting and when is one a brahmachari? What does eating leftovers mean? How is one affectionate towards guests?”

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person eats in the morning and in the evening and never in the intervening period, he is regarded as a person who always fasts. A person who only has intercourse with his wife during her season is regarded as a brahmachari. So is a man who always speaks the truth and is generous in his conduct. By not eating the flesh of animals that should not be eaten, or of animals pointlessly killed,²⁰⁴ one is regarded as a person who abstains from meat. A person who donates is pure. One who doesn’t sleep during the day is regarded as one who does not sleep. O Yudhishtira! Know this. If a man always eats what is left after the servants and the guests have eaten, he is a person who only subsists on amrita. If a person does not eat as long as brahmanas are unfed, he is regarded as someone who does not eat. He conquers heaven. If a person eats what is left after gods, ancestors, servants and guests have eaten, he is said to be a person who only eats leftovers. It is said that they obtain worlds all the way up to Brahma’s abode. O lord of men! The apsaras and the gandharvas attend to them there. They eat and find pleasure with the gods, the guests, the ancestors and their sons and grandsons there. This is their supreme destination.”

Chapter 1775(94)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Many kinds of gifts are given to brahmanas. O grandfather! What are the special characteristics of the donor and the recipient?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A brahmana can accept a gift from a person who is virtuous and also from a person who is wicked. If the donor possesses the qualities, there is little sin in that. But if the donor doesn’t possess the qualities, the recipient is submerged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vrishadarbhi²⁰⁵ and the *saptarshis*. Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Bharadvaja, Goutama,

Vishvamitra, Jamadagni and the virtuous Arundhati²⁰⁶ had a common female servant named Ganda. Her husband was the shudra Pashusakha. In ancient times, all of them performed austerities and wandered around the earth. Immersed in *samadhi*, they wished to see Brahma's eternal world. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There was a very long period of drought. The world was hungry and it became very difficult to remain alive. On an earlier occasion, a sacrifice had been performed by Shibi. As dakshina at that sacrifice, he had given away his own son to the officiating priest. O lord! This son was not destined to have a long life and he died at that time. Tormented by hunger, they sat around the dead body. The supreme rishis saw that the son of the one who had performed the sacrifice was dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Afflicted by hunger, they placed the body on a plate and cooked it. There was no food available in the world of mortals. Desiring to save their lives and in search of a means of sustenance, those ascetics had to resort to this calamity. While they were cooking, the king was passing along that road. King Shaibhya, Vrishadarbha's son, was distressed to see this.

“Vrishadarbhi said, ‘If you accept a gift, you will be saved. For your sustenance, accept a gift. O ones rich in austerities! Listen. I will tell you about the riches I possess. I love brahmanas who seek gifts from me. I will give you one thousand mules. I will give each of you cows, with calves that have just been born. All of them will be swift, with white hair. I will give each of you one thousand bulls that are capable of bearing loads. They will be well born and auspicious. I will give you fat ones that can till the ground. I will give you well-behaved cows that have only had one calf. There are the best of villages that yield succulent grain. There are other jewels that are extremely difficult to obtain. What will I give you? Do not act so as to eat something that should not be eaten. For your sustenance, what can I give you?’

“The rishis replied, ‘O king! Receiving a gift from a king may seem to be sweet, but is like poison. Knowing this, why are you trying to tempt us? It is destiny that kshatriyas must seek refuge with brahmanas. Their austerities are unblemished. By pleasing them, the gods are pleased. A brahmana earns merits through days of austerities. If he accepts a gift from a king, those are destroyed, as in a forest conflagration. O king! May you always be fortunate, giving to those who solicit from you. Give them all those riches.’”

Bhishma continued, “Having said this, all of them departed. The meat the intelligent ones had intended to prepare remained uncooked. Having abandoned it there, all of them left for the forest, wishing to search for food. Urged by the king, his ministers went to the forest. They plucked some figs and tried to give those away as donations. The servants filled the insides of some of those plucked figs with gold and tried to persuade them to accept these. Atri picked up some of those figs and found that they were heavy. He said, ‘Do not take us to be fools. We are not evil in intelligence. We know there is gold in these. We know and are awake. If accepted in this world, they will lead to bitter results in the world hereafter. They should not be accepted by someone who desires happiness in this world and in the next.’ Vasishtha said, ‘One gold coin will be counted as one hundred, or even one thousand.’²⁰⁷ If we accept many, we will obtain the ends meant for the wicked.’ Kashyapa said, ‘All the paddy, barley, gold, animals and women on earth cannot satisfy one person's desire. Therefore, abandon greed and walk the path of peace.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Once horns appear on a ruru deer, as the animal grows, they also grow. There is no limit to what a man wishes for.’ Goutama said, ‘All the objects in the world cannot fill up the world. A man is like an ocean. He can never be filled.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘When desire is satisfied, that only leads to another desire growing. The subsequent desire and thirst pierce like an arrow.’ Jamadagni said, ‘It is certain that self-restraint in not accepting sustains austerities. A brahmana's avarice for riches makes him deviate.’ Arundhati said, ‘It is the view of some that objects must be stored for the sake of dharma and artha. However, storing austerities is superior to storing objects.’ Ganda said, ‘My lords are fierce and they are frightened of this. They are stronger than me. I am weak. Therefore, I am even more terrified of this.’ Pashusakha said, ‘There is nothing superior to dharma and brahmanas know about that wealth. I humbly wait on them, so that I may accurately get to know about that excellent learning.’ The rishis said, ‘Let him²⁰⁸ keep his subjects happy through the gifts that he makes. Let him gift the stuffed fruits to them and not to us.’ Having said this, they discarded the fruits that had gold inside them. Firm in their vows, all the rishis went off elsewhere. The ministers said, ‘O king! You should know that suspecting that the fruits were stuffed, they have abandoned them and have gone elsewhere.’ Thus addressed by his servants, Vrishadarbhi was enraged. Determined to take revenge on all of them, he went to his own house. Having gone there, he ignited a fire. Resorting to terrible rituals, he poured oblations into this. To satisfy his wishes, the king uttered

well-pronounced mantras and offered oblations with each one of them. A demoness arose from the fire. She could strike terror in the worlds. Vrishadarbhi named her Yatudhani. The demoness was like the night of final destruction. With hands joined in salutation, she presented herself before King Vrishadarbhi and asked, ‘What will I do?’ Vrishadarbhi replied, ‘Go to the seven rishis and Arundhati and also to their male servant and female servant. Find out their names and remember those in your mind.’²⁰⁹ Once you have found out their names, kill them all. Having destroyed them, you can go wherever you want.’ Yatudhani agreed. She assumed her own form²¹⁰ and went to the forest where the maharshis were roaming around.”

Chapter 1776(95)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! The maharshis, with Atri as the foremost, were wandering around in the forest, eating roots and fruits. As they roamed around, they saw a mendicant named Shunasakha. His shoulders, hands, feet, mouth and stomach were plump and his limbs were stout. The beautiful Arundhati saw that all his limbs were well formed. She told the rishis, ‘You are not like him. Nor will you ever be.’ Vasishtha said, ‘His agnihotra fire is not like ours. Morning and evening, he pours oblations into it, while we can’t. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Atri said, ‘Unlike us, he doesn’t suffer from hunger. He possesses vigour and control. Unlike ours, his learning hasn’t been destroyed. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Vishvamisra said, ‘We are suffering from decay. Unlike us, he is able to sustain the eternal sacred texts. We have become lazy, overcome by hunger and stupid. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Jamadagni said, ‘Unlike us, he does not have to think at all about the annual store of food and kindling. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Kashyapa said, ‘Unlike us, he does not have four brothers who beg and solicit alms.’²¹¹ That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Unlike us, he is devoted to the brahman. His consciousness is not clouded by grief because of the wife’s recriminations.’²¹² That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ Goutama said, ‘Unlike us, he is not clad in three pieces of kusha grass and one piece of *ranku*²¹³ hide. These are also three years old. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.’ On seeing the maharshis, the mendicant Shunasakha approached them. Observing the appropriate custom, he greeted them by touching their hands. They spoke to each other about how difficult it was to roam around in the forest, hunting for food. For some time, they remained together.

“After this, they departed. They roamed around in the forest again, single-minded in their task of collecting roots and fruits. Once, as they were wandering around, they saw a beautiful lake that was full of lotuses. The banks were thick with rare trees. The water was pure and transparent. The lotuses were beautiful in form, with complexions like that of the rising sun. The lake was covered with the petals of lotuses, with a complexion like that of lapis lazuli. There were many kinds of aquatic birds that lived in the water. There was a single path that led down to the water. It was easy of access and was free of mud. Engaged by Vrishadarbhi, the demoness known as Yatudhani, terrible to see, protected the lotuses. With Shunasakha to help them, the maharshis sought some lotus stalks. All of them wished to approach the lotuses, protected by the demoness. They saw Yatudhani, with a terrible visage. She was stationed on the banks of the lake. The maharshis addressed the demoness. ‘Who are you, standing here alone? Who are you waiting for and what is your purpose? You are stationed on the banks of this lake. What do you wish to do?’ Yatudhani replied, ‘Whoever I might be, you should never question me. O ones rich in austerities! Know that I am the one who protects all the riches of this lake.’ The rishis said, ‘All of us are afflicted by hunger. We have been able to obtain nothing. With your permission, let all of us gather some lotus stalks.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘As long as there is a compact, you can gather lotus stalks as you wish. One after another, you must tell me your names. Without any delay, you can then gather the lotus-stalks.’ Having told them that she was Yatudhani, the demoness wished to kill the rishis. Atri was overcome by hunger and spoke these words. ‘I am the one who saves. I study thrice a day. There is no night during which I have not studied. O beautiful one! Know that this is the reason why my name is Atri.’²¹⁴ Yatudhani replied, ‘O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name, though I am unable to comprehend the explanation. But you can descend into the lake.’ Vasishtha said, ‘I am Vasishtha. I am the foremost. I reside in wealth and houses. Know that since I am the foremost and since I reside, I am Vasishtha.’²¹⁵ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you

have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Kashyapa said, ‘I am the mooring for my lineage and I am radiant like the sun.²¹⁶ Since I come from Kashi, know that I am the brahmana who bears the name of Kashyapa.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name, though I am unable to comprehend the explanation. But you can descend into the lake.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘O beautiful one! I support my sons.²¹⁷ I support my disciples. I support the gods. I support brahmanas. I support my wife. Since I do this easily, I am Bharadvaja.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Goutama said, ‘O demoness! O Yatudhani! Listen to me. I have conquered the sky and earth through my self-restraint.²¹⁸ I travel using my self-restraint. I am like a fire without smoke. Because of my self-restraint, you will find it extremely difficult to look at me. Know me to be Goutama.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name and I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘The gods of the universe are my friends.²¹⁹ The cattle are my friends. O Yatudhani! Listen to me. I am known as Vishvamitra.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Jamadagni said, ‘O beautiful one! I have been born from the sacrifices of those who have no birth.²²⁰ I provide inspiration because of my purity. Know that it is the view that I am Jamadagni.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name and I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Arundhati said, ‘I stand next to my husband and hold up the earth. My mind gently follows my husband.²²¹ Therefore, know me to be Arundhati.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Ganda said, ‘The side of my face has a lump.²²² I bear that mark of a lump on the cheek. O one who has been born from the fire! Because of the lump that stands out on my cheek, know me to Ganda.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Pashusakha said, ‘O one who has been born from the fire! O friend! I am a friend to, and friendly towards, animals, especially towards cows.²²³ Therefore, know me to be Pashusakha. Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Shunasakha said, ‘I am not interested in explaining my name the way they have done.²²⁴ O Yatudhani! However, you should reflect on the fact that I am known by the name of Shunasakha.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘The words that you have spoken are not clear. Your words are ambiguous. O brahmana! Therefore, tell me your name properly.’ Shunasakha said, ‘I have told you my name properly, though you have been unable to grasp it. Therefore, I will strike you with my triple stick.²²⁵ May you instantly be reduced to ashes.’ That stick was like the curse of a brahmana. Struck by it on the head, the demoness fell down on the ground, reduced to ashes. Shunasakha thus slew the immensely strong Yatudhani.

“Having done this, he stuck his triple staff on the ground and sat down on a grassy spot. As they wished, all the sages collected lotus stalks. Delighted, they then arose. Having collected bundles of lotus stalks, they were full of exhaustion. They flung these down on the banks and again entered the lake to offer oblations of water. O bull among men! Having arisen from the water, all of them looked around, but could no longer see the lotus stalks. The rishis said, ‘We were overcome with hunger. Which wicked person has stolen what belongs to us? We desired to eat those lotus stalks. Who has acted in this cruel way?’ Those bulls among brahmanas suspected each other and questioned each other. O afflicter of enemies! They told each other that all of them would have to swear an oath. When all of them said this, Shunasakha tried to restrain them. But they were hungry and exhausted and prepared to swear. Atri said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks touch cattle with his feet, urinate while facing the sun and study in a forbidden way.’ Vasishtha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks not study, suffer affliction from dogs, live a life of mendicancy, slay his friends and those who seek refuge, earn a living through his daughter and seek riches from wicked people and thieves.’ Kashyapa said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks gamble everywhere, destroy trust, bear false witness, eat the flesh of animals killed in vain, make unsuccessful donations and have intercourse with his wife during the day.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks be addicted towards cruel adharma vis-à-vis women, relatives and cattle, let him defeat brahmanas,

let him defy his preceptor and study the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda and let him offer oblations into fires that are kindled with straw.' Jamadagni said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks release excrement into the water, kill milk-yielding cattle, indulge in sexual intercourse outside the season, be hated and have enemies, live off his wife, make friends with difficulty and become someone else's guest.'²²⁶ Goutama said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks discard the Vedas after studying them, throw away the three sacrificial fires, sell soma, dwell in a village that has a common well, and live with a brahmana who has a *vrishala* for his wife.' Vishvamitra said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks be faced with a situation where his seniors and servants are maintained by other people, though he is alive. Despite many children, let him not accomplish his purpose. Let him be an impure and crooked brahmana. Let him be insolent because of his prosperity. Let him have to till the soil and let him be malicious. During the rains, let him be a servant of the king. Let the thief be an officiating priest for someone who is not entitled to perform a sacrifice.' Arundhati said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks always cause grief to her mother-in-law and her husband. Let her be evil in intelligence. Let her eat the tasty food alone. In the midst of her family, at the end of the day, let her be made to eat only *saktu*. Despite giving birth to a brave son, let her be unfortunate.'²²⁷ Ganda said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks always speak falsehoods and act against the virtuous. Let her have to bestow her daughter in marriage in exchange for a price. Let her eat the food she has cooked alone. Let her spend her life as a servant maid. Let her be destroyed because of her perverse deeds.' Pashusakha said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks give birth to servants. Let him have worthless offspring. Let him never worship the gods.' Shunasakha responded, 'Let the person who has taken away the lotus stalks bestow his daughter in marriage on a revered brahmana who knows the metres and observes brahmacharya. Let him bathe after having studied the Atharva Veda.' The rishis replied, 'The oath you have taken is something desired by brahmanas. O Shunasakha! You must have stolen all our lotus stalks.' Shunasakha said, 'What you left here can no longer be seen. What you have said is true. I have done the deed. It isn't a lie. I have stolen the lotus stalks. While you looked on, I made the lotus stalks vanish. O illustrious ones! O unblemished ones! I did that to test you. I have come here to protect all of you. Yatudhani was an extremely angry demoness who desired to kill you. She was invoked by Vrishadarbhi. O ones rich in austerities! I have slain her. That evil and wicked one was generated from the fire, so as to cause injury to you. O brahmanas! That is the reason I have come here. Know me to be Vasava. Since you are without avarice, you have obtained the indestructible worlds that satisfy all the objects of desire. O brahmanas! Arise quickly from this spot and go there.' Thus addressed by Purandara, the maharshis were delighted. With Indra of the gods, all of them went to heaven. Those great-souled ones suffered hardships from supreme hunger. Yet, because they did not succumb to greed, they obtained heaven. In this way, those great-souled ones enjoyed many objects of pleasure. Therefore, in every situation, a man must abandon greed. O king! Lack of avarice is known as supreme dharma. If a man recites this account of good conduct in an assembly, he obtains a share of happiness and does not have to face difficulties. The ancestors, the rishis and the gods are pleased with him. After death, such a man obtains fame, dharma and artha.'"

Chapter 1777(96)

‘**B**hishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the oaths taken in the course of a visit to the tirthas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O great king! This is about what was done by rajarshis and brahmana rishis when there was a theft of lotuses. The rishis assembled on the western side of Prabhasa. Having assembled there, they consulted each other. They decided that they would roam around, visiting all the sacred tirthas on earth. Having said this, all of them departed on that task. O king! There were Shukra, Angiras, the learned Kavi, Agastya, Narada, Parvata, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Goutama, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, the rishi Galava, Ashtaka, Bharadvaja, Arundhati, the Valakhilyas, Shibi, Dilipa, Nahusha, Ambarisha, King Yayati, Dhundhumara and Puru. O Indra among men! Those great ones proceeded, placing Shatakratu, Vritra’s slayer, at their head. Having visited all the tirthas, in the month of Magha, they went to the sacred tirtha of Koushiki. They had cleansed their sins after visiting all the tirthas. After this, they went to that extremely sacred lake that was

Brahma's. They were like fires and they bathed in that tirtha of the gods. They then gathered lotus stalks and ate them. O king! Some of them extracted the stalks of lotuses. Other brahmanas extracted the roots of the lotuses.

“However, they found that the lotuses uprooted by Agastya had been stolen by someone. Agastya, foremost among the rishis, spoke to them. ‘Who has stolen my excellent lotuses? I suspect it must be one of you. Give my lotuses back. It is unworthy of you to steal my lotuses. I have heard that time destroys the strength of dharma. That time must have arrived and dharma's affliction is increasing. Before adharma increases further, I should quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when brahmanas will recite the Vedas in loud tones in the midst of villages, within the hearing of vrishalas. There will be a time when kings will conduct themselves according to adharma. I do not wish to see all that. Before all that happens, I will leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when men will regard the superior, the middling and the inferior as the same. A great darkness will pervade everything. Before that happens, I wish to quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when strong mortals will oppress weaker ones. Before I see that, I wish to quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. I am not interested in seeing this state of affairs in the world of men.’

“Thus addressed by the maharshi, the rishis replied, ‘We have not stolen your lotuses. You should not suspect us in vain. O maharshi! We will take terrible oaths.’ O Indra among men! Since the maharshis were certain that they had not dishonoured dharma, with the kings, and their sons and grandsons, one after another, they took these oaths. Bhrigu said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses abuse when he is censured, strike back when he is struck and let him eat the flesh from the backbones of animals.’²²⁸ Vasishtha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses not be interested in studying, let him be surrounded by dogs and as a mendicant, let him live in a city.’²²⁹ Kashyapa said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses sell merchandise everywhere, let him covet objects left in trust and let him bear false witness.’ Goutama said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses live with insolence in his mind, let him earn a living through trade and tilling the ground and let him be malicious.’ Angiras said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be impure and a crooked brahmana, let him be surrounded by dogs and let him not be freed from the sin of causing injury to brahmanas.’ Dhundhumara said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be ungrateful towards his friends, let him be reborn to a shudra mother and let him eat the food alone.’ Puru said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a physician, let him be sustained by his wife and let him obtain a means of living through his father-in-law.’ Dilipa said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses dwell in a village that has a common well, let him be the husband of a vrishala and let him go to the worlds meant for such people.’ Shukra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses eat flesh from the backbones of animals, let him have intercourse during the day and let him become the servant of a king.’ Jamadagni said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses study in a prohibited way, let his friends eat at his funeral ceremonies²³⁰ and let shudras eat at his funeral ceremonies.’ Shibi said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses die without having ignited the sacrificial fire, let there be impediments at his sacrifices and let him obstruct the ascetics.’ Yayati said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be false to his vows and procreate through his wife when he wears matted hair and let him disrespect the Vedas.’ Nahusha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a householder who drives his guests away because he has initiated himself into the pursuit of desire, let him pass on learning to his servants.’ Ambarisha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be extremely cruel and a follower of adharma in his treatment of women, relatives and cattle and let him disregard brahmanas.’ Narada said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be ignorant, let his fire remain hidden, let him read the sacred texts in mispronounced tones, let him show disrespect to those who are superior.’ Nabhaga said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses always utter falsehoods, let him quarrel with the virtuous, let him bestow his daughter for a price.’ Kavi said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses strike a cow with his feet, let him urinate towards the sun, let him abandon those who seek refuge.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a servant to a king during a drought, let him act as an officiating priest to those who should not perform sacrifices.’ Parvata said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses have lordship over a village, let him travel on vehicles drawn by asses, let him use dogs for a means of subsistence.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses suffer all the sins committed by those who perform all the cruel and wicked acts, let him utter lies.’ Ashtaka said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a king who is not accomplished in his wisdom and is wicked in conduct and addicted to desire, let him rule the earth in accordance with adharma.’ Galava said, ‘Let the person who has stolen

the lotuses be worse than a person who is a sinner, let him be a man who injures his own through his wicked deeds, let him boast about the gifts he has donated.’ Arundhati said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses speak ill of her mother-in-law, let her harbour evil thoughts towards her husband, let her eat the tasty food alone.’ The Valakhilyas said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses stand on one foot at the entrance to a village, seeking alms,’²³¹ despite knowing about dharma, let him abandon dharma.’ Pashusakha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a brahmana who disregards the agnihotra fire and sleeps happily, let him adopt the life of a mendicant and yet be addicted to desire.’ Surabhi said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a cow who, despite possessing her own calf, is milked by some other cow’s calf, with the milk being placed in a brass vessel.’ O Indra among Kouravas! In this way, they were ready to curse with too many different kinds of oaths.

“‘The one with the thousand eyes, the king of the gods, was delighted. He glanced at the angry ones, foremost among brahmanas. The rishis were enraged and Maghavan told them what he thought. He spoke to the brahmana rishis, the devarshis and the *rajarshis*. O king! Hear from me.’ Shakra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses bestow his daughter in marriage on a brahmana who knows about the metres, follows brahmacharya and has studied the Atharva Veda. Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a person who has studied all the Vedas. Let him be pure in conduct and devoted to dharma. Let him go to Brahma’s abode.’ Agastya replied, ‘O slayer of Bala! Instead of a curse, you have pronounced a benediction. Follow eternal dharma and return my lotuses.’”²³² Indra said, ‘O illustrious one! I did not steal the lotuses because of greed. You should not be angry at me. I stole them because I desired to hear about dharma. Dharma represents the essence of the sacred texts. Dharma is the bridge that leads to welfare. From the rishis, I have heard what is eternal, undecaying and everlasting. O supreme among sages! Take back the lotus stalks. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! You should forgive my transgression.’ Thus addressed by the great Indra, the extremely angry ascetic accepted the lotuses. The intelligent sage was pleased. Those residents of the forest visited tirthas again. They washed their bodies at those sacred tirthas. If a person reads this account on auspicious and festive days, his son will not be born stupid and wicked. He will never be touched by any anxiety or dirt. After death, he will be radiant and obtain excellence in heaven. These are the sacred texts followed by the rishis. O supreme among men! A person who follows these goes to Brahma’s undecaying world.”

Chapter 1778(97)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the dharma followed at funeral ceremonies, umbrellas and footwear are given. Who started this? How did this originate and why are these given? It isn’t just the dharma of funeral ceremonies. They are given on other auspicious occasions too. O king! I wish to hear the truth about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen in detail to how the system of umbrellas and footwear started, about how it originated in this world and who started it. It became an everlasting practice for those who seek an auspicious end. O lord of men! I will tell you everything in detail. O lord of men! In this connection, listen to an ancient account. This is a conversation between Jamadagni and the great-souled Surya. O lord! In ancient times, the illustrious one used to play around with his bow himself. One after another, Bhargava would take aim and shoot his arrows. Renuka²³³ would bring back all the ones that the blazingly energetic one shot. She would properly bring them back and return them to him. He would be pleased at the sound of the bowstring slapping against his palm and the sound of the arrows. He would cheerfully shoot them and she would bring them back. Once, it was the month of Jyeshtha²³⁴ and the sun was in the middle of the sky. Having shot his arrows, the brahmana told Renuka, ‘O large-eyed one! Go and fetch the arrows that have been shot from the bow. O one with the beautiful brows! Bring them back, so that I can shoot them again.’ O lord of men! She left. But the beautiful one had to seek shade at the foot of a tree. There, her head and feet were scorched by the sun. The beautiful one spent some time there, but she feared that she would be cursed by her husband. The black-eyed one therefore began to collect the arrows again. The illustrious one collected the arrows and returned. But the one with the beautiful limbs was distressed and her feet suffered from the pain. Scared and trembling, she returned to her husband. The husband, the rishi, angrily spoke

these words to the one with the beautiful face. ‘O Renuka! Why do you repeatedly take such a long time to return?’ Renuka replied, ‘O one rich in austerities! My head and feet are scorched. I suffer from the heat of the sun and have to seek shade at the foot of a tree. O brahmana! That is the reason I take a long time to return. O lord! O one rich in austerities! Knowing this, you shouldn’t be angry with me.’ Jamadagni said, ‘O Renuka! The one with the blazing rays has been the cause of your misery. Today, using the blazing energy of my weapons and my arrows, I will destroy Surya.’ He drew back his divine bow and picked up many arrows. He stood there, turning his face in the direction of the sun. O Kounteya! On seeing that he was ready to strike, Surya approached in the form of a brahmana and spoke these words. ‘What crime has Surya committed against you? From the firmament, Surya scatters down his rays. The sun collects juices from the earth and showers them down in the form of rain. O brahmana! Food is generated from that and this brings happiness to humans. It has been read in the Vedas that food is life. O brahmana! Hidden in the clouds, the sun is surrounded by his rays and showers down rain on the seven *dvipas*. The herbs, the creepers, the leaves and the flowers result. O lord! It is through the rain that all the food is generated. Everything is sustained through food—the sacraments, beginning with birth, all the vows and rites, the donation of cows, marriages, the prosperous sacrifices, the donations and all the methods for the accumulation of wealth. O Bhargava! You know the truth about that. Everything that is pleasant and beautiful results from food. I am telling you what you already know. O brahmana! Everything that I am telling you is already known to you. O brahmana rishi! Be pacified. Why are you trying to bring Surya down?’”

Chapter 1779(98)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “When the sun beseeched the supreme among sages, what did the immensely energetic Jamadagni do?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Despite the supplication, the sage Jamadagni, the lord who was like the fire in his radiance, was not pacified. Surya again spoke to him in sweet words. O lord of the earth! In the form of the brahmana, he bowed his head down and joined his hands in salutation. ‘O brahmana rishi! In his course, Surya is always moving. Since the sun is always moving forward, how will you strike one who is in motion?’ Jamadagni replied, ‘Through the sight of my knowledge, I know who you are. Whether you are stationary or mobile, it will be my task to teach you humility today. O sun! In the afternoon, you are stationary for a brief instant. O Surya! Without thinking about it, I will pierce you then.’ Surya said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O supreme among archers! There is no doubt that you know who I am. O illustrious one! Even if I have offended you, know that I have sought refuge with you.’ At this, the illustrious Jamadagni laughed and spoke these words. ‘O Surya! Since you have sought protection with me, you should not be frightened any more. If a person who has sought refuge with me is slain, that will cause a transgression of the uprightness of brahmanas, the stability of the earth, the mildness of the moon, the gravity of Varuna, the resplendence of the fire, the radiance of Meru and the heat of the sun. A person who kills a supplicant is like one who violates his preceptor’s bed, kills a brahmana and drinks liquor. O son!²³⁵ Therefore, think of something against the heat. Let the paths of those who are oppressed by your rays become comfortable.’ Having said this, the extender of the Bhrigu lineage was silent. Quickly, Surya gave him an umbrella and footwear. Surya said, ‘O maharshi! Accept this umbrella as a helmet against my rays. Accept this footwear, made out of leather, for the protection of the feet. From this day, these will be known on earth as auspicious gifts and they will be regarded as supreme and indestructible.’ Umbrellas and footwear were thus instituted by Surya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the three worlds, they came to be known as auspicious. Therefore, excellent umbrellas and footwear must be given to brahmanas. This is extremely great dharma and one should not think about this. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! If a person gives a white umbrella with one hundred ribs to brahmanas, he obtains happiness after death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Always honoured by brahmanas, apsaras and gods, he dwells in Shakra’s world. O mighty-armed one! If a person gives footwear to brahmanas, *snatakas* and other brahmanas who are controlled and are being scorched, he obtains worlds that are revered by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After death, he resides happily in Goloka. O best among

the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I have thus told you everything about the fruits from donating umbrellas and footwear.”

Chapter 1780(99)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the truth about the fruits obtained from trees and ponds.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Land that is beautiful with forests, adorned with many kinds of colourful minerals and grows all kinds of seeds is said to be the best. Among fields, the one that have ponds are superior. I will progressively tell you about all kinds of waterbodies. I will tell you about the qualities associated with those who dig ponds. Those who create ponds are honoured everywhere in the three worlds. Even when dwelling with friends, in places that enhance friendship, it is best to dwell in houses that have ponds. Those lead to the greatest fame. To obtain the fruits of dharma, artha and kama, the learned say that it is best to dig a pond properly. A field with a pond is a great refuge. Four kinds of creatures are noticed near a pond.²³⁶ When there are ponds in every direction, this brings supreme benefit. Gods, humans, gandharvas, ancestors, serpents, rakshasas and all mobile objects resort to waterbodies. Therefore, I will tell you about the qualities that are said to be associated with ponds. The rishis have spoken about these fruits being obtained. The learned have said that if one’s pond has water when the rains are meagre, one obtains the fruits of an agnihotra. If one’s pond has water during autumn, after death, one obtains the supreme fruits of donating one thousand cows. If one’s pond has water during the cold season,²³⁷ one obtains the fruits of performing a sacrifice where a lot of gold is donated. If one’s pond has water during the winter, the learned have said that the fruits obtained are like those of an agnishtoma sacrifice. If one’s well-constructed pond provides excellent refuge during the spring, the fruits obtained are those of an *atiratra* sacrifice. If one’s pond has drinking water during the summer, the learned sages have said that the fruits are like those of a *vajapeya* sacrifice. A man whose wells and waterbodies are such that cattle can always find drinking water there, is virtuous and saves his entire lineage. If a person’s pond is such that thirsty cows, animals, birds and humans find drinking water there, he obtains the fruits of *ashvamedha*. If everyone drinks water, bathes and rests in a person’s pond, after death, he is thought of as obtaining everything infinite. O son! Water is extremely difficult to obtain, especially after death. Eternal pleasure results from offering water to drink. If a person remains awake and donates sesamum, water and a lamp, after death, with his relatives, he obtains bliss that is extremely difficult to get. O tiger among men! The giving of water is heavier than all gifts. It is superior to all gifts. Therefore, drinking water must always be given. I have thus spoken to you about the supreme fruits associated with ponds. I will next tell you about the planting of trees. Among immobile objects six kinds of species are spoken about—trees, bushes, creepers, smaller creepers,²³⁸ bamboos and grass. Among these different species, the planting of trees brings the greatest benefit. It brings fame in the world of men and leads to auspicious fruits in the hereafter. Such a person obtains a name in this world and greatness with the ancestors. He goes to the world of the gods and his name is never destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A person who plants trees saves his lineage, both ancestors and descendants. Therefore, plant trees. There is no doubt that a person who plants trees will obtain sons. When he dies, he will obtain the undecaying world of heaven. There will be blossoming trees with large numbers of gods there. There will be fruits, with the ancestors. The trees there will honour him as a guest and offer him shade. The trees offer refuge to kinnaras, serpents, rakshasas, gods, gandharvas, humans and large numbers of rishis. They satisfy humans with their flowers and their fruit. If a person plants trees, those trees save him in the world hereafter, like a son. Therefore, a person who desires benefit must always dig ponds and plant trees. These will protect you, like sons. O son! This is said to be your dharma. If a person digs ponds and plants trees, he is like a brahmana who speaks the truth or performs desirable sacrifices. He will obtain greatness in heaven. Therefore, dig ponds and plant trees. This is like a sacrifice among all kinds of sacrifices. This is like always speaking the truth.”

Chapter 1781(100)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Tell me everything about the dharma associated with *garhasthya*. O king! What must a man do to obtain prosperity in this world?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of men! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is about a conversation between Vasudeva and the earth. The powerful Vasudeva praised the goddess earth. O best among the Bharata lineage! He asked her what you have asked me.

“Vasudeva said, ‘Having resorted to the dharma of *garhasthya*, what acts should I undertake? O earth! What are the necessary tasks? Which acts bring happiness?’

“The earth replied, ‘Rishis, ancestors, gods and humans must be worshipped through sacrifices. O Madhava! Listen to me. The gods are always satisfied with sacrifices and humans with hospitality. One must always warmly give them what deserves to be given. O Madhusudana! The large number of rishis is also delighted with this. Before eating, the householder must always tend to the sacrificial fire and offer the oblations. O Madhusudana! The gods are pleased through these acts. For the sake of pleasing the ancestors, every day, he must perform the funeral rites of offering food, water, roots and fruits. After having followed the prescribed ordinances and ignited the fire, one must offer cooked food to the Vishvadevas. This must be offered to Agni, Soma and the Vishvadevas, and thereafter, to Yama. Separate oblations are recommended for the Prajapatis. The oblations must be offered in the due order. For Yama it is to the south, for Varuna it is to the west, for Soma it is to the north and for brahmanas, it is in the centre of the house. O Madhava! For Dhanvantari it is to the north-east and for Shakra it is to the east. It is said that men must be given offerings at the gate of the house. In the interior of the house, it is only the Maruts and the gods who can be given offerings. The Vishvadevas should be given offerings under the open sky. The ones who roam during the night and ghosts must be given offerings at night. After these offerings have been properly rendered, alms must be given to brahmanas. If no brahmanas are present, the first share of the offerings must be flung into the fire. If a man wishes to donate at a funeral ceremony for the ancestors, there are rites he must perform after the funeral ceremony has been concluded. Following the ordinances, the ancestors must be satisfied with the offerings. It is the turn of the Vishvadevas next. Thereafter, the brahmanas must be invited. The guests must next be served the food that is left. O great king! When they are first honoured, men are pleased. A guest is said to be a person who stays for a short period of time. A man must always submit to a preceptor, a father, a friend and a guest, “This is what is available in my house today.” A person who says this and does this is said to follow dharma. O Krishna! A man who is a virtuous householder must always eat what is left after this. Even if they reside in his house for an entire year, a man must honour and satisfy a king, an officiating priest, a snataka, a preceptor and a father-in-law with *madhuparka*. In the morning and in the evening, it is recommended that food must be placed on the ground for dogs, *shvapakas* and birds. This is known as an offering to the Vishvadevas. This is said to be dharma for a person who follows *garhasthya*. Without any malice, one must act in this way. One will then obtain supreme prosperity in this world. After death, one will obtain greatness in the vault of heaven.’ Hearing the earth’s words, the powerful Vasudeva always acted in this way. You should also act accordingly. O lord of men! By following the dharma of a householder, you will obtain fame in this world and heaven after death.”’

Chapter 1782(101)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! What is the one that is known as the donation of lamps? How did it originate and what are its fruits? Tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Prajapati Manu and Suvarna. There was an ascetic who was known by the name of Suvarna. His complexion was golden. That is the reason he was known as Suvarna.²³⁹ He possessed the qualities of noble lineage and good conduct. He was supremely devoted to studying. Through his own qualities, he surpassed many who were descended from excellent lineages. On one occasion, the brahmana saw Manu wandering around.

They asked each other questions about their respective well-beings. Resolved to obtain success, they sat down together on the mountainous slopes of the golden mountain of Meru. Seated there, they conversed with each other on various topics—the brahmana rishis, the gods, the daityas and the ancient great-souled ones. Suvarna spoke these words to the lord, Svayambhu Manu. ‘For the welfare of all beings, you should answer my question. O lord of the subjects! There are many beautiful objects that are offered to the gods. How did this originate and what are the fruits that result? Please instruct me about this.’

“Manu replied, ‘In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Shukra and Bali when they met. Bali, Virochana’s son, ruled the three worlds. He quickly approached Shukra, the extender of the Bhṛigu lineage. The lord of the asuras honoured Bhargava with arghya and after he had sat down, seated himself. In the proper way, he then offered him a large quantity of dakshina. They then conversed about what you have spoken about, about the fruits of donating beautiful objects like incense and lamps. The Indra among the daityas asked the Indra among wise ones this supreme question. “O supreme among those who know about the brahman! What are the fruits from donating beautiful objects like incense and lamps? O foremost among brahmanas! You should tell me this.”

““Shukra said, “Austerities were created first and dharma evolved after that. During the intervening period, creepers and herbs were generated. They had soma as their essence and many of these were created on earth. Some of this species were like amrita, while others were like poison. There were others that were neither. Amrita instantly provided pleasure and nourishment to the mind. The terrible stench of poison makes the mind suffer in every way. Know that amrita is auspicious and poison is extremely inauspicious. All the herbs constitute amrita. The energy of poison is generated from the fire. Whatever delights the mind is beneficial. That is the reason men who are performers of good deeds describe them as beautiful. A pure man gives the gods these beautiful objects. Whatever satisfies the gods is said to be beautiful. O lord! O king of the daityas! When a person gives beautiful objects to the gods, with an auspicious end in mind, they are pleased with him. Herbs possess many kinds of valour and have many different forms. It should be known that they have separate categories of fierce, mild and energetic. There are trees that can be used at sacrifices and those that should not be used at sacrifices. Listen to me. There are garlands that ensure welfare for the asuras and for the gods. I will progressively tell you what is loved by rakshasas, gods, *yakshas*, ancestors and humans and what ensures benefit. There are those²⁴⁰ that are wild, those that naturally grow in villages, those that have to be cultivated, those that are grown in mountainous regions, those with thorns, those without thorns and those that have fragrance, beauty and taste. The scent of flowers is said to be of two types—agreeable and disagreeable. Flowers with an agreeable fragrance must be offered to the gods. O lord! The gods always desire flowers that come from trees without thorns and those that are generally white in complexion. A person who knows about donations should give garlands of aquatic flowers, lotuses and the like, to gandharvas, serpents and yakshas. Flowers which are extremely difficult to touch, those with thorns and those that are mostly red or black, must be offered to creatures that are fierce in their valour.²⁴¹ O lord! It has been said that beautiful and agreeable flowers, those that delight the mind and are sweet when crushed, should be offered to humans. Flowers that have grown in cremation grounds or temples should not be used in any activity that involves nourishment, such as marriages or secret pleasures. Mild flowers from slopes of mountains should be offered to the gods. Following the ordinances of the sacred texts, mild flowers that have grown and have been plucked properly can be offered. They please gods with their fragrance, yakshas and rakshasas with their sight and serpents with their touch. Men are pleased in all three ways. Gods are pleased instantly. They are capable of satisfying all the desires and wishes of mortals. When the gods are pleased, they always honour those who revere them. When they are ignored and disrespected, they destroy those inferior men. I will now tell you the fruits from offering incense. There are many kinds of incense—good and bad. Listen to me. There are three kinds—extractions, wood that naturally burns and incense that is artificially created. There are auspicious and inauspicious fragrances. Listen in detail. With the exception of *sallaki*,²⁴² all extractions can be given to the gods. It is certain that *guggulu*²⁴³ is the best among these. *Aguru*²⁴⁴ is the best among extractions and is desired by yakshas, rakshasas and serpents. The daityas love *sallaki* and such similar extractions. O king! Fragrances from *sarja*²⁴⁵ and the essence of similar wood, mixed with the fermented juice of sugar cane are recommended for men. The gods, the danavas and demons are said to be instantly satisfied. Men are said to use these²⁴⁶ for pleasure. These are the qualities and reasons why these beautiful objects

are said to be given. These different kinds of incense lead to an enhancement of pleasure. I will tell you about the supreme fruits associated with giving lamps—whom these lamps should be given to, when, and in what form. Light is a manifestation of energy and it is described as moving upwards. Therefore, when energy is given, it increases the energy of men. *Dakshinayana* is mixed with a period of intense darkness. Therefore, the donation of lamps is praised during *uttarayana*.²⁴⁷ Light moves upwards and it is an antidote to darkness. Therefore, it has been determined as something that moves upwards. It is because of light that the gods are energetic, powerful and radiant. Rakshasas obtain these through darkness. Thus, lamps should be given. Through giving light, a man obtains the radiance of eyesight. Such a donor should not be injured and the lamp must not be stolen or destroyed. A person who steals a lamp becomes blind. He is shrouded in darkness and loses his radiance. The donor of a lamp goes to heaven and is surrounded by an array of lights there. The best lamps are those in which ghee is burnt. Next are those in which the juices of herbs²⁴⁸ are burnt. A person who desires prosperity must never give a lamp in which the essence of fat, marrow and bones is being burnt. A person who desires his own prosperity must always place lamps on the slopes of mountains, along deserted roads, near sanctuaries and crossroads. A man who gives lamps always saves his lineage and purifies his soul. He becomes radiant and obtains the world of the stellar bodies. I will tell you about the qualities and fruits associated with rendering offerings to gods, yakshas, serpents, men, ghosts and rakshasas. Know that rakshasas are those who eat first, without feeding brahmanas, gods, guests and children. They are inauspicious and do not pronounce vashatkara. Therefore, one must single-mindedly bow one's head down and respectfully first render offerings to the gods. The gods accept these and always praise the house. It is through such offerings that brahmanas, other guests, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, gods and ancestors are sustained. When they are gratified, they please the offerer with a long life, fame and riches. Along with the offerings, flowers, curds and well-cooked food, auspicious, fragrant and agreeable to see, must be rendered to the gods. Offerings made to yakshas and rakshasas must have blood and meat, mixed with liquor²⁴⁹ and decorated with parched rice. What is given to the serpents must always be mixed with lotuses. The ghosts accept sesamum seed and molasses. Someone who eats only after honouring the gods with a first share becomes strong and noble. Therefore, they must be given an offering first. One's house is radiant because of the gods who are present in the house. For the sake of prosperity, one must worship them and give them the first share.””

‘Bhishma continued, “This is what Kavya Bhargava told the Indra among the asuras. Manu told Suvarna this and Suvarna told Narada. O immensely radiant one! Narada told me about these qualities. O son! Therefore, you should also follow all these kinds of conduct.””

Chapter 1783(102)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O best among the Bharata lineage! I have heard about giving flowers, incense and offerings, about the rites to be followed and the fruits. However, you should tell me about this again. What are the fruits from giving incense and lamps? Why do householders hurl offerings down?”²⁵⁰

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Nahusha and Agastya and Bhrigu. O great king! Rajarshi Nahusha was an extremely great ascetic. Through his excellent and good deeds, he obtained the kingdom of heaven. O king! Though Nahusha went to heaven and resided there, he performed many kinds of human and divine rites. O king! Though the great-souled one was in heaven, he performed all the human rites and the eternal divine ones. He ignited the fire, collected kindling, kusha grass and agreeable objects. He made offerings of food, parched grain, incense and lamps. All of these continued to be practised in the great-souled king's house. Though he dwelt in heaven, he performed the sacrifice of meditation and the sacrifice of mental control. The lord of the gods²⁵¹ worshipped all the gods in the proper way. O scorcher of enemies! He continued to do everything in the indicated way, just as he had done earlier. But after some time, the fact of having become Indra, led to insolence penetrating him. O king! He ignored all the rites and began to suffer. Intoxicated at having been granted a boon,²⁵² he made the rishis carry him. Since his observance of the rites had diminished, he also became weak. When it was time for the foremost among sages, stores of austerities, to bear him, he became overcome with a great deal of insolence. One after another, the rishis carried him. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! It was then time for Agastya to bear him. At that time, the immensely energetic Bhṛigu, supreme among those who knew about the brahman, had gone there. He reached Agastya's hermitage and asked, 'O great sage! Why do we have to tolerate Nahusha? Since he has become Indra of the gods, the evil-minded one shows us disrespect.'

"Agastya replied, 'O great sage! How can I curse him? You know that the granter of boons has given him a boon. When he arrived in heaven, he asked for a boon from that god. "Anyone that my eyes turn towards will come under my subjugation." This boon was granted. Therefore, there is no doubt that I won't be able to burn him down. That is also the reason why the other supreme rishis have not been able to curse him or bring him down. O lord! In earlier times, the great-souled gave him amrita to drink. That is the reason we can't bring him down. It is evident that the god has granted this boon to cause misery to all beings. That is the reason the worst among men displays this adharma towards brahmanas. O supreme among eloquent ones! The time has arrived. Tell me what should be done. All of us will act exactly as you tell us to.'

"Bhṛigu said, 'I have come here because I have been asked to do so by the grandfather. This is to counter Nahusha's strength and insolence. Today, the extremely evil-minded king of the gods will yoke you to his chariot. Today, I will use my energy to uproot him from the status of Indra. Behold. Today, I will establish Shatakratu as Indra again. That extremely evil-minded and wicked person will be dislodged from his status as Indra. Today, the evil Indra of the gods will strike you with his foot. His consciousness will be affected by destiny and that evil-minded one will destroy himself. He will transgress dharma and I will thus be able to strike the one who causes the injury. O best among brahmanas! In my anger, I will curse him, "May you become a snake." I will thus shame that extremely evil-minded one. O great sage! While you look on, I will bring him down to earth. Nahusha is the performer of wicked deeds. He is intoxicated because of his prosperity and strength. O sage! If it pleases you, I will act in this way.'"

Bhishma continued, "Thus addressed by Bhṛigu, the undecaying son of Mitravaruna, Agastya, was extremely pleased and his anxiety was dispelled."

Chapter 1784(103)

'Yudhishtira asked, "How did he face a calamity and how was he brought down on the ground? How did he lose his status of Indra? You should tell me about this."

Bhishma replied, "Those two great-souled ones conversed about what they should do. I have told you everything about how humans go to heaven. In that way, the great-souled one became the king of the gods by giving lamps and all the other required objects, observing all the rites for rendering offerings and performing all the other separate tasks that are meant for auspicious days. O Indra among kings! The learned say that in the world of the gods and in the world of men, a householder who practises good conduct obtains prosperity. This is through offering incense and lamps and prostrations. When food is cooked, the first share must be offered to brahmanas. When offerings are rendered to gods who reside in the house, they are pleased. The householder obtains satisfaction by rendering such offerings. However, through such an act, the gods are pleased a hundred times more. This is also the way virtuous people give incense and lamps, prostrating themselves. Such acts are praised and possess many qualities. After bowing down, learned people perform many acts of ablutions and these please the gods. When they are worshipped in accordance with the rites, the gods accept the offerings and are delighted. This is the kind of intelligence Nahusha, lord of men, resorted to. Having performed these wonderful rites, he obtained the great status of Indra of the gods. But after some time, his good fortune started to decline. He no longer followed all the rites and started to ignore them. The Indra among the gods was negligent in observing the rendering of offerings and in following the ordinances and giving incense, lamps and water. The rakshasas started to obstruct his sacrificial rites.

"He yoked Agastya, foremost among rishis, to his vehicle. The immensely strong one smiled and instructed that the vehicle should be swiftly conveyed from the banks of the Sarasvati. The immensely energetic Bhṛigu spoke to the son of Mitravaruna. 'Until I have entered your matted hair, do not shut your eyes.' While he entered the matted hair, the undecaying one²⁵³ stood immobile. The immensely energetic Bhṛigu prepared to bring the king down. The

king of the gods approached the rishi and the vehicle. O lord of the earth! Agastya spoke these words to the lord of the gods. ‘O Indra! Yoke me swiftly. What region will I bear you to? O lord of the gods! I will convey you wherever you tell me to.’ Thus addressed, Nahusha yoked the sage. Bhrigu, who was inside the matted hair, became extremely delighted. However, Bhrigu took care not to look at the great-souled Nahusha, since he knew about the power that the boon had given him. Though he was yoked by Nahusha, Agastya did not display any rage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king struck him with a goad. But even then, the one with dharma in his soul wasn’t angered. The king of the gods then angrily kicked Agastya on the head with his left foot. Bhrigu was inside the matted hair. When the head was thus struck, the powerful one angrily cursed Nahusha, evil in his intelligence. Bhrigu said, ‘In your rage, you have kicked the head of this great sage. O extremely evil-minded one! Therefore, you will quickly fall down on earth and become a snake.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! As soon as he said this, he²⁵⁴ became a snake and fell down on earth, on the surface of the ground. This was done by Bhrigu, who had not looked at him. O lord of the earth! Had Nahusha been able to see Bhrigu, he wouldn’t have been able to use his energy to bring him down. O great king! However, because of his gifts, austerities and rituals, though he fell down on the ground, he still retained his memory. To bring an end to the curse, he sought to pacify Bhrigu. O great king! He²⁵⁵ felt compassion and sought to bring an end to the curse. Bhrigu said, ‘There will be a king named Yudhishtira, an extender of the Kuru lineage. He will free you from the curse.’ Saying this, he vanished.

“‘The immensely energetic Agastya thus accomplished Shatakratu’s purpose. Worshipped by the brahmanas, he returned to his own hermitage. O king! You have saved Nahusha from that curse. O lord of men! While you looked on, he went to Brahma’s abode. Bhrigu thus brought Nahusha down to earth and went to Brahma’s abode and told Brahma what had happened. The grandfather summoned Shakra and the gods. ‘O gods! It is because of my boon that Nahusha obtained this kingdom. However, because of Agastya’s anger, he has been dislodged and has gone to earth. The gods are incapable of continuing without a king. Therefore, again consecrate Shakra in the kingdom of heaven.’ O Partha! The gods were thus addressed by the grandfather. Cheerfully, they replied to the grandfather that it would be that way. The illustrious Vasava was consecrated in the kingdom of heaven by Brahma and conducted himself as earlier. O tiger among kings! This is the ancient account about Nahusha’s transgression. But because of his deeds, Nahusha regained his success. Therefore, in the evening, a householder must offer lamps. After death, a person who gives lamps obtains divine eyesight. The donor of a lamp becomes like the full moon in his resplendence. A man who gives a lamp obtains beauty and riches for as many years as the number of *nimeshas*²⁵⁶ for which the lamp is ablaze.’”

Chapter 1785(104)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “There are wicked and foolish men who perform cruel deeds and steal the possessions of brahmanas.

Where do they go?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a chandala and a *kshatrabandhu*.²⁵⁷

“‘The king said, ‘O chandala! You have the form of an aged person, but your behaviour is like that of a child. Your body is covered with dust created by dogs and asses, but you are concerned with what has come from cows. Tasks censured by the righteous are recommended for chandalas. Why are you using water from the tank to wash off only the dust that has been raised by cattle?’

“‘The chandala replied, ‘O king! Earlier, cows that belonged to a brahmana were stolen and in the process, they raised some dust and this descended on some *soma* plants. Brahmanas who drank this soma and the king who had initiated himself into the sacrifice were swiftly submerged in hell, with the officiating priests, since all of them had appropriated something that belonged to a brahmana. Men who partook of the milk, ghee and curds,²⁵⁸ all the brahmanas and all the kings, were submerged in hell. When they shook their bodies, with the milk, they slew the sons and the grandsons.²⁵⁹ Though the couple²⁶⁰ was virtuous in conduct, because they had looked at the animals, they were killed. O king! I used to reside there, as a brahmachari who had conquered his senses. O lord of men! The

food I had obtained as alms got sprinkled with the dust. O king! Having eaten that, when I died, I became a chandala. The king who stole the brahmana's possessions came to an inglorious end. Therefore, under no circumstances, should one steal a brahmana's possessions. I only ate food that was sprinkled with a brahmana's dust. Look at what has happened to me. That is the reason a learned person must never sell soma. Learned people censure those who sell soma. O king! When they reach Vaivasvata's body, all the people who sell it or buy it go to *rourava*.²⁶¹ Even if a person is learned and ignorantly sells dust that has been laced with soma, he is destroyed and, for a long period of time, is reborn as a person who lives off lending money and usury. He goes to hell three hundred times and subsists on the excrement of dogs, in the companionship of dogs. If excessive insolence and transgression of a friend's wife are weighed on both sides of a balance, excessive insolence is heavier. Look at this wicked dog. It is light brown and thin. It is through excessive insolence that beings attain such an end.²⁶² I was born in a large and prosperous family. O lord! In that other life, I was accomplished in jnana and vijñana. I knew that sins would lead to destruction. But I showed by anger towards beings and ate the flesh from the backbones. I displayed that kind of conduct and ate that kind of food. That is the reason I have come to this present state. Behold the progress of time. I am like a person whose clothes have caught fire at one end, or like one who is pursued by bees. Look at me. I am agitated and covered with dust and am running away. Those who are householders can overcome great sins through studying. In addition, there are donations. That is what the learned ones have said. O lord of the earth! If it is a brahmana who has committed sinful deeds, he must go to a hermitage and free himself from all attachments and desire. O bull among kshatriyas! I have now been born in a wicked lineage. I am not certain about how I can liberate myself. Because of some good deeds that I performed then, I have not lost my memory. O king! I wish to be emancipated. I am seeking refuge with you and asking you. Dispel my doubt. O excellent one! How can I free myself from this state of being a chandala?"

"The king said, 'O chandala! Know about how you can be freed. If you cast aside your life for the sake of a brahmana, you will obtain what is desirable. To ensure the welfare of brahmanas, give up your body in the field of battle, or before predatory beasts. If you offer your life as an oblation, you will be freed. There is no other means for your liberation.'"

'Bhishma continued, "O king! O scorcher of enemies! Thus addressed, to protect the possessions of a brahmana, in the field of battle, he offered his life as an oblation, thus attaining a desirable end. O son! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O mighty-armed one! Therefore, if you desire the supreme end, always protect the possessions of brahmanas.'"

Chapter 1786(105)

'Yudhishtira asked, "O grandfather! It has been said that all the performers of good deeds obtain an identical world. O grandfather! Or are there many worlds? Tell me this."

'Bhishma said, "O Partha! Because of their deeds, men go to many different worlds. People with good deeds go to worlds meant for the virtuous and those with bad deeds go to places meant for the wicked. O son! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between the sage Goutama and Vasava. There was a brahmana named Goutama. He was mild and self-controlled and had conquered his senses. In a great forest, he saw a baby elephant that was distressed because it had lost its mother. The one who was firm in his vows was overtaken by compassion. On seeing it, he nurtured it. After a long period of time, it became large and extremely strong. It was a giant elephant with shattered temples, exuding musth everywhere. Assuming the form of Dhritarashtra,²⁶³ Shakra seized the elephant. Goutama, firm in his vows, saw that it was being dragged away. The immensely ascetic one spoke to King Dhritarashtra. 'O Dhritarashtra! Do not be ungrateful and seize this elephant. It is my son and I have nurtured it with difficulty. The virtuous say that one becomes a friend after taking seven steps together.²⁶⁴ O king! Let the sin of having injured a friend not touch you. It fetches me water and kindling. It protects my hermitage when I am away. It is humble towards the family of its preceptor. It is engaged in the tasks of its preceptor. It is mild, restrained and grateful. I have always cherished it. O king! Ignoring my protestations, you should not take this elephant away.'

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘I will give you one thousand cows, one hundred female servants and five hundred gold coins. O maharshi! I will give you many other kinds of riches. What will a brahmana do with an elephant?’

“Goutama replied, ‘O king! Keep your cows, female servants, gold coins and many other jewels. O Indra among men!²⁶⁵ Keep your diverse riches. What will a brahmana do with wealth?’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘What will brahmanas do with elephants? O brahmana! The race of elephants is meant for kings. I am taking this best of elephants away as my mount and there is no adharma in this. O Goutama! Do not obstruct me.’

“Goutama replied, ‘After death, the virtuous rejoice in a world. After death, the wicked sorrow in another world. O great-souled one! I will follow you to those worlds in Vaivasvata’s abode to try and bring this elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are those who lack faith and belief and do not follow rites. They are evil in soul and are addicted to satisfying the senses. They suffer misery in Yama’s abode. Dhritarashtra will go to a supreme region and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘In Vaivasvata’s world, people are controlled. There is truth there and no falsehood is uttered. The weak can oppress the strong there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are worlds for those who are proud and do not follow the ordinances in their behaviour towards their elder sisters, fathers, mothers and preceptors. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a supreme region and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘King Vaishravana’s²⁶⁶ dominion is Mandakini. It yields great objects of pleasure and is entered by those who are entitled to enjoy pleasure. There are large numbers of gandharvas, yakshas and apsaras there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who are excellent in their vows and follow the vow of tending to their guests. They give what they have pledged to brahmanas. They eat what is left after giving the others their shares. They obtain adornments in Mandakini.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There is a beautiful forest on the summit of Meru. It has excellent flowers and rings with the songs of kinnaras. There are beautiful and large *jambu*²⁶⁷ trees there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are brahmanas who are mild and devoted to the truth. They are extremely learned and seek to ensure the pleasure of all beings. They study itihasa and the Puranas. They offer libations and give offerings to brahmanas. O maharshi! Worlds are ordained for such people. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there. If you know about such a region, tell me about it. I will quickly go there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There is the grove of Nandana that belongs to the king of the kinnaras.²⁶⁸ It possesses many excellent blossoming trees and is loved by Narada. Large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras are always there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who are always accomplished in dancing and singing. They are devoted to the welfare of people and never seek anything. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘O Indra among men! There is the beautiful region of Uttara Kuru, where you will find delight with the gods. The brahmanas who reside there were created from the fire. There are those who had other origins and those who were generated from the mountains. Shakra showers down and yields all the objects of desire there. The women there pursue kama. There is no jealousy between men and women there. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who feel no desire about any creature. They do not eat meat and have cast aside the rod of chastisement. They do not cause injury to mobile and immobile objects. They regard all creatures as being like their own selves. They are without desire and without any sense of ownership. They are devoid of attachment. They are indifferent towards gain and loss and regard censure and praise as identical. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. That is the abode of King Soma. O great-souled one! I will follow you there and try to bring the

elephant back.'

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are those who are devoted to donating, but never accept anything back. For no reason do they accept anything from others. There is nothing that they are not prepared to give to the deserving and to all their guests. These people are extremely gracious. They are forgiving and do not speak ill of others. They are devoid of attachment and are always auspicious in conduct. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are resplendent and eternal worlds beyond these. They are free from dust, free from darkness and free from sorrow. This is the extremely great world of Aditya, meant for those who possess excellent conduct. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are those who are devoted to studying. They are devoted to serving their preceptors. They are ascetics, excellent in their vows and devoted to the truth. They never speak against their preceptors. They always seek to tend to the tasks of their preceptors. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! These are the pure and cleansed ones, restrained in speech. Those great-souled ones are established in the truth and learned in the Vedas. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are resplendent and eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. That is the abode of King Varuna. O great-souled one! I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who observe the *chaturmasya* sacrifice. There are worlds obtained by those who perform one thousand sacrifices. There are faithful brahmanas who follow the ordinances and offer agnihotra oblations for three years. Those great-souled ones bear the burden of dharma with their own wives. They are well-established along the appropriate path. There is said to be a destination for such people, who have dharma in their souls. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘Indra’s world is sparkling. It is devoid of sorrow. It is extremely difficult to reach and is sought by men. That is the abode of the one with abundant energy. O king! I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are brave men who live for one hundred years. They study the Vedas and without any distraction, perform sacrifices. All of these wander around in Shakra’s world. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are the great worlds of Prajapati. These are in the vault of heaven and all of these are devoid of sorrow. These belong to the learned ones from whom all the worlds have been generated. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are kings who have bathed after a royal sacrifice. Those great-souled ones have protected their subjects. They have bathed their limbs after a horse sacrifice. But Dhritarashtra will not go to their worlds.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are blazing and eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. Those worlds are extremely difficult to obtain and there is no oppression there. This is Goloka. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who possess one thousand cows and every year, give away one hundred. There are people who possess one hundred cows and every year, according to capacity, give away ten. There are those who possess ten and give away one. There are generous ones who possess five and give away one. There are brahmanas who emaciate themselves through brahmacharya. They recite words about the brahman. Those spirited ones are devoted to visiting the tirthas. In Goloka, they find delight on celestial vehicles. They go to Prabhasa, the sacred Manasa, the great lake of Pushkara, the sacred Naimisha, the tirtha of Bahuda, Karatoya, Gaya, Gayashira, Vipasha, Sthulavaluka, Tushniganga, Dashaganga, Mahahrada, Goutami, Koushiki, Sarasvati, Drishadvati and Yamuna. Those pure and great-souled ones, firm in their vows, go to divine and auspicious regions, where they are adorned in celestial garlands. They go to those fragrant regions. But Dhritarashtra will not go there.’

“Goutama replied, ‘There are regions where there is no fear from the cold and no fear from heat. There is no hunger, thirst, suffering, unhappiness and happiness. There is nothing hated or loved. There is no friend or enemy.

There is no old age or death. There is no good deed or bad. Those who are wise and spirited find extensive prosperity there. That is Svayambhu's auspicious world. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are those who are free from all attachments. They have cleansed their souls and are firm in their vows. They establish themselves in the yoga of *adhyatma*. They attain the destination of heaven. They possess the attribute of sattva and obtain Brahma's auspicious world. O great sage! You will not be able to see Dhritarashtra there.'

"Goutama replied, 'The *rathantara* and *brihat* are chanted there.²⁶⁹ The sacrificial altar is strewn with lotuses. The drinker of soma goes there on tawny horses.²⁷⁰ I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back. I know that you are Shatakratu, the slayer of Vritra. You are the one who roams through the earth and the universe. Through mental affliction, I hope I have not said or done anything unpleasant to you.'

"Shakra said, 'I came to this world traversed by people and followed in their footsteps so as to seize this elephant. I bow down before you. Command me. I will do everything that you ask me to.'

"Goutama replied, 'Give my son, the white elephant, back. It is a child and is only ten years old. It resides in this forest with me and I have no second companion. O Indra of the gods! Give me back the elephant.'

"Shakra said, 'O foremost among brahmanas! This elephant is your son. It is sniffing in the air and looking towards you. It is sniffing your feet with its trunk. I bow down before you. Meditate so that I may obtain benefit.'

"Goutama replied, 'O Indra of the gods! I always think of what will be auspicious for you. I always meditate about you and worship you. O Shakra! Grant me everything auspicious. Given by you, I am accepting this elephant.'

"Shakra said, 'There are learned, spirited and great-souled ones who have the Vedas hidden inside them. Among all those great-souled ones, you alone have been able to recognize me. I am pleased with you now. Listen. O brahmana! Swiftly come to me with your son, the elephant. Today, without any delay, you will obtain the auspicious worlds.'"

Bhishma continued, "Placing Goutama and his son, the elephant, ahead of him, the wielder of the vajra went to heaven, a place that is extremely difficult for even the righteous to reach.'"

Chapter 1787(106)

Yudhishtira said, "You have spoken about many kinds of gifts, tranquility, truth, non-violence, satisfaction with one's own wife and the fruits of donations. O grandfather! It is known that there is nothing other than the strength of austerities. You should now explain about supreme austerities."

Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishtira! There are said to be worlds associated with austerities. O Kounteya! It is my view that there is no austerity that is superior to fasting. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Bhagiratha and the great-souled Brahma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have heard that Bhagiratha went beyond the world of the gods, Goloka and the world of the rishis. On seeing this, Brahma spoke these words to King Bhagiratha. 'This region is extremely difficult to reach. How have you come here? O Bhagiratha! The gods, the gandharvas and men cannot come here, without tormenting themselves through austerities. How have you come here?'

"Bhagiratha replied, 'Without any doubt, I always gave to brahmanas. I always gave them hundreds and thousands.²⁷¹ Know that I always practised brahmacharya. It is because of those fruits that I have come here. I performed the *ekaratra* sacrifice and the *pancharatra* sacrifice ten times each and the *ekadasha* sacrifice eleven times.²⁷² I performed one hundred *vyotishtoma* sacrifices. But it is not because of those fruits that I have come here. For one hundred years, I always resided on the banks of the Jahnavi, tormenting myself through austerities. I gave away thousands of she-mules and women there. But I have not come to this city because of that. In Pushkara, I gave brahmanas one hundred thousand horses and again two hundred thousand horses. I gave them thousands of cows. I gave excellent and garlanded maidens, ornamented with golden moons.²⁷³ There were another sixty thousand who wore ornaments made out of pure gold. O protector of the worlds! In the sacrifice of *gosava*²⁷⁴ I gave away one hundred million cows. I gave each of them²⁷⁵ ten cows ready for milking, accompanied by their calves

and gold and brass vessels for milking. Once they had accepted these, controlling myself, I gave each of them ten more cows that had only had one calf each. These were those that yielded milk and were rohinis. I gave them ten million more cows and all of these yielded milk. I gave them ten times that number. O Brahma! But I have not come here because of that. I gave away one hundred thousand horses of the *bahlika* variety. They were white and had golden harnesses. But that is not the reason I have come here. O Brahma! I gave away eight crore of gold coins and another ten crore at each sacrifice that I performed. But it is not because of those fruits that I have come here. O grandfather! I gave away seventeen crore horses. They were pale yellow in complexion and possessed black ears. They were adorned with golden harnesses. O Brahma! I gave away seventeen thousand she-elephants.²⁷⁶ They were gigantic in size and their tusks were as large as ploughs. They were adorned in golden garlands. O lord of the gods! I gave away ten thousand chariots that were made out of gold throughout. They were ornamented with celestial decorations made out of gold. There were seven thousand more that were yoked to horses that were ornamented with gold. I gave these away in the form of dakshina at ten horse sacrifices that I performed, following what has been recommended in the Vedas. I was Shakra's equal in my power and in the valour of my sacrifices. O grandfather! At eight royal sacrifices that I performed, I vanquished all the kings and gave them away as dakshina, with thousands of gold coins strung around their necks. But that is not the reason I have come here, because of those sacrifices. O lord of the universe! The dakshina given there flowed over everything, like the Ganga's current. Following my inclinations, to each.²⁷⁷ I gave two thousand elephants and two thousand horses that were ornamented in gold and one hundred of the best villages. I did this three times. I was an ascetic and controlled my diet. I restrained my speech. For a long period of time, I resided in the Himalayas, along the Ganga, whose flow is irresistible. Her flow was held by Mahadeva on his head. O grandfather! But I have not come here because of those fruits. I hurled the shami stick²⁷⁸ and performed tens of thousands of sacrifices for the gods. Some lasted for thirteen days, others for twelve days. Some were *pundarika* sacrifices. But I am not here because of those fruits. I gave eight thousand humped bulls to brahmanas. Each of them was white and the horns were encrusted with gold. I gave them beautiful wives with golden necklaces. I gave piles of gold and gems. There were mountains of jewels. There were hundreds of thousands of villages, prosperous with wealth and grain. At the many great sacrifices I performed, I attentively gave each brahmana one hundred thousand cows that had only had a single calf each. But I am not here because of that. With dakshina, I performed sacrifices that lasted for eleven days. O god! There were horse sacrifices that lasted for twenty four days. O Brahma! Yet again, I performed such rites sixteen times. But I haven't come here because of those fruits. I also gave each of them a grove with kanchana trees. Each grove extended for a yojana on every side and was full of gems. But I am not here because of those fruits. Without any anger, for thirty years, I practised the excellent *turayana* vow.²⁷⁹ During this period, every day, I cheerfully gave brahmanas eighty thousand cows. They yielded milk and were rohinis. O protector of the universe! O lord of the gods! I always gave to brahmanas. But I have not come here because of those fruits. O Brahma! I always performed sacrifices with thirty fires. I performed eight *sarvamedha* and seven *naramedha* sacrifices. I also performed one hundred and twenty eight *vishvajit* sacrifices.²⁸⁰ O lord of the gods! But I have not come here because of those fruits. On the banks of Sarayu, Bahuda and Ganga, and in Naimisha, I gave away one million cows. It is not because of that either. Indra knew about the truth and kept it a secret. However, through his austerities, Bhargava²⁸¹ got to know. O one who should be worshipped! Blazing in his energy, Ushanas revealed that means of success and I have followed it. I have satisfied brahmanas and obtained success through those deeds. O lord! Thousands of rishis and others assembled and told me, "Go to Brahma's world." O lord! Thousands of brahmanas were pleased with me and also told me this. That is the reason I have obtained this world and there is nothing more to think about. This is the method that the ordainer has ordained. Asked by you, I have described it accurately to you. It is my view that there is no austerity that is greater than fasting. O supreme among gods! I bow down before you. Be pleased."

'Bhishma continued, "King Bhagiratha told Brahma this. Following the indicated rites, he worshipped the one who deserves to be worshipped."

‘Yudhishtira asked, “The Vedas say that a man possesses valour that lasts for one hundred years and has a lifespan of one hundred years. O grandfather! In that case, why do men die when they are children? Despite possessing a long lifespan, why does a man’s lifespan become short? How does one obtain fame? How does one obtain prosperity? Is it austerities, brahmacharya, meditation, oblations, herbs, birth or conduct? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will now tell you about what you have asked, the reason why a man has a short life or a long life. How does he obtain fame and how does he obtain prosperity? How should a man act so as to obtain benefit? Conduct ensures a long lifespan. Prosperity is obtained through conduct. It is through conduct that a man obtains fame, in this world and in the next. A man who is wicked in conduct does not obtain a long lifespan. Creatures are terrified of him and suffer on his account. Therefore, a person who desires his own prosperity must act in accordance with good conduct. Good conduct destroys the wickedness of the body and removes everything that is inauspicious. Good conduct is the sign of dharma. Good conduct is the sign of the virtuous. The conduct of virtuous people is a sign of good conduct. Even if people hear of a person who follows dharma and undertakes appropriate tasks, without actually having seen him, they repeatedly act so as to bring him pleasure. There are people who are non-believers, devoid of rites, those who cross their preceptors and the sacred texts. They are evil in conduct and only know about adharma. Their lifespans are destroyed. They don’t follow good behaviour and violate the ordinances. They are always indiscriminate about sexual intercourse. Such men have short lives and go to hell. If a man doesn’t possess any auspicious signs, but is nevertheless faithful and without malice, following good conduct, then he lives for one hundred years. A person without anger, truthful in speech, non-injurious towards creatures, without jealousy and without deceit—lives for one hundred years. A man who crushes lumps of earth or tears up grass,²⁸² bites his nails, eats food tasted by others and is restless—does not obtain greatness.

“A person must wake up at *brahma muhurta*²⁸³ and think about dharma and artha. After waking, he must perform the ablutions and joining the hands in salutation, recite the morning prayers, facing the east. In the same way, restraining conversation with others, the evening prayers must be recited. One must never look at the rising sun or the setting sun. During the two sandhyas,²⁸⁴ the rishis worship for a long time. That is the reason they obtain long lifespans. Therefore, restraining speech at the time, one must respectively face the east and the west. There are brahmanas who do not worship during the eastern and the western sandhya. All of them follow adharma and the king must make them undertake the tasks of shudras. For all the varnas, one must never have sexual intercourse with another person’s wife. For a man, there is nothing on earth that shortens a lifespan as much as having intercourse with another person’s wife. The application of cosmetics, dressing the hair, applying of collyrium, brushing the teeth and worshipping the gods must be done in the forenoon. One must never look at urine or excrement, or stand on these. One must not speak when passing urine. One must not release excrement in a field or near a village. Both urine and excrement must never be released in water. One must not speak while eating and must face the east. One should not criticize the food. Having finished eating, one must mentally touch the fire. If one eats facing the east, one obtains a long lifespan. If one eats facing the south, one obtains fame. If one eats facing the west one obtains wealth. If one eats facing the north, one speaks the truth. One must never sit on anything like chaff, hair, ash or bones. From a distance, one must avoid the water that someone else has used for bathing. One must offer oblations for peace and recite the savitri mantra. One must be seated while eating and not walk around. One must not pass urine while standing, or on ashes or inside a pen for cows. One must wash one’s feet before eating. But one must not go to sleep with wet feet. A person who washes his feet before eating lives for one hundred years. Three things of energy must never be touched with a hand that has not been washed after eating—a fire, a cow and a brahmana. If one does this, the lifespan is not diminished. When one is impure, one must never look at three objects of energy—the sun, the moon and all the nakshatras. When an aged person arrives, a young person’s breath of life ascends upwards. By standing up and greeting him, it is got back again. After greeting an aged person, a seat must be offered to him. When he is seated, one must remain standing, hands joined in salutation. When the aged person walks, one must follow him from the rear.²⁸⁵ One must not sit on a broken seat. A broken brass vessel must also be thrown away. One must never eat while clad in a single garment.²⁸⁶ One should not bathe naked. One should not sleep naked. One should not touch food that someone else has partly eaten. In an impure state, one must not touch another person’s head, since all the breath of life is concentrated there. One must not grasp another per-

son's hair or strike him on the head. One must not join one's hands together and use them for scratching one's own head. While bathing, one must not repeatedly dip one's head in the water. Then, the lifespan will not be shortened. After having washed the head, one should not apply oil to the limbs or touch the water again. Before eating, one should eat some crushed sesamum. One will then obtain greatness. One should never teach or study in an impure state. Nor should one mentally think of these when a bad stench is borne along by the wind. In this connection, those who know about the ancient accounts recount a chant that Yama sung. 'If a person speaks about studying or studies during an impure state, then he reduces his lifespan and that of his offspring.'²⁸⁷ Therefore, one must never prepare to teach or study at such times. If a person passes urine or excrement towards the sun, towards a fire, towards a cow, towards a brahmana or along a road—then his lifespan is destroyed. During the day, urine and excrement must be released while facing the north. At night, they must be released while facing the south. If this is followed, the lifespan will not be diminished. A person who desires to live for a long time must not show disrespect towards three creatures, regardless of how weak they are—a brahmana, a kshatriya and a snake. All three possess virulent poison. When angry, a virulent serpent can burn down with its sight. An angry kshatriya can also burn down in that way, through the touch of his energy. A brahmana can destroy the entire lineage, through his sight, as well as through his meditation. Therefore, a learned person makes efforts to worship all three. One must never engage in enmity against one's preceptor. O Yudhishtira! If the preceptor is enraged, he must be pacified through entreaties. Even if he does something improper, the preceptor must always be followed. There is no doubt that the criticism of the preceptor burns down a man. One must always pass urine at a spot that is far from a habitation. After this, one must always wash one's feet at a distance. Those who desire benefit must throw away food that has been partially eaten by others far away.

“One should not set out on a journey in the morning, in the evening, when it is midday, with someone one does not know, alone, or with a vrishala. One must always yield right of way to a brahmana, cattle, the king, old people, those who bear burdens, those who are pregnant and those who are weak. When one comes upon a large tree that one knows about, one must circumambulate it. One must always circumambulate a crossroads that is along the path. One must never frequent crossroads at midday, in the evening and in the middle of the night. This is also true of both the sandhyas. One must never wear footwear or garments that have been worn by another person. One must always be a brahmachari and one must never cross one's legs. One must always be a brahmachari on the night of the new moon, the night of the full moon, the fourth lunar tithi and the eighth lunar tithi of both the pakshas.²⁸⁸ One must not pointlessly eat meat, nor should one eat meat from the backbone. One must avoid censure, calumny and slander. One should not utter cruel words and those that make another person feel inferior. One should not agitate others with words and say that people are wicked. When they descend from the mouth, such words are like arrows. They strike and cause sorrow, night and day. They descend on the inner organs of the other person. Therefore, a learned person does not release these on others. When a forest is struck with arrows or cut down with an axe, it grows again. But words spoken badly are terrible. The wounds caused by words are never healed. One should not quarrel with, and strike, those who have a limb missing, have an excessive limb, are lacking in knowledge, are deficient in beauty and riches and lacking in spirit. If a person is a non-believer, criticizes the Vedas, slanders the gods, or is hateful, insolent and harsh—he must be shunned. One must not angrily pick up someone else's rod and use it to strike.²⁸⁹ That apart, it has been said that for purposes of imparting instruction, only the son or the disciple can be struck. One must not cause suffering to brahmanas. One must not point a finger at nakshatras. One must not mention the names of tithis and pakshas. If this is done, the lifespan will not be diminished. After having passed urine or excrement or having walked along a road, one must wash one's feet. One must also do this before studying and eating. The gods have thought of three things that are pure and recommended for the use of brahmanas—something that is invisible, something that has been washed and something that has been praised in words. *Samyava*,²⁹⁰ *krisara*, meat, *shashkuli*²⁹¹ and *payasam* must never be cooked for one's own self. They must be offered to the gods. One should always tend to the sacrificial fire. One should always give alms. One should always use a *dantakashtha*,²⁹² refraining from speaking at the time. One should not be in bed when the sun has arisen. If this happens, one must atone for this. After waking, one must first greet the mother, the father, the preceptor and other seniors. That is the way to attain greatness. The *dantakashtha* must always be thrown away and a new one used. One must always eat according to the injunctions of the sacred texts, fasting on auspicious occa-

sions. When one passes urine or excrement, one must control one's mind and always face the north when doing this. Without worshipping the gods first, one should never set out. Elsewhere, it has been said that this also applies to preceptors, the aged, those who know about dharma and those who are learned. An extremely intelligent person never looks at a mirror that is dirty. He never has intercourse with a woman he does not know, or with one who is pregnant. One should not sleep with the head facing the north or the west. One should sleep with one's head facing the east or the south. One should not sleep on a bed that is broken or weak. One should not sleep on a bed without a cover, or lie down diagonally. One must not bathe naked and never in the night. After bathing, a learned person doesn't allow his body to be massaged. One should not smear unguents without having had a bath first. After having bathed, the garment must not be waved around.²⁹³ A man must never wear wet garments. One should not take off the garlands. Nor should one wear them outside.²⁹⁴ One should not wear garlands of red flowers. The learned person only uses white flowers. O lord! Avoid the lotus and the water lily. However, a red flower can be worn on the head, even if it is wild. A garland made of kanchana flowers is never censured. O lord of the earth! After bathing, one must always use wet unguents.²⁹⁵ An intelligent man does not mix up his garments.²⁹⁶ One should not wear a garment worn by another person. Nor should one wear a garment without a fringe.²⁹⁷ O best among men! One must wear a different garment when one goes to bed. One must wear a different garment when making a journey. One must also wear a different garment when worshipping the gods. Otherwise, the gods are dishonoured.

“An intelligent person uses separate unguents made out of *priyangu*, sandalwood, *bilva*, *tagara* and *kesara*.²⁹⁸ When fasting, one must purify oneself through a bath and wear ornaments. On the days of the new moon and the full moon, one must always be a brahmachari. One must never eat food cooked by a woman who is going through her monthly period. One should not eat food that has lost its essence. Nor should one eat food, without first offering it to someone who is looking towards it. An intelligent person does not sit close to someone who is inferior or impure. Food that is forbidden by dharma should not even be eaten subsequently.²⁹⁹ An excellent person who desires prosperity on earth does not eat *pippala*, *vata*, *shanashaka* and *udumbara*.³⁰⁰ The meat of goats, cows and peacocks must be avoided. One must not eat dried meat, or meat that is stale. A learned person does not eat salt picked up with his hand.³⁰¹ In the night, curds and saktu must not be eaten and pointless meat³⁰² must also be avoided. One should not eat food with hair in it. Nor should one eat at the funeral ceremony of an enemy. One must be controlled. One must eat in the morning and in the evening and never in between. One must not talk while eating. While eating, one must not be clad in a single garment. One should never eat without being seated. One should never eat food off the bare ground. When one is seated and one is eating, one must not make a sound. O lord of the earth! Water and food must first be offered to a guest. An intelligent man who is not distracted only eats later. O lord of men! A person who eats food without first offering it to well-wishers, and to those who are entitled to eat in the same row,³⁰³ is said to partake of virulent poison. After having water, payasam, ghee, curds, saktu and honey, the leftovers must never be offered to anyone. O tiger among men! One should never be suspicious of the food one is having. A person who desires his benefit must never drink curds after a meal. When one has finished eating, one must wash oneself, using water and the hand. One should sprinkle one's right toe with some water. One should then touch the head with the hand and controlled, touch fire. A man who is skilled in these techniques becomes superior to all his relatives. After eating, noticing where the breath of life is established, one should touch the navel with the palm of the hand. However, the hand must not be wet. The space between the base and the tip of the thumb is said to be brahma tirtha. The back of the little finger is said to be deva tirtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The space between the thumb and the middle finger is used in offering oblations of water to the ancestors, following the ordinances.

“One should not speak ill of others. One should never say anything that is disagreeable. A person who desires his own well-being is not enraged, even when he is provoked. One should not converse with outcasts. One should avoid their sight. One should not have any association with them. That is the way to attain greatness. One should not have sexual intercourse during the day. Nor should one have intercourse with a maiden or a harlot. One should not have intercourse with a woman who has not bathed. That is the way to attain greatness. Different parts of the body must be washed after different tasks. After doing this, one must drink water thrice and wash one's lips with water twice. That is the way for a man to be purified. After all the organs of action have been washed, a man must sprinkle himself with water thrice. After this, he can undertake the rites mentioned in the Vedas for ancestors and

gods. O Kourava! Listen to the purification recommended for a brahmana. This is said to be beneficial before and after eating, and for everything else. In all kinds of purification, the brahma tirtha must be touched first. After releasing excrement or after spitting, one must touch water and be purified. An aged relative or a friend who is poor must be invited to reside in one's own house. One will be praised and obtain a long lifespan. One is praised if pigeons, or male or female parrots, are kept in the house. They remove difficulties from the house and so do cockroaches. If fire-flies, vultures, wood pigeons and bees enter a house and seek shelter in it, an act of pacification must be performed. These are inauspicious signs and great-souled ones must seek to counter them. One must never reveal the secrets of great-souled people. One should not have intercourse with a woman who is prohibited, or with a king's wife or her friends. O Yudhishtira! One should not be intimate with physicians, children, the aged and servants. O Indra among kings! One must always take care of friends, brahmanas, those who have sought refuge and relatives. That is the way to obtain greatness. O lord of men! If a wise person desires his own benefit, he must always dwell in a house that has been constructed in consultation with architects and brahmanas. O king! One should not sleep during the two sandhyas. Nor should one attend to learning at those times. An intelligent person does not eat at these times. That is the way to obtain greatness. Rites for the ancestors should not be performed at night. Nor should one indulge in cosmetics after having taken food. If one desires one's own prosperity, one should not render offerings of water in the night. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At night, saktu must always be avoided. Leftovers of food and drink must not be taken. At night, one should not eat in excess. One should not kill birds, especially after having fed them.³⁰⁴ An immensely wise person must marry a maiden who has been born in an extremely good lineage, has all the praiseworthy signs and has attained the right age. So that the lineage is established, one should have offspring. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons must be imparted learning and knowledge about the dharma of the family. The daughters who are born must be bestowed on sons born from good families. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons must be established, so that they can earn subsistence from what the family owns. Before worshipping the ancestors and the gods, the head must be washed. A man's funeral ceremony must not be performed during the nakshatra he has been born under. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rites with a fire must not be performed during Proshthapada.³⁰⁵ One must always avoid nakshatras that are said to be fierce. All of them must be shunned. O Indra among kings! When being shaved, one must be controlled and must face the east. One can also face the north. That is the way to obtain greatness. One must never criticize others, or even one's own self. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It has been said that censure is not in conformity with dharma.

“O supreme among men! One should avoid a woman who is deficient in limb or is a maiden. One must avoid a woman who is descended from the same rishi's lineage.³⁰⁶ One must avoid a woman who comes from the same lineage as one's mother.³⁰⁷ One must also avoid an aged woman, one who has become an ascetic, or one who is devoted to her husband. One must avoid one who is excessively dark, or one who has a bad complexion. A learned person will not have intercourse with a woman whose birth is unknown, or with one who has inferior birth. One should also avoid marriage with a woman whose complexion is yellow, or one who has leprosy. O lord of men! Three kinds of women must be avoided—those with a family history of epilepsy, those who are inferior and those born in a family that has white leprosy. One should only marry a woman who possesses the auspicious marks, has all the praiseworthy signs and is pleasant and beautiful. O Yudhishtira! One should marry into a family that is superior or equal. If a person desires prosperity, he should not marry a woman who is inferior or an outcast. The fire must be carefully lit. All the rites spoken about in the Vedas and the Brahmana texts must be carefully observed. One must not injure women and one must always protect the wife. Jealousy reduces the lifespan. Therefore, jealousy must be avoided. Sleeping during the day reduces the lifespan. Sleeping after the sun has arisen also does that. Those who sleep in the morning and the evening are as impure as those who eat leftovers. Intercourse with someone else's wife reduces the lifespan. After having been shaved, one must not remain impure.³⁰⁸ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One must make efforts not to do what is prohibited. One must not eat during the sandhyas. Nor should one eat food in which there is excrement. Before undertaking any rite, there are some tasks that must carefully be done. O lord of men! One must bathe and worship the brahmanas. One should also bathe before worshipping the gods and saluting the preceptor. Unless invited, one should not turn up at a sacrifice as a spectator. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one goes there without an invitation, this reduces the lifespan. One should not

travel alone, nor should one travel during the night. Before the western sandhya arrives, one must find shelter inside a house. O bull among men! One must always follow the commands of the mother, the father and the preceptor, without thinking about whether these are desirable or undesirable.

“O lord of men! One must pay attention to Dhanurveda and to the Vedas. O Indra among kings! Pay attention to riding on elephants, riding on horses and riding on chariots. A person who pays attention to these, and to sacrifices, obtains happiness. He is invincible towards his enemies, his servants and his relatives. If he is engaged in protecting the subjects, he will never suffer a loss. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should know about the sacred texts of logic and about the sacred texts of sound. O lord of men! You should know about the sacred texts of the gandharvas and about the different kinds of arts. You should always hear about the Puranas, itihasa, different stories and about the conduct of great-souled ones. If the wife is not in the right season, one should not have intercourse with her, or invite her. A learned person has intercourse with her on the fourth day, after she has bathed, and in the night. Intercourse on the fifth day gives birth to a daughter. Intercourse on the sixth day gives birth to a son. A learned person follows these rules in having intercourse with the wife. Relatives, matrimonial allies and friends must always be honoured. To the best of one’s capacity, sacrifices must be performed and many kinds of dakshina must be offered at these sacrifices. O lord of men! After this period is over, one moves on to the next period, leading up to death.³⁰⁹ I have briefly recounted the techniques that lead to a long life. O Yudhishtira! Anything that remains, which I have refrained from stating, must be learnt from aged ones. Conduct leads to prosperity. Conduct enhances fame. Conduct increases the lifespan. Conduct destroys anything that is inauspicious. Conduct is said to be superior to all the different kinds of knowledge. Conduct is said to be the power of dharma. Conduct increases the lifespan. I have thus told you about conduct. This is great in attaining heaven and obtaining benedictions. Brahma has said that one must exhibit compassion towards all the varnas.”

Chapter 1789(108)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! How should an elder brother behave towards a younger brother and how should a younger brother behave towards an older brother? Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! You have always been the eldest and you must behave as an elder brother. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the superior conduct that a preceptor exhibits towards a disciple. Even if the preceptor is unaccomplished in wisdom, the disciple is unable to abandon him. At times, the elder brother must be blind to the transgressions of the younger brothers. Even if he understands, he must pretend to be stupid. He must refrain from speaking to them about these transgressions. If it is evident that they³¹⁰ have different inclinations, men will try to create dissension. O Kounteya! Enemies are always tormented by prosperity and desire to bring about dissension. It is through the eldest that the lineage prospers and is also destroyed. If the eldest is inferior, the lineage is destroyed in every possible way. An eldest brother who injures a younger brother is no longer entitled to the share of the eldest brother and must be restrained by the king. There is no doubt that a deceitful man must go to the worlds meant for the wicked. It is said that the birth of such a person is fruitless, like the flower of a bamboo. When a wicked man is born, he creates all kinds of hardships for the family. He generates ill fame and all the fame vanishes. If a person performs perverse deeds, his other brothers should not give him his share. The eldest brother no longer needs to give such a younger brother a share in the ancestral property. If riches are obtained by an elder brother through his own efforts, as a result of travels and without using the ancestral property in any way, then unless he so desires, a share in these need not be given to younger brothers. When the father has not ascended upwards,³¹¹ if the brothers want the property to be divided up, the father should never have an unequal division among the sons. The eldest brother must not be ignored, regardless of whether he performs good or bad deeds. Even if the wife is wicked, her interests must be considered.³¹² Those who are learned about dharma say that this is the best dharma. The *upadhyaya* is superior to ten *acharyas*.³¹³ The father is superior to ten *upadhyayas*. The mother is superior to ten fathers and even to the entire earth. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother and all the respect is due to her. That is the reason why people think that the mother is the most superior. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the father is dead, the elder brother is regarded as equal to the father. He is the one who

provides a means of sustenance for everyone and protects them. All the younger brothers must bow down before him and follow his instructions. Like their father, he is the one who will provide them a means of subsistence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The body is created by the father and the mother. But the birth that the instructor gives³¹⁴ is true birth and is without old age and without death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The elder sister is like a mother. The wife of the elder brother is also like that, since in infancy, the younger brother is suckled at her breast.”

Chapter 1790(109)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O grandfather. Among all the varnas, including the *mlechchhs*, there is a view that there should be fasting. But the reason for this is not known to us. We have heard that brahmanas and kshatriyas must follow rituals. O grandfather! But why should the others fast? O king! How did the ritual of fasting come to be applied to everyone? Tell me this. What kind of destination is obtained by those who are given to fasting? It is said that fasting leads to supreme benefits and that one should fast. O foremost among men! What are the fruits that are obtained through fasting? How is one freed from adharma and how does one obtain dharma? O supreme among the Bharata lineage! How does one obtain supreme heaven? O lord of men! What must be donated after fasting? Tell me about the dharma that leads to the obtaining of happiness and artha.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kounteya knew about dharma and asked this. Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, who knew the truth about dharma, spoke these words to Dharma’s son. “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O great king! In ancient times, I had heard about this, about the rituals of fasting and about its best qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I had asked Angiras, Prajapati’s son. Asked by me, that store of austerities told me the truth. I asked this question to the illustrious one who was generated from the fire. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He told me about the sacred rituals of fasting.

“Angiras said, ‘O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is recommended that brahmanas and kshatriyas should fast for three nights. O bull among men! It has also been decreed that they can fast for two nights, or for a single night. Out of confusion, if vaishyas or shudras fast for three nights or two nights, they gain nothing out of this.³¹⁵ Without fasting, eating one-fourth of the normal food is recommended for vaishyas and shudras. Those who know about dharma have not recommended that they should fast for three nights. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person who knows about the brahman fasts on the fifth or sixth lunar day, or on the day of the full moon, he obtains the quality of forgiveness and beauty and becomes learned. If a person performs sacrifices and fasts either on the fifth or the sixth lunar day, eating on the other, he is never without offspring. He is wise and is never poor. He gets to feed brahmanas. O Kounteya! If a person fasts on the eighth lunar day, or on the fourteenth day of shuklapaksha, he is without disease and becomes valiant. If a person devotedly eats only one meal during the month of Margashirsha,³¹⁶ he is freed from disease and sins and gets to feed brahmanas. He is full of all kinds of benefit and he obtains all the herbs. He obtains crops through agriculture, a lot of riches and many sons are born to him. O Kounteya! If a person devotedly eats only one meal during the month of Pousha,³¹⁷ he becomes extremely fortunate and handsome and obtains a share of fame. If a person is devoted to his father and eats only one meal during the month of Magha,³¹⁸ he is reborn in a prosperous lineage and obtains greatness amidst his relatives. If a person eats only one meal during the month of Bhagadaiva,³¹⁹ he is loved by women and they are under his control. If a person is controlled and eats only one meal during the month of Chaitra,³²⁰ he is reborn in a great family that has a wealth of gold, jewels and pearls. If a person conquers his senses and eats only one meal during the month of Vaishakha,³²¹ regardless of whether the person is a man or a woman, the person obtains superiority among all the relatives. If a person eats only one meal a day during the month of Jyeshthamula,³²² that person obtains the greatest and supreme prosperity, regardless of whether the birth is as a man or as a woman. Without any distraction, if a person eats only one meal during the month of Ashadha,³²³ he is reborn with a lot of grain, a lot of riches and a lot of sons. If a person is controlled and eats only one meal during the month of Shravana,³²⁴ he enhances his relatives and is consecrated by them as superior. If a man eats only one meal during the month of Proshthapada,³²⁵ he swells with wealth and his prosperity remains stable. If a person eats only one meal a day during the month of

Ashvayuḡa,³²⁶ he obtains subjects and mounts and a large number of sons are born to him. If a man eats only one meal a month during the month of Kartika,³²⁷ when he is reborn, he is brave, obtains great fame and has many wives. O tiger among men! I have recounted the benefits from fasting in different months.

““O king! Listen to the rules for the tithis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person only eats when a paksha is over,³²⁸ when he is reborn, he obtains a long life, has many sons and owns many cattle. If a person fasts for three nights in every month and does this for twelve years, he becomes an uncontested lord of the tribe,³²⁹ with no rivals. O best among the Bharata lineage! These are the rules and the rites that should be followed for twelve years and you should also observe them. O king! If a person only eats in the morning and in the evening, and doesn’t drink even water in between, if he is always devoted to non-violence, if he offers oblations into the fire, and if he does this every day for six years, there is no doubt that he will obtain success. Such a man obtains the fruits got through an agnishtoma sacrifice. He gets to dwell with apsaras, who delight him with their dancing and singing. He ascends on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of molten gold. He obtains greatness in Brahma’s world for a full one thousand years. When those merits are exhausted, he returns³³⁰ and obtains greatness. If a man takes only one meal a day for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of an atiratra sacrifice. He obtains greatness in heaven for ten thousand years. When those merits are exhausted, he returns and obtains greatness. If a person only eats on every fourth day for an entire year, if he is devoted to non-violence, if he is always truthful in speech and if he controls his senses, he obtains the fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. He obtains greatness in heaven for thirty thousand years. O Kounteya! If a man only eats on every sixth day for an entire year, that man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to ruddy geese. He obtains delight in heaven for forty thousand years. O king! If a man remains alive through only eating on every eighth day for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a *gavamaya* sacrifice.³³¹ He travels on a celestial vehicle yoked to swans and cranes. He obtains delight in heaven for fifty thousand years. If a person only eats at the end of the fortnight and does this for a year, the illustrious Angiras has said that this is like fasting for six months. He resides in heaven for sixty thousand years. O lord of the earth! He is woken up from sleep with the sweet sounds of veenas, lutes and flutes. O son! O king! If a man eats only once a day for an entire year, drinking only water at the end of every month, he obtains the fruits of a vishvajit sacrifice. He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to lions and tigers. He obtains delight in heaven for seventy thousand years. O tiger among men! Fasting for more than a month has not been recommended. O Partha! Those who know about dharma have spoken about these rules for fasting. If a person is not afflicted by disease and follows these indications for fasting, at every step, there is no doubt that he obtains the fruits of sacrifices. He travels to heaven in a celestial vehicle yoked to swans. That man finds delight with one hundred apsara maidens. O lord! If a person is not afflicted by disease and follows these indications for fasting, he obtains delight in heaven for one hundred thousand years. He is woken from his sleep to the sound of *kanchis* and *nupuras*.³³² O bull among the Bharata lineage! He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to thousands of swans and is as radiant as the moon. He goes to a place surrounded by hundreds of women and finds delight there. There, he doesn’t have to look for something that will restore his strength when he is weak, or something that will heal his wound when he is wounded. He will not have to look for medications that will cure his disease, or something to pacify him when he is angry. He will not have to search for wealth to counter misery caused by a lack of riches. A person who seeks heaven will find happiness and delight there. He will be astride a celestial vehicle that is golden in complexion, one that can travel anywhere at will. Such a man will be ornamented with everything auspicious and will find pleasure, surrounded by hundreds of women. He will be well, successful in attaining his desires. He will be happy and devoid of sin. Through fasting and the eventual giving up of the body, such a man obtains these fruits. He will be on a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as gold, with a complexion that is like that of the rising sun. It will be decorated with lapis lazuli and there will be the sounds of veenas and drums. There will be flags and lamps and the sound of celestial bells. Followed by thousands of women, such a man will find happiness there. O Pandava! He will find delight in heaven for as many thousands of years as there are pores in his body.

““There is no sacred text that is superior to the Vedas. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother. There is no acquisition superior to obtaining dharma. There is no austerity superior to fasting. There is nothing superior to, and more sacred than, brahmanas, on earth and in heaven. There is no task in austerities that is equal to fasting. It is through following the rites of fasting that the gods obtained heaven. It is through fasting that the rishis obtained

supreme success. For one thousand celestial years, the intelligent Vishvamitra devotedly ate only one meal a day and obtained the status of becoming a brahmana. Chyavana, Jamadagni, Vasishtha, Goutama and Bhrigu—all of these maharshis were forgiving and obtained heaven.’ This is what Angiras indicated to the maharshis earlier. A person who always follows what he has indicated, never confronts any misery. O Kounteya! These are the progressive ordinances that were laid down by maharshi Angiras. If a man listens to these all the time, he doesn’t suffer from any sin. His mind is not overcome by wickedness and he is free from all kinds of confusion. He understands the sounds made by everything, whether it has been born from a womb or has not been born from a womb. That supreme among men obtains eternal fame.”

Chapter 1791(110)

‘Yudhishtira said, “The grandfather has spoken about the rules the great-souled ones have laid down for sacrifices. You have also spoken their true qualities, in this world and in the world hereafter. O grandfather! However, those who are poor cannot perform sacrifices. Sacrifices require many objects and an extensive list of articles. O grandfather! Only princes and kings are capable of undertaking these. Those without riches, alone and without help, are deprived of sacrifices. What are the rules that the poor can always follow to obtain these qualities, which are equal to the fruits of sacrifices? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “For this, the fruits of fasting were spoken about by Angiras. O Yudhishtira! Those ordinances are equal to the fruits of sacrifices. Listen. There may be a person who is always devoted to non-violence, offering oblations to the fire and only eating in the morning and in the evening, not taking food or water during the intervening period. If he does this for six years, there is no doubt that he will be successful. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that is like molten gold in complexion. He resides amidst celestial women, with the sounds of singing and dancing. With a complexion like that of the fire, he dwells in Prajapati’s abode for a *padma* number of years.³³³ If a person continuously eats one meal a day for three years and is always devoted to his lawful wife, he obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too only on the second day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, if he performs sacrifices at which he gives away a lot of gold and if he does this for one year, he is loved by Vasava. If such a person is truthful in speech, good in conduct, does not hate brahmanas, if he is self-restrained, forgiving and has conquered his anger, he attains the supreme destination. He is astride a sparkling white celestial vehicle, yoked to swans. He dwells with apsaras for two *padma* years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every third day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, and if he does this for one year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of an atiratra sacrifice. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that is yoked to peacocks and swans. He always dwells in the world of the saptarshis, with the apsaras. The learned know that this residence is for three *padma* years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every fourth day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, and if he does this for one year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. Such a man is astride a celestial vehicle, together with Indra’s daughters. In Vasava’s world, which extends up to the ocean, he always witnesses the king of the gods sporting. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every fifth day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, if he does this for one year, if he is not greedy, truthful in speech and does not injure brahmanas and if he is without jealousy and without sin, then he obtains the fruits of a *dvadashaha* sacrifice.³³⁴ He is on a divine and celestial vehicle made out of molten gold, yoked to swans, which has the complexion of a garland of suns collected together. He resides in a white palace. He happily dwells there for fifty-one *padma* years.³³⁵ If a sage only eats a meal on every sixth day, if he always offers oblations into the fire, if he does this for one year, if he performs ablutions three times a day and if he is without malice and observes brahmacharya, then he obtains the supreme fruits of a gavamaya sacrifice.³³⁶ He is on a supreme vehicle meant for virtuous people. It is as radiant as a blazing fire and is drawn by swans and peacocks, decorated with pure gold. He sleeps and awakes on the laps of apsaras, to the sound of nupuras and girdles. He resides there for one thousand and three hundred crore, eighteen *padma* and two *pataka* years.³³⁷ He obtains greatness in Brahma’s world for as many years as there is hair on the skins of fifty thousand bears. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every seventh day, if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he protects his speech

and practises brahmacharya and if he avoids agreeable pigments, liquor and meat, such a man goes to the world of the Maruts and to Indra's world. He is successful in all his objectives and is served by the daughters of the gods. Such a man obtains the fruits of sacrifices at which a lot of gold is given. He enjoys happiness in those worlds for an extremely large number of years. If a man is forgiving for an entire year, if he only eats on every eighth day, if he is always devoted to the tasks of the gods and if he offers oblations into the fire, he obtains the supreme fruits of a poundarika sacrifice. He ascends on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of lotuses. There is no doubt that he obtains dark, golden, fair and dark women, who are young and beautiful. For an entire year, if a person only eats on every ninth day and if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, then that man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of a lotus flower. It blazes like the sun and the fire and is full of energy, like a divine garland. He is conveyed to the eternal firmament by Rudra's daughters. He obtains delight in those worlds for eighteen thousand years and another one crore, one thousand and one hundred years. For an entire year, if a person only eats on every ninth day and if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains the supreme fruits of one thousand horse sacrifices. He dwells with Brahma's daughter in a region that is agreeable to the hearts of all beings. That man always finds delight with beautiful women. Some of them have the complexions of red lotuses. Others have the complexion of blue lotuses. He is in a supreme celestial vehicle meant for the virtuous. It has the complexion of the waves of the ocean. It goes around in circles, forwards and backwards, in movements that can't be detected. It resounds with the noise of colourful garlands made out of jewels and conch shells. It is decorated with lotuses, crystals and diamonds and there are well-constructed pillars and altars. He ascends this great vehicle, drawn by swans and cranes. If a person only eats ghee on every eleventh day, if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he does not desire the wives of others, in thoughts and in deeds and if he does not utter a lie, even for the sake of his mother and his father, then a celestial vehicle presents itself before him. Astride that, he sees Svayambhu and the immensely strong Mahadeva on their celestial vehicles. He is conveyed there by beautiful maidens who are golden in complexion. He resides in that divine and beautiful world of heaven that belongs to Rudra. He dwells there for as many years as it takes for the yuga to be over, one hundred thousand crores and another hundreds of crores. Rudra is always worshipped by the gods and the danavas, who bow their heads down before him. Every day, he gets to see Rudra. If a person only eats ghee on every twelfth day and if he does this for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of all the sacrifices. He is on a celestial vehicle that has the radiance of the twelve Adityas. It is extremely expensive in form, with jewels, pearls and coral. Beautiful peacocks and ruddy geese sing melodiously there. O king! Surrounded by women, he always resides in an expensive palace that is in Brahma's world. The immensely fortunate rishi, Angiras, who knew about dharma, spoke about this. If a person only eats ghee on every thirteenth day and if he continuously does this for a year, he obtains the fruits of a sacrifice performed by the gods. That man is successful in obtaining a celestial vehicle that is named after the red lotus. It is adorned with pure gold and heaped high with gems. There are divine women there, adorned in celestial ornaments. The wind bears along beautiful, auspicious and divine fragrances. He dwells there for *shanku*, *pataka*, *padma*, *samudra*³³⁸ and tens and tens of thousands of number of years, until the end of the yuga. He is always delighted with sounds from the singing of the gandharvas and the playing of drums and kettledrums. Celestial maidens give him pleasure. If a person only eats ghee on every fourteenth day and if he continuously does this for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a great sacrifice.³³⁹ There are ornamented celestial maidens, whose beauty cannot be described and whose ages cannot be discerned. They wear armlets made out of polished and molten gold. They follow him on celestial vehicles. He wakes to the excellent sounds of swans and the jingle of nupuras and kanchis. That man resides in the abode of the celestial maidens. That man resides there for as many years as there are grains of sand in the Jahnavi. If a person eats only one meal a day, and that too at the end of a fortnight, if he conquers his senses and if he continuously offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of one thousand royal sacrifices. He always ascends on a vehicle that is drawn by swans and peacocks. It is decorated with pure gold and is colourful with circles of jewels. There are beautiful and supreme women, adorned in divine ornaments. He ascends on that divine and celestial vehicle, with celestial qualities. It has one column, four gates and seven floors and is extremely auspicious. It is beautiful because of the sounds of singing and thousands of flags signifying victory. It is decorated with jewels, pearls and coral that have the tinge of lightning. With rhinoceroses and elephants as mounts, he resides

there for thousands of years. If a person only eats ghee, and that too on every sixteenth day, and if he does this continuously for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a sacrifice at which soma is offered. He always resides in the abode of Soma's daughters. He is worshipped astride a beautiful celestial vehicle that has all the objects of pleasure. It has sweet and pleasant fragrances and can go everywhere at will. He enjoys these fruits for fifty padmas and over and above that, another ten great kalpas.³⁴⁰ Such a man dwells there for four *sagaras*.³⁴¹ If a person only eats ghee, and that too on every seventeenth day, if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he goes to the abodes of Varuna, Indra, Rudra, the Maruts and Ushanas, and to Brahma's world. He is on a supreme seat and is served by the daughters of the gods. He comprehends the form of the universe and gets to see the divine rishis known as the Bhurbhuvās. The daughters of the god of the gods offer him pleasure there. They are sweet and ornamented and can adopt thirty-two different types of forms. O lord! The brave one resides there for as long as the moon and the sun travel in the sky, subsisting on sudha and amrita. If a person eats one meal a day, that too on every eighteenth day, and if he does this for an entire year, he gets to see all the seven worlds. Chariots that thunder follow him at the rear. Beautiful and ornamented celestial maidens accompany him. He obtains great happiness astride a divine and excellent celestial vehicle that is yoked to tigers and lions and thunders like the clouds. With those maidens, he enjoys delight for one thousand kalpas. He subsists on the juice of sudha, which is like amrita. If a person eats only one meal a day on every nineteenth day and if he does this for an entire year, he gets to see all the seven worlds. He obtains an excellent region that is served by large numbers of apsaras, with the melodious songs of the gandharvas. He is on a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as the sun. Without any anxiety, he finds delight there, with those excellent women. He is handsome and wears divine garments. He is there for tens of thousands of years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twentieth day, if he does this for an entire year, if he is truthful in speech and firm in his vows, if he is a brahmachari and does not eat flesh and if he is engaged in the welfare of all beings, he obtains the extensive and divine worlds of the Adityas. Gandharvas and apsaras, wearing divine garlands and fragrances, follow him on golden celestial vehicles. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-first day and if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he goes to the divine world of Ushanas, Shakra's world and those of the Ashvins and the Maruts. He always finds happiness there and experiences no misery there. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle, served by the best of women. The lord sports with them. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-second day, if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he has fortitude and is always devoted to non-violence and if he is truthful in speech and without malice, he obtains the world of the Vasus, which are as radiant as the sun. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle. He subsists on sudha and can go anywhere at will. Adorned with divine ornaments, he finds pleasure with the maidens of the gods. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-third day, if he does this for a year and if he is restrained in diet and has conquered his senses, he goes to the worlds of Vayu, Ushanas and Rudra. He can go wherever he wants. He can travel wherever he wants. He is worshipped by large numbers of apsaras. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle and obtains many qualities. Adorned with divine ornaments, he finds pleasure with the maidens of the gods. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-fourth day and if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains delight for a long period of time in the world named after the Adityas. He wears divine garlands and garments and is smeared with celestial fragrances. He is on a beautiful and golden celestial vehicle that is drawn by swans. He finds delight with the daughters of the gods for crores of years. If a man eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-fifth day and if he does this for an entire year, he is astride a magnificent vehicle that is yoked to lions and tigers and which thunders like the clouds. Celestial maidens follow him at the rear on chariots that are silvery, sparkling and auspicious. He is astride that extremely beautiful and celestial vehicle. Surrounded by hundreds of women, he resides there for one thousand kalpas. He subsists on the juice of sudha, which is like excellent amrita. If a man eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-sixth day, if he is controlled and restrained in diet for an entire year, if he has conquered his senses and is devoid of attachment and if he offers oblations into the fire, that immensely fortunate one obtains a region where he is worshipped by a large number of apsaras. He obtains the seven worlds of the Vasus and the Maruts. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is made out of crystal, ornamented with all the jewels. He finds delight, worshipped by the gandharvas and the apsaras. With celestial energy, he dwells there for two thousand divine yugas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-seventh day and if he offers

oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains great fruits and is worshipped in the world of the gods. He resides there, subsisting on amrita. He finds happiness and all his thirst is extinguished. O king! He conducts himself like the divine rishis and the rajarshis. He resides there, astride a supreme celestial vehicle, divine in his soul. He obtains pleasure and pride, served by beautiful women. He dwells happily there for three thousand yugas and kalpas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-eighth day, if he does this for an entire year and if he conquers his soul and conquers his senses, he obtains the pervasive fruits that lead to a conduct like that of the divine rishis. He obtains all the objects of pleasure. His sparkling energy is like that of the one with the one thousand rays.³⁴² The extremely radiant one finds delight with delicate women. Their breasts are large and their thighs are plump. They are adorned in celestial ornaments. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as the sun and those beautiful women please him there. That celestial vehicle can go anywhere it wills. He resides there for one hundred thousand kalpas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-ninth day and if he devotes himself to a vow of truth for an entire year, he obtains divine and auspicious worlds where he is worshipped by divine rishis and rajarshis. He travels on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of the sun and the moon. It is made out of pure gold and is decorated with every kind of jewel. It is full of large numbers of apsaras and there are sounds of gandharvas singing. There are beautiful women who wear divine ornaments. They are sweet and bring delight to the mind. Proud and energetic, he finds pleasure with them. He obtains all the objects of pleasure and is full of energy. He is like the fire in his radiance. He is divine, with a celestial form, and his radiance is like that of the immortals. He goes to the worlds of the Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas, the Ashvins and the Rudras, and to Brahma's world. If a person controls himself and eats only one meal a day, that too on every thirtieth day and if he does this for an entire year, he obtains Brahma's world. He subsists on the juice of sudha. He is handsome and agreeable to everyone. The energy and prosperity of his form are as radiant as that of the one with the rays.³⁴³ He is adorned in divine garlands and garments and is smeared with celestial fragrances. He is immersed in yoga. He enjoys happiness and does not know any misery. He obtains greatness astride his celestial vehicle and shines with his own radiance. The daughters of the Rudras and the divine rishis always worship him. They are capable of assuming many kinds of beautiful forms. They exhibit many different kinds of love. They speak in many kinds of sweet voices. They can cause pleasure in many different kinds of ways. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is like a city. It is like the sun and has the complexion of the sun. The chariots that follow him are like the moon. Those that are ahead of him are like the clouds. Those to his right are red. Those below him form a blue circle. Those above him are colourful. He resides there and is worshipped. That intelligent one is said to reside in Brahma's world for as many years as is the number of raindrops that shower down on Jambudvipa in the course of one thousand years. As many drops descend from the sky during the monsoon, for that number of years he resides there, with the radiance of an immortal. If a person fasts for an entire month and does this for ten years, he obtains the supreme state of heaven in his own body and gets the status of a maharshi. Such a sage is self-controlled and has always conquered his anger. He has also triumphed over his penis and his stomach. He is restrained and offers oblations into the fire. He follows the rites during the two sandhyas. If a man follows these diverse rituals and eats at the end of a month, because of his good conduct, he is said to dwell in a place that is as stainless as the clouds. O king! Like the immortals, he goes to heaven in his own body. Following the ordinances, he obtains heaven and all that is auspicious. He enjoys every object of desire. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! These are the rituals for supreme sacrifices. I have progressively explained them to you and also the fruits obtained from fasting. O Partha! Poor men can thus obtain the fruits of sacrifices. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Having fasted, and devoted to worshipping gods and the brahmanas, they can go to the supreme destination. I have described in detail the rituals associated with fasting. Without distraction, the great-souled ones follow these rituals and purify themselves. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They turn their intelligence towards restraining insolence and hatred. They are steady and do not deviate. You should not have any doubt about this.”

udhishtira said, “O grandfather! Tell me about what is best among all the tirthas, the place where one can obtain supreme purification. You should explain this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The learned say that all the tirthas indeed possess qualities. Hear attentively about the tirtha that leads to purification. One should bathe in the tirtha of Manasa.³⁴⁴ It is fathomless, sparkling and pure. It has truth as its water and fortitude as its lake. It is eternal and one must resort to its spirit. This tirtha leads to purification of the mind, uprightness, truthfulness, mildness, non-violence, lack of hatred towards all beings, self-control, tranquility, lack of ownership, lack of ego, freedom from opposite pairs of sentiments and lack of desire for possessions. One should seek alms at this tirtha of purification. A person who possesses this wealth of the truth and whose intelligence has no sense of pride is said to be the supreme tirtha. In looking for signs of purity, one should look for them everywhere. The *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* in their atmans have been washed. Without considerations of purity and impurity, they follow the tasks of their own paths. They are devoted to renouncing everything. They know everything and can see everything. Through purity, they cleanse their impure conduct. They are the tirthas of purification. A person who has sprinkled his body with water isn’t regarded as having bathed. A person who hasn’t bathed through self-control hasn’t really bathed. Purification isn’t outside, but inside. They do not look towards what has happened in the past. They do not desire objects and have no sense of ownership. Those who have no desire are said to be the ones who are supremely pure. Wisdom is the special purification of the body. Freedom from desire and tranquility of the mind is also like that. Purity of conduct and purity of the mind are the pure tirthas that yield supreme benefit. The purification that results from knowledge is said to be the supreme purification. A person who uses the lamp of his mind and the strength of knowledge about the brahman is known to bathe in the tirtha of Manasa. He is the *kshetrajna* who knows. A person who always possesses these sentiments of purification and is only devoted to these qualities is a man who is always pure. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have spoken about the tirthas that are in the body. Listen to the other sacred tirthas that exist on earth. Just as specific aspects of the body are said to be pure, there are sacred waters in parts of the earth too. By praying at these tirthas and bathing and offering oblations to the ancestors, one cleanses one’s sins. Those sacred tirthas enable one to obtain happiness in heaven. Because of association with virtuous people and because of the earth’s energy, those waters are extremely energetic and those regions are extremely auspicious. If one bathes in the sacred tirthas both of the mind and of the earth, one swiftly obtains success. Strength without exertion and exertion without strength are unable to ensure success in tasks. In that way, these two bring success together. Thus, both types, purification through the body and purification through tirthas, lead to success and represent supreme purification.”

Chapter 1793(112)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O mighty-armed one! O one who knows about all the sacred texts! I wish to hear about the supreme cycle of life that mortals have to go through. O Indra among kings! O king! In a battle, what kind of conduct ensures that men obtain supreme heaven and what conveys them to hell? When people die and give up this body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, and go to other worlds, who are the ones who follow them?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The illustrious and extremely intelligent Brihaspati is arriving here. Ask the extremely fortunate one about this eternal mystery. No one other than him is capable of explaining this. There is no speaker who is Brihaspati’s equal.”

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Partha and Gangeya were thus conversing with each other. The illustrious Brihaspati, pure in his soul, arrived there. With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, the king arose. All of them, including the advisers, worshipped him in an unmatched way. Following the prescribed method, the king who was Dharma’s son, excellent in his vows, approached the illustrious Brihaspati and asked him a question.

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O illustrious one! O one who knows about every kind of dharma! O one who knows about all the sacred texts! Who is an aide to mortals? Is it the father, the mother, the son or the preceptor? When people die and give up the body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, and go to the world hereafter, who are the ones who follow them?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “O Indra among kings! A creature is born alone and is destroyed alone. He tides over hardships alone. He advances towards calamities alone. The father, the mother, the brother, the son, the preceptor, large numbers of kin and allies and large numbers of friends cannot be aides. When people die and give up this body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, those people remain for a while and then return. When the body is discarded, it is dharma alone that follows. Therefore, men must always serve dharma, which alone is the aide. A being who is full of dharma goes to supreme heaven. One who is full of adharma goes to hell. Therefore, a learned person always pursues artha that is obtained through dharma. In the world hereafter, dharma alone is the one who helps men. A man undertakes tasks because of greed, confusion, compassion and fear. Even if he is extremely learned, he is overcome by avarice and may do perverse deeds for the sake of others. Dharma, artha and kama—these are the three fruits of remaining alive. While avoiding adharma, one should try to obtain these three.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O illustrious one! I have heard the extremely beneficial words that you have spoken and they are full of dharma. My intelligence now turns to what happens to the existence of the body.³⁴⁵ After death, what remains of the body is subtle and unmanifest.³⁴⁶ It can no longer be seen through the eye. How can dharma follow it?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “Earth, wind, space, water, light as the fifth, the intelligence, the atman and dharma always look on. These elements are incessant witnesses for beings.³⁴⁷ Together with these, dharma follows the being.³⁴⁸ O immensely intelligent one! The body that consists of skin, bones, flesh, semen and blood is abandoned when life is given up. However, if the being is full of dharma, it obtains happiness in this world³⁴⁹ or in the next. What will I tell you about next?”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O illustrious one! You have instructed me about how dharma follows. I wish to know about how semen originates.”

‘Brihaspati replied, “O lord of men! The deities that are in the body, earth, air, space, water, light, and the mind, eat the food. O Indra among kings! Those five elements³⁵⁰ are satisfied. This is also true of the mind, as the sixth. O one who is pure in his soul! This leads to the great semen being generated. O Partha! When a man and a woman unite, conception results from this. I have thus told you everything. What do you wish to hear next?”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O illustrious one! You have explained how conception results. Explain to me how a being is born and delivered thereafter.”

‘Brihaspati replied, “When the *jivatman* unites with the body, it is overcome by the elements. When it is freed from the elements,³⁵¹ it again goes to its supreme destination. The *jivatman* unites with the elements.³⁵² The deities who are in the five elements see all the good and the bad deeds. What do you wish to hear about next?”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O illustrious one! The *jivatman* casts aside the skin, bones and flesh and also abandons the elements. How can it then enjoy joy or misery?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “The *jivatman* is united with dharma and swiftly unites with the semen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When it is time for women to ovulate, it unites and a birth results. A man must endure difficulties and misery in this cycle of life. Following Yama’s orders, Yama’s messengers endow the embryo with difficulties and the time of death. O king! From the time of birth in this world, a being has to enjoy the effects of his³⁵³ own earlier deeds and the fruits of the dharma he has resorted to. Since his birth, if he has followed dharma to the best of his capacity, then when the man is reborn, he always enjoys happiness. However, if after following dharma, he has served the cause of adharma, the being will experience happiness first, followed by unhappiness subsequently. Full of adharma, the being will have to go to Yama’s dominion. Born as inferior species, he will have to endure great hardships. A being is overcome by confusion. Listen attentively to the different kinds of birth that result from different kinds of acts. This has been spoken about in the sacred texts and in the historical accounts. Those from the mortal world have to go to Yama’s terrible dominion. If a brahmana who has studied the four Vedas is overcome by confusion and accepts a gift from an outcast, he is reborn as a mule. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a mule for fifteen years. When he dies as a mule, he is reborn as a bull and lives in that state for seven years. When he dies as a bull, he is born as a Brahma-rakshasa. After living as a Brahma-rakshasa for three months, he is again born as a brahmana. A person³⁵⁴ who acts as an officiating priest for an outcast is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives in that state for fifteen years. When he is freed from his state of a worm, he is reborn as a donkey. He lives as a donkey for five years and then again as a pig for five years. He

next lives as a dog for one year. After that, he is reborn as a man. There is no doubt that a stupid disciple who injures his preceptor has to go through cycles of inferior birth. O Indra among kings! He is first born as a dog, then as a predatory beast and finally as a mule. After going through these hardships after death, he is then reborn as a brahmana. If a disciple has wicked intentions towards his preceptor's wife, even in his mind, because of that adharma in his mind, he has to go through inferior transformations in this cycle of life. He is reborn as a dog and lives in that state for three years. When he dies, he is reborn as a worm. Having become a worm, he lives in that state for one year. When he dies, he gets his status of a brahmana back. If without any reason, a preceptor slays a disciple, who is like a son, because of that capricious act, he is born as a swan. O king! If a son disrespects his father or his mother, when he dies, the creature gives up his earlier form and is born as a donkey. He lives as a mule for ten months, as a dog for fourteen months and as a cat for seven months. After that, he is again born as human. O king! If a person abuses his mother or his father, he is reborn as a *sarika*.³⁵⁵ If he strikes them, he is reborn as a tortoise. He lives as a tortoise for ten years and as a porcupine for three years. For six months, he is born as a snake. After that, he is reborn as human. If a person lives on food that a king provides, but overcome with delusion, injures his master, when he dies, he is born as a monkey. He is a monkey for ten years and a rat for three years. He then becomes a dog for six months. After that, he is reborn as human. A man who misappropriates what has been left to him in trust has to go through one hundred transformations in the cycle of life after reaching Yama's dominion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is first born as a worm and lives in that state for fifteen years.³⁵⁶ After that, when the evil deeds are exhausted, he is reborn as human. When a malicious man dies, he is born as a *sharngaka* bird. An evil-minded man who causes breach of trust is born as a fish. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After having been a fish for eight years, he is born as a deer. After having been a deer for four months, he is born as a goat. He dies after having lived as a goat for one year. The being is then born as a worm. It is after this that he is reborn as human. O great king! If a shameless and confused man whose senses are afflicted steals paddy, barley, sesamum, beans, pulses, mustard, chickpeas, groundnut, black gram, wheat, linseed and others kinds of grain, he is born as a rat. O great king! After he dies, he is reborn as a pig. O king! As soon as he is born as pig, he dies from disease. O king! Because of his foolish deeds, he is then born as a dog. After being in the state of a dog for five years, he is then reborn as human. If a person oppresses another person's wife, he is born as a wolf. After that, he is successively born as a dog, a jackal, a vulture, a snake, a heron and a stork. O king! If a confused and evil-minded person violates his brother's wife, he is born as a male cuckoo and lives in that state for a year. In that way, if a person is overcome by desire and violates a friend's wife, a preceptor's wife or a king's wife, when he dies, he is born as a pig. He spends five years as a pig and five years as a porcupine. He then becomes an ant for six months and a worm for one month. In addition, he has to spend cycles of birth as a worm. Spending one month in each life as a worm, he has to spend thirteen years as a worm. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. O lord! If a person presents himself and because of confusion, causes obstructions at a marriage, an act of donations or a sacrifice, when he dies, he is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a worm for fifteen years. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. O king! If a person has already promised his daughter to someone, but bestows her on a second person instead, when he dies, he is born as a worm. O Yudhishtira! He lives in that form for thirteen years. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. If a person eats without having completed the rites of oblation for the gods and the ancestors, he is born as a crow. After ten years as a crow, he is born as a cock. After being a snake for one month, he then becomes human. If a person disrespects his elder brother, who is like a father, when he dies, he is born as a crane. He lives as a crane for thirty-two months. When he dies, he becomes human again. A vrishala who has intercourse with a brahmana lady is born as a worm. However, if offspring have resulted, he is born as a rat. O king! When an ungrateful person dies and goes to Yama's dominion, he suffers extremely terrible afflictions in Yama's dominion. He is angrily struck there, with spears, clubs and tridents. He is flung into fierce pits of fire, forests that have swords as leaves, heated sands and *shalmali* trees that are covered with thorns. There are many other fires he has to face in Yama's dominion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He confronts extremely sharp pain. He is then brought back into the cycle of life and is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a worm for fifteen years. After that, whenever he is born, he dies as a child. He goes through one hundred different births as different kinds of creatures. Having gone through many such cycles of existence, he is born as inferior species. After

dying, he faces hardships for a very large number of years. He is then born as a senseless tortoise. Because of desire for riches or because of enmity, if a person who is armed kills a man who is unarmed, he is worst among men. When he dies, he is born as a mule. He lives as a mule for two years and is slain through the use of weapons. When he dies, he is born as a deer that is always anxious. After one year as a deer, he is slain through the use of weapons. After having died as a deer, he is born as a fish that lives for four months and is slain through the use of a net. He is then born as a predatory beast. After ten years as a predatory beast, he becomes a leopard for five years. Goaded by the progress of time, he then confronts his death. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is re-born in human form. If an evil-minded person kills a woman, he faces many hardships when he goes to Yama's dominion. He goes through the cycle of life twenty times. O great king! After that, he is born as a worm. After twenty years as a worm, he is born as human. If a man steals food, he is born as a bee. He spends many months in the company of bees. When the sin has been extinguished, he becomes human again. If a man steals a musical instrument, he is born as a mosquito. If a man steals food mixed with sesamum cakes, he is born as a fierce rat, the size of the rat depending on how much was stolen. A person who steals salt is born as a cricket. A person who steals curd is born as a stork. A person who steals fish is born as an unclean frog. A person who steals water is born as a crane. A person who steals oil is born as a cockroach. An evil-minded person who steals honey is born as a gnat. An evil-minded person who steals iron is born as a crow. A person who steals payasam becomes a partridge. A person who steals cakes is born as an owl. A person who steals fruits, roots and cakes is born as an ant. An evil-minded person who steals brass is born as a pigeon. A person who steals a silver vessel is born as a dove. A person who steals a golden vessel is born as a worm. When a person who steals cotton dies, he is born as a heron. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a man steals jute, he becomes a sheep. If a person steals a woollen garment, he is born as a rabbit. If a man steals dyes, when he dies, he is born as a peacock. If a person steals red garments, he is born as a pheasant. O king! Overcome by greed, if a man steals pigments and fragrances, he is born as a mole. If a man violates trust and misappropriates what has been left with him, that man loses his lifespan and is born as a fish. After he dies as a fish, he is born as a man. However, though he becomes a man, he only has a short lifespan. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who perform wicked deeds are born as inferior species. They do not know any of the dharma that is there in their own souls. Having performed wicked deeds and having always ignored the vows, they suffer from disease and from joy and misery. There is no doubt that they are born as mlechhas one should not associate with. Those are men who are wicked in conduct and are overcome by avarice and confusion. There are also men who avoid sin from the time they are born. They are handsome and prosperous and do not suffer from disease. Wicked women are also thought to go through the same kinds of progressions. They are born as the wives of the creatures that have been mentioned. I have recounted all the sins that come from stealing the possessions of others. O unblemished one! I have told you about this briefly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the course of some other conversation, you will hear about this again. O great king! In ancient times, Brahma told me about this. I asked him about it and he told me the truth, in the midst of the divine rishis. I have told you everything, just as it had been described to me. O great king! Having heard this, always turn your mind towards dharma and act accordingly.”

Chapter 1794(113)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O brahmana! O unblemished one! You have spoken to me about the progress of adharma. O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to hear about the progress of dharma. Having performed wicked deeds, how can one go to the auspicious destination?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “Having performed wicked deeds, one comes under the subjugation of adharma. Because the mind is perverse, one goes to hell. However, having performed adharma out of delusion, a person may be tormented by this. If he turns his mind towards meditation, he does not have to suffer on account of those wicked deeds. If a man controls his mind and properly follows the dharma that has been spoken about, he is accordingly freed from his earlier anxieties. This is like a snake casting aside its skin. If one controls oneself, immerses one's mind in meditation and gives away many kinds of gifts, one attains a desirable end. O Yudhishtira! I will speak

about the objects that should be given. Having performed such tasks, a man becomes united with dharma. Among all kinds of donations, food is said to be the best. An upright person who desires dharma should first donate food. Food provides life to men and other creatures are also generated from it. All the worlds are established on food. That is how food manifests itself. The gods, the rishis, the ancestors and men praise food. It is by giving food that Koushika went to heaven. Cheerfully, excellent food that has been lawfully obtained must be given to brahmanas who are devoted to studying. When food is cheerfully given and it is eaten by one thousand brahmanas, the donor is not born as inferior species. O bull among men! If a man feeds ten thousand brahmanas, he is said to be always freed from all adharma and sin. If a brahmana follows the Vedas, invites another brahmana who is devoted to studying and gives him food as alms, he obtains happiness in this world. This is also true of a kshatriya who doesn't injure brahmanas, always protects them according to law, and gives them food. O one with dharma in your soul! O Pandava! If a person is restrained and controlled and gives it to brahmanas who are aged in their knowledge of the Vedas, all his evil deeds are destroyed. If a vaishya gives a one-sixth share of his agricultural produce to brahmanas, he is purified and freed from his sins. A shudra can obtain food through hard labour, with risk to his life. If he gives this to brahmanas, he is cleansed and freed from sin. If a person takes food that he has grown, or has obtained through his own strength, without causing injury or without being deceitful, and gives it to brahmanas, he does not have to face any hardships. If a man is devoid of greed and gives lawfully earned food to brahmanas who are aged in their knowledge of the Vedas, he is freed from sin. Food leads to energy in this world. A man who donates it becomes energetic. By resorting to this path, followed by the virtuous, one is freed from all sins. The learned travel this path of making gifts. This is the eternal dharma of giving what is life itself. In every kind of situation, it is a man's task to always give lawfully earned food to worthy recipients. Food leads to the ultimate destination. If a man donates food, he does not have to face hardships. Therefore, avoiding what is unlawful, food must be given. A householder must always eat after food has been offered to brahmanas first. If a man does not donate food on a certain day, that day becomes sterile. O king! If a man feeds one thousand brahmanas who know about the Vedas and right policy, are learned about dharma and also know about itihasa, then he does not go to hell, or undergo this terrible cycle of life. After death, he obtains the fruits that lead to the satisfaction of all the objects of desire. Without anxiety, in this way, he enjoys happiness and delight. He becomes handsome, famous and prosperous. I have thus told you everything about the great fruits from the donation of food. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This kind of gift is the foundation of dharma.”

Chapter 1795(114)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is best for a man—non-violence, the rites of the Vedas, meditation, controlling the senses, austerities or service to the preceptor?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “All of these are different gates to dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will talk about all six. Listen. I will tell you about what is supreme and best for creatures. If a man resorts to the dharma of non-violence, this man always restrains the three sins that characterize all creatures, desire, anger, and obtains success.³⁵⁷ If a person desires happiness for himself, he should be non-violent towards beings and should not use the rod of chastisement against them. After death, he will then be happy. If a man looks upon all creatures as his own self, controls the rod and conquers his anger, he obtains happiness after death. He sees himself in all beings and all beings in his own self. Even the gods are confused in trying to follow his footsteps.³⁵⁸ One should never do something to others that one would regard as an injury to one's own self. In brief, this is dharma. Anything else is succumbing to desire. In refusing gifts, judging happiness and misery, the agreeable and the disagreeable, a man who desires success must use the yardstick of how it would affect him.³⁵⁹ If one injures another person, one is in turn injured by that other person. In that way, if one loves another person, one is in turn loved by that other person. For the world of the living, this is the yardstick of dharma that has been instructed by the accomplished.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The preceptor of the gods said this to Dharmaraja Yudhishtira. While they looked on, the intelligent one then went to heaven.’

Chapter 1796(115)

Vaishampayana continued, “The grandfather was lying down on the bed of arrows. After this, the immensely energetic King Yudhishtira again asked the supreme among eloquent ones. “O immensely intelligent one! The rishis, the brahmanas and the gods cite the proofs laid down in the Vedas and praise the dharma that has signs of non-violence. O supreme among kings! However, if a man has indulged in violence, in deeds, words and thoughts, how can he be freed from the misery?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O slayer of enemies! Those who have spoken about the brahman have instructed that there are four kinds of non-violence and deviation from even one of these is not acceptable. All quadrupeds are incapable of standing on three legs. O protector of the earth! In that way, it is said that one cannot stand on only three. When others follow in the footsteps of an elephant, all their footprints are lost in the footprints left by the elephant. In that way, in this world, non-violence has been instructed as the supreme dharma. Creatures become attached to violence in deeds, words and thoughts. It must first be given up in the mind and then in words and deeds. Those who have spoken about the brahman have spoken about these three kinds of reasons. The sins are established in thoughts, words and taste.³⁶⁰ Learned ones who are devoted to austerities do not eat flesh. O king! I will tell you about the sins attached to the eating of meat. Listen to me. Those who senselessly eat it, eat what is like the flesh of their own son. A son is born through the union of the mother and the father. In that way, the juices are united with the tongue and lead to discrimination. That is the reason the sacred texts say that taste and attachment must be controlled.³⁶¹ Whether it is cooked well or not cooked well, whether there is salt in it or no salt in it, once one discriminates, those sentiments constrict the consciousness. After listening to the sounds of drums, conch shells and stringed musical instruments, how can those evil men eat meat? Having tasted the juices, there are those who praise meat and the fruits it leads to, describing it as inconceivable, unimaginable and impossible to describe. These are sinful acts and lead to consequent fruits. There are many virtuous people who protected the flesh of others and gave up their own flesh and their own lives instead. They went to heaven. O great king! These are the four traits of non-violent conduct. What I have instructed you has the essence of all dharma and artha.”’

Chapter 1797(116)

‘Yudhishtira said, “You have said several times that non-violence is supreme dharma. However, you have also said that in funeral ceremonies, the ancestors desire meat. Earlier, you have spoken about funeral rites where many different kinds of meat are offered. Without causing injury or killing, how can meat be obtained? In giving up meat, there is thus a doubt that is created about dharma. What are the sins from eating meat and what are the qualities associated with not eating it? What if one eats something that has been seized or killed by another person? What if a man buys and eats meat from an animal that has been killed by some other person? I wish to determine the nature of eternal dharma. How does one obtain a long lifespan? How does one become spirited? How does one obtain faultless limbs? How is prosperity obtained?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O bull among the Kuru lineage! There is adharma attached to eating meat. Listen to the truth about the excellent ordinances that have been stated on this. It has been said that those who desire beauty, unblemished limbs, long lives, intelligence, spirit and strength and wish to cleanse their souls should abandon violence. O bull among the Kuru lineage! There have been many conversations between the rishis on this. O Yudhishtira! Listen to their views. O Yudhishtira! Every month, if a person is careful in his vows and avoids liquor and meat, he does what is equal to performing a horse sacrifice. O king! The learned ones, the saptarshis, the Valakhilyas and the rishis who subsist on air praise abstention from eating meat. If a person does not eat meat, if he does not kill animals and does not cause others to kill him, he is a friend to all creatures. Svayambhuva Manu said this. Such a person is not oppressed by any creature and all beings trust him. A person who abandons meat is always revered by the virtuous. Narada, the one with dharma in his soul, has said that a person who desires to enhance his own flesh on the basis of the flesh of others, always faces hardships. Brihaspati has said that a person

who abstains from liquor and meat is like an ascetic who donates and performs sacrifices. It is my view that two kinds of people are equal—those who perform a horse sacrifice every month for one hundred years and those who do not eat meat. A person who abandons liquor and meat is like one who always performs sacrifices, always gives donations and is a perennial ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person eats meat, but subsequently gives it up, he is like one who performs all the sacrifices indicated in all the Vedas. After one has savoured its taste, it is extremely difficult to give up meat. This act of granting life and freedom from fear to all beings is superior to performing all the vows indicated in the four.³⁶² There is no doubt that a learned person who grants the dakshina of freedom from fear to all beings is a donor who grants life in this world. This is the supreme dharma praised by the learned. Those who desire their benefit see that the lives of all other beings are like their own lives. An intelligent, virtuous and great-souled person who desires his own prosperity must look upon all others as one's own self. Even the learned are scared of death. Why should one forcibly slay those who are trying to save their own lives? They are without disease and without sin. In trying to remain alive, why should one be wicked and subsist on their flesh? O great king! That is the reason meat must be avoided. This is the supreme aspect of dharma, heaven and joy. Non-violence is supreme dharma. Non-violence is the greatest austerity. Non-violence is supreme truth. Dharma flows from this. Meat cannot be obtained from grass, wood or stone. Meat is obtained by slaying animals. That is the sin attached to eating it. The gods love truth and uprightness and subsist on svaha, svadha and amrita. Know that predatory beasts and rakshasas are devoted to deceit and falsehood. O king! A person who does not eat meat does not face any fear in terrible and desolate spots, in deserted regions that are difficult of access, at crossroads and in assembly halls, during night and day and during the two sandhyas. If one is not an eater, then one is not a slayer either. A man becomes a slayer and slays because of food. Therefore, if one does not eat, one withdraws from violence too. It is because of food that there is violence towards deer and other animals. O immensely radiant one! This violence goes on because of devouring. Therefore, a person who desires his own prosperity must abstain from meat. Terrible people who cause violence to creatures will never find protectors. They will always be oppressed by creatures, like deer by beasts of prey. Men are attached to adharma because of greed, confusion of the intelligence, in search of strength and vigour and because of association with the wicked. If a person seeks to enhance his own flesh by eating the flesh of others, he always dwells in anxiety and is reborn as inferior species. The supreme rishis have always said that abstention from eating meat leads to prosperity, fame, long lives, heaven and great benedictions. O Kounteya! I heard everything about this earlier. Markandeya spoke about the sins associated with eating meat. If a person eats the flesh of animals that seek to remain alive, whether he slays them or whether they are already dead,³⁶³ it is as if he himself is the slayer. There are three kinds of slaughter—killing by using wealth to purchase, killing by eating and directly killing by binding and slaying. Because of sinful sentiments, men eat food that is not sanctioned. Even if one sanctions slaughter, one is tainted with that sin. If one does not eat meat and is compassionate towards all creatures, one is not oppressed by any being. One obtains a long life. One is without disease and happy. The sacred texts have said that not eating meat is superior dharma to donating gold, donating cattle and donating land.

“One should never eat futile meat that has not been offered in sacrifices, without following the rites. There is no doubt that a man who eats this will go to hell. Know that if one eats meat that has been offered at sacrifices or has been killed for the sake of brahmanas, there is a little bit of sin. However, by acting in a contrary way, one is touched by sin. A person who kills animals for someone else to eat is the worst among men. But the greater sin is attached to the eater, not to the killer. If an ignorant person wishes to follow the path of the rites and sacrifices laid down in the sacred texts, but nevertheless kills animals in a desire for their flesh, such a man goes to hell. If a man eats meat but subsequently refrains from it, he withdraws from sin and pursues extremely great dharma. One who brings the meat, one who sanctions it, one who actually kills, one who buys and sells, one who cooks and one who eats—all of these are killers. I will now tell you about the proofs that have been laid down by the ordainer himself. The ancient rishis indicated their nature in the Vedas. O tiger among kings! It has been said that the dharma that is in the nature of pravritti, with a desire for obtaining the fruits, is not for those who are in pursuit of moksha. An oblation that has been sanctified with the mantras, even if it is in the form of meat that has been slaughtered, is pure. This is in accordance with the proofs cited in the Vedas and is used in rites for the ancestors. Manu has said that anything else is futile meat and must not be eaten. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Anything else is

the behaviour like that of a rakshasa. It does not lead to heaven or fame. A man must not eat meat that has not been sanctioned by those earlier ordinances. If a man desires to save himself from all kinds of extreme hardships, he must avoid the flesh of creatures in every form. It has been heard that in an earlier kalpa, men obtained the auspicious worlds by performing sacrifices with grain, regarding this as equivalent to animals. In ancient times, the rishis had a doubt and went and asked Vasu, the king of the Chedis. O lord! Though he knew that meat should not be eaten, he said that it could be eaten. Because of this, that king fell down from the sky onto the ground. When he again repeated his view, he penetrated into the nether regions of the earth. For the welfare of the subjects, the great-souled Agastya used the power of his austerities to dedicate deer and other wild animals to all the gods. Therefore, the rites do not suffer if these are not offered to the ancestors and the gods. The ancestors are delighted, even if their satisfaction is not through meat. O Indra among kings! O unblemished one! Listen to what I am recounting. O lord of men! There are all kinds of happiness associated with not eating meat. It is my view that if a person torments himself through extremely difficult austerities for one hundred years and if a person gives up meat, both of them are equal. O lord of men! Especially during shuklapaksha in the month of Koumudi,³⁶⁴ one must avoid all kinds of meat. That is ordained by dharma. Meat must also be avoided during the four months of the monsoon. A person will then obtain four kinds of fortune—deeds, a long life, fame and strength. If, in addition, a person does not eat any kind of meat for several months, he overcomes all types of misery. He is happy and possesses good health. If a person abstains from meat for several months or pakshas at a stretch, thus refraining from violence, Brahma's world is ordained for him. O Partha! Kings who regarded all beings as their own selves and knew about the supremely desired objective, avoided meat during the month of Koumudi and the paksha mentioned. O Indra among kings! These were Nabhaga, Ambarisha, the great-souled Gaya, Ayu, Anaranya, Dilipa, Raghu, Puru, Kartavirya, Aniruddha, Nahusha, Yayati, Nriga, Vishvagshvena, Shashabindu, Yuvanashva, Shibi, the son of Ushinara, Shvynachitra, Somaka, Vrika, Raivata, Rantideva, Vasu, Srinjaya, Dushsanta, Karusha, Rama, Alarka, Nala, Virupashva, Nimi, the intelligent Janaka, Sila, Prithu, Virasena, Ikshvaku, Shambhu, Shveta, Sagara and many others. O Indra among kings! In earlier times, they did not eat meat during the bright part of the month of Koumudi and went to heaven.³⁶⁵ Blazing in their prosperity, they remained in Brahma's world. They were worshipped and revered by gandharvas and thousands of women. Thus, non-violence is supreme dharma and is associated with all the auspicious signs. Great-souled ones who act accordingly reside in the vault of heaven. There are those who are devoted to dharma and always avoid liquor and meat. Since birth, they avoid all kinds of liquor and they are said to be sages. There is no doubt that they become superior to all their kin. They are freed from all kinds of calamities that present themselves. They are freed when they are bound down. They are freed from affliction and disease. They are freed from misery and grief. Such a man is always handsome and does not have to be born as inferior species. O best among the Kuru lineage! He is intelligent and obtains great fame. O king! I have thus spoken to you about the avoidance of meat and also about the ordinances of pravritti and *nivritti* laid down by the rishis.”

Chapter 1798(117)

‘Yudhishtira said, “In this world, men are extremely desirous of flesh and give up many other kinds of food instead. They behave like many rakshasas. There are many kinds of cakes and different forms of vegetables, full of juices and succulent. But they do not desire them as much as they crave for meat. My mind is confused because of this. I think that the taste associated with meat must be superior. O bull among men! I wish to hear about the qualities that are associated with not eating meat and about the sins associated with eating it. O one who knows about dharma! You know the truth about everything. Tell me about what is in conformity with dharma. What should be eaten? What should not be eaten? Tell me everything.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. There is nothing on earth that is superior to meat in taste. There is nothing superior to meat for those who are wounded, weak, afflicted, exhausted from travels and those who are addicted to sexual desire. It instantly enhances the life force and provides the best means of sustenance. O scorcher of enemies! There is no food that is superior

to meat. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! However, there are many qualities associated with giving it up and they manifest themselves in men. Listen to this attentively. If there is a man who desires to enhance his own flesh by resorting to the flesh of others, there is no one who is inferior or more cruel than him. In this world, there is nothing as loved as one's own life. Therefore, a man must act towards others, as he would towards his own self. O son! There is no doubt that flesh originates in semen. That is the reason it is said that there are great sins in eating and killing it. Learned ones who know about the Vedas have said that non-violence is a characteristic of dharma. Therefore, one should resort to non-violence. A man must act towards others as he would towards his own self. It has been said that slaughtered animals are oblations offered to the ancestors and the gods in sacrifices. If this is in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas, then there can be no sin attached to eating it. It has been heard in the sacred texts that animals were created for the purpose of sacrifices. Those who do not follow these ordinances are said to be rakshasas. Listen to the ordinances that have been laid down for kshatriyas. If they eat meat that has been obtained through their own valour, they do not incur any sin. All deer and wild animals are said to have been dedicated to all the gods. O king! This was done by Agastya in ancient times and that is the reason hunting is praised. There can be no hunting without being prepared to give up one's own life. O king! There is thus no difference in form between the one who is killing and the one who is being killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That is the reason all the rajarshis went on hunts. The learned say that this does not lead to their being tainted by any sin. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! In this world and in the next world, there is nothing superior to compassion towards all creatures. A man who is compassionate does not suffer from any fear. In this world and in the next world, those who are compassionate are ascetics. Those who are compassionate grant all creatures freedom from fear. We have heard that no being causes them fear either. Whether he is wounded, fallen down, prostrate, afflicted or hurt, whether it is plain or uneven terrain, all creatures protect him. Snakes, animals, pishachas and rakshasas do not strike him. Even if there is an occasion for fear, he is freed and he frees others too. There has not been, nor will there be, any donation that is superior to the granting of life. It is certain that there is nothing more loved than one's own life. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Causing injury to any being is thus nothing but another name for death. When the time for death arrives, all creatures tremble. In this ocean of life, creatures are whirled around and agitated through conception, birth, old age, misery and death. While dwelling in the womb, they are cooked in juices that are astringent, acidic and bitter, with the extremely terrible touch of urine, phlegm and excrement. In that stage of an embryo, they are helpless and are repeatedly struck. Because they desire flesh, in that helpless state, they are seen to be brought down. Having been born as different kinds of species, they are cooked in the hell known as Kumbhipaka.³⁶⁶ Being born and killed, a creature is repeatedly whirled around. When one arrives on earth, there is nothing as loved as one's own life. Therefore, one should be compassionate towards all beings and look upon them as one's own self. O king! If a person does not eat any kind of flesh from the moment of his birth, there is no doubt that he obtains an extensive spot in heaven. In a desire to remain alive, if a person eats the flesh of other creatures, there is no doubt that those other creatures will devour him. 'Whomever I eat, that creature will eat me.'³⁶⁷ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that it is my view that this is how the word for meat has evolved. A slayer is always killed. A person who binds is bound. O king! A person who injures is injured. One who hates faces hatred. Whatever deeds are performed in whatever kind of body, in exactly that kind of body are the fruits enjoyed.³⁶⁸ Non-violence is supreme dharma. Non-violence is supreme self-control. Non-violence is supreme donation. Non-violence is supreme austerity. Non-violence is supreme sacrifice. Non-violence is supreme strength. Non-violence is supreme friendship. Non-violence is supreme happiness. Non-violence is supreme truth. Non-violence is supreme learning. Among donations made at all the sacrifices, bathing at all the tirthas and the fruits of all kinds of donations, there is nothing that is equal to non-violence. The austerities of a person who is non-violent are inexhaustible. A non-violent person is like one who always performs sacrifices. A person who is non-violent towards all beings is like their mother and their father. O bull among the Kuru lineage! These are the many fruits of non-violence. I am incapable of speaking about all its qualities, even if I were to speak for one hundred years.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “Whether they desired it, or whether they did not desire it, there are those who were slain in this great battle. O grandfather! What species will they be born as? In this great battle, men gave up their lives amidst hardships. O one who knows about dharma! I know that the giving up of life is an extremely difficult task. It is my view that you know everything. Why is that the case, regardless of whether there is prosperity or adversity, or whether there is good or bad?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of the earth! Whether there is prosperity or adversity, whether there is good or bad, creatures born in this cycle of life follow a certain conduct. They exhibit a certain sentiment. Listen to the reason. O Yudhishtira! The question that you have asked me is an extremely appropriate one. O king! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O Yudhishtira! This is a conversation between Dvaipayana and a worm. In ancient times the brahmana Krishna Dvaipayana, the essence of the brahman, was roaming around. He saw a worm swiftly advancing along a road that was meant for carts. He knew about the progress of all creatures and could speak the languages of all embodied beings. The one who knew everything and could see everything spoke to the worm in these words. ‘O worm! You seem to be frightened and I can see that you are hurrying? Tell me. Why are you running? Where has this fear come from?’

“The worm replied, ‘My fear results from having heard the great roar of a cart. O immensely intelligent one! That terrible sound is approaching. I have heard it. It will kill me. That is the reason I am making efforts. I can also hear the sighs of the bulls as they are being goaded. O lord! They are bearing a great load and I can hear that sound approaching. I can hear many kinds of sounds being made by men who are urging the mounts. For those who have been born as worms, these kinds of sounds are intolerable. I face an extremely terrible fear and that is the reason I am making efforts. Life is extremely difficult to get and all creatures are miserable at the prospect of death. I am therefore running away in fear. From a state of happiness, I do not wish to confront a state of unhappiness.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Thus addressed, he³⁶⁹ replied, ‘O worm! What will bring you happiness? Since you have been born as inferior species, I think that death should bring you happiness. O worm! You cannot experience sound, touch, taste, smell, speech and many kinds of pleasure. For you, there can be nothing better than death.’

“The worm replied, ‘Whatever be the state, a living being is devoted to that state. O immensely wise one! I sense that this represents my happiness and that is the reason I wish to remain alive. Everything that I value results from my present body. Men and those who are inferior in species differ in what brings them pleasure. In earlier times, I was also a man. I was an extremely rich shudra. I was not a brahmana. I was cruel and wicked in the means I used to earn subsistence. I was harsh in speech. I was deceitful and unwise. I hated everything in the universe. I violated agreements in pursuit of riches. I was devoted to appropriating the possessions of others. In my household, I did not tend to servants and guests. I was malicious and cruel and desired to keep the tasty objects for myself. I did not faithfully offer food at sacrifices meant for the gods and the ancestors. I did not desire to give any riches. Nor did I give any food. I did not protect frightened people who sought refuge and sought protection with me. I violently cast aside those who were terrified. I did not save those who were frightened. On seeing the prosperity of other men, their riches, grain, beloved wives, vehicles and wonderful houses, I indulged in futile acts of jealousy. I was jealous on seeing the prosperity of others and I desired that they might suffer. Following my own caprices, I sought to destroy the three objectives³⁷⁰ of others. Earlier, I engaged in these acts, driven by the many qualities of cruelty. Remembering that, I am tormented, just as one is at having to give up a beloved son. I have not known the fruits of any auspicious deeds I performed. But I worshipped my aged mother and on one occasion, I worshipped a brahmana, when he came to my house. He possessed the qualities of good conduct. Since I worshipped that brahmana as a guest, I have not lost my memory. It is evident that good act has led to this bit of happiness. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear from you the truth about what will be best for me.’”

Chapter 1800 (119)

“‘Vyasa said, ‘Though you have been born as inferior species, V it is because of that good deed that you have not been confused. O worm! It is because of that deed that you are not confused and have met me. Now that you have met me, I can save you through the strength of my austerities. There is no other strength that is

stronger than the strength of austerities. O worm! I know that you have been born as a worm because of your own wicked deeds. However, if you wish to base yourself on dharma, resort to what is supreme dharma. Because of their deeds, gods also have to come down to earth, or are born as inferior species. Among men, there are the qualities of dharma, kama and artha. A learned person desires speech, intelligence, hands and feet. What can be worse for a man than to resort to this evil kind of life?³⁷¹ As long as one is alive on this earth, a foremost brahmana is one who worships the moon and the sun and speaks about the auspicious accounts. O worm! You will become that. You will be freed and will enjoy all those qualities of creatures. I will convey you to that status of being a brahmana, which is what you desire.”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having agreed to this, the worm remained where it was.³⁷² It went through birth in all the other kinds of species—porcupine, lizard, boar, animal, bird, shvapaka, vaishya and finally, kshatriya. He went and met the rishi and reported everything to him. He remembered how he had been a worm. He joined his hands in salutation and touched the feet of the rishi, who was truthful in speech, with his head. The worm said, ‘My present state is unmatched and possesses ten times the qualities I had desired. I was earlier a worm, but have become a prince now. Extremely strong elephants, with golden harnesses, bear me. Supreme horses from Kamboja are yoked to my chariot. The vehicles that bear me are yoked to camels and mules. With my relatives and advisers, I eat food that is mixed with meat. I happily sleep on beds in excellent houses. O immensely fortunate one! While I sleep in the second half of the night, I am extremely honoured. In the second half of the night, all the bards, raconteurs and minstrels chant my praises and speak pleasantly to me, as if I am the great Indra of the gods. O one who is devoted to the truth! O infinitely energetic one! All this is because of your favours. I used to be a worm, but have now become a prince. O immensely wise one! I bow down before you. Instruct me about what I should do. In truth, everything that has happened to me has occurred because of the strength of your austerities.’ Vyasa replied, ‘O king! As you chose, you have now worshipped me with eloquent words. Even when you were a worm, you retained your memory and that has now come back. The wicked deeds that you committed earlier have not yet been extinguished. You were a shudra who primarily desired riches. You were cruel and an assassin. You performed a good deed in earlier times and that is the reason you have met me now. Though you were born as inferior species, you worshipped me. O prince! Because of that, you will obtain the status of becoming a brahmana. In the field of battle, you will give up your life for the sake of cows and brahmanas. Enjoy the happiness of being a prince. Perform sacrifices and give away dakshina. Immersed with the brahman, enjoy eternal happiness in heaven. Those born as inferior species become shudras. Shudras become vaishyas and vaishyas become kshatriyas. A kshatriya who discharges his conduct proudly becomes a brahmana. A brahmana who is virtuous in his conduct goes to the sacred heaven.’”

Chapter 1801 (120)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Having given up the state of being a worm, he became a kshatriya and followed that dharma. However, the valiant one remembered and performed extensive austerities. Krishna Dvaipayana, foremost among brahmanas and learned about dharma and artha, saw his extensive austerities and arrived there.

“Vyasa said, ‘O worm! The vow of a kshatriya is to protect all creatures. If you observe the vow meant for a kshatriya, you will then become a brahmana. In your own self, know what is good and bad, and save all the subjects properly. Share everything that is auspicious. Purify everything that is inauspicious. Be cheerfully immersed in your own soul. Follow your own dharma. Once you give up the body of a kshatriya, you will become a brahmana.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O Yudhishtira! He had actually retired to the forest. However, hearing the maharshi’s words, he returned and began to protect the subjects, following dharma. O supreme among kings! The worm continued to follow the dharma of protecting the subjects. After a short period of time, he died and became a brahmana. The immensely wise and immensely illustrious Krishna Dvaipayana saw the brahmana and again arrived there.

“Vyasa said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O handsome one! Never be distressed. A person who performs good deeds obtains a good birth. One who performs wicked deeds obtains a wicked birth. O one who knows about dharma! You will obtain the dharma that has been laid down in the sacred texts. O worm! Therefore, on no account, should you ever be distressed at the prospect of death. The only fear is about the destruction of dharma. Therefore, follow supreme dharma.’

“The worm replied, ‘O illustrious one! Because of what you have done, I have moved from happiness to greater happiness. With the foundation of dharma, I have obtained this prosperity. My sins have now been destroyed.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Because of the illustrious one’s words, the worm obtained the status of a brahmana, which is extremely difficult to get. O king! He marked out the earth with many sacrificial altars. The excellent brahmana then went to Brahma’s world. O Partha! The worm obtained the supreme state of the eternal brahman. Because of Vyasa’s words, the fruits of his own deeds were extinguished. The bulls among kshatriyas have followed their own natures and have been slain. They have obtained auspicious ends. O son! Therefore, do not grieve about them.”’

Chapter 1802 (121)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “Learning, austerities and donations—which among these is superior? O best among virtuous ones! I am asking you. O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Maitreya and Krishna Dvaipayana. O king! Once, Krishna Dvaipayana was wandering around in disguise. He arrived in Varanasi and came to Maitreya, who was from an independent lineage.³⁷³ That supreme sage was seated. However, seeing that he had arrived, Maitreya worshipped him and fed him excellent food. That excellent food possessed all the qualities and he ate it. The great-minded Krishna was seated. He smiled happily. On seeing him smile, Maitreya spoke to Krishna. ‘O one with dharma in your soul! Tell me the reason why you are smiling. You are an ascetic. You are firm in your intelligence. And yet, you are overcome by delight. O learned one! I am bowing down my head before you and am asking you. I have myself earned fortune through my austerities. Indeed, I have obtained great fortune. O father!’³⁷⁴ Our conducts are different and the title you bear is different from the title I bear. But that apart, I think there is little difference between us. Indeed, I think I am superior to you.’

“Vyasa replied, ‘I smiled because I remembered hyperbolic and paradoxical statements.³⁷⁵ The words of the Vedas seem to be false. However, why should the Vedas utter a falsehood? There are three modes that are said to represent the supreme vow for a man—lack of hatred, gifts and finally, speaking the truth. These are the supreme words of the ancient sacred texts and even now, we should act in accordance with them. Even a little bit of donations, given in this way, gives rise to great fruits. Without any malice in your heart, you have given a drink to a person who was thirsty. Though you were thirsty, you gave a thirsty man a drink. You gave me food. O lord! You have thus conquered great worlds, as if you have performed a great sacrifice. I am pleased with you because of your sacred gift and because of your austerities. Your scent is auspicious. Your sight is auspicious. I think that the wind bears this sacred fragrance because of the dutiful acts you have performed. O son! This is superior to all the bathing and all the smearing of unguents. Among all the things that are sacred and auspicious, donations are supreme. Had they not been excellent, the words of the Vedas would not have praised them. There is no doubt that gifts are the best. Learned people travel along the paths followed by those who make gifts. Those who donate grant life. They are established in dharma. Among those who study the Vedas, those who control their senses and those who renounce everything, those who donate are the best. O son! From this state of happiness, you will rise to another state of happiness that is even more beautiful. It is my view that a man thus moves from bliss to greater bliss. There is no doubt that we have experienced many direct manifestations of what has been spoken about in the Vedas. Prosperous people obtain greater riches. They donate, perform sacrifices and obtain happiness. O immensely wise one! It can be seen that unhappiness follows happiness and happiness follows unhappiness. This is natural progression. Learned people have ordained that a man must follow three kinds of conduct—some are good, some are wicked and some are neither good, nor wicked. I do not think there is any other kind of conduct. However, there is a conduct that is not sinful. For example, a person who is engaged in his own tasks does neither good, nor

evil. Find delight. Find pleasure. Donate and perform sacrifices. Even those who are learned and ascetic will not be able to surpass you.’”

Chapter 1803(122)

‘**B**hishma said, “Maitreya was born in an extremely prosperous family. He was wise and extremely learned. He was also one who valued rites. Thus addressed, he replied, ‘O immensely wise one! There is no doubt that it is exactly as you have described it. O lord! However, with your permission, I wish to say something.’

“Vyasa replied, ‘O Maitreya! O immensely wise one! Say whatever you wish to. Speak. I wish to hear your words.’

“Maitreya said, ‘Your words on gifts are blameless and pure. There is no doubt that your soul has been cleansed through learning and austerities. Since your soul has been cleansed, I can obtain a great advantage from this. Using my intelligence, I can see that you are extremely prosperous in austerities. O god! I think this great opportunity of my being able to see you is because of your favours and because of the rites I have naturally performed. Austerities, learning and birth—these are the three ways of becoming a brahmana. It is through these three qualities that one obtains the status of being a brahmana. Therefore, when he³⁷⁶ is satisfied, the ancestors and the gods are also satisfied. There is no one superior to a brahmana in knowledge. Men obtain fruits from a field that has been ploughed well. In that way, a donor obtains fruits when the recipient is learned. Had there not been a brahmana with learning and good conduct as a recipient, the donations of riches by a wealthy person would have been useless. When an ignorant brahmana eats, he destroys the food that he eats and also destroys the donor. Such an ignorant person destroys the food and also destroys the person who is doing the eating. A learned lord digests the food and the lord again regenerates it. In the absence of learning, the food is not regenerated and this is a difference that is more than subtle. Merits are obtained both by the donor and by the recipient and do not devolve only on a single one. This is what the learned rishis have said. If donations are made to learned brahmanas who are controlled and have good conduct, then the auspicious fruits are obtained in this world and in the next. There are those who are pure in lineage and are always devoted to severe austerities. They are engaged in donations and studying. They should always be worshipped. These are the paths followed by the virtuous and one is not confused if one treads that way. They have nurtured the eternal sacrifices and have conveyed people to heaven.’”

Chapter 1804(123)

‘**B**hishma said, “Thus addressed, the illustrious one³⁷⁷ replied to Maitreya. ‘It is through good fortune that you possess learning. It is through good fortune that your intelligence is like this. In this world, these qualities are repeatedly praised. There is no doubt that beautiful, young and prosperous people cannot surpass you and that is because of good fortune. The gods have shown you their favours. There is something that is superior to donations. Listen. All the rites of pravritti described in the sacred texts and all the other kinds of pravritti that have progressively evolved, are based on the primacy of the Vedas. I praise donations. You praise austerities and learning. Austerities are sacred. Austerities are the means to acquire the Vedas and heaven. We have heard that greatness can be obtained through austerities and learning. It is through austerities that all the evil acts can be destroyed. However, whatever a man obtains by tormenting himself with austerities can also be obtained by a brahmana who is accomplished in the Vedas. Anything that is difficult to do, anything that is difficult to conquer, anything that is difficult to get and anything that is difficult to cross—all these can be obtained through austerities. Austerities are supremely strong. A person who drinks liquor, a person who violates agreements and seizes, a person who kills a foetus and a person who has intercourse with his preceptor’s wife—can be freed from all the sins through austerities. A person with all kinds of knowledge has true sight. He can see what cannot be seen. Both of them³⁷⁸ are ascetics and one must always bow down before them. All those who possess learning are ascetics and must be worshipped. A

person who donates obtains happiness and prosperity in this world and in the next. Those who perform the good deed of donating food obtain this world and other worlds, Brahma's world and worlds that are superior to that. They should be worshipped and are worshipped. They should be revered and are revered. A donor is praised wherever he goes.³⁷⁹ Gains are proportionate to what one does and what one does not do. Whether one resides in the upper regions or whether one resides in the lower regions, worlds are accordingly obtained.³⁸⁰ You will obtain the food and the drink that you yourself give. You possess intelligence. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are learned. You are not cruel. O Maitreya! Always be devoted to the vow of being celibate and not taking a wife. In addition, receive this instruction about what is primarily praised for a householder. When the wife is pleased with her husband and when the husband is pleased with his wife, in that family, all will be well. Water washes away dirt from the body. The radiance of the fire dispels darkness. In that way, all sins are cleansed through donations and austerities. O Maitreya! May you be well. May all be well in your house. I will depart. You should retain this in your mind and you will obtain benefit.' Maitreya bowed down before him and circumambulated him. He joined his hands in salutation before the illustrious one and pronounced benedictions for him."

Chapter 1805(124)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! I wish to hear about the good conduct of virtuous women. O grandfather. Tell me the truth.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There was a lady named Sumana, from the Kaikeya lineage. Shandili knew about everything and about all kinds of dharma. In the world of the gods, she asked the spirited one.³⁸¹ ‘O fortunate one! What conduct did you follow? How did you cleanse all your sins and arrive in the world of the gods? You are blazing in your own energy, like the flames of a fire. You seem to be like a daughter of the lord of the stars,³⁸² creating day with your own radiance. You are clad in a white garment and you show no signs of exhaustion. You are resplendent astride a sparkling celestial vehicle and there are one thousand qualities in your energy. Your austerities, donations and rituals cannot have been minor, since you have obtained this world. Therefore, tell me the truth.’ The one with the sweet smiles was thus gently asked by Sumana.

“‘In private, Shandili spoke these words to Sumana. ‘I did not wear ochre robes. I did not dress myself in bark. I did not shave my head, nor did I sport matted hair. That is not the reason I have obtained divinity. In a fit of distraction, I never addressed my husband in any hurtful or harsh words. I worshipped the gods, the ancestors and brahmanas. I was never careless and served my father-in-law and my mother-in-law. I never allowed any calumny to penetrate my mind. I never stood at the door, speaking to someone for a long period of time. I did not laugh when a wicked act was performed. I did not perform any injurious acts. I never divulged a secret, or what was not a secret. When my husband went out for work and returned home, I was controlled and honoured him by offering him a seat. I did not eat food that he did not know about, or did not approve of. I avoided anything like that, whether it was eaten, swallowed or licked. I arose in the morning and performed all the tasks that needed to be done to honour the relatives. If my husband had to go elsewhere on some task, I always remained engaged in tasks that would bring many benedictions. Until my husband returned, I did not use beautiful collyrium, wear garlands and apply fragrances after bathing, or ornament myself. I never awoke my husband when he was happily asleep. I satisfied my mind by undertaking tasks for the afflicted. For the sake of the family, I did not urge my husband to exert himself. I never divulged secrets and I kept the household clean. If a woman is controlled and protects this path of dharma, she will obtain greatness in heaven, just as Arundhati did amongst all the women.’ The ascetic goddess recited this account to Sumana. The immensely fortunate one described this dharma towards the husband and instantly disappeared. O Pandava! A person who reads this account on an auspicious occasion obtains the world of the gods and resides in great happiness in Nandana.”’

Chapter 1806(125)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O foremost among the Bharata lineage! What is superior, conciliation or gifts? Tell me which you think is better.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Some are pleased through conciliation, others are pleased through gifts. One must secure a man’s devotion after ascertaining his nature. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Listen to the qualities that are associated with conciliation. The most terrible of creatures can be pacified through conciliation. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. In a forest, a brahmana who was seized by a rakshasa was freed. There was an intelligent brahmana. In a desolate forest, he confronted a catastrophe because he was seized by a rakshasa who intended to eat him. However, he possessed intelligence and learning. Despite seeing that terrible creature, he was not confused or distressed. Instead, he resorted to conciliation. Having honoured him with his words, the rakshasa asked the brahmana a question. ‘I will free you if you can answer my question. Why am I yellowish green and lean?’ The brahmana thought for an instant about the purport of the rakshasa’s anxious question.

“He then replied, ‘You reside away from home. You are alone and without any of your well-wishers, though you command an unmatched territory. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. O rakshasa! Though you are virtuous, there is no doubt that your friends, because of their own wickedness, have acted perversely against you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You possess an excess of prosperity and wealth and you stupefy them with your supreme and excellent qualities. Nevertheless, they disregard you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You have performed good deeds and possess the qualities. You can see that they don’t have the qualities. You are wise. They are foolish and uncontrolled in their souls. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Though you are afflicted because of lack subsistence, you have avoided the censured means of subsistence. This has resulted from your greatness. There is no doubt that this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. You have chosen to suffer because of your own noble qualities. But you are disregarded by the others, who think that they have defeated you. O virtuous one! That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There are those who suffer because they resort to deviant paths, overcome by the desire and the anger in their souls. I think you are reflecting about those people. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Though you have obtained everything, you have to adopt the form of one who has obtained nothing. Though you are humble, those who are evil in conduct exhibit their intolerance towards you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There was an enemy who arrived before you, pretending to be a friend. He first acted nobly. Subsequently, he deceived you and left. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you know about the purport and progress of everything that is manifest. You are skilled in the mysteries and accomplished. But those people do not honour you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You remained among wicked people and spoke to them, clearing their doubts. Nevertheless, they did not praise your qualities. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You do not possess riches, intelligence and learning. Despite this, on the basis of your energy, you aspire to obtain greatness. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. I think that you have controlled your soul and desire to roam around in this forest in the pursuit of austerities. But your numerous friends are not prepared to accept this. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. At the right time, when you spoke excellent words amidst rich people, they were not applauded. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is a stupid and angry person whom you love from your heart. Though you have firmly instructed him and entreated him, you have been unsuccessful. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that someone urged you to undertake a task. But once the objective has been attained, he is trying to appropriate it. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that your well-wishers only honour you for your own sake, ignoring the qualities that you naturally possess. Knowing this, you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you are ashamed. Consequently, you are unable to divulge your intentions and desires. Therefore, you are lax in pursuing what you want. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. In this world, there are many kinds of men, with diverse intelligence and inclinations. You wish to persuade them with your own qualities, but are unable. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You are without learning. You are timid. You possess limited riches. You seek to obtain fame on the basis of learning, valour and donations. There is no doubt that this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. There is a fruit that you have desired for a long time, but have not been able to get. What you obtained was stolen by others. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you are unable to see any

taints in yourself or anything wrong in what you have done. You are abused without reason. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Your well-wishers are miserable and afflicted. They lack riches and qualities and you wish to free them from their destitution. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You see virtuous people in the householder mode and wicked people roaming around in the forest. Those who are emancipated have become attached to houses. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. The words you speak are full of dharma and artha and are appropriate to the time and the place. But they are not accepted. There is no doubt this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. You are learned. However, wishing to remain alive, you have accepted riches from a unaccomplished donor. There is no doubt that you are yellowish green and lean because you accepted that. It is certain that when you are engaged in hunting, you can see wickedness flourish and the good suffer. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You wish to do what is agreeable towards well-wishers who are in conflict and act against each other. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There are learned and wise people who are unable to control their senses. I think that you reflect about their indulging in perverse deeds. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean.’ Thus honoured, the rakshasa honoured the brahmana back in return. He made him a friend, gave him riches and released him.”

Chapter 1807(126)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! You are the one who is famous in our lineage. There are many kinds of extensive sacred texts. They are about the truth of dharma and artha and about how happiness can be brought. O destroyer of enemies! I wish to hear about the wonderful worlds that can be obtained. A time has arrived when kin and friends are extremely difficult to find. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With your exception, there is no one else who can instruct us. O unblemished one! O king! If you wish to show me and my brothers a favour, you should answer a question that I am asking you. This Narayana is handsome and is revered by all the kings. But he shows you a great deal of honour, serves you and indulges you. In his presence and before all these kings, and for doing what is agreeable to my brothers, you should speak to me about the nature of this affection.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing his respectful words, Bhishma, Bhagirathi’s son, was filled with affection and spoke these words.

‘Bhishma continued, “I will tell you about an extremely enchanting account. O king! It is about the power this Vishnu showed in ancient times and I heard about it. Also hear from me about the power of the one who has a bull as his sign. Hear about the doubts of Rudrani and the couple.³⁸³ Krishna, with dharma in his soul, observed a vow for twelve years. When he had initiated himself, Narada and Parvata went there to see him. Krishna Dvaipayana, Dhoomya, supreme among those who meditate, Devala, Kashyapa and Hastikashyapa were also there. There were other virtuous and self-restrained rishis who had initiated themselves. Those stores of austerities were like the gods and they were followed by all their disciples. Devaki’s son was delighted. Taking them to be the equals of the gods, he worshipped them with all the honours that were due to guests, befitting their lineages. Happily, the maharshis sat down on seats that were green and gold, new and made out of the feathers of peacocks. While the stores of austerities resided there, there were pleasant conversations on topics connected with dharma, and about rajarshis and gods. At that time, because of the vow that was being observed, Narayana’s energy arose from the kindling. In the form of a fire, it emerged from the mouth of Krishna, the performer of wonderful deeds. That fire started to burn the mountain, with its trees, creepers and bushes, with the large numbers of birds, animals, predatory beasts and reptiles. Many kinds of animals lost their senses and began to utter cries of lamentation. The summit of the mountain was mangled and assumed a blazing appearance. The mighty and raging fire burnt down everything else. It then approached Vishnu and touched his feet, like a disciple. Seeing that the forest had been burnt down, Vishnu, the afflicter of enemies, cast his benign eye towards it and brought it back to its natural state. The mountain again became full of blossoming trees and creepers. There were large numbers of birds and predatory beasts and reptiles. On witnessing this extraordinary sight, the large numbers of sages began to think. They were astounded and their body hair stood up. They showed signs of fear. Narayana, supreme among eloquent ones, saw that the rishis were

astounded. In gentle and sweet words, he asked them a question. ‘What has happened to these bulls among rishis? You are always devoid of attachment. You have renounced and are without a sense of ownership. Why are you overcome by this wonder? O unblemished ones! I have a doubt about the precise nature of this. O rishis! O stores of austerities! You should speak to me and explain this.’

“The rishis replied, ‘You create the worlds and you withdraw them back again. You are winter. You are summer. You are the monsoon. You are the father and the mother of every object that exists on earth, mobile and immobile. You are the lord and you are the source of creation. O Madhusudana! This itself is wonderful and praiseworthy. O benign one! However, you should explain the fire that emerged. O afflicter of enemies! That is the reason we are suffering from fright. O Hari! You should speak to us about what we have heard and what we have seen.’

“Vasudeva said, ‘What emerged from my mouth is Vaishnava energy. It has black trails and it is the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga. The mountain was mangled by this. O rishis! Why are you afflicted? You have conquered anger. You have conquered your senses. You are the stores of austerities and are like the gods. Nevertheless, you are distressed and are seeking assurance. I am observing a vow. I am following the vow of an ascetic. That is the reason the fire arose from me. You should not be pained by this. I came to this auspicious mountain to observe the vow. A son who will be my equal in valour will be created through these austerities. That is the reason the soul in my body emerged in the form of this fire. It has gone to see the grandfather of all the worlds, the granter of boons. O best among sages! He told me that I would have a son. This son would use half of my energy and would be born as Vrishadhvaja.³⁸⁴ It is he who assumed the form of a fire and appeared before my feet, restored to his nature, as if he was a peaceful disciple wishing to serve me. This is the mystery about the intelligent Padmanabha.³⁸⁵ Out of affection, I have told you this. O ones rich in austerities! You should not be scared. Without any anxiety, you can go everywhere. You are far-sighted. You are ablaze in the vow of asceticism. You are full of jnana and vijnana. Tell me about something supremely wonderful that you have heard of, or seen, in heaven or on earth. I wish to taste the amrita that emerges as words from your lips. O ones who reside in hermitages! Anything that you speak about will be like that. O ones who are pure in vision! Everything wonderful and divine that I see in heaven or on earth is part of my own supreme nature, which no one can obstruct. There is nothing that manifests itself as wonderful unless that wonder originates in me. But everything that is spoken by the faithful and the virtuous must be heard. They have remained on earth for a long time and are like the writing on the rocks. Now that you have assembled, that is the reason I wish to hear something from the mouths of the virtuous. You continuously speak about topics that illuminate the intelligence of men.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “At this, all those numerous sages were comforted and approached Krishna. With eyes that were like lotus petals, they looked at Janardana. Some of them glorified him. Others worshipped him. Those eloquent ones used hymns from the Rig Veda to chant Madhusudana’s praises. All the sages appointed Narada, who could see the words and who was eloquent with words, to speak on their behalf. They said, ‘O lord! There was an extraordinary and unthinkable event on Mount Himalaya. This was experienced by a large number of sages who had gone on a visit to the tirthas.’ He was urged by those large numbers of sages. As instructed, for everyone’s welfare, he told Hrishikesha everything. The illustrious sage and rishi, devarshi Narada, spoke about the auspicious incident that had occurred in earlier times.”’

Chapter 1808(127)

‘Bhishma said, “Narada, the illustrious rishi, Narada’s well-wisher, spoke about the conversation between Shankara and Uma. “Narada said, ‘The lord of the gods, the one with dharma in his soul and the one with the sign of the bull was engaged in austerities on sacred Mount Himalaya, frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. The place was beautiful because of the numerous herbs and diverse flowers. It was inhabited by large numbers of apsaras and surrounded by hundreds of bands of *bhutas*. They had many forms and some were malformed. Some were divine and extraordinary to see. Others had faces like lions, tigers, elephants and all kinds of other species. There were those with faces like jackals and leopards. Others had faces like bears and bulls. There were those with

faces like owls. There were others with faces like hawks and kites. Some had faces like many kinds of deer. All kinds of species assembled there. There were large numbers of kinnaras, gods, gandharvas, yakshas and bhutas. The place was full of divine flowers and was adorned with celestial garlands. There was divine sandalwood and the smell of celestial incense. The one with the mark of the bull was seated there. Celestial musical instruments were sounded—drums, kettledrums, conch shells and trumpets. With peacocks surrounding them, the large numbers of bhutas danced. The place was populated by celestial women and the divine apsaras also danced. It was a beautiful sight and was divine and wonderful to see. The lord of the bhutas practised austerities on that mountain. O Madhava! The mountain was unmatched. The supreme brahmanas studied there and there were the sounds of the brahman and vashatkara, combined with singing. It was as if a great festival was being observed, though the place also had a terrible appearance. O Janardana! On seeing this, the large numbers of sages were overcome by great delight. There were the immensely fortunate sages, successful ones who had held up their seed, the Maruts, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the eternal Vishvadevas, the yakshas, the serpents, the pishachas, the guardians of the worlds, the fire god and all the different kinds of sentiments. All of them assembled, to reside there. There were the seasons, scattering flowers, and the great elements. There were the blazing herbs, illuminating the forest. Filled with delight, the birds sang and danced. They sported on the slopes of that beautiful mountain and people found this very pleasant.

““The great-minded god was seated on the slope of that mountain, which was adorned with divine minerals. It seemed like a bed. His lower garment was the skin of a tiger and his upper garment was the skin of a lion. A snake was his sacred thread and he was adorned with red armlets. His beard and matted hair were tawny. His form was terrible, one that created terror among the enemies of the gods. However, Vrishabhadhvaja³⁸⁶ granted freedom from fear to all creatures who were devotees. On seeing him, all the rishis bowed down their heads. Those forgiving ones were cleansed from all their sins and freed from all their taints. Bhutapati’s³⁸⁷ place had an extremely terrible appearance. It was extremely difficult to approach and was populated by large serpents. O Madhusudana! But in a short instant, everything became wonderful. The one with the bull as his sign was seated there, assuming a terrible form. However, the daughter of the mountain³⁸⁸ arrived there, surrounded by the wives of the bhutas. Her garments were like Hara’s and the vows that she followed were also similar to his. She held a sparkling golden pot that was filled with water from all the tirthas. All the sacred mountainous streams followed the auspicious one. Flowers were showered down and many kinds of fragrances began to blow. The one who resided on the slopes of the Himalayas approached Hara’s side. Smilingly and in sport, the auspicious and beautiful goddess suddenly covered Hara’s eyes with her hands. As soon as his eyes were covered, everything lost consciousness and was enveloped in darkness. Suddenly, oblations and vashatkara disappeared. Everyone was distressed and overwhelmed by terror and fright. As soon as Bhutapati’s eyes were covered, it was as if the sun had vanished. However, in a short instant, the darkness that pervaded the worlds was dispelled. A great and blazing flame emerged from his forehead, from the mouth of the third eye and it was like the sun. It blazed like the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga and it began to destroy the mountain.

““The daughter of the mountain saw the blazing fire emerge from the eye. On seeing this, the large-eyed one bowed her head down before Hara. The forest of shala and *sarala* trees was being burnt. So were the beautiful groves of sandalwood. The celestial herbs were ablaze. Large numbers of animals were terrified. They swiftly appeared before Hara and sought his protection. It was simultaneously terrible and beautiful. The flames were like the fickle touch of lightning and rose up and touched the sky. It was as if all twelve Adityas were together. It was like the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga. It was as if Mount Himalaya was burnt down in an instant. The summit and its minerals were consumed. The herbs were burnt and destroyed. On seeing that the mountain had been destroyed, the daughter of the king of the mountains sought refuge with the illustrious one. She joined her hands in salutation and stood there. Sharva³⁸⁹ saw Uma standing there, mild in her feminine nature. She did not desire that her father should face this disaster. Bhava glanced affectionately towards the mountain and everything became beautiful again, returned to the natural state. The birds were delighted and the trees in the forests blossomed.

““On seeing that the mountain had returned to its natural state, the goddess was happy. The unblemished one spoke to her husband, Maheshvara, the lord of all creatures. “O illustrious one! O lord of all creatures! O one who wields the trident! O one who is great in vows! A great doubt has been generated in me and you should explain this. Why did a third eye manifest itself on your forehead? Why was the mountain, with its large numbers of birds

and forests, burnt down? After a short instant, why did it regain its natural state? O Maheshvara! Having destroyed it, why did you cover it with trees again?” Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! O unblemished one! In your childishness, you covered my eyes. Since the light was destroyed, in a short instant, the world was destroyed.³⁹⁰ O daughter of the mountain! When the sun was destroyed, the world was pervaded by darkness. I created the blazing third eye to protect the subjects. In a short while, that great energy destroyed this mountain. O goddess! To ensure your pleasure, in a short instant, I restored it to its natural state.” Uma said, “O illustrious one! Those of your faces that are towards the east, the north and the south are handsome and beautiful to see, like the moon. Why is the face towards the south terrible? Why do you possess tawny, matted and erect hair? Why is your throat blue, like the plumage of a peacock? Why is the Pinaka³⁹¹ always there in your hand? Why are you always in the form of a matted brahmachari? I have a doubt about all of this. O Bhutapati! O unblemished one! Tell me. O Vrishadhvaja! I am your companion in the pursuit of dharma.” The daughter of the mountain spoke to the illustrious wielder of the Pinaka in this way. The lord was pleased with her conduct and her intelligence. The god therefore said, “O extremely beautiful one! O one with the beautiful face! I will tell you the reason behind these forms.””

Chapter 1809(128)

“““Maheshvara said, “In ancient times, Brahma created a supreme woman named Tilottama. The beautiful one was created out of tiny particles from jewels.³⁹² In her beauty, she was unmatched on earth. That goddess approached me. O beautiful one! The one with the beautiful face wanted to ostensibly circumambulate me, but actually wanted to seduce me. O goddess! In whichever direction the one with the excellent teeth approached me, one of my handsome faces emerged. In a desire to see her, using the powers of yoga, I came to have four faces. Using the yoga in my own self, I came to exhibit those four faces. With the face that is towards the east, I rule everything, like a lord. O unblemished one! With the face that is towards the north, I sport with you. With the face that is towards the west, I am amiable and bring happiness to all creatures. But towards the south, I am fierce in form. I am terrible and destroy subjects. For the welfare of all the worlds, I have become a brahmachari with matted hair. The Pinaka is in my hand to accomplish the tasks of the gods. In ancient times, hankering after my prosperity, Indra hurled his vajra at me. That scorched my throat. That is the reason I have a blue throat.”

“““Uma asked, “There are many other excellent and handsome mounts. O god! Why have you accepted a bull as your mount?”

“““Maheshvara replied, “In ancient times, Brahma created a cow named Surabhi that yielded milk. Once she was created, she had many offspring and all of them yielded milk that was like amrita. From the mouth of one of the calves, some froth fell on my body. At this, I scorched the cows and they came to assume many different complexions. I was then pacified by the preceptor of the worlds,³⁹³ who knows about the meaning of good policy. He gave me a bull for my standard and also as my mount.”

“““Uma asked, “There are many different kinds of abodes and they possess all the qualities of the universe. O illustrious one! Having discarded all those, why do you find pleasure in the cremation ground? It is full of hair and bones and is terrible with broken doors and pots.³⁹⁴ It is infested with vultures and jackals and flames from funeral pyres. It is impure because of the mire from flesh, fat and blood, with entrails strewn around. There are the howls of jackals.”

“““Maheshvara replied, “During the night, I roam around the entire earth in search of a sacred spot. However, there is nothing more sacred than a cremation ground. Among all kinds of abodes, that is the reason I find pleasure in a cremation ground. It has the shade of banyan trees and is decorated with garlands that have been thrown away. O one with the beautiful face! With the large numbers of bhutas, I am happy there. O goddess! Without those large numbers of bhutas, I am not interested in residing anywhere. It is my view that this residence is sacred and is like heaven. It is supreme and auspicious. It is applauded by those who desire something sacred.”

“““Uma said, “O illustrious one! O lord of all the creatures! O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! O one who holds the Pinaka in the hand! O granter of boons! I have a great doubt. O lord! These large numbers of sages have tormented themselves through all kinds of austerities. There are many kinds of people who

roam around in the world, attired as ascetics. O destroyer of enemies! For the sake of this large number of rishis and also to do what is agreeable to me, you should dispel this doubt. What are said to be the signs of dharma? How should men act? You are capable of speaking about dharma. You know about dharma. O lord! Tell me.”

“Narada continued, ‘At this, the entire assemblage of sages honoured the goddess. Those eloquent ones, who were supreme among those who knew about meanings, praised her with hymns from the Rig Veda.

“Maheshvara replied, “Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, compassion towards all creatures, tranquility and donations according to capacity—this is said to be the supreme dharma for a householder. Not desiring the wives of others, protecting what has been left in trust, protecting women, not accepting what has not been given and the avoidance of liquor and meat—these are five aspects. Dharma has many branches and all of these yield happiness. Any embodied being must act in accordance with dharma and accumulate dharma.”

“Uma asked, “O illustrious one! I wish to ask you about a doubt and you should explain it to me. For each of the four varnas, dharma has qualities associated with the respective varnas. What is the nature of dharma for a brahmana? What is it for a kshatriya? What are the signs of dharma for a vaishya? What are the signs for a shudra?”

“Maheshvara replied, “O illustrious one! You have asked me about a very pertinent doubt. O immensely fortunate one! On earth, the brahmanas are like gods on earth. There is no doubt that fasting always constitutes dharma for brahmanas. Dharma and artha result from this and they become immersed with the brahman.³⁹⁵ O goddess! The rituals of dharma involve the law of following the vows. People are born twice through the sacrament of the sacred thread.³⁹⁶ The supreme dharma for embodied beings is to worship the seniors and the gods and immerse oneself in studying. Dharma results from acting in this way.”

“Uma said, “O illustrious one! I have a doubt in this connection and you should explain it to me. Skilfully recount to me the dharma of the four varnas.”

“Maheshvara replied, “Listening to the mysteries of dharma, observing the vows of the Vedas, following the dharma of the vows, pleasing the preceptor by remaining near his feet, following the dharma of seeking alms, always being immersed in dharma, always following the dharma of studying and following the stage of brahmacharya—these are for a brahmana. After having finished studying and having received the preceptor’s permission, he must follow the proper rites and accept a wife who is his equal. For him, dharma is to follow the path of the virtuous and avoid food offered by a shudra. Dharma must always be followed and so must brahmacharya. Controlling the senses, oblations must always be offered into the fire. A householder must be restrained in diet and must subsist on leftovers. He must be pure and truthful in speech. Dharma is following the vow of serving gress. Dharma is tending to the three sacred fires. Following the indicated ordinances, animals must be bound for the purposes of performing sacrifices. Sacrifices and non-violence towards creatures constitute supreme dharma. It is dharma not to eat first and to only eat leftovers. It is said that there is dharma when one eats after the other family members have eaten. This is especially true of a learned brahmana who is a householder. The dharma of a householder is that the husband and the wife should be equal in their pursuit of dharma. For the gods who reside in the household, one must always offer flowers and sacrifices. The house must always be rubbed clean and fumigated with smoke. For the sustenance of the worlds, this is the dharma of the twice-born who are householders. This is always nurtured by virtuous brahmanas. O goddess! I will recount for you the dharma of kshatriyas. I will recite it for you. Listen to me with undivided attention. It has been said that the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect the subjects. For a king who follows this dharma, his enjoyment of the fruits has been indicated. If a king follows the dharma of protecting the subjects, because he has accumulated dharma through protecting the subjects, he conquers the worlds. In addition, the supreme dharma for a king is self-control and studying, the performance of agnihotra sacrifices and donations. He must wear the sacred thread and follow the rites of dharma associated with sacrifices. His dharma is to unwaveringly follow the tasks and support the servants. Dharma lies in applying the rod of chastisement appropriately. It is dharma to follow the rites and sacrifices indicated in the Vedas. Dharma is being devoted to truthfulness in speech and ensuring the resolution of disputes. If a king extends a helping hand to those who are distressed, he obtains greatness in the world hereafter. He must exhibit valour for the sake of cattle and brahmanas and lay down his life in battle. He conquers the world through horse sacrifices and obtains residence in heaven. The eternal dharma of a shudra is animal husbandry and agriculture. He must perform agnihotra sacrifices

and donate gifts and study. He must engage in trade in virtuous ways. He must tend to guests and be tranquil and self-restrained. He must welcome brahmanas. Renouncing is the eternal dharma of vaishyas. A vaishya who is engaged in the path of trade must never sell sesamum, fragrances and juices and must follow the path of truth. According to capacity and as is proper, he must tend to all the guests, and thus pursue the three objectives.³⁹⁷ The supreme dharma for a shudra is to always serve brahmanas. A shudra who is controlled, performs austerities, is devoted to the truth, conquers his senses and serves his guests obtains a store of greatness that is associated with austerities. An intelligent shudra will shun violence and be good in conduct. He will worship gods and brahmanas. He thus obtains the fruits associated with dharma. O beautiful one! I have told you everything about the four varnas, one by one. O beautiful one! What else do you wish to hear?''''''

Chapter 1810(129)

“““Uma said, “You have separately described for me the sacred dharma that the four varnas must observe for their benefit. O illustrious one! But tell me about the dharma that pervades everything.”

““Maheshvara replied, “The creator and ordainer of the worlds desired qualities and created brahmanas for saving the worlds. Among all the mortals on earth, they are regarded as gods. I will tell you about their rites of dharma and the resultant fruits. The dharma of brahmanas is said to be the supreme dharma. For sustaining the worlds, Svayambhu created three kinds of dharma. Whenever the earth is recreated, these are created. Listen to them. The dharma cited in the Vedas is supreme, the ones in the sacred texts known as the smritis come next. After that, it is said to be virtuous conduct. These three types of dharma are eternal. A brahmana should know the three Vedas,³⁹⁸ but he should not earn a living through studies. A person who performs the three rites, overcomes the three and is a friend to everyone is said to be a brahmana.³⁹⁹ The lord of the worlds has decreed that brahmanas can perform six acts for making a living. Hear with single-minded attention. Studying, teaching, donating gifts, receiving gifts, performing sacrifices and officiating at the sacrifices of others—these six acts are in conformity with dharma for a brahmana. Continuous studying is dharma. Sacrifices represent eternal dharma. According to capacity and according to the ordinances, gifts are praised. This is supreme dharma and the virtuous are always devoted to this. In this way, pure householders can accumulate great stores of dharma. A person who performs the five sacrifices,⁴⁰⁰ is pure in soul, is truthful in speech, is without malice, donates, treats brahmanas well, lives in clean houses, is without insolence and is always upright, is pleasant in speech, is devoted to welcoming guests, eats leftovers and lawfully offers *padya*, arghya, a seat, a bed, a lamp and refuge to a guest—is regarded as someone who follows dharma. One must wake in the morning and perform ablutions, then invite the guests to eat. One must treat them well, before allowing them to leave. This is eternal dharma. Day and night, to the best of one’s capacity, one must tend to guests and pursue the three objectives. The dharma of shudras is said to be service towards the other three varnas. It has been ordained that the dharma of a householder has the attributes of pravritti. This is auspicious and beneficial towards all beings and I will recount this. According to one’s capacity, one must donate. One must perform sacrifices in the same way. One must follow the acts for sustenance and one must desire one’s own prosperity. Wealth must be earned through dharma. The riches earned through dharma must be divided into three parts. In all tasks, a man must make efforts to follow supreme dharma. A person who desires his own prosperity must set aside one part for the pursuit of dharma. Another part is for the pursuit of kama. The third part is set aside for increasing the riches. Another kind of dharma is said to be the pursuit of moksha and this has the attributes of nivritti. O goddess! I will describe this kind of conduct to you. Listen to the truth. This dharma is compassion towards all beings. One should not reside in the same village for more than one night. For someone who craves for moksha, the act of freeing oneself from the bonds of hope is praised. There should be no attachment towards the water pot, water, clothes, seats, the triple staff, beds, fire, or the place one has sought refuge in. Such a person’s mind and consciousness is turned towards adhyatma. He is always attached to yoga and sankhya. He seeks shelter under a tree. He finds refuge in an empty house. He lies down along the banks of rivers. He loves the banks of rivers. A person who is freed from all kinds of attachment and all bonds of affection is a brahmana. A person who has the sentiments of merging his own self with his atman is a brahmana. He is as immobile as a pillar. He abstains from food. All his

acts are driven towards moksha. He wanders around, attached only to such things. This is eternal dharma. He dwells alone. He is without attachment. He cannot be seen in the same village for more than one night. He is not tied to any place of residence. He is free. He does not sleep on the same bank of a river for more than one night. The learned say that this is the dharma of moksha. This is the virtuous path of the righteous, mentioned in the Vedas. A person who follows this path leaves no footprints behind him. There are four kinds of mendicants—*ku-tichara*, *kritodaka*, *hamsa* and *paramahamsa*.⁴⁰¹ Among these, the one that follows is superior to the preceding one. There is nothing superior, inferior or equal to the last.⁴⁰² There is nothing before it or after it. Such a person is tranquil, without happiness or unhappiness. He is without change, without old age and without death.”

““Uma said, “You have spoken about householders, the dharma of moksha and the conduct of virtuous people. In the mortal world, these paths are beneficial and great. O one who knows about dharma! I wish to know about the supreme dharma followed by the rishis. I have always been attached to those who reside in hermitages. A fragrant smoke rises from the ghee offered as oblations and seems to spread throughout the hermitage. O Maheshvara! My mind is always delighted at seeing them. O god! O lord! I have a doubt about the dharma followed by sages. O one who knows about the truth about all kinds of dharma! O god of the gods! Tell me about this. O Mahadeva! Explain to me everything about what I have asked you.”

““Maheshvara replied, “I will tell you about the supreme dharma followed by the sages. O beautiful one! Observing their own austerities, the sages progress towards success. O immensely fortunate one! O one who knows about dharma! Listen to the dharma observed by the rishis who always know about dharma. They are the Phenapas and their dharma is to subsist on foam.⁴⁰³ In heaven, Brahma drank some sweet amrita and some sacred foam was released from what Brahma had drunk. The pure stores of austerities who subsist on this are known as the Phenapas. Now hear about the large numbers of Valakhilyas who tread along the path of dharma. The Valakhilya sages have obtained success through their austerities and reside in the solar disc. There are also those who know about dharma and follow the conduct of birds. They wish to observe *unchha*. They dress themselves in skins cast off by deer. They are attired in hides and rags. The Valakhilyas, stores of austerities, are beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and progress along the virtuous path. They are each as long as a thumb and they reside in their own respective places, desiring to perform austerities. The fruits of their dharma are great. They are as revered as the gods. They ensure success in the tasks meant for the gods. They have burnt down all their sins through their austerities and illuminate the directions. There are others who are pure in their minds and are devoted to the dharma of compassion. These virtuous and auspicious ones are Chakracharas⁴⁰⁴ and they roam around in Soma’s world. The Samprakshalas, the Ashmakuttas and the Dantolukhalinas reside near the world of the ancestors and following the ordinances, resort to *unchha*.⁴⁰⁵ There are others who drink soma, like the gods. Still others subsist on heat. Resorting to *unchha*, they are present there and naturally restrain their senses. They offer oblations into the fire and worship the ancestors and the gods. They perform the five sacrifices and these sacrifices are said to constitute their dharma. O goddess! These are the Chakrachara brahmanas who roam around in the world of the gods. Other kinds of dharma are also practised by the rishis. Hear about those. All those who follow the dharma of rishis conquer their atmans and control their senses. After this, it is my view that desire and anger must be conquered. The sacrifices known as *agnihotra* and *dharmanatri* must be performed and so must sacrifices with oblations of soma. Dakshina must be given at the five sacrifices. Always observing the rites of sacrifices and devotion towards worshipping the ancestors and the gods constitute dharma. Through what has been obtained by practising *unchha*, one must tend to the guests. One must refrain from enjoying beauty and control the addiction towards milk. One must lie down on the bare ground. One must practise yoga. One must eat herbs and leaves. One must eat fruits, roots, wind, water and moss. These are the rituals practised by the rishis. Through these, they obtain the destinations meant for those who have renounced. When there is no smoke from a house, when the pestle has been laid down, when the fire has been extinguished, when residents have eaten, when the vessels have been put away, when mendicants have ceased to solicit alms and when there are no guests waiting—that is when a person must eat whatever food is left. A person who is devoted to this dharma of the truth and is forgiving follows the dharma of a sage. He is not arrogant. He is not proud. He is not distracted. He is not astounded. He treats friends and enemies equally. He is friendly towards everyone and knows about supreme dharma.”””

Chapter 1811(130)

“““ Uma said, “There are those who are controlled in their vows and restrained and reside in beautiful regions, mountainous springs, streams, groves and forests in hills and colourful spots with fruits and roots. O Shankara! I wish to hear about their sacred rites. O lord of the gods! They reside in vanaprastha and depend only on their own selves for maintenance.”

“““Maheshvara replied, “Listen attentively to the dharma practised by those who are in vanaprastha. O goddess! Listen attentively to this and turn your intelligence towards supreme dharma. For those virtuous and controlled ones who decide to reside in the forest, there are things that ensure success. Listen to the tasks that must be observed by those who are in vanaprastha. They must perform ablutions thrice a day and must perform the rites for worshipping the ancestors and the gods. They must observe agnihotra and follow the ordinances in offering oblations at sacrifices. They must pick up wild rice and subsist on fruits and roots. They must extract the oil required from castor and inguda nuts. Having obtained success through the practice of yoga, they must give up desire and anger. They must resort to *virashayya* and reside in *virasthanas*.⁴⁰⁶ A virtuous person must be immersed in yoga and during the summer, he must expose himself to the five fires.⁴⁰⁷ He must follow the yoga practised by a frog and other similar techniques.⁴⁰⁸ He must always be in *virasana*. He must sleep on the bare ground. A person whose mind has turned towards dharma must act so as to expose himself to the cold and to the heat. He must subsist on water or air. He must eat moss. He must be controlled and must be an Ashmakutta or a Samprakshala. He must be attired in rags and hides. He will wear garments made out of deerskin. Following dharma and following the ordinances, he must spend as much of time as left to him. He must always reside in forests. He will roam around in forests. He will always be found in a forest. He will approach his preceptor in the forest. He will reside there and obtain his subsistence from the forest. His dharma is represented by the rites of offering oblations. He will perform the five sacrifices. He will follow the injunctions mentioned in the Vedas and perform sacrifices on *nagapanchami*.⁴⁰⁹ He will be devoted to performing sacrifices on the eighth lunar day and chaturmasya. He will always perform sacrifices on the day of the full moon and all the other sacrifices. He will be freed from all attachment towards the wife. He will be free from all kinds of confusion. He will be freed from all kinds of sin. Such a sage will roam around in the forest. His supreme possessions are the sacrificial ladle and vessel and he is always devoted to the three fires. Such a righteous person is established on the virtuous path and goes to the supreme destination. Such sages resort to the dharma of rishis and obtain success. They go to Brahma’s extremely auspicious world and to Soma’s eternal world. O goddess! I have thus told you briefly about the auspicious dharma followed by those who resort to vanaprastha. However, there are many detailed aspects.”

“““Uma said, “O illustrious one! O god! O lord of the gods! O one to whom all creatures bow down! There is a dharma that is spoken about as leading to success and large numbers of sages follow it. Tell me about this. Success has been spoken about and those who reside in the forest have obtained success through that mode. However, there are also others that follow their own independent modes and remain attached to their wives. What is said to be their dharma?”

“““Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! All those ascetics who follow independent modes sport with their wives. Their shaved heads and ochre robes are because of where they reside during the night.⁴¹⁰ The rishis perform ablutions thrice a day and render great oblations. Meditation, resorting to the virtuous path and following the instructions have been specified for them. I have earlier spoken about the dharma that should be followed by forest dwellers. If that dharma is followed, one obtains the fruits of austerities. If one is following the dharma of having a wife, then one should control one’s senses and be satisfied with one’s own wife alone. Following the ordinances, one should have intercourse with her when she is in season. The dharma that has been laid down by the rishis is the dharma that should be followed. Those who know about dharma do not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by desire. A person must properly grant the dakshina of freedom from fear to all creatures. If he also frees himself from violence and anger, he is united with dharma. If a person is compassionate towards all creatures, upright in his vows towards all creatures and if he looks upon all creatures as his own self, he is united with dharma. Bathing oneself in all the Vedas and uprightness towards all creatures are equal in merit. Perhaps uprightness is superior. Uprightness is said to be dharma. Deceit is said to be adharma. A man who is upright is said to be united with

dharma. A person who is upright in this world always resides near the immortals. Therefore, a person who desires to follow dharma must always be upright. A person who is forgiving and self-restrained, if he has conquered anger and he does not cause injury, is immersed in dharma. A man who is always devoted to dharma is said to be united with dharma. A person must not be distracted and must have dharma in his soul. To the best of his capacity, he must resort to the path of the virtuous. His intelligence and character are then supreme and he is thought to be immersed in the brahman.”

““Uma asked, “O god! There are ascetics who are stores of austerities. They are radiant in their states. What kind of conduct ensures this for them? O illustrious one! There are also kings and princes, poor or extremely rich. Through what deeds can they obtain great fruits? O god! There are also forest dwellers who obtain eternal regions where they are smeared with divine sandalwood paste. What are their deeds? O god! I have a doubt about the auspicious pursuit of austerities. O three-eyed one! O destroyer of Tripura! Tell me everything about this.”

““Maheshvara replied, “There are self-controlled people who follow the vow of fasting. They are non-violent and truthful in speech. They are successful and without disease. After death, they find delight with the gandharvas. In the right place and following the ordinances, they lie down in manduka yoga. They have dharma in their souls and initiate themselves. They find delight with the nagas. There are those who reside with deer and survive on the basis of grass that falls off from the mouth of deer. They initiate themselves in this. They go to Amaravati⁴¹¹ and find delight there. There are those who follow the vow of surviving on moss and dried leaves. They always follow the yoga of exposing themselves to the cold. They go to the supreme destination. There are those who survive on wind and air and eat fruits and roots. They obtain the prosperity of the yakshas and find delight with large numbers of apsaras. There are those who follow the rites instructed in the ordinances. They follow the yoga of exposing themselves to the fire and the heat. If they do this for twelve years, they become kings. If a sage controls his food and carefully observes the rituals for twelve years, near a desert, he becomes a king.⁴¹² If a person initiates himself into the vow of lying down on the bare ground, with the open sky in every direction, and follows this for twelve years, he obtains happiness. O beautiful one! A person who lies down on the ground obtains many kinds of fruits, extremely expensive beds and houses and the radiance of the moon. If a person obtains subsistence through his own self and is controlled and restrained in food, giving up his life through fasting, he obtains heaven. If a person initiates himself in the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and gives up his body in the great ocean, he obtains Varuna’s world. If a person initiates himself in the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and pierces his feet with stones, he obtains delight with the guhyakas. There may be a person who cleanses his soul with his own atman. He is beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and is without possessions. Immersed in his mind alone, he initiates himself into this vow, which he observes for twelve years. He obtains the world of heaven and finds delight with the gods. If a person initiates himself into the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and then gives up his body as an oblation into the fire, he obtains greatness in Agni’s world. O goddess! There may be a brahmana who is controlled and has initiated himself into the proper ordinances. He immerses himself in his atman. He is beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and is without possessions. Immersed in his mind alone, he initiates himself into this vow, which he follows for twelve years. He then ties a pile of kindling to his shoulder, but is otherwise untired. He always devotes himself to the path meant for brave ones and is in virasana. He is always in virasthana and gives up his life in the way followed by brave people. He goes to Shakra’s eternal world, where he is honoured with all the objects of desire. It is full of divine flowers and he is smeared with celestial sandalwood paste. With dharma in his soul, he resides happily in heaven, with large numbers of gods. If a brave person is always engaged in the yoga followed by brave people, if he is spirited and gives everything up and if he initiates himself into the path followed by brave people and is always controlled and pure, then he obtains the eternal worlds that are meant for brave people. With great ease, he roams around on celestial vehicles that can go wherever they want. He is handsome and without disease. He goes to Shakra’s world and finds happiness there.”””

“““Uma said, “O illustrious one! O one who plucked out Bhaga’s eyes! O one who struck down Pushan’s teeth! O one who destroyed Daksha’s sacrifice! O three-eyed one! I have a great doubt. In ancient times, the illustrious Svayambhu created the four varnas. Through what perverse deeds does a vaishya become a shudra? How does a kshatriya become a vaishya and a brahmana become a kshatriya? O god! By following what kind of dharma is one capable of preventing this degradation of varnas? As a consequence of what deeds is a brahmana reborn as a shudra? O lord! Through what deeds does a kshatriya become a shudra? O god! O lord of the bhutas! O unblemished one! I have a doubt. Tell me. How can those who naturally belong to the other three varnas become brahmanas?”

“““Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! O auspicious one! The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. One is a brahmana as a result of creation. It is my view that kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras are also created.⁴¹⁴ However, because of wicked deeds, a brahmana can be dislodged from his state. Therefore, being the best of the varnas, a brahmana must try to protect that status. If a kshatriya or vaishya follows a brahmana’s dharma and lives in the manner indicated for brahmanas, he too can obtain the status of a brahmana. If a person abandons the status of a brahmana and follows the dharma of a kshatriya, he is dislodged from the status of a brahmana and is reborn as a kshatriya. The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. However, because of greed and confusion, a brahmana may always resort to the work of vaishyas and this shows extreme folly. A brahmana can thus become a vaishya and a vaishya can become a shudra. A brahmana can be dislodged from his own dharma and can become a shudra. Such a brahmana is dislodged from his varna and becomes an outcast. He goes to hell and is dislodged from Brahma’s world. He is reborn as a shudra. An immensely fortunate kshatriya or vaishya can also deviate from his own dharma and tasks and follow the tasks meant for a shudra. Dislodged from this own position, he causes a confusion of varnas. In this way, brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas can become shudras. If a person is pure and is engaged in his own dharma, if he pursues jnana and vijnana without being sullied, if he knows about dharma and follows dharma, he obtains the fruits of dharma. O goddess! After this, I will recount what was recited by Brahma. ‘The virtuous faithfully pursue dharma, kama and adhyatma.’ Food cooked by those who are fierce, food cooked together for large groups and food at the funeral ceremony for a miscarriage at birth are condemned. Tainted food and food served by a shudra must never be eaten. O goddess! Food cooked by a shudra is condemned. It is my view that the proof for this lies in the words that emanated from the mouth of the grandfather, the great-souled god of the gods. If one dies with some of the food from a shudra undigested in one’s stomach, even if one has offered oblations into the fire, one is reborn as a shudra. Because of the undigested food from a shudra, one is dislodged from the status of a brahmana. Such a brahmana becomes a shudra. There is nothing to think about this. If a brahmana dies with undigested food in his stomach, whatever be the varna of the person from whom he received that food, he is reborn as that varna. The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain and is sacred. If one disrespects it and eats food that should not be eaten, one is dislodged from the status of a brahmana. A brahmana who drinks liquor, is guilty of killing a brahmana, is mean in behaviour, is a thief, breaks his vows, is impure, is negligent about studying, is wicked, greedy, deceitful and fraudulent, is without vows, is the husband of a vrishala lady, eats directly from the cooking vessel, sells soma and serves those who are inferior is dislodged from a brahmana birth. A brahmana who violates his preceptor’s bed, hates his preceptor and maligns his preceptor is dislodged from a brahmana birth, even if he happens to know about the brahman. However, by performing the acts associated with virtuous conduct, a shudra can obtain the status of a brahmana and a vaishya that of a kshatriya. Following the law and the ordinances, a shudra must make efforts to serve and attend to the needs of the superior varnas. Without any distraction, a shudra must always remain established in this path of the virtuous. He must honour gods and brahmanas and observe the vow of showing hospitality towards all guests. He must be controlled and restrained in diet and approach his wife when it is her season. He must search out accomplished people and separate them from the unaccomplished. He must eat leftover food. A shudra who desires to become a vaishya must not eat pointless meat. He must be truthful in speech. He must be without a sense of pride. He must be beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and must be knowledgeable about tranquility. He must always perform sacrifices. He must be pure and supremely devoted to studying. He must be self-controlled. He must honour brahmanas and seek the welfare of all the varnas. He must be in the state of a householder and must only eat in the morning and in the evening.⁴¹⁵ He must conquer the inclination to eat and subsist on leftovers. He must be without desire and without

ego. Following the rites, he must offer libations at agnihotra sacrifices. He should eat the food that is left after all the guests have eaten. A vaishya must thus tend to the three fires. Such a vaishya is pure and obtains greatness by being born in a family of kshatriyas. If such a vaishya is born as a kshatriya, observes all the sacraments from the time of birth, performs virtuous deeds and observes all the vows, thereafter, he becomes a brahmana. Born as a kshatriya, he must cleanse himself, perform sacrifices and donate copious amounts of dakshina. If he desires heaven, he must always study and tend to the three fires. He must always stretch out a hand towards the afflicted and following dharma, protect the subjects. He must be truthful and always seek happiness in following the truth. Following dharma, he must use the rod of chastisement. He must not hesitate to use the rod of chastisement in ensuring adherence to dharma. In all acts, he must be bound by not extracting more than one-sixth.⁴¹⁶ A person who knows about artha must be comfortable in matters of sexual intercourse. A person who has dharma in his soul must always have intercourse with his wife when it is her season. He must be controlled in observing fasts. He must be pure and supremely devoted to studying. He must always sleep on a bed of kusha grass. There must always be a fire in his house. With a cheerful mind, he must attend to all the guests and pursue the three objectives. He must always tell shudras who desire food that it is available. No desire should be discernible that is driven by selfish motives. He must seek to tend to ancestors, gods and guests. In his own house, he must live like a mendicant. Following the ordinances, he must render oblations into the fire thrice a day. He must not turn his back in a battle and must lay down his life for cows and brahmanas. Or, he must give up his life by entering the three fires that have sanctified with mantras. Such a person becomes a brahmana. A kshatriya who has cleansed himself, is full of jnana and vijnana, is accomplished in the Vedas and has dharma in his soul can become a brahmana through his own deeds. These are the fruits of deeds obtained by those who are born in inferior varnas. A shudra who cleanses himself in this way can become a brahmana. A brahmana who is indiscriminate about which varna he accepts food from can become an outcast. He may have to give up the sacredness associated with the status of being a brahmana and become a shudra. A shudra who is pure in his deeds, pure in his soul and has conquered his senses can obtain the status of becoming a brahmana. Brahma himself said this. It is my view that a shudra who is naturally pure in his deeds should be known as one who is purer than a brahmana. Birth, sacraments, learning and humility are not sufficient reasons for a person to be a brahmana. Conduct is the only reason. All the brahmanas in the world obtain that status because of conduct. O one with the beautiful hips! A person who possesses that good conduct obtains the status of a brahmana. O fortunate one! It is my view that the nature of being a brahmana is equal everywhere⁴¹⁷—wherever the sparkling brahman, devoid of qualities, exists, that person is a brahmana. O goddess! Depending on the place, the fruits of birth are only for purposes of classification. Brahma, the granter of boons, created subjects and spoke of it in this way. The status of being a brahmana is like a great field that roams around on earth, using its feet. The seeds that are sown in that field lead to crops in the hereafter. A person who is always restrained in diet and is always on the path of the virtuous is one who walks along Brahma's path and obtains greatness. When he is in a house in the form of a householder, he must always show the traits of studying the samhitas. He must always devote himself to studies and earn a living through donations and studies. A brahmana who acts in this way and is always based on the path of virtue, offering oblations into the fire, is regarded as one who is immersed in the brahman. Once one has obtained the status of a brahmana, one must make all one's efforts to preserve it through deeds and not accepting gifts from inferior varnas. O one with the sweet smiles! I have thus told you everything about how a shudra can become a brahmana. I have also told you about how a brahmana can be dislodged from dharma and can become a shudra.”””

Chapter 1813(132)

“““Uma asked, “O illustrious one! O lord of all the bhutas! O one who is worshipped by the gods and the asuras! O god! O lord! I have a doubt about dharma and adharma for men. Tell me about this. Men are always bound down in three ways—deeds, thoughts and words. They are also freed from nooses through these means. O god! Through what kinds of good deeds, what kinds of qualities in conduct and what kinds of speech do men go to heaven?”

““Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! You know the truth about the purport of dharma. You are always devoted to truth and self-control. However, engaged in the welfare of all beings, you have asked a question that enhances intelligence. Listen. A virtuous person is devoted to the dharma of truth. He discards every kind of desire. He dispels all his doubts and is not bound down by dharma or adharma. He is omniscient and looks on everything equally. He knows the truth about destruction and falling down. Such men are beyond attachment and are freed from all bondage. Such a man does not cause any injury in deeds, thoughts and words. They are never attached and are not bound down by any kinds of deeds. They are not addicted to taking the lives of others. They are virtuous in conduct and are full of compassion. They are impartial towards what is hated and what is agreeable. They are controlled and are freed from all the bondage of deeds. They are compassionate towards all creatures. They grant assurance to all beings. Such men discard all injurious tendencies in their conduct and go to heaven. They never have a sense of ownership about what belongs to others. They avoid the wives of other people. Men who enjoy the riches obtained through dharma go to heaven. Men who always act towards other people’s wives as if they are mothers, sisters or daughters, go to heaven. They always refrain from theft and are satisfied with their own riches. Men who are content with what fortune has given them go to heaven. They are devoted to their own wives and have intercourse when it is the season. Men who do not hanker after sexual intercourse like vulgar people go to heaven. Their conduct is such that they always withdraw their glances from looking towards the wives of other people. They control their senses. Such men exhibit supreme good conduct and go to heaven. These men always tread along the path that has been created by the gods. Learned men always tread along this path, even if they are not attired in ochre. They follow the dharma of donating. They observe good conduct and purity. They are compassionate. For the sake of earning a living, such men always follow dharma. Virtuous men who wish to reside in heaven should follow this and nothing else.”

““Uma said, “There are words that bind down and there are also those that lead to liberation. O god! O lord of creatures! O unblemished one! Tell me about those.”

““Maheshvara replied, “For one’s own self, for the sake of someone else, for sport or for laughter, if a man never utters a falsehood, he goes to heaven. For the sake of subsistence, for the sake of dharma, or for the sake of satisfying desire, if a man never utters a falsehood, he goes to heaven. Men who speak gentle, harmless and sweet words that are devoid of sin, and those who utter words of welcome go to heaven. Virtuous men do not utter bitter, harsh and cruel words, and are not addicted to slander. They go to heaven. There are men who avoid calumny and do not use words that cause dissension. They only utter words that ensure friendship. They go to heaven. There are men who never seek to hate others and do not seek to search out their weaknesses. They are self-controlled and equal in treatment towards all creatures. They go to heaven. There are those who avoid deceitful and vain talk and words that are against others. They always indulge in amiable speech. They go to heaven. Because of anger or fear, they do not utter words that shatter the hearts of others. Even when angered, they speak comforting words. Such men go to heaven. O goddess! In speech, a man must always follow this kind of dharma. This is auspicious and has the quality of truth. A learned person must always avoid falsehood.”

““Uma said, “A man is always bound down by his thoughts and deeds. O immensely fortunate one! O god of the gods! O wielder of Pinaka! Tell me about those.”

““Maheshvara replied, “A man must always exhibit dharma in his thoughts. O fortunate one! He will then go to heaven. I will tell you about it. Listen. If there are wicked thoughts, the acts these lead to are more evil. They bind men down. O one with the beautiful face! Listen. Even if a man seeks something that belongs to someone else, abandoned in a deserted forest, and does not entertain thoughts about appropriating it, he goes to heaven. If a man never desires an object that belongs to someone else, in a village, house or a deserted place, he goes to heaven. In that fashion, if a man never desires to have intercourse with someone else’s wife, not even in his mind, he goes to heaven. A man whose thoughts are such that he always regards a friend and an enemy as equal, and treats both as friends when he meets them, goes to heaven. A man who is learned, compassionate, pure, devoted to the truth and satisfied with what belongs to him, goes to heaven. A man whose nature avoids enmity, one whose intelligence is always turned towards friendship and one who is compassionate towards all beings, goes to heaven. If a man is faithful, compassionate, virtuous, loves association with virtuous people and always knows the difference between dharma and adharma, he goes to heaven. O goddess! If a man knows the fruits and consequences of good and bad

deeds, he goes to heaven. A man who follows the law, possesses the qualities, is always devoted to gods and brahmanas and reveres those who should be shown respect, goes to heaven. I have recounted to you the fruits of auspicious deeds about the path that leads to heaven. What do you wish to hear next?"

“Uma said, “O Maheshvara! I have a great doubt about mortal creatures. Therefore, you should explain this to me in a skilful way. O lord! Through what deeds does a man obtain a long life? O lord of the gods! Through what great austerities does one obtain a long life? On earth, because of what deeds does a man obtain a short life? O god! O unblemished one! You should tell me about these perverse deeds. Some obtain great fortune. Others obtain ill fortune. Some are born in ignoble families. Others are born in noble families. Some men are hideous and look like pieces of wood. Other men are handsome and beautiful to behold. Some are limited in intelligence, others are wise. Some are extremely wise and have insight about jnana and vijnana. Some face few obstructions, others confront great impediments. O god! Men are seen to be like this. You should instruct me about this.”

“Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! I will tell you about the fruits of deeds. In the world of mortals, all men enjoy these fruits. There may be a fierce man who is engaged in taking the lives of others, with a staff raised in his hand. With staffs raised in their hands, large numbers of demons always attack him.⁴¹⁸ There may be a man who is cruel towards all beings. He always causes anxiety to everyone. He is so wicked that he doesn’t even spare insects and ants. O goddess! Such a man goes to hell. If a hideous person has dharma in his soul, he is reborn handsome. A person with injurious tendencies in his soul goes to hell. A person who doesn’t cause injury goes to heaven. In hell, a man confronts terrible hardships. Having passed through hell, some are reborn as humans, but have short lifespans. O goddess! A man who is addicted to violence is bound down by his wicked deeds. A person who causes injury to all creatures is reborn as one with a short lifespan. A person who does not kill beings, has cast aside his staff and does not use his staff against anyone, one who does not strike or kill even when he is struck and one who is affectionate towards all creatures, treating others like his own self, is reborn as a pure person. O goddess! These kinds of men are the best and obtain divinity. They obtain happiness and all the objects of pleasure. They will obtain bliss. When such a person is reborn in the world of men, he obtains happiness and a long life. Through good conduct and good deeds, this is the path to obtain a long life. Brahma has spoken about liberation through lack of injury towards creatures.””

Chapter 1814(133)

“Uma asked, “Through what kind of conduct, behaviour, deeds and donations does a man obtain heaven?”

“Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! If a man is generous, honours brahmanas, is compassionate towards the distressed and the blind, donates food, grain, drink and garments, constructs dwelling houses, assemblies, wells, lakes and ponds and cheerfully gives all those who desire, and not just one single person, seats, beds, vehicles, riches, jewels, houses, all kinds of grain, cattle, fields and women—when such a person dies, he obtains the world of the gods. He dwells there for a long period of time, enjoying all the objects of pleasure. With apsaras for company, he sports and obtains bliss in Nandana and other pleasure gardens. Thereafter, when he is dislodged from heaven, he is reborn in the world of men. O goddess! However, he is born in a family that possesses all the objects of pleasure, with riches and grain. With all the qualities of desire, he finds delight there. Such a man is prosperous. He has large stores of treasure and many objects of pleasure. O goddess! In this way, a person who is generous in his conduct towards all creatures obtains all the objects of pleasure and is handsome in every way. Brahma himself spoke about this in ancient times. O goddess! There are others who are niggardly in giving to brahmanas. They are limited in intelligence and do not give, even when they have possessions. Even when they see distressed, blind and afflicted people and mendicants and guests who are seeking, they turn them away. They are addicted to their own tongues and greed. They do not give riches, garments, objects of pleasure, food, gold, cattle, not even food that is not good. They follow evil conduct. They are greedy and non-believers. They are devoid of generosity. O goddess! Such foolish men always go to hell. After some time has passed, they are reborn as men. But these ones, limited in intelligence, are born in families that lack riches. They are overwhelmed by hunger and thirst. They do not enjoy the objects of pleasure. They lose hope about obtaining all the objects of pleasure. They

subsist by following inferior methods of living. Such men are born in families that have few objects of pleasure. They suffer from ill fortune. O goddess! It is through their own deeds that these men are born poor. There are others who are insolent and proud, always addicted to wicked deeds. Lacking sense, they do not offer seats, even to those who deserve them. Limited in intelligence, they do not yield right of way to those who should be granted right of way. Limited in intelligence, they do not offer padya to those who should be offered padya. They do not follow the ordinances and worship and honour those who should be revered by giving them arghya. Limited in intelligence, they do not offer arghya and water for ablutions to those who deserve them. When a preceptor arrives, they do not treat the preceptor with the affection that he deserves. Their conduct is driven by insolence and they are full of greed. They disrespect those who should be revered. They seek to subjugate their seniors. O goddess! Such kinds of men always go to hell. After many years have passed, these men overcome hell and are born again, but in inferior families. Those insensible people, those who disrespect their preceptors and seniors, are born in inferior lineages, like those of *svapakas* and *pulkasas*.⁴¹⁹ A person who is not insolent and proud, one who worships gods and brahmanas, one who bows down before everyone and uses sweets words, one who does what is agreeable to all varnas and is always engaged in the welfare of all beings, is honoured in the worlds. Such a person does not hate. He is pleasant and gentle in his words. His speech is always agreeable. He does not cause injury to any being and has words of welcome for everyone. He always observes the virtuous ordinances and worships those who deserve to be shown respect. He yields the right of way to those who should be given right of way. He worships preceptors as a preceptor should be worshipped. He receives guests who arrive and honours the others who come. O goddess! Such men obtain the destination of heaven. When such a person is reborn as a man, this occurs in a superior family. There are all the objects of pleasure there and the family possesses all the jewels. He follows supreme dharma and donates to those who should be given. He is revered by all creatures. All the worlds bow down before him. Such a man always obtains these fruits because of his own deeds. He obtains a superior lineage and associates with those who are superior. I have spoken about the dharma that the creator himself spoke about. There may be a person who is fierce in conduct. All creatures are terrified of him. He strikes them with his hands and feet and sticks, or binds them up in ropes. O beautiful one! He stupefies creatures with bricks and other methods and ties them up. He is deceitful in his intelligence, causing violence and agitation. He always attacks creatures and makes them anxious. A person who shows this kind of conduct goes to hell. After some time has passed, he is born as a man. However, he is reborn in an inferior family and has to face many kinds of impediments and hardships. This wicked man hated creatures and these are the fruits of his own deeds. O goddess! Know that this man's relatives and friends also have similar natures. There may be another person who is seen to be compassionate towards all creatures. He looks on everyone with a friendly eye, and treats them the way a father treats his son. He is in control of his senses and is without any enmity. He does not agitate creatures or cause any violence to them. He controls his hands and feet and offers assurance to all beings. He does not use ropes, rods, sticks and weapons to agitate creatures. He is gentle in his deeds and is full of compassion. A person with good conduct of this nature obtains heaven. He obtains delight in that divine residence, dwelling like a god. After those deeds have been exhausted, he is reborn in the mortal world as a human. However, when he is born, he faces no hardships or impediments and obtains happiness. Without any effort, he obtains happiness. Such a man is always without any anxiety. O goddess! These are the paths of the virtuous, where there are no obstructions."

“Uma said, “Some men are seen to be accomplished in commentaries and debating. They are full of jnana and vijnana. They are wise and learned about meanings. O god! There are others who find wisdom difficult to obtain. They are devoid of jnana and vijnana. Through what specific deeds does a man become wise? O Virupaksha! How does a man become limited in wisdom? O supreme among those who know about all kinds of dharma! Dispel my doubt about this. O god! Some are born blind. Others are afflicted by disease. Some men are seen to be eunuchs. Tell me the reason for this.”

“Maheshvara replied, “There are brahmanas who are learned about the Vedas. They are successful and know about dharma. They incessantly ask about what is good and what is bad. They avoid inauspicious deeds and practise the auspicious ones. They always obtain heaven and happiness in this world. When they are reborn as men, they become intelligent. They are learned and wise and obtain what is beneficial. If a foolish person looks at another person's wife with a wicked eye, because of that evil sentiment, he is reborn as a blind person. With wicked in-

tent, if a man looks at naked women, because of that evil deed, he is reborn as a person who is afflicted with disease. If a foolish man is evil in conduct and engages in an act of sexual intercourse with someone from another varna, because of that lack of wisdom, he is reborn as an eunuch. A man who binds animals, violates his preceptor's bed and indulges in indiscriminate sexual intercourse, is reborn as one who is impotent.”

““Uma asked, “What are virtuous deeds? What leads to hell? O supreme among gods! How can a man obtain what is beneficial?”

““Maheshvara replied, “A person who wishes to stay on the virtuous path must always ask brahmanas. A person who searches for dharma and desires the qualities obtains heaven. O goddess! Thereafter, when he is reborn as a human, he is intelligent and wise and retains his memory. O goddess! This is the revered dharma of the virtuous and it leads to prosperity. For the welfare of men, I have told you about this.”

““Uma said, “There are men who are limited in knowledge. They hate dharma. They do not desire to approach brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas. There are other men who follow vows and are full of devotion and self-control. There are others who deviate from vows and rituals and are like rakshasas. Some perform sacrifices. Others do not offer oblations. What kind of deeds lead to these outcomes? Tell me.”

““Maheshvara replied, “For the worlds, the ordinances of dharma have been laid down earlier in the sacred texts. However, even those who are firm in vows are subsequently seen to become ordinary in conduct. Because they are overcome by delusion, those who speak about dharma practise adharma. Those who deviate from their vows and ordinances are said to become Brahma-rakshasas.⁴²⁰ After some time has passed, they regain their enterprise and are reborn as humans. However, they do not offer oblations. They do not utter vashatkara and are the worst among men. O goddess! I have thus dispelled all your doubts. I have told you about what is good and bad for men and about the ocean of dharma.”””

Chapter 1815(134)

“““Maheshvara said, “O one who knows about the supreme! O one who knows about dharma! O one who resides in hermitages! O virtuous one! O one with the excellent brows! O one with beautiful tips of the hair! O daughter of the Himalaya mountain! O accomplished one! O one who possesses tranquility and self-control! O one who has no sense of ownership! O one who follows dharma! O beautiful one! I am asking you. I wish to ask you about something. Tell me. Savitri is Brahma's virtuous wife, Shachi is Koushika's⁴²¹ virtuous wife, Dhumorni is the wife of Martanda's son,⁴²² Riddhi is Vaishravana's⁴²³ wife, Gouri is Varuna's wife, Suvarchala is Surya's wife, Rohini is the virtuous wife of the moon, Svaha is the wife of Vibhavas⁴²⁴ and Aditi is the wife of Kashyapa. All of them regard their husbands as gods. O goddess! You have always spoken to all of them and have asked them. O one who knows about dharma! O one who speaks about dharma! That is the reason I am asking you. I wish to hear about the dharma of women, which you also follow vis-à-vis me. You observe dharma with me. Your conduct is similar to mine. Your vows are similar to mine. Your attributes and energy are similar to mine. You have performed terrible austerities. Whatever you speak to me will become a yardstick. This will be specific to women and will always be the objective of women. O Gouri! O one with the beautiful hips! This will always be observed on earth and be established in all the worlds. Your body is half of my body. It has emerged from half of my body. You are the one who performs the tasks of the gods. You are the one who caused the worlds to have offspring. O beautiful one! You know everything about the eternal dharma of women. Therefore, in detail, tell me about the specific dharma of women.”

“““Uma replied, “O illustrious one! O lord of all beings! O creator of the past, the present and the future! O god! It is because of your powers that these words are manifesting themselves before me. O lord of the gods! These rivers, with the waters of all the tirthas, have approached near you, so that you can touch their waters. After consulting them, I will progressively tell you everything.⁴²⁵ Purusha is said to be someone who possesses the powers, but has no sense of ego.⁴²⁶ O lord of creatures! Women always tend to follow other women. These rivers will therefore be honoured by me. This sacred river, Sarasvati, is supreme among all rivers. This is the foremost among all rivers and heads towards the ocean. There are Vipasha, Vitasta, Chandrabhaga, Iravati, Shatadru, Devika, Sindhu,

Koushiki, Gomati and the river of the gods, which has all the tirthas and is the supreme rivers which has come down to earth from heaven, the goddess Ganga.” This is what the wife of the god among the gods, supreme among the upholders of dharma, said. She first smiled and then addressed all those rivers. Devoted to dharma, the goddess and queen asked them about the dharma of women. All of them, with Ganga, supreme among rivers, as the foremost, were accomplished about the dharma of women. Uma said, “The illustrious one has asked a question about the dharma of women. I wish to speak to Shankara after I have consulted you. I do not see any knowledge on earth that is possessed by one single individual. Whether you are in heaven, or whether you head towards the ocean, I am therefore showing you respect.””

‘Bhishma continued, “Those best among rivers were auspicious and extremely sacred and were thus asked. They appointed Ganga, the river of the gods, who worshipped her.⁴²⁷ She⁴²⁸ was prosperous with a great deal of intelligence. She was sweet in her smiles and knew about the dharma of women. She spoke to the goddess who was the auspicious and sacred daughter of the king of the mountains, the one who destroys all sins. She⁴²⁹ was intelligent and full of humility. She was accomplished in all kinds of knowledge. Possessing great intelligence, Ganga smiled and spoke these words. ‘O goddess! O one who is devoted to dharma! We are blessed that you have shown us your favours. O unblemished one! You are revered by the entire universe, but you have shown honour to a river. If a powerful person asks another person, there is no doubt that the questioner should be respected. There is no doubt that a person who is evil-souled will not go to a learned person. A person who knows about jnana and vijnana and is accomplished in commentaries and arguments, but who does not ask others before replying, is not worthy of respect, even if he speaks extremely learned words in an assembly. If he is driven by a sense of ego, he ends up uttering words that are weak in import. You are foremost in heaven in your divine knowledge. The divine and the sacred are always present in you. O goddess! In instructions about the dharma of women, you are the one who should be worshipped by us.’ The goddess was thus praised by Ganga because of her many qualities. The extremely beautiful one among the gods⁴³⁰ then began to speak everything about the dharma of women. ‘In accordance with the ordinances, the dharma of women manifests itself to me. I will thus speak about what is praiseworthy. In a marriage, the relatives speak about the dharma that women should follow. In the presence of a fire, she agrees to follow the dharma of her husband. She must be pleasant in nature and sweet in speech. She must be good in conduct and must be pleasant in her appearance. With an attentive mind and a pleasant face, she must follow the dharma of her husband. This is the supreme dharma for a woman who wishes to have a share in dharma. A virtuous wife always regards her husband as a divinity. In her conduct, she attends to him and follows his words, as if a god has spoken it. She does not exhibit any sentiments of disregarding this and is excellent in her vows. She derives as much happiness from looking at her husband as from looking at her son’s face. She is virtuous and controlled in her conduct. Such a wife follows dharma. It has been heard that the dharma of a couple is to follow the sacred dharma together. A wife whose intelligence is devoted to her husband and who bears a pleasant visage is one who follows that dharma. She does not speak harsh words, or does not glance at him with cruelty in her eyes. A woman who exhibits an extremely pleasant face towards her husband is one who is devoted to her husband. Such a beautiful woman does not look at the moon or the sun, or at a tree that has an appellation of being male. If she looks at none other than her husband, she is one who follows dharma. A woman who attends to her husband like a son, even if he is poor, diseased, distressed, or weak from travels, is one who obtains a share in dharma. If a woman is accomplished and self-controlled, if she has sons, if she is devoted to her husband and if she loves her husband, then that woman has a share in dharma. If a woman always serves and tends, without any distraction, if she is extremely happy and humble, then she obtains a share in the dharma. If a woman does not desire any objects of pleasure, prosperity or happiness other than her husband, then she has a share in that dharma. She always awakes at the right time and attends to the seniors. She keeps the house clean and rubs it down with cow dung. She always tends to the fire and makes offerings of flowers. With her husband, she satisfies gods, guests and servants. Following the law and the ordinances, she subsists on leftover food. A woman who always satisfies and nourishes people is united with dharma. Possessing the qualities, she satisfies the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, attentive at their feet. She is always devoted to her mother and her father and possesses a store of austerities. A woman who nourishes brahmanas, the weak, those without protectors, the distressed, the blind and the destitute with food is one who takes part in the vows of her husband. With a light spirit, she always practises vows that are extremely diffi-

cult to observe. Her mind is on her husband. She is engaged in the welfare of her husband. She is one who has a share in the vows of her husband. A woman who regards her husband as supreme, practises auspicious austerities, which convey her to eternal heaven. She is sacred and follows her husband's vows. For women, the husband is the god. The husband is the friend. The husband is the destination. There is no objective equal to the husband. There is no divinity equal to the husband. There is no heaven that can match a woman as much as a husband's favours. O Maheshvara! If you are pleased with me, that is beneficial heaven for me. Even if a poor or diseased husband asks the wife to undertake a task that is adharma or leads to a loss in life, even if that task is a vice or leads to a curse imposed by brahmanas, regarding this as the dharma to be followed in a time of catastrophe, that task must be undertaken, without any reflection. In accordance with your words, I have thus recounted the dharma of women. A beautiful woman who conducts herself in this way obtains a share in dharma.' Thus addressed, the lord of the gods worshipped the daughter of the mountain. He then gave all the people permission to leave, including his supreme companions. The large numbers of bhutas and the rivers went away, to wherever they had come from. The gandharvas and the apsaras also bowed their heads down before Bhava."

Chapter 1816(135)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard everything about dharma and about everything that purifies, Yudhishtira again spoke to Shantanu's son. "Who is the single divinity in the world? Who is the single one who is the refuge? Who should a man praise and worship to obtain what is beneficial? In your view, what is the supreme dharma among all kinds of dharma? What mantras should be chanted to free a creature from the bondage of this cycle of life?"

'Bhishma replied, "The lord of the universe is the infinite god of the gods. He is Purushottama. A man must always arise and chant his one thousand names. A man must always devotedly worship the one without decay. One must meditate on him and praise him. One must perform sacrifices for him. Vishnu is without beginning and without end. He is the great lord of all the worlds. He is the controller of the worlds and must always be praised. One will then transcend all misery. He is devoted to brahmanas. He knows about all kinds of dharma. He is the one who enhances deeds in the worlds. He is the protector of the worlds. He is the great being. All the creatures originated in him. It is my view that this is the supreme dharma among all kinds of dharma. A man must always devotedly praise Pundarikaksha. He is supreme in his great energy. He is supreme in his great austerities. He is the supreme and great brahman. He is the supreme refuge. He is purest among all objects that are pure. He is the most auspicious among all objects that are auspicious. He is the god among all the gods. He is the undecaying father of all creatures. When the beginning of a yuga commences, all creatures owe their origin to him. When there is destruction at the end of a yuga, everything merges into him. O lord of the earth! He is Jagannatha, foremost in the worlds. Listen to Vishnu's one thousand names. They dispel all sin and fear. The great-souled one possesses minor names and famous ones. The rishis chanted them. For the sake of prosperity, I will state them. (1) Vishva;⁴³¹ (2) Vishnu; (3) Vashatkara; (4) Bhuta-bhavya-bhavat-prabhu;⁴³² (5) Bhuta-krit;⁴³³ (6) Bhuta-bhrit;⁴³⁴ (7) Bhava;⁴³⁵ (8) Bhutatman;⁴³⁶ (9) Bhuta-bhavana;⁴³⁷ (10) Putatman;⁴³⁸ (11) Paramatman; (12) Muktanam-parama-gati;⁴³⁹ (13) Avyaya;⁴⁴⁰ (14) Purusha;⁴⁴¹ (15) Sakshi;⁴⁴² (16) Kshetrajna; (17) Akshara;⁴⁴³ (18) Yoga; (19) Yoga-vidam-neta;⁴⁴⁴ (20) Pradhana-purusheshvara;⁴⁴⁵ (21) Narasimha-vapu;⁴⁴⁶ (22) Shrimat;⁴⁴⁷ (23) Keshava;⁴⁴⁸ (24) Purushottama;⁴⁴⁹ (25) Sarva;⁴⁵⁰ (26) Sharva;⁴⁵¹ (27) Shiva;⁴⁵² (28) Sthanu;⁴⁵³ (29) Bhutadi;⁴⁵⁴ (30) Nidhi-avyaya;⁴⁵⁵ (31) Sambhava;⁴⁵⁶ (32) Bhavana;⁴⁵⁷ (33) Bharta;⁴⁵⁸ (34) Prabhava;⁴⁵⁹ (35) Prabhurishvara;⁴⁶⁰ (36) Svayambhu; (37) Shambhuraditya;⁴⁶¹ (38) Pushkaraksha;⁴⁶² (39) Mahasvana;⁴⁶³ (40) Anadi-nidhana;⁴⁶⁴ (41) Dhatri;⁴⁶⁵ (42) Vidhatri;⁴⁶⁶ (43) Dhaturuttama;⁴⁶⁷ (44) Aprameya;⁴⁶⁸ (45) Hrishiksha;⁴⁶⁹ (46) Padmanabha;⁴⁷⁰ (47) Amara-prabhu;⁴⁷¹ (48) Vishvakarma;⁴⁷² (49) Manu; (50) Tvashtri;⁴⁷³ (51) Sthavishtha;⁴⁷⁴ (52) Sthavira;⁴⁷⁵ (53) Dhruva;⁴⁷⁶ (54) Agrahya;⁴⁷⁷ (55) Shashvata;⁴⁷⁸ (56) Krishna; (57) Lohitaksha;⁴⁷⁹ (58) Pratardana;⁴⁸⁰ (59) Prabhuta;⁴⁸¹ (60) Triakubdam;⁴⁸² (61) Pavitra;⁴⁸³ (62) Mangala;⁴⁸⁴ (63) Parama;⁴⁸⁵ (64) Ishana;⁴⁸⁶ (65) Pranada;⁴⁸⁷ (66) Prana;⁴⁸⁸ (67) Jyeshtha;⁴⁸⁹ (68) Shreshtha;⁴⁹⁰ (69) Prajapati; (70) Hiranyagarba;⁴⁹¹ (71) Bhugarbha;⁴⁹² (72) Madhava;⁴⁹³ (73) Madusudana;⁴⁹⁴ (74) Ishvara; (75) Vikrami;⁴⁹⁵ (76) Dhanvi;⁴⁹⁶ (77) Medhavi;⁴⁹⁷ (78) Vikrama-krama;⁴⁹⁸ (79) Anut-

toma;⁴⁹⁹ (80) Duradharsha;⁵⁰⁰ (81) Kritajna;⁵⁰¹ (82) Kritiratmavan;⁵⁰² (83) Suresha;⁵⁰³ (84) Sharana;⁵⁰⁴ (85) Sharma;⁵⁰⁵ (86) Vishvareta;⁵⁰⁶ (87) Prajabhava;⁵⁰⁷ (88) Aha;⁵⁰⁸ (89) Samvatsara;⁵⁰⁹ (90) Vyala;⁵¹⁰ (91) Pratyaya;⁵¹¹ (92) Sarva-darshana;⁵¹² (93) Aja;⁵¹³ (94) Sarveshvara;⁵¹⁴ (95) Siddha;⁵¹⁵ (96) Siddhi;⁵¹⁶ (97) Sarvadirachyuta;⁵¹⁷ (98) Vrishakapi;⁵¹⁸ (99) Ameyatman;⁵¹⁹ (100) Sarva-yoga-vinishrita;⁵²⁰ (101) Vasu;⁵²¹ (102) Vasumana;⁵²² (103) Satya;⁵²³ (104) Samatman;⁵²⁴ (105) Sammita;⁵²⁵ (106) Sama;⁵²⁶ (107) Amogha;⁵²⁷ (.) Pundarikaksha;⁵²⁸ (108) Vrishakarma;⁵²⁹ (109) Vrishakriti;⁵³⁰ (110) Rudra;⁵³¹ (111) Bahushira;⁵³² (112) Babhru;⁵³³ (113) Vishva-yoni;⁵³⁴ (114) Shuchi-shrava;⁵³⁵ (115) Amrita;⁵³⁶ (.) Shashvata;⁵³⁷ (.) Sthanu;⁵³⁸ (116) Vararoaha;⁵³⁹ (117) Mahatapa;⁵⁴⁰ (118) Sarvaga;⁵⁴¹ (119) Sarvavid;⁵⁴² (120) Bhanu;⁵⁴³ (121) Vishvaksema;⁵⁴⁴ (122) Janardana;⁵⁴⁵ (123) Vedas;⁵⁴⁶ (124) Vedavidavyanga;⁵⁴⁷ (125) Vedanga;⁵⁴⁸ (126) Vedavid-kavi;⁵⁴⁹ (127) Lokadhyaksha;⁵⁵⁰ (128) Suradhyaksha;⁵⁵¹ (129) Dharmadhyaksha;⁵⁵² (130) Kritakrita;⁵⁵³ (131) Chaturatman;⁵⁵⁴ (132) Chaturvyuha;⁵⁵⁵ (133) Chaturdamshttra;⁵⁵⁶ (134) Chaturbhujia;⁵⁵⁷ (135) Bhrajishnu;⁵⁵⁸ (136) Bhojana;⁵⁵⁹ (137) Bhokta;⁵⁶⁰ (138) Sahishnu;⁵⁶¹ (139) Jagadadija;⁵⁶² (140) Anagha;⁵⁶³ (141) Vijaya;⁵⁶⁴ (142) Jeta;⁵⁶⁵ (.) Vishva-yoni;⁵⁶⁶ (143) Punarvasu;⁵⁶⁷ (144) Upendra;⁵⁶⁸ (145) Vamana;⁵⁶⁹ (146) Pramshu;⁵⁷⁰ (.) Amogha;⁵⁷¹ (147) Shuchirurjita;⁵⁷² (148) Atindra;⁵⁷³ (149) Samgraha;⁵⁷⁴ (150) Sarga;⁵⁷⁵ (151) Dhritatman;⁵⁷⁶ (152) Niyama;⁵⁷⁷ (153) Yama;⁵⁷⁸ (154) Vedyā;⁵⁷⁹ (155) Vaidya;⁵⁸⁰ (156) Sadayogi;⁵⁸¹ (157) Viraha;⁵⁸² (.) Madhava;⁵⁸³ (158) Madhu;⁵⁸⁴ (159) Atindriya;⁵⁸⁵ (160) Mahamaya;⁵⁸⁶ (161) Mahotsaha;⁵⁸⁷ (162) Mahabala;⁵⁸⁸ (163) Mahabuddhi;⁵⁸⁹ (164) Mahavirya;⁵⁹⁰ (165) Mahashakti;⁵⁹¹ (166) Mahadyuti;⁵⁹² (167) Anirdeshya-vapu;⁵⁹³ (.) Shrimat;⁵⁹⁴ (.) Ameyatman;⁵⁹⁵ (168) Mahadri-dhrik;⁵⁹⁶ (169) Maheshvasa;⁵⁹⁷ (170) Mahibharta;⁵⁹⁸ (171) Shrinivasa;⁵⁹⁹ (172) Satamgati;⁶⁰⁰ (173) Aniruddha;⁶⁰¹ (174) Surananda;⁶⁰² (175) Govinda;⁶⁰³ (176) Govindampati;⁶⁰⁴ (177) Marichirdmana;⁶⁰⁵ (178) Hamsa;⁶⁰⁶ (179) Suparna;⁶⁰⁷ (180) Bhujagottama;⁶⁰⁸ (181) Hiranyanabha;⁶⁰⁹ (182) Sutapa;⁶¹⁰ (.) Padmanabha;⁶¹¹ (.) Prajapati;⁶¹² (183) Amrityu;⁶¹³ (184) Sarvadrakimsaha;⁶¹⁴ (185) Samdhata;⁶¹⁵ (186) Samdhitmat;⁶¹⁶ (187) Asthira;⁶¹⁷ (.) Aja;⁶¹⁸ (188) Durmarshana;⁶¹⁹ (189) Shasta;⁶²⁰ (190) Vishrutatman;⁶²¹ (191) Surariha;⁶²² (192) Gurugurutama;⁶²³ (193) Dhama;⁶²⁴ (.) Satya;⁶²⁵ (194) Satya-parakrama;⁶²⁶ (195) Nimisha;⁶²⁷ (196) Animisha;⁶²⁸ (197) Sragvi;⁶²⁹ (198) Vachaspati;⁶³⁰ (199) Rudaradhi;⁶³¹ (200) Agrani;⁶³² (201) Gramani;⁶³³ (.) Shrimat;⁶³⁴ (202) Nyaya;⁶³⁵ (203) Neta;⁶³⁶ (204) Samirana;⁶³⁷ (205) Sahasra-murda;⁶³⁸ (206) Vishvatman;⁶³⁹ (207) Sahasraksha;⁶⁴⁰ (208) Sahasra-pada;⁶⁴¹ (209) Avartana;⁶⁴² (210) Nivritatman;⁶⁴³ (211) Samvrita;⁶⁴⁴ (212) Sampramardana;⁶⁴⁵ (.) Aha;⁶⁴⁶ (213) Samvartaka;⁶⁴⁷ (214) Vahni;⁶⁴⁸ (215) Anila;⁶⁴⁹ (216) Dharanidhara;⁶⁵⁰ (217) Suprasada;⁶⁵¹ (218) Prasannatman;⁶⁵² (219) Vishvadhrik;⁶⁵³ (220) Vishva-bhuk;⁶⁵⁴ (221) Vibhu;⁶⁵⁵ (222) Satkarta;⁶⁵⁶ (223) Satkrita;⁶⁵⁷ (224) Jahnu;⁶⁵⁸ (225) Narayana;⁶⁵⁹ (226) Nara;⁶⁶⁰ (227) Amaskhyeya;⁶⁶¹ (228) Aprameyatman;⁶⁶² (229) Vishishta;⁶⁶³ (230) Shishtakrit;⁶⁶⁴ (231) Shuchi;⁶⁶⁵ (232) Siddhartha;⁶⁶⁶ (233) Siddha-samkalpa;⁶⁶⁷ (234) Siddhida;⁶⁶⁸ (235) Siddhi-sadhana;⁶⁶⁹ (236) Vrishahi;⁶⁷⁰ (237) Vrishabha;⁶⁷¹ (238) Vishnu;⁶⁷² (239) Vrishaparva;⁶⁷³ (240) Vrishodara;⁶⁷⁴ (241) Vardhana;⁶⁷⁵ (242) Vardhamana;⁶⁷⁶ (243) Vivikta;⁶⁷⁷ (244) Shruti-sagara;⁶⁷⁸ (245) Subhujā;⁶⁷⁹ (246) Durdhara;⁶⁸⁰ (247) Vagmi;⁶⁸¹ (248) Mahendra;⁶⁸² (249) Vasuda;⁶⁸³ (.) Vasu;⁶⁸⁴ (250) Naikarupa;⁶⁸⁵ (251) Brihadrupa;⁶⁸⁶ (252) Shipivishta;⁶⁸⁷ (253) Prakashana;⁶⁸⁸ (254) Ojas;⁶⁸⁹ (255) Tejas;⁶⁹⁰ (256) Dyutidhara;⁶⁹¹ (257) Prakashatman;⁶⁹² (258) Pratapana;⁶⁹³ (259) Riddha;⁶⁹⁴ (260) Spashtakshara;⁶⁹⁵ (261) Mantra;⁶⁹⁶ (262) Chandramshu;⁶⁹⁷ (263) Bhaskaradyuti;⁶⁹⁸ (264) Amritamshu;⁶⁹⁹ (265) Bhava;⁷⁰⁰ (266) Bhanu;⁷⁰¹ (267) Shashabindu;⁷⁰² (268) Sureshvara;⁷⁰³ (269) Oushadha;⁷⁰⁴ (270) Jagata;⁷⁰⁵ (271) Setu;⁷⁰⁶ (272) Satya-dharma-parakrama;⁷⁰⁷ (273) Bhuta-bhavya-bhavannatha;⁷⁰⁸ (274) Pavana;⁷⁰⁹ (275) Paavana;⁷¹⁰ (.) Anila;⁷¹¹ (276) Kamaha;⁷¹² (277) Kamakrit;⁷¹³ (278) Kanta;⁷¹⁴ (279) Kamaprada;⁷¹⁵ (280) Prabhu;⁷¹⁶ (281) Yugadikrit;⁷¹⁷ (282) Yugavarta;⁷¹⁸ (283) Naikamaya;⁷¹⁹ (284) Mahashana;⁷²⁰ (285) Adrishya;⁷²¹ (286) Vyakta-rupa;⁷²² (287) Sahasrajit;⁷²³ (288) Anantajit;⁷²⁴ (289) Ishta;⁷²⁵ (.) Vishishta;⁷²⁶ (290) Shishteshta;⁷²⁷ (291) Shikhandi;⁷²⁸ (292) Nahusha;⁷²⁹ (293) Vrisha;⁷³⁰ (294) Krodhaha;⁷³¹ (295) Krodhakrit;⁷³² (296) Karta;⁷³³ (297) Vishva-bahu;⁷³⁴ (298) Mahidhara;⁷³⁵ (299) Achyuta;⁷³⁶ (300) Prathita;⁷³⁷ (.) Prana;⁷³⁸ (.) Pranada;⁷³⁹ (301) Vasavanuja;⁷⁴⁰ (302) Apamnidhi;⁷⁴¹ (303) Adhishtthanam;⁷⁴² (304) Apramatta;⁷⁴³ (305) Pratishtitha;⁷⁴⁴ (306) Skanda;⁷⁴⁵ (307) Skanda-dhara;⁷⁴⁶ (308) Dhurya;⁷⁴⁷ (309) Varada;⁷⁴⁸ (310) Vayu-vahana;⁷⁴⁹ (311) Vasudeva;⁷⁵⁰ (312) Brihad-bhanu;⁷⁵¹ (313) Adideva;⁷⁵² (314) Purandara;⁷⁵³ (315) Ashoka;⁷⁵⁴ (316) Tarana;⁷⁵⁵ (317) Tara;⁷⁵⁶ (318) Shura;⁷⁵⁷ (319) Shouri;⁷⁵⁸ (320) Janeshvara;⁷⁵⁹ (321) Anukula;⁷⁶⁰ (322) Shatavarta;⁷⁶¹ (323) Padmi;⁷⁶² (324) Padmanibhekshana;⁷⁶³ (.) Padmanabha;⁷⁶⁴ (325) Aravindaksha;⁷⁶⁵ (326) Padmagarbha;⁷⁶⁶ (327) Sharira-bhrit;⁷⁶⁷ (328) Mahardhiriddha;⁷⁶⁸ (329) Vriddhatman;⁷⁶⁹ (330) Mahaksha;⁷⁷⁰ (331) Garuda-dhvaja;⁷⁷¹ (332) Atula;⁷⁷² (333) Sharabha;⁷⁷³ (334) Bhima;⁷⁷⁴ (335) Samayajna;⁷⁷⁵ (336) Havi;⁷⁷⁶ (337) Hari;⁷⁷⁷ (338) Sarva-lakshana-lakshanya;⁷⁷⁸ (339) Lakshmivat;⁷⁷⁹ (340) Samitimjaya;⁷⁸⁰ (341) Vikshara;⁷⁸¹ (342)

Rohita;⁷⁷³ (342) Marga;⁷⁷⁴ (343) Hetu;⁷⁷⁵ (344) Damodara;⁷⁷⁶ (345) Saha;⁷⁷⁷ (.) Mahidhara;⁷⁷⁸ (346) Mahabhaga;⁷⁷⁹ (347) Vegavat;⁷⁸⁰ (348) Amitashana;⁷⁸¹ (349) Udbhava;⁷⁸² (350) Kshobhana;⁷⁸³ (351) Deva; (352) Shrigarbha;⁷⁸⁴ (353) Parameshvara;⁷⁸⁵ (354) Karana;⁷⁸⁶ (355) Kaarana;⁷⁸⁷ (.) Karta;⁷⁸⁸ (356) Vikarta;⁷⁸⁹ (357) Gahana;⁷⁹⁰ (358) Guha;⁷⁹¹ (359) Vyavasaya;⁷⁹² (360) Vyavasthana;⁷⁹³ (361) Samsthana;⁷⁹⁴ (362) Sthanada;⁷⁹⁵ (.) Dhruva;⁷⁹⁶ (363) Parariddhi;⁷⁹⁷ (364) Parama;⁷⁹⁸ (365) Spashtastushta;⁷⁹⁹ (366) Pushta;⁸⁰⁰ (367) Shubhekshana;⁸⁰¹ (368) Rama;⁸⁰² (369) Virama;⁸⁰³ (370) Virata;⁸⁰⁴ (.) Marga;⁸⁰⁵ (371) Neya;⁸⁰⁶ (372) Naya;⁸⁰⁷ (373) Anaya;⁸⁰⁸ (374) Vira;⁸⁰⁹ (375) Shaktimatam-shreshtha;⁸¹⁰ (376) Dharma; (377) Dharma-viduttoma;⁸¹¹ (378) Vaikuntha; (.) Purusha;⁸¹² (.) Prana;⁸¹³ (.) Pranada;⁸¹⁴ (379) Pranava;⁸¹⁵ (380) Prithu;⁸¹⁶ (381) Hiranya-garbha;⁸¹⁷ (382) Shatrughna;⁸¹⁸ (383) Vyapta;⁸¹⁹ (384) Vayu;⁸²⁰ (385) Adhokshaja;⁸²¹ (386) Ritu;⁸²² (387) Sudarshana;⁸²³ (388) Kala;⁸²⁴ (389) Parameshthi;⁸²⁵ (390) Parigraha;⁸²⁶ (391) Ugra;⁸²⁷ (392) Samvatsara;⁸²⁸ (393) Daksha;⁸²⁹ (394) Vishrama;⁸³⁰ (395) Vishva-dakshina;⁸³¹ (396) Vistara;⁸³² (397) Sthavara;⁸³³ (.) Sthanu;⁸³⁴ (398) Pramana;⁸³⁵ (399) Vijamavyayam;⁸³⁶ (400) Arrha;⁸³⁷ (401) Anartha;⁸³⁸ (402) Maha-kosha;⁸³⁹ (403) Maha-bhoga;⁸⁴⁰ (404) Maha-dhana;⁸⁴¹ (405) Anirvinna;⁸⁴² (406) Sthav-ishtha;⁸⁴³ (407) Murdhamaryupa;⁸⁴⁴ (408) Maha-makha;⁸⁴⁵ (409) Nakshatra-nemi;⁸⁴⁶ (410) Nakshatri;⁸⁴⁷ (411) Kshama;⁸⁴⁸ (412) Kshaama;⁸⁴⁹ (413) Samihana;⁸⁵⁰ (414) Yajna;⁸⁵¹ (415) Ijya;⁸⁵² (416) Mahejya;⁸⁵³ (417) Kratu;⁸⁵⁴ (418) Satra;⁸⁵⁵ (419) Satam-gati;⁸⁵⁶ (420) Sarva-darshi;⁸⁵⁷ (421) Vimuktatman;⁸⁵⁸ (422) Sarvajna;⁸⁵⁹ (423) Jnanam-uttamam;⁸⁶⁰ (424) Suvrata;⁸⁶¹ (425) Sumukha;⁸⁶² (426) Sukshma;⁸⁶³ (427) Sughosha;⁸⁶⁴ (428) Sukhada;⁸⁶⁵ (429) Suhrid;⁸⁶⁶ (430) Manohara;⁸⁶⁷ (431) Jita-krodha;⁸⁶⁸ (432) Vira-bahu;⁸⁶⁹ (433) Vidarana;⁸⁷⁰ (434) Svapana;⁸⁷¹ (435) Svavasha;⁸⁷² (436) Vyapi;⁸⁷³ (437) Naikatman;⁸⁷⁴ (438) Naikakarma-krit;⁸⁷⁵ (439) Vatsara;⁸⁷⁶ (440) Vatsala;⁸⁷⁷ (441) Vatsi;⁸⁷⁸ (442) Ratna-garbha;⁸⁷⁹ (443) Dhaneshvara;⁸⁸⁰ (444) Dharmagub;⁸⁸¹ (445) Dharma-krit;⁸⁸² (446) Dharmi;⁸⁸³ (447) Sadastksharam;⁸⁸⁴ (448) Aksharam;⁸⁸⁵ (449) Avijnata;⁸⁸⁶ (450) Sahasramshu;⁸⁸⁷ (.) Vidhatri;⁸⁸⁸ (451) Krita-lakshmana;⁸⁸⁹ (452) Gabhasti;⁸⁹⁰ (453) Nemi;⁸⁹¹ (454) Sattvastha;⁸⁹² (455) Simha;⁸⁹³ (456) Bhuta-maheshvara;⁸⁹⁴ (.) Adideva;⁸⁹⁵ (457) Mahadeva;⁸⁹⁶ (458) Devesha;⁸⁹⁷ (459) Deva-bhrit-guru;⁸⁹⁸ (460) Uttara;⁸⁹⁹ (461) Gopati;⁹⁰⁰ (462) Gopta;⁹⁰¹ (464) Kapindra;⁹⁰² (465) Bhuri-dakshina;⁹⁰³ (466) Somapa;⁹⁰⁴ (467) Amritapa;⁹⁰⁵ (468) Soma; (469) Purujit;⁹⁰⁶ (.) Purushottama;⁹⁰⁷ (470) Vinaya;⁹⁰⁸ (471) Jaya;⁹⁰⁹ (472) Satya-sandha;⁹¹⁰ (473) Dasharha; (474) Satvata-pati;⁹¹¹ (475) Jiva;⁹¹² (476) Vinayita;⁹¹³ (.) Sakshi;⁹¹⁴ (477) Mukunda;⁹¹⁵ (478) Amita-vikrama;⁹¹⁶ (479) Ambho-nidhi;⁹¹⁷ (480) Anantatman;⁹¹⁸ (481) Maho-dadhisaya;⁹¹⁹ (482) Antaka;⁹²⁰ (.) Aja;⁹²¹ (483) Maharha;⁹²² (484) Svabhavya;⁹²³ (485) Jitamitra;⁹²⁴ (486) Pramodana;⁹²⁵ (487) Ananda;⁹²⁶ (488) Nandana;⁹²⁷ (489) Nanda;⁹²⁸ (490) Satyadharma;⁹²⁹ (491) Tri-vikrama;⁹³⁰ (492) Maharshi; (493) Kapilacharya;⁹³¹ (.) Kritajna;⁹³² (494) Medini-pati;⁹³³ (495) Tripada;⁹³⁴ (496) Tridashadhyaksha;⁹³⁵ (497) Mahashringa;⁹³⁶ (498) Kritantakrit;⁹³⁷ (499) Mahavaraha;⁹³⁸ (.) Govinda;⁹³⁹ (500) Sushena;⁹⁴⁰ (501) Kanakangadi;⁹⁴¹ (502) Guhya;⁹⁴² (503) Gabhira;⁹⁴³ (.) Gahana;⁹⁴⁴ (504) Gupta-chakra-gadadhara;⁹⁴⁵ (505) Vedha;⁹⁴⁶ (506) Svanga;⁹⁴⁷ (507) Ajita;⁹⁴⁸ (.) Krishna;⁹⁴⁹ (508) Dridha;⁹⁵⁰ (509) Samkarshana; (.) Achyuta;⁹⁵¹ (510) Varuna; (511) Vaaruna;⁹⁵² (512) Vriksha;⁹⁵³ (.) Pushkaraksha;⁹⁵⁴ (513) Maha-mana;⁹⁵⁵ (514) Bhagavat;⁹⁵⁶ (515) Bhagaha;⁹⁵⁷ (516) Nandi;⁹⁵⁸ (517) Vanamali;⁹⁵⁹ (518) Halayudha;⁹⁶⁰ (519) Aditya; (520) Jyotiraditya;⁹⁶¹ (521) Sahishnu;⁹⁶² (522) Gati-sattama;⁹⁶³ (523) Sudhanva;⁹⁶⁴ (524) Khanda-parashu;⁹⁶⁵ (525) Daruna;⁹⁶⁶ (526) Dravina-prada;⁹⁶⁷ (527) Divah-spruk;⁹⁶⁸ (528) Sarva-drik;⁹⁶⁹ (529) Vyasa; (.) Vachaspati;⁹⁷⁰ (530) Ayonija;⁹⁷¹ (531) Trisama;⁹⁷² (532) Samaga;⁹⁷³ (533) Sama; (534) Nirvana;⁹⁷⁴ (535) Bheshaja;⁹⁷⁵ (536) Bhishaka;⁹⁷⁶ (537) Sannyasa-kricchama;⁹⁷⁷ (538) Shanta;⁹⁷⁸ (539) Nishtha;⁹⁷⁹ (540) Shanti;⁹⁸⁰ (541) Parayanam;⁹⁸¹ (542) Shubhanga;⁹⁸² (543) Srashta;⁹⁸³ (544) Kumuda;⁹⁸⁴ (545) Kuvaleshaya;⁹⁸⁵ (546) Gohita;⁹⁸⁶ (.) Gopati;⁹⁸⁷ (.) Gopta;⁹⁸⁸ (547) Vrishabhaksha;⁹⁸⁹ (548) Vrisha-priya;⁹⁹⁰ (549) Anivarti;⁹⁹¹ (.) Nivritatman;⁹⁹² (550) Samshepta;⁹⁹³ (551) Kshema-kricchiva;⁹⁹⁴ (552) Shrivatsa-vaksha;⁹⁹⁵ (553) Shrivasa;⁹⁹⁶ (554) Shripati;⁹⁹⁷ (555) Shrimatam-vara;⁹⁹⁸ (556) Shrida;⁹⁹⁹ (557) Shrisha;¹⁰⁰⁰ (.) Shrinivasa;¹⁰⁰¹ (558) Shri-nidhi;¹⁰⁰² (559) Shri-vibhavana;¹⁰⁰³ (560) Shridhara;¹⁰⁰⁴ (561) Shrikara;¹⁰⁰⁵ (562) Shreya;¹⁰⁰⁶ (.) Shrimat;¹⁰⁰⁷ (563) Loka-trayashraya;¹⁰⁰⁸ (564) Svaksha;¹⁰⁰⁹ (565) Khadga;¹⁰¹⁰ (566) Shatananda;¹⁰¹¹ (.) Nandi;¹⁰¹² (567) Jyoti;¹⁰¹³ (568) Ganeshvara;¹⁰¹⁴ (569) Vijitatman;¹⁰¹⁵ (570) Vidheyatman;¹⁰¹⁶ (571) Satkirti;¹⁰¹⁷ (572) Chinna-samshaya;¹⁰¹⁸ (573) Udimma;¹⁰¹⁹ (574) Sarvata-chakshu;¹⁰²⁰ (575) Anisha;¹⁰²¹ (.) Shashvata;¹⁰²² (576) Sthira;¹⁰²³ (577) Bhushaya;¹⁰²⁴ (578) Bhushana;¹⁰²⁵ (579) Bhuti;¹⁰²⁶ (.) Vishoka;¹⁰²⁷ (580) Shoka-nashana;¹⁰²⁸ (581) Archishmat;¹⁰²⁹ (582) Archita;¹⁰³⁰ (583) Kumbha;¹⁰³¹ (584) Vishud-dhatman;¹⁰³² (585) Vishodhana;¹⁰³³ (.) Aniruddha;¹⁰³⁴ (586) Apratiratha;¹⁰³⁵ (587) Pradyumna; (.) Amita-vikrama;¹⁰³⁶ (588) Kalanemiha;¹⁰³⁷ (.) Vira;¹⁰³⁸ (.) Shura;¹⁰³⁹ (.) Shouri;¹⁰⁴⁰ (.) Janeshvara;¹⁰⁴¹ (589) Trilokatman;¹⁰⁴² (590) Triloksha;¹⁰⁴³ (.) Keshava;¹⁰⁴⁴ (591) Keshiha;¹⁰⁴⁵ (.) Hari;¹⁰⁴⁶ (592) Kamadeva;¹⁰⁴⁷ (593) Kamapala;¹⁰⁴⁸ (594)

Kami;¹⁰⁴⁹ (.) Kanta;¹⁰⁵⁰ (595) Kritagama;¹⁰⁵¹ (596) Anirdeshya-vapu;¹⁰⁵² (.) Vishnu;¹⁰⁵³ (.) Vira;¹⁰⁵⁴ (597) Ananta;¹⁰⁵⁵ (598) Dhananjaya; (599) Brahmanya;¹⁰⁵⁶ (600) Brahma-krit;¹⁰⁵⁷ (601) Brahma; (602) Brahma-vivardhana;¹⁰⁵⁸ (603) Brahma-vid;¹⁰⁵⁹ (604) Brahmana; (605) Brahmi;¹⁰⁶⁰ (606) Brahmajna;¹⁰⁶¹ (607) Brahmana-priya;¹⁰⁶² (608) Mahakrama;¹⁰⁶³ (609) Maha-karma;¹⁰⁶⁴ (610) Maha-teja;¹⁰⁶⁵ (611) Mahoraga;¹⁰⁶⁶ (612) Maha-kratu;¹⁰⁶⁷ (613) Maha-yajva;¹⁰⁶⁸ (614) Maha-yajna;¹⁰⁶⁹ (615) Maha-havi;¹⁰⁷⁰ (616) Stavva;¹⁰⁷¹ (617) Stava-priya;¹⁰⁷² (618) Stotra;¹⁰⁷³ (619) Stuti;¹⁰⁷⁴ (620) Stota;¹⁰⁷⁵ (621) Rana-priya;¹⁰⁷⁶ (622) Puma;¹⁰⁷⁷ (623) Purayita;¹⁰⁷⁸ (624) Punya;¹⁰⁷⁹ (625) Punya-kirti;¹⁰⁸⁰ (626) Anamaya;¹⁰⁸¹ (627) Manojava;¹⁰⁸² (628) Tirtha-kara;¹⁰⁸³ (629) Vasu-reta;¹⁰⁸⁴ (630) Vasu-prada;¹⁰⁸⁵ (.) Vasudeva;¹⁰⁸⁶ (.) Vasu;¹⁰⁸⁷ (631) Vasumana;¹⁰⁸⁸ (632) Havi;¹⁰⁸⁹ (633) Sadgati;¹⁰⁹⁰ (634) Satkriti;¹⁰⁹¹ (635) Satta;¹⁰⁹² (636) Sadbhuti;¹⁰⁹³ (637) Satparayana;¹⁰⁹⁴ (638) Shurasena; (639) Yadu-shreshtha;¹⁰⁹⁵ (640) Sannivasa;¹⁰⁹⁶ (641) Suyamuna;¹⁰⁹⁷ (642) Bhutavasa;¹⁰⁹⁸ (.) Vasudeva;¹⁰⁹⁹ (643) Sarvasu-nilaya;¹¹⁰⁰ (644) Anala;¹¹⁰¹ (645) Darpaha;¹¹⁰² (646) Darpada;¹¹⁰³ (647) Dripta;¹¹⁰⁴ (648) Durdhara;¹¹⁰⁵ (649) Aparajita;¹¹⁰⁶ (650) Vishva-murti;¹¹⁰⁷ (651) Mahamurti;¹¹⁰⁸ (652) Dipta-murti;¹¹⁰⁹ (653) Amuritmat;¹¹¹⁰ (654) Aneka-murti;¹¹¹¹ (655) Avyakta;¹¹¹² (656) Shatamurti;¹¹¹³ (657) Shatanana;¹¹¹⁴ (658) Eka;¹¹¹⁵ (659) Naika;¹¹¹⁶ (660) Sava;¹¹¹⁷ (661) Ka;¹¹¹⁸ (662) Kim;¹¹¹⁹ (663) Yat;¹¹²⁰ (664) Padam-anuttamam;¹¹²¹ (665) Loka-bandhu;¹¹²² (666) Loka-natha;¹¹²³ (.) Madhava;¹¹²⁴ (667) Bhaktavatsala;¹¹²⁵ (668) Suvana-varna;¹¹²⁶ (669) Hemanga;¹¹²⁷ (670) Chandana-angadi;¹¹²⁸ (.) Viraha;¹¹²⁹ (671) Vishama;¹¹³⁰ (672) Shunya;¹¹³¹ (673) Dhrita-sharira;¹¹³² (674) Achala;¹¹³³ (675) Chala;¹¹³⁴ (676) Amani;¹¹³⁵ (677) Manada;¹¹³⁶ (678) Manya;¹¹³⁷ (679) Loka-svami;¹¹³⁸ (680) Triloka-dhrik;¹¹³⁹ (681) Sumedha;¹¹⁴⁰ (682) Medhaja;¹¹⁴¹ (683) Dhanya;¹¹⁴² (684) Satyamedha;¹¹⁴³ (685) Dhara-dhara;¹¹⁴⁴ (.) Tejas;¹¹⁴⁵ (.) Vrisha;¹¹⁴⁶ (686) Dyuti-dhara;¹¹⁴⁷ (687) Sarva-shastra-bhritam-vara;¹¹⁴⁸ (688) Pragraha;¹¹⁴⁹ (689) Nigraha;¹¹⁵⁰ (690) Avyagra;¹¹⁵¹ (691) Naika-shringa;¹¹⁵² (692) Gadagraja;¹¹⁵³ (693) Chatur-murti;¹¹⁵⁴ (694) Chatur-bhuj;¹¹⁵⁵ (695) Chatur-vyuha;¹¹⁵⁶ (696) Chatur-gati;¹¹⁵⁷ (697) Chatur-atman;¹¹⁵⁸ (698) Chatur-bhava;¹¹⁵⁹ (699) Chatur-veda;¹¹⁶⁰ (700) Videkapat;¹¹⁶¹ (701) Samavarta;¹¹⁶² (702) Nivrita-atman;¹¹⁶³ (703) Durjaya;¹¹⁶⁴ (704) Duratikrama;¹¹⁶⁵ (705) Durlabha;¹¹⁶⁶ (706) Durgama;¹¹⁶⁷ (707) Durga;¹¹⁶⁸ (708) Duravasa;¹¹⁶⁹ (709) Durariha;¹¹⁷⁰ (.) Shubhanga;¹¹⁷¹ (710) Lokasara;¹¹⁷² (711) Suttantu;¹¹⁷³ (712) Tantu-varadhana;¹¹⁷⁴ (713) Indra-karma;¹¹⁷⁵ (.) Maha-karma;¹¹⁷⁶ (714) Krita-karma;¹¹⁷⁷ (.) Kritagama;¹¹⁷⁸ (.) Udbhava;¹¹⁷⁹ (715) Sundara;¹¹⁸⁰ (716) Sunda;¹¹⁸¹ (717) Ratna-nabha;¹¹⁸² (718) Sulochana;¹¹⁸³ (719) Arka;¹¹⁸⁴ (720) Vajasana;¹¹⁸⁵ (721) Shringi;¹¹⁸⁶ (722) Jayanta;¹¹⁸⁷ (723) Sarva-vijjayi;¹¹⁸⁸ (724) Suvana-bindu;¹¹⁸⁹ (725) Akshobhya;¹¹⁹⁰ (726) Sarva-vagishvaresvara;¹¹⁹¹ (727) Maha-hrada;¹¹⁹² (728) Maha-garta;¹¹⁹³ (729) Maha-bhuta;¹¹⁹⁴ (730) Maha-nidhi;¹¹⁹⁵ (.) Kumuda;¹¹⁹⁶ (731) Kundara;¹¹⁹⁷ (732) Kunda;¹¹⁹⁸ (733) Parjanya;¹¹⁹⁹ (.) Pavana;¹²⁰⁰ (.) Anila;¹²⁰¹ (734) Amritamsha;¹²⁰² (735) Amrita-vapu;¹²⁰³ (.) Sarvajna;¹²⁰⁴ (736) Sarvato-mukha;¹²⁰⁵ (737) Sulabha;¹²⁰⁶ (.) Suvrata;¹²⁰⁷ (.) Siddha;¹²⁰⁸ (738) Shatru-jit;¹²⁰⁹ (739) Shatru-tapana;¹²¹⁰ (740) Nyagrodha;¹²¹¹ (741) Udumbara;¹²¹² (742) Ashvattha;¹²¹³ (743) Chanura-andhra-nishudana;¹²¹⁴ (744) Sahasrarchi;¹²¹⁵ (745) Saptajihva;¹²¹⁶ (746) Saptaidha;¹²¹⁷ (747) Sapta-vahana;¹²¹⁸ (748) Amurti;¹²¹⁹ (.) Anagha;¹²²⁰ (749) Achintya;¹²²¹ (750) Bhaya-krit;¹²²² (751) Bhaya-nashana;¹²²³ (752) Anu;¹²²⁴ (753) Brihat;¹²²⁵ (754) Krishna;¹²²⁶ (755) Sthula;¹²²⁷ (756) Guna-bhrit;¹²²⁸ (757) Nirguna;¹²²⁹ (758) Mahat;¹²³⁰ (759) Adhrita;¹²³¹ (760) Svadhrita;¹²³² (761) Svasya;¹²³³ (762) Pragvamsha-vamsha-varadhana;¹²³⁴ (763) Bhara-bhrit;¹²³⁵ (764) Kathita;¹²³⁶ (765) Yogi; (766) Yogisha;¹²³⁷ (767) Sarva-kamada;¹²³⁸ (768) Ashrama; (769) Shramana;¹²³⁹ (.) Kshama;¹²⁴⁰ (.) Suparna;¹²⁴¹ (.) Vayu-vahana;¹²⁴² (770) Dhanurdhara;¹²⁴³ (771) Dhanurveda;¹²⁴⁴ (772) Danda;¹²⁴⁵ (773) Damayita;¹²⁴⁶ (774) Dama;¹²⁴⁷ (.) Aparajita;¹²⁴⁸ (775) Sarva-saha;¹²⁴⁹ (776) Niyanta;¹²⁵⁰ (.) Niyama;¹²⁵¹ (.) Yama;¹²⁵² (777) Sattvavat;¹²⁵³ (778) Sattvika;¹²⁵⁴ (.) Satya;¹²⁵⁵ (779) Satya-dharma-parayana;¹²⁵⁶ (780) Abhipraya;¹²⁵⁷ (781) Priyarha;¹²⁵⁸ (782) Arha;¹²⁵⁹ (783) Priya-krit;¹²⁶⁰ (784) Priti-varadhana;¹²⁶¹ (785) Vihayas-gati;¹²⁶² (.) Jyoti;¹²⁶³ (786) Suruchi;¹²⁶⁴ (787) Huta-bhuj;¹²⁶⁵ (.) Vibhu;¹²⁶⁶ (788) Ravi;¹²⁶⁷ (789) Virochana;¹²⁶⁸ (790) Surya; (791) Savita; (792) Ravi-lochana;¹²⁶⁹ (.) Ananta;¹²⁷⁰ (.) Huta-bhuj;¹²⁷¹ (.) Bhokta;¹²⁷² (.) Sukhada;¹²⁷³ (793) Naikada;¹²⁷⁴ (794) Agraja;¹²⁷⁵ (795) Anirvinna;¹²⁷⁶ (796) Sadamarshi;¹²⁷⁷ (797) Lokadhishtanam-adbhutam;¹²⁷⁸ (798) Sanatana;¹²⁷⁹ (799) Sanatanatama;¹²⁸⁰ (800) Kapila; (801) Kapi;¹²⁸¹ (.) Avyaya;¹²⁸² (802) Svastida;¹²⁸³ (803) Svasti-krit;¹²⁸⁴ (804) Svasti;¹²⁸⁵ (805) Svasti-bhuk;¹²⁸⁶ (806) Svastidakshina;¹²⁸⁷ (807) Aroudra;¹²⁸⁸ (808) Kundali;¹²⁸⁹ (809) Chakri;¹²⁹⁰ (.) Vikrami;¹²⁹¹ (810) Ajita-shasana;¹²⁹² (811) Shabdatiga;¹²⁹³ (812) Shabda-saha;¹²⁹⁴ (813) Shishira;¹²⁹⁵ (814) Sharvari-kara;¹²⁹⁶ (815) Akrura;¹²⁹⁷ (816) Peshala;¹²⁹⁸ (.) Daksha;¹²⁹⁹ (817) Dakshina;¹³⁰⁰ (818) Kshaminam-vara;¹³⁰¹ (819) Viddhatama;¹³⁰² (820) Vitabhaya;¹³⁰³ (821) Punya-shravana-kirtana;¹³⁰⁴ (822) Uttarana;¹³⁰⁵ (823) Dushkritiha;¹³⁰⁶ (.) Punya;¹³⁰⁷ (824) Duhsvapna-nashana;¹³⁰⁸ (.) Viraha;¹³⁰⁹ (825) Rakshana;¹³¹⁰ (826) Santa;¹³¹¹ (827) Jivana;¹³¹² (828) Paryavasthita;¹³¹³ (829)

Ananta-rupa;¹³¹⁴ (830) Ananta-shri;¹³¹⁵ (831) Jita-manyu;¹³¹⁶ (832) Bhayapaha;¹³¹⁷ (833) Chaturasra;¹³¹⁸ (834) Gab-hiratman;¹³¹⁹ (835) Vidisha;¹³²⁰ (836) Vyadisha;¹³²¹ (837) Dishā;¹³²² (838) Anadi;¹³²³ (839) Bhur-bhuva;¹³²⁴ (840) Lakshmi; (841) Suvira;¹³²⁵ (842) Ruchirangada;¹³²⁶ (843) Janana;¹³²⁷ (844) Janaja;¹³²⁸ (845) Janmadi;¹³²⁹ (.) Bhima;¹³³⁰ (846) Bhima-parakrama;¹³³¹ (847) Adhara;¹³³² (848) Nilaya;¹³³³ (.) Dhatri;¹³³⁴ (849) Pushpa-hasa;¹³³⁵ (850) Prajagara;¹³³⁶ (851) Urdhvaga;¹³³⁷ (852) Satpathachara;¹³³⁸ (.) Pranada;¹³³⁹ (.) Pranava;¹³⁴⁰ (853) Pana;¹³⁴¹ (.) Pramana;¹³⁴² (854) Prana-nilaya;¹³⁴³ (855) Prana-krit;¹³⁴⁴ (856) Prana-jivana;¹³⁴⁵ (857) Tattva;¹³⁴⁶ (858) Tattva-vid;¹³⁴⁷ (859) Ekatman;¹³⁴⁸ (860) Janma-mrityu-jaratiga;¹³⁴⁹ (861) Bhur-bhuvah-svastarutsara;¹³⁵⁰ (.) Savita;¹³⁵¹ (862) Prapitamaha;¹³⁵² (.) Yajna;¹³⁵³ (863) Yajna-pati;¹³⁵⁴ (864) Yajva;¹³⁵⁵ (865) Yajnanga;¹³⁵⁶ (866) Yajna-vahana;¹³⁵⁷ (867) Yajna-bhrit;¹³⁵⁸ (868) Yajna-krit;¹³⁵⁹ (869) Yajni;¹³⁶⁰ (870) Yajna-bhuk;¹³⁶¹ (871) Yajna-sadhana;¹³⁶² (872) Yajnanta-krit;¹³⁶³ (873) Yajna-guhyam;¹³⁶⁴ (874) Annam;¹³⁶⁵ (875) Annada;¹³⁶⁶ (876) Atma-yoni;¹³⁶⁷ (877) Syayam-jata;¹³⁶⁸ (878) Vaikhanas;¹³⁶⁹ (879) Sama-gayana;¹³⁷⁰ (880) Devaki-nandana;¹³⁷⁰ (.) Srashta;¹³⁷¹ (881) Kshitisha;¹³⁷² (882) Papa-nashana;¹³⁷³ (883) Shankha-bhrit;¹³⁷⁴ (.) Chakri;¹³⁷⁵ (884) Sharnga-dhanva;¹³⁷⁶ (885) Gada-dhara;¹³⁷⁷ (885) Rathanga-pani;¹³⁷⁸ (.) Akshobhya;¹³⁷⁹ and (886) Sarva-praharanayudha.¹³⁸⁰ These are recited as the one thousand names of the great-souled Keshava. I have recounted them in detail and these divine names must be chanted. A man who always listens to these and recites them does not confront anything inauspicious, in this world and in the next. Such a brahmana obtains the Vedanta and a kshatriya becomes victorious. A vaishya becomes prosperous and a shudra obtains happiness. A person in search of dharma obtains dharma. A person in search of artha obtains artha. A person who desires objects of desire obtains objects of desire. A person who wants offspring obtains offspring. One must awake in the morning, purify one's mind and with devotion, recite Vasudeva's one thousand names. He will obtain great fame and become foremost among his relatives. He will obtain a prosperity that is not destroyed and will obtain supreme benefit. He will never face any fear and will obtain valour and energy. He will not suffer from disease. He will be radiant and will be full of strength, beauty and other qualities. A person afflicted by disease will be freed from disease. A person who is bound down will be freed from bondage. A person who is scared will be freed from his fear and will be freed from all catastrophes. A man who always chants Purushottama's one thousand names with devotion will be able to quickly overcome all hardships. A mortal person must seek refuge with Vasudeva. He must be devoted to Vasudeva. He will then be freed from all sins and, pure in soul, will obtain the eternal brahman. A person who is devoted to Vasudeva never faces anything inauspicious. For such a person, there is no fear from birth, death, old age and disease. With faith and devotion, one must study these words of praise. One will then unite oneself with happiness, forgiveness of character, prosperity, fortitude, memory and deeds. There will be no anger, jealousy, greed or inauspicious tendencies. A person who is devoted to Purushottama accomplishes auspicious deeds. The firmament, the moon, the sun, the nakshatras, the directions, the earth and the great ocean—all these are pervaded with the great-souled Vasudeva's valour. The gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the serpents, the rakshasas and everything mobile and immobile in the universe—all these are under Krishna's subjugation. The senses, mind, intelligence, spirit, energy, strength and fortitude—all of these are said to be part of Vasudeva's soul. He is the *kshetra* and the *kshetrajna*. In all the sacred texts, conduct is said to be the foremost. Conduct is based on dharma and he is said to be the lord of dharma. The rishis, the ancestors, the gods, the great elements, the minerals and everything mobile and immobile in the universe has originated from Narayana. The knowledge of yoga, the knowledge of sankhya, all the acts of artisanship, the Vedas, the sacred texts and vijnana—all these originated from Janardana. Vishnu is the single great being. He has manifested himself in many kinds of forms. He pervades the three worlds and is in the soul of all creatures. He is the undecaying enjoyer who enjoys the universe. This praise of the illustrious Vishnu was chanted by Vyasa. If a man desires to obtain benefit and happiness, he should read it. He is the lord of the universe. He is without origin. He is the undecaying god whose power pervades the universe. A person who worships Pundarikaksha does not have to face defeat.”

udhishtira asked, “Who deserves to be worshipped? Who should one bow down to? What should one’s conduct be, and towards whom? O grandfather! What kind of conduct, and towards whom, does not lead to suffering?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The subjugation of brahmanas makes the gods suffer. O Yudhishtira! One does not suffer if one bows down before brahmanas. They must be worshipped. One should bow down before them. They should be treated like one’s own sons. Those learned ones are the ones who hold up all the worlds. For all the worlds, the brahmanas are the great bridges of dharma. Their happiness is in renouncing riches and in restraining speech. They are firm in their vows and lay down ordinances that are agreeable to creatures. Those illustrious ones are the ones who formulate the sacred texts for the worlds. They possess the wealth of austerities. Words always constitute their great strength. Their power flows from dharma. They possess the subtle insight of dharma. They desire dharma and are established in dharma. Their good deeds are the bridges of dharma. All the four kinds of subjects¹³⁸¹ depend on them for life. They lead along the path that everyone should follow. They are the conveyors of the eternal sacrifices. They always bear the burdens of fathers, grandfathers and preceptors. Like well-trained cattle, they do not waver under the burden, even on uneven terrain. They are ahead of ancestors, gods and guests. They deserve the first share of havya and kavya. By eating the food, they save the worlds from great fear. They are lamps for all the worlds. They are eyes, even for those who possess sight. They are subtle in their insight and accomplished. They are the stores of all kinds of artisanship. They know about the progress of all creatures. They think about the progress of adhyatma. They know about the beginning, the middle and the end and are devoid of any sense of doubt. They know about what is superior and inferior. They go to the supreme destination. They are emancipated and have cleansed all sins. They are beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and are without any possessions. They deserve to be honoured and are always respected. Those great-souled ones possess knowledge. They treat sandalwood paste and mud and filth equally. They are indifferent to what constitutes food and what does not constitute food. They regard fine cloth, coarse cloth, silk and hides equally. They can remain for many days, without eating anything. They can control their senses and dry up their bodies in studying. They can turn those who aren’t divinities into gods and turn gods into those who aren’t divinities. If they are enraged, they can create other worlds and guardians of the worlds. Because of the curse of those greatsouled ones, the waters of the ocean can no longer be drunk. The fire of their rage has still not been pacified in Dandaka. They represent gods among the gods. They are the reason among all reasons. They are the supreme proof among all proofs. Which learned person can disregard them? Among them, the aged and the young deserve all kinds of honours. They are superior because of their austerities and learning and they revere each other. An ignorant brahmana is also like a god and can be a great source of purification. A learned one is a greater god and is like a full ocean. Whether ignorant or learned, a brahmana is like a great divinity. This is like Agni being a great divinity, whether sanctified by mantras or not. An energetic fire is not tainted, even if it burns in the cremation ground. Clarified butter is also as beautiful, whether used in a sacrifice or not. A brahmana must always be revered, even if he is engaged in all kinds of acts that aren’t beneficial. Know that he is like a supreme divinity.”

Chapter 1818(137)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O lord of men! What is seen to be the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas? O immensely wise one! What is your view? Why do you engage in these tasks of worshipping them?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, a history is recounted about a conversation between Pavana and Arjuna. There was the thousand-armed and handsome Kartavirya.¹³⁸² The immensely strong one became the lord of this entire world and his capital was in Mahishmati. Haihaya had truth for his valour and he ruled the entire earth, with its stores of jewels, islands and the girdle of the ocean. He placed the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront and was humble and learned. For some reason, he gave all his own riches to Dattatreya. Kritavirya’s son worshipped the sage. The brahmana was delighted and offered to grant him three boons. Happy at the prospect of receiving boons, the king said, ‘When I am in the midst of the soldiers, let me have one

thousand arms. But in my house, it should not be that way.¹³⁸³ In the battle, let the soldiers see my one thousand arms. O one who is great in his vows! Let me conquer the entire earth through my valour. Having obtained it through dharma, let me attentively rule it. O supreme among brahmanas! I desire a fourth boon from you too. O unblemished one! You have shown me your favours and you should grant me this. If I ever resort to false conduct, let the virtuous instruct me.’ Thus addressed, the brahmana told the king that it would be that way. The one who was blazing in his energy granted him these boons. He¹³⁸⁴ ascended a chariot that was as resplendent as the fire and the sun. Deluded by his valour, he exclaimed, ‘There is no one who is my equal in valour, patience, fame, purity, bravery and energy.’ When he spoke these words, an invisible voice was heard from the sky. ‘O foolish one! You do not know that brahmanas are superior to kshatriyas. The kshatriya protects subjects because he is aided by brahmanas.’ Arjuna replied, ‘When I am pleased, I can create beings. When I am angry, I can convey them to their destruction. There is no brahmana who is superior to me in deeds, thoughts and words. You have said that the brahmana is superior. However, there is a second view that the kshatriya is superior. No special reason for superiority can be seen in what you have said. Brahmanas seek refuge with kshatriyas. Kshatriyas do not seek refuge with brahmanas. On earth, the brahmanas obtain their prosperity, their studying of the brahman and their food from kshatriyas. Dharma and the protection of subjects have kshatriyas as a refuge. Brahmanas obtain their sustenance through kshatriyas. How can brahmanas be superior? If those who always resort to alms are superior to all creatures, I will use my powers to bring all the brahmanas under my subjugation. What the maiden Gayatri¹³⁸⁵ has spoken from heaven is not the truth. The brahmanas are attired in skins. I will defeat them and bring all of them under my subjugation. There is no one in the three worlds, human or divine, who can dislodge me from my kingdom. Therefore, I am superior to brahmanas. If the brahmanas are foremost in the world, today, I will make kshatriyas superior to them. There is no one who can withstand my strength in battle.’ Hearing Arjuna’s words, the invisible voice was frightened. At this, Vayu spoke from the firmament. ‘Cast aside these wicked sentiments and bow down to brahmanas. If you commit this sin, your kingdom will be agitated. O lord of the earth! Otherwise, the brahmanas will pacify you. Those immensely strong ones will drive you away from your kingdom or destroy your enterprise.’ The king asked, ‘Who are you?’ The windgod replied, ‘I am Vayu. I am a messenger of the gods. I am telling you what is beneficial for you.’ Arjuna asked, ‘I can see that you have now exhibited your devotion and attachment towards brahmanas. Among all the creatures on earth, tell me about the brahmanas. Tell me. Is a supreme brahmana Vayu’s equal? Tell me. Is he equal to the water, the sun or the firmament?’”

Chapter 1819(138)

“Vayu said, ‘O foolish person! Listen to the qualities associated with the great-souled brahmanas. O king! The brahmanas are superior to the ones you have spoken about. The earth challenged King Anga and lost her essence in the ground. She was stupefied by the brahmana Kashyapa and faced destruction. O king! The brahmanas are always indestructible, on earth and in heaven. In ancient times, the one from the Angiras lineage himself used his energy to drink up the waters. Having drunk up the waters, as if they were milk, the great ascetic wasn’t satisfied. O king! He covered up the giant ocean with land everywhere. When the one from the Angiras lineage was angry with me, I had to flee from the earth for a long period of time and reside in the agnihotra sacrifice. When Purandara desired Ahalya, he was cursed by the illustrious Goutama. It was only for the sake of dharma that greater injury was not done to him. O king! The ocean became full of salty water. O lord! That salinity was due to the curse of brahmanas. Agni¹³⁸⁶ is golden in complexion, without any smoke and the flames rise upwards together. However, when cursed by an angry Angiras, all these qualities vanished. Behold the Maruts. They were crushed when they laughed at the great ocean. Those who wear gold¹³⁸⁷ have always been cursed by brahmanas. O lord of men! You are not their equal. Know brahmanas to be superior, even when these lords, the brahmanas, are still inside wombs. The great kingdom of Dandaka was destroyed by a brahmana. The great kshatriya named Talajangha was destroyed by Ourva alone. You have obtained your extensive kingdom, strength, dharma and learning because of the favours of Dattatreya and these are extremely difficult to obtain. O Arjuna! Why do you always offer oblations to Agni? He is nothing but a brahmana. He is the one who bears the oblations of all the worlds. Don’t you

know this? A brahmana is foremost. He is the protector of beings. He is the creator of the world of the living. Despite knowing this, why are you confused? Prajapati Brahma is unmanifest.¹³⁸⁸ He is powerful and without decay. He created everything in this universe, mobile and immobile. Some learned people say that Brahma was born from an egg. When that original egg cracked, mountains, directions, water, earth and heaven were created. No one saw that happen. How could he have been born from that darkness? The sacred texts also say that space was the egg from which the grandfather was generated. “Tell me. Since there was nothing then, where was he stationed then?” O king! “The lord was nothing but pervasive energy and is said to be Ahamkara. There was no egg. But Brahma, the creator of the worlds, was that energy.”¹³⁸⁹

‘Bhishma continued, “Having been thus addressed, he was silent and Vayu spoke again.”’

Chapter 1820(139)

““Vayu said, ‘O king! In ancient times, there was a king named Anga. He wished to give away this entire earth as dakshina to brahmanas. The earth began to think. “I am Brahma’s daughter and I properly sustain all the creatures. The king has obtained me as a boon. Why does he desire to give me away to brahmanas? I will abandon my essence in the ground and repair before Brahma’s feet. Let this kingdom and its king face destruction.”’ Kashyapa saw the earth wandering around. He controlled himself, freed himself from his body and entered the ground. Thus penetrated, it became full of grass and herbs in every way. O king! All fear was removed from the ground and it was pervaded by supreme dharma. O king! Kashyapa, great and attentive in his vows, remained inside the ground for thirty thousand divine years. O great king! After this, the earth arrived and bowed down before Kashyapa. She became the daughter of the great-souled Kashyapa. O king! This was the nature of the brahmana Kashyapa. Tell me about another one, or a kshatriya, who is superior to Kashyapa.”’

‘Bhishma continued, “The king was silent and Pavana¹³⁹⁰ spoke again. ‘O king! Hear about Utathya, born in the lineage of Angiras. Soma had a daughter named Bhadra and she was held to be supremely beautiful. Soma saw that Utathya would be an unmatched husband for her. For this purpose, the immensely fortunate and illustrious lady tormented herself through extremely fierce austerities. She wished to obtain the immensely fortunate Utathya as a husband. He¹³⁹¹ invited Utathya and gave away the illustrious one as a wife and he received her in the proper way, with a lot of dakshina. The handsome Varuna had desired her earlier. He arrived in the forest and when she was bathing in the Yamuna, stole her. Abducting her, the lord of the waters took her away to his own city, which was extremely wonderful and had six hundred thousand lakes. There was nothing that was more beautiful or better than that city. There were palaces with divine apsaras and all the beautiful objects of pleasure. O king! The god, the lord of the waters, sported with her there. Utathya got to know about the way his wife was being oppressed. He heard everything from Narada. Utathya spoke to Narada. “Go and speak harsh words to Varuna. Report my words that he should release my wife. Why has he abducted her? He is a protector of the worlds and their people. He is not a destroyer of the worlds. Soma gave me this wife and he has abducted her.” Addressed in these words, Narada went to the lord of the waters and told him, “Release Utathya’s wife. That is what Utathya has asked me to tell you.” However, Varuna told him, “I love this wife a great deal and I am unwilling to let her go.” Thus addressed by Varuna, Narada returned to the sage alone. Distressed, he spoke these words to Utathya. “O great sage! Varuna seized me by the throat and threw me out. He did not give me your wife. Do what you must.” Hearing Narada’s words, the one from the Angiras lineage blazed in rage. Using his energy, the extremely great ascetic stupefied the waters and drunk them up. When all the waters were drunk up, the lord of the waters and his well-wishers began to be destroyed. But he still did not release her. Enraged, Utathya, supreme among brahmanas, spoke to the earth. “O fortunate one! There are six hundred thousand lakes. Instead, show me land there.” At this, the ocean retreated and a creek¹³⁹² was created there. The supreme among brahmanas told the rivers that flowed through the region, “O Sarasvati! O timid one! Become invisible here. Instead, go towards the desert. O beautiful one! Abandon this region and make it inauspicious from now on.” When the region was thus destroyed, the lord of the waters took the fortunate lady and returned the wife to the one born in the Angiras lineage. Having obtained his wife back, Utathya was happy. O Haihaya! He released Varuna from his miserable plight. After having got his wife back, the one who

knew about dharma, Utathya, the extremely energetic one, spoke to Varuna. O lord of men! Listen to what he said. “O lord of the waters! You suffered these hardships because of my austerities.” Having said this, he took his wife and returned to his own house. O king! Utathya, bull among brahmanas, was like this. I have told you about him. Tell me about a kshatriya who is superior to Utathya.’”

Chapter 1821(140)

‘Bhishma said, “Thus addressed, he was silent and Vayu spoke again. ‘O king! Listen to the greatness of the brahmana Agastya. Once, defeated by the asuras, the gods lost all their enthusiasm. All their sacrifices were appropriated and also the svadha that was due to the ancestors. O bull among the Haihaya lineage! The danavas stopped rites performed by men. We have heard that the gods were dislodged from their prosperity and began to wander around on earth. O king! While doing this, they saw Agastya. He was full of energy and was engaged in great vows. He blazed like the sun in his radiance. On seeing him, surrounded by his fame, the gods worshipped him. O lord of men! At that time, they spoke these words to the great-souled one. “We have been shattered by the danavas in the battle. We have been dislodged from our prosperity. Therefore, we are suffering from great fear. O bull among sages! Save us.” Thus addressed by the gods, Agastya became angry. The energetic one blazed, like the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The danavas were burnt down by the net of his flaming rays. O great king! In thousands, they fell down from the firmament. The daityas were burnt down by Agastya’s energy. They abandoned both the worlds¹³⁹³ and sought refuge in the inauspicious southern direction. At that time, Bali was performing a horse sacrifice in the nether regions of the earth. He and the other great asuras who were in the bowels of the earth were saved and were not burnt down. The gods again got the worlds back, tranquil and without any dust. The gods said, “Slay the asuras who are hidden inside the earth.” O king! Addressed by the gods, he replied, “I am capable of using my austerities to burn down those who are inside the earth. However, if I burn them down, my austerities will be diminished.” Nevertheless, the illustrious one used his own energy to burn down the danavas. O king! Thus did Agastya, cleansed in soul, use his austerities. O unblemished one! I have told you about Agastya’s powers. I have spoken about him to you. Tell me is there is a kshatriya superior to him.’ Thus addressed, he was silent.

“Vayu spoke again. ‘O king! Listen to the great deeds performed by the illustrious Vasishtha. Once, the gods performed a sacrifice near Lake Manasa. Because of Vasishtha’s learning, they mentally approached him and made him the officiating priest. They were anxious about initiating themselves into that sacrifice and became lean in the process. There were danavas named Khalinas, with complexions like those of mountains, and they wanted to slay the gods. However, they were repeatedly slain, from a distance. But they had been granted a boon by Brahma. Therefore, as soon as they were killed, they immersed themselves in the waters of the lake and came back to life again. They seized extremely terrible mountains and used trees as clubs. With these, they arose from the waters and agitated them so much that it extended for hundreds of yojanas. They attacked the tens of thousands of gods. Oppressed by them, the gods sought refuge with Vasava. However, Shakra was also afflicted and sought refuge with Vasishtha. The illustrious rishi, Vasishtha, granted them freedom from fear. The sage wasn’t cruel. But he also knew about their misery. Almost carelessly, he used his own energy to burn down all the Khalinas. The river Ganga had left for Kailasa. But the greatly ascetic one brought the divine river to the lake and she penetrated the waters of the lake. When the water was penetrated, the river began to flow as Sarayu. The region where the Khalinas were killed came to be known as Khalina. Thus did Vasishtha protect Indra and the residents of heaven. Despite the supreme boon they had received from Brahma, the daityas were killed by the great-souled one. O unblemished one! I have thus spoken to you about Vasishtha’s deeds. I have told you about them. Tell me if there is a kshatriya who is superior to Vasishtha.’”

Chapter 1822(141)

‘**B**hishma said, “Thus addressed, Arjuna was silent and Vayu spoke again. ‘O best among the Haihaya lineage! Listen to the deeds of the extremely great-souled Atri. Once upon a time, there was a terrible battle between the gods and the danavas. Svarbhanu¹³⁹⁴ pierced the sun and the moon with his arrows. O tiger among kings! Devoured by darkness, the gods were slain by the danavas, together with the sacrificial animals. Struck by the asuras, the residents of heaven began to lose their lives. They saw the brahmana Atri performing austerities in a great forest. He had conquered his senses and all his rage had been pacified. The gods spoke to him. “Both the moon and the sun have been struck by the arrows of the asuras. We are being killed and have been enveloped by the enemies. O lord! We cannot find peace and there is nothing to save us from our fear.” He asked, “How can I save you?” They said, “You become the moon. You become the sun, the dispeller of darkness. Become the one who slays these bandits.” Thus addressed, Atri became the sun and the moon. He showed his amiable form as the moon and he also showed himself as the sun. O king! Seeing that the sun and the moon had lost their radiance, in that battle, Atri used the power of his austerities to display himself in those forms. The universe was covered in darkness, but he illuminated everything again. With his own energy, he destroyed the large numbers of enemies of the gods. The gods saw that the giant asuras were being burnt down by Atri. Protected by Atri, they used their valour to slay their enemies. In his form as the sun, he saved the gods and slew the asuras. Using his supreme energy, Atri became the moon. The sage, who meditated and was attired in skins, had no second. He subsisted on fruits. O rajarshi! But behold the deeds Atri performed. In detail, I have spoken to you about the deeds of the extremely great-souled Atri. I have told you. You tell me if there is a kshatriya who is superior to Atri. O king! Listen to the great deeds that the great-souled Chyavana performed. Having given his promise to the Ashvins, Chyavana spoke to the chastiser of Paka and to all the other gods and said, “Give the Ashvins a share of the soma.” Indra replied, “We have cast them away.¹³⁹⁵ How can we give them soma? They are not revered as gods. Therefore, we cannot do what you have asked us to. O one who is great in vows! We do not desire to drink soma with the Ashvins. Let anyone else who desires to drink with them do so. We are not interested in drinking with them.” Chyavana said, “O slayer of Bala! You should not act against the words that I have spoken. Forced by me, you will drink soma with them at a sacrifice.” With the Ashvins and for their benefit, Chyavana started a rite and as a result of the mantras, sura manifested itself. On seeing that he had started the rite, Indra became senseless with rage. He raised a huge mountain and attacked Chyavana. With intolerance in his eyes, he also attacked the illustrious one with his vajra. Chyavana was full of austerities. On seeing that he was advancing, he sprinkled some water on him, the vajra and the mountain and thereby paralysed him. The great sage also created an extremely terrible enemy for Indra. He used mantras to summon Mada, with a gaping mouth. He possessed one thousand teeth that extended for one hundred yojanas. His extremely terrible jaws extended for two hundred yojanas. One of the jaws rested on earth, while the other one rose up and touched heaven. All the gods, together with Vasava, were stuck at the base of his tongue. They were like fish in the great ocean, in the process of being devoured by a whale. Because of the invocation of the mantras, the gods entered Mada’s mouth. With Shakra, all of them said, “We bow down before brahmanas. Without any anxiety, we will drink soma with the Ashvins.” Shakra bowed down before Chyavana. Thus did Chyavana ensure that the Ashvins would drink soma. The sage withdrew Mada and instructed him about the tasks that he should henceforth do.¹³⁹⁶ The valiant one was instructed to reside in dice, hunting, liquor and women. O king! There is no doubt that men confront destruction because of these sins. Therefore, men must always avoid them from a distance. O king! I have thus recounted to you Chyavana’s deeds. I have told you about this. Tell me if there is a kshatriya superior to Chyavana.’”

Chapter 1823(142)

‘**B**hishma said, “Arjuna was silent and the wind god spoke again. ‘O lord of men! Listen to what that foremost of brahmanas did. Indra and all the other residents of heaven were engulfed in Mada’s mouth. At that time, Chyavana took the earth away from them. Since both the worlds had been taken away from them, the gods were distressed. Afflicted with grief, they sought refuge with the great-souled Brahma.’

“The gods said, ‘O one who is worshipped by the worlds! We have been seized by Mada’s mouth. O lord! Chyavana has seized the earth and the Kapas¹³⁹⁷ have taken over heaven.’

“Brahma replied, ‘O residents of heaven! With Indra, quickly go and seek refuge with the brahmanas. With their favours, you will obtain back the worlds, as in earlier times.’

“The wind god continued, ‘They went and sought refuge. However, the brahmanas asked, “Whom will we subjugate?” They told the brahmanas, “Defeat the Kapas.” However, the brahmanas responded that they could only vanquish those who were on earth. Nevertheless, the brahmanas initiated rites to destroy the Kapas. Hearing this, the Kapas sent a messenger named Dhani to the brahmanas. Dhani conveyed the words of the Kapas to the brahmanas. “All of the Kapas are exactly like you. Why have you embarked on this task? All of them are knowledgeable about the Vedas. All of them are wise. All of them observe the rites and the sacrifices. All of them follow the vows of truth. All of them are equal to the maharshis. Shri¹³⁹⁸ roams happily amidst them and they also sustain Shri. They do not pointlessly seek intercourse with the wives of others. They do not pointlessly eat meat. They offer oblations into the blazing fire. They follow the words of their preceptors. All of them are restrained in their souls. They give children their shares. They travel on vehicles together.¹³⁹⁹ They do not have intercourse during the menstrual period. They do not eat when others are unfed. They do not sleep during the day. The Kapas possess these and many other qualities. Why do you wish to conquer them? Refrain. It will be better for you to withdraw.” The brahmanas replied, “We will defeat the Kapas. We have promised the gods this. Therefore, the Kapas deserve to be slain by us. O Dhani! Return to where you came from.” Dhani went and told the Kapas that the brahmanas wouldn’t do what was agreeable to them. Therefore, all the Kapas seized weapons and attacked the brahmanas. The brahmanas saw that all the Kapas were advancing, with upraised standards. They released blazing fire at the Kapas, designed to destroy their lives. The brahmanas released those eternal fires, meant to devour the Kapas. O lord of men! They blazed in the firmament, like clouds. Because of this energy, the energy and valour of the gods increased. They praised the brahmanas and the illustrious Brahma. They got their immortality back and were worshipped in the three worlds.”

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing Vayu’s words, Arjuna worshipped him and replied. O mighty-armed one! O lord of men! Hear what he said. ‘O lord! In every way, I always remain alive for the sake of brahmanas. I always bow down before Brahma and brahmanas. I have obtained this fame through Dattatreya’s favours. That is the reason I have been able to perform supreme deeds in this world and have observed great dharma. O wind god! I have heard the truth about the deeds of the brahmanas. You have told me everything and I have listened attentively.’ Vayu replied, ‘Use your senses and the dharma of kshatriyas to protect brahmanas. There is a terrible danger to you from the Bhṛigu lineage.¹⁴⁰⁰ But that will occur in the distant future.’”

Chapter 1824(143)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “O king! You always worship brahmanas who are rigid in their vows. O lord of men! What do you see as the outcome of those acts of revering them? O one who is great in vows! What do you see as the prosperity obtained from worshipping brahmanas? O mighty-armed one! Tell me everything about worshipping them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “This Keshava, extremely intelligent, will tell you everything about the prosperity obtained from worshipping brahmanas and about the prosperity that has been seen from observing great vows. My strength, hearing, speech, mind, years and knowledge are no longer as pure as they used to be. I do not think that there is a great deal of time left for me to give up my body. The sun seems to move very slowly. The dharma for brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas, as stated in the great Puranas, and the rods of chastisement that have been laid down in the Puranas, have been stated by me. O Partha! Let Krishna instruct you about what remains. I know the truth about Krishna and about his ancient strength. O Indra among Kouravas! Keshava is immeasurable in his soul. He will speak to you about doubts on dharma. Krishna created the earth, the sky and heaven. Terrible in his strength, he is the ancient boar. The firmament, heaven, the four directions and the four sub-directions are subservient to him. Everything in this ancient universe was created by him and originates in him. He is without a sense of owner-

ship. A lotus was generated from his navel and the infinitely energetic Svayambhu emerged from that. O Partha! It is he who dispelled that terrible darkness which pervaded the primeval ocean. He existed in the form of all the dharma in krita yuga. In treta yuga, he existed in the form of knowledge. O Partha! In dvapara yuga, Krishna exists in the form of strength. In kali yuga, he will be on earth in the form of adharma. He is the god who slew the daityas earlier. He is the ancient god who became an emperor. He is the creator of beings. He is the creator of future beings. He is the protector of the world and the universe. When dharma suffers, Krishna is born among gods and men. Cleansed in his soul and based on dharma, he establishes the superior and the inferior worlds. Sparing those who should be spared, he slays the asuras. O Partha! He is good and bad deeds and their reason. The god does what needs to be done. He is also what will be done. Again, know that he is Soma and Shakra. He is Vishvakarma. He is the one who has the universe as his form. He brings prosperity to the universe. He is the one who destroys the universe. He wields the trident. He is covered in blood. He is fierce. He is known by his deeds and everyone praises him. The gandharvas, the apsaras and hundreds of gods always worship him. The rakshasas bear him. He is the bringer of prosperity. He alone is the victorious one. He is honoured and praised in the sacrifices. He is praised in the *rathantara* hymns of the Sama Veda. The brahmanas praise him in mantras about the brahman. It is to him that the officiating priests offer oblations. He is the ancient Brahma, shrouded in mystery. O foremost among the Bharatas! He is seen in the great sacrifices. He is the one who is fierce in deeds, the savior of cattle.¹⁴⁰¹ He is the one who agitates the daityas and the danavas and those who are devoted to them. He is the one to whom the many kinds of food are given. He is the one to whom the horses and the mounts are rendered. He is the one who protects earth and heaven. Everything is under the eternal one's subjugation. He is the ancient one whose seed fell into the pot. The rishi Vasishtha is said to have originated from that. He is the wind god. He is the powerful Ashvins. He is the rays of the sun. He is the first god. All the asuras were defeated by him. In three steps, he conquered them with his valour.¹⁴⁰² He exists in gods, men and the ancestors. Those who know about sacrifices speak of him as abundance. He is the one who rises in the morning and divides time. He is the two ayanas of uttarayana and dakshinayana. His rays move upwards, downwards and diagonally and heat the earth. He is the one who is praised by brahmanas who know about the Vedas. It is from him that the sun obtains its radiance. From one month to another month, he is the one who is sanctified in sacrifices. Those who know about the Vedas recite his name at sacrifices. He is like a single wheel with three naves, borne by seven horses in the three worlds.¹⁴⁰³ He is immensely energetic. He goes everywhere. He is the one who is supremely powerful. Krishna alone holds up the worlds. He is the food. He is the devourer. He is the patient one. O Partha! Krishna is always the doer. Once, in the form of deadwood, the great-souled lord satisfied the fire god¹⁴⁰⁴ in Khandava. He vanquished the rakshasas and those who were devoted to them. He goes everywhere. He is all the fires to whom libations are offered. He is the single horse from whom all the white horses originated. He is the single horse which led to all the horses being created. His chariot has three seats for the driver and three wheels. It has three kinds of motion and four horses.¹⁴⁰⁵ He is the refuge of the five elements. The earth, the firmament and heaven are in him, though he is without a sense of ownership. Hrishiksha, the infinitely resplendent one, as energetic as the fire, created these beautiful mountains. The wielder of the vajra crossed the waters in an attempt to cause him violence and strike him, but was repulsed. The great Indra praises him in great sacrifices. The brahmanas speak about the ancient one in thousands of hymns from the Rig Veda. No one other than him was capable of hosting the immensely energetic Durvasa in his house. He is spoken of as the single and ancient rishi. He is immersed in adhyatma and he is the creator of the universe. He is the original god who makes the Vedas known. He is the one who follows the ancient rituals. He is Vishvakarma. All the objects of desire, everything in the Vedas and all the fruits desired in the world flow from him. He is the white light in all the worlds. He is the three guardians of the worlds in the three worlds. He is the three fires. He is the three kinds of speech.¹⁴⁰⁶ Devaki's son is all the gods together. He is the year. He is the seasons. He is the fortnights. He is day. He is night. He is *kala* and *kashtha*. He is *matra*, *muhurta*, *lava* and *kshana*.¹⁴⁰⁷ Vishvakarma is in all of these. He is the moon and the sun. He is the planets, the nakshatras and the stars. He is everything that can be seen on the night of the full moon. O Partha! He is the conjunction of the nakshatras and the seasons. All of these are created out of Vishvakarma. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the large number of Maruts, Prajapati, Aditi, the mother of the gods and the saptarshis—all of them are in Krishna. He becomes the wind and agitates the universe. He becomes the fire and burns the universe. His form is the universe.

He becomes water and submerges everything. He becomes Brahma and creates the large numbers in the universe. He learns everything that is in the Vedas. But he is the Vedas. He follows the ordinances. But he is the ordinances. He is dharma, the Vedas and strength. Know that Keshava is everything mobile and immobile. He manifests himself as supreme light. He is the radiance that is in front of us. In his form as the universe, he illuminates everything. From his own self, he first created water and then everything else in the universe. He is the origin of the wonderful and varied seasons. He is the clouds and lightning and everything else. He is Airavata. Everything mobile and immobile is Krishna. He is famous in the universe. Know him to be Vishnu. He is the abode of the universe. He is devoid of qualities. He is Vasudeva. As life in creatures, he is Samkarshana and is worshipped. He is Pradyumna. He is Aniruddha in his fourth form.¹⁴⁰⁸ From his own self, the great-souled one manifested himself to us in these forms. Desiring to create this universe with its five kinds of beings,¹⁴⁰⁹ he divided himself into five elements. O Partha! He thus created earth, wind, space, light and water. He created mobile and immobile objects and the four kinds of beings.¹⁴¹⁰ He created the earth and sowed the five kinds of seed.¹⁴¹¹ He created the firmament, so that it could shower down on earth. O king! He created the universe. It is he who created all creatures from his own self. The lord of creatures always desires to create and brought together everything—the gods, the asuras, men, the worlds, the rishis, the ancestors and the subjects. Know that everything good and bad, mobile and immobile—flows from Vishvaksena. Everything that exists and everything that will exist—know that everything flows from Keshava. When it is time for creatures to die and the time of destruction presents itself, it is Krishna who is the eternal and direct conveyor of dharma. Know that every creature in the universe and everything else originates in Vishvaksena. Everything that is praised in this world, everything auspicious, everything good and bad is Keshava, who is himself inconceivable. There is no reason to hold an opposite view. Keshava is like this. He is Svayambhu. He is the supreme and undecaying Narayana. He is the beginning and the end of all creatures and he is also their middle. The universe vests in him.”

Chapter 1825(144)

‘Yudhishtira said, “O Madhusudana! Tell us about the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas. Our grandfather knows you. And you know about the purport of everything.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hear attentively to the truth about brahmanas. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! I will speak to you about their qualities. Once, Pradyumna¹⁴¹² was enraged by some brahmanas and asked, ‘O Madhusudana! What are the fruits associated with worshipping brahmanas? In this world and in the world hereafter, how do they get that sovereignty? O one who deserves honours! What are the fruits from constantly worshipping brahmanas? O father! Tell me everything about this. In this connection, I have a great doubt.’ I was addressed in these words by Pradyumna and replied. O great king! Listen attentively to what I said. ‘O Rukmini’s son! Listen to the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas. They are Somarajas.¹⁴¹³ They are the lords of happiness and unhappiness and prosperity, in this world and in the next. O Rukmini’s son! O son! Brahmanas are the best of friends. There is no need to think about this. In this world, the brahmanas are foremost in valour, lifespans, deeds, fame and strength. Among all those who roam around in the world, brahmanas are the foremost. O son! How can one disrespect those who are like lords? O mighty-armed one! You should not display any rage towards brahmanas. In this world and in the next world, brahmanas are great beings. If they are angry, they can burn down the entire universe and this can be instantly seen. They are capable of creating worlds and those who roam around in those worlds. They possess knowledge and energy. Why should one not treat them properly? O son! A brahmana resided in my house and his complexion was tawny. He was dressed in rags and he had a staff made out of a bilva tree. His hair and nails were long. He was a tall man and there was no one taller than him on earth. He wandered around the worlds of gods and men, singing a chant at public squares and assemblies. “Who will honour the brahmana Durvasa by inviting him to reside in his house? Hearing my words, who will dare to grant me refuge? If someone accepts me as a guest, he must not enrage me.” Since no one invited him, I invited him to come and live with me. On some days, he would eat food that could be eaten by many thousands of people alone. Some days, he would eat very little. Some days, he would go out of the house and not return. He would sud-

denly laugh and suddenly cry. At that time, there was no one on earth who was his equal in rage. On one occasion, he entered his living quarters and burnt down the beds, the spreads and the ornamented maidens who were there to serve him. Having done this, he left. On another occasion, the sage, rigid in his vows, told me, “O Krishna! I wish to eat some payasam. Fetch it quickly.” I always got to know what he had in mind beforehand. Therefore, I had instructed all the people in the house to keep every kind of food and drink ready. I thus brought him the food he wanted. Having known in advance, I treated him with every honour. I brought some flaming hot payasam and offered it to him. Having quickly eaten it, he spoke these words to me. “Swiftly smear this payasam on your limbs.” Without any hesitation, I did what he had asked me to. I smeared my body and my head with what was left. At that time, he saw that your mother, the one with the beautiful face, was standing nearby. Smiling, he smeared the payasam on her too. The sage suddenly yoked her, with payasam smeared all over her limbs, to his chariot and left my house. The intelligent brahmana blazed, with a complexion like that of the fire. While I looked on, he yoked the young Rukmini like a beast of burden to his chariot and goaded her. Despite this, I did not exhibit the least bit of sorrow or jealousy. He went out, along a large royal road. On witnessing this great wonder, some from the Dasharha lineage were overcome by rage. They spoke to each other and conversed among themselves. “Let only brahmanas be born. Let no other varnas be born. Which other man could have used his chariot in this way and remained alive? The venom from a virulent serpent is the sharpest among all kinds of poison. But this is sharper than that poison. When one is burnt by the poison of a brahmana, no physician exists.” When the unassailable one advanced in this way, Rukmini tottered and fell down on the road. Intolerant, the handsome one quickly goaded her. Extremely angry, the brahmana descended from the chariot. He advanced along the path on foot and headed towards the southern direction. With payasam smeared all over our limbs, we followed that rushing supreme among brahmanas along the path. We said, “O illustrious one! Be pacified.” The energetic brahmana looked towards me and replied, “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Using your nature, you have conquered anger. O one who is excellent in vows! I do not see any crime in you. O Govinda! Ask for the boon that you desire. O son!¹⁴¹⁴ I am pleased with you. Behold the prosperity I can confer. As long as men have a liking for food, they will exhibit the same liking towards you, as they do towards their food. As long as anything auspicious remains in the worlds, your fame will also remain. You will obtain supremacy in the three worlds. O Janardana! You will be extremely loved in the worlds. O Janardana! Each of your objects that have been shattered, burnt or destroyed, will be restored, in a better form than earlier. O Madhusudana! O Achyuta! Because you have smeared your body, as long as you wish, you will not suffer any fear from death. O son! Why did you not smear the soles of your feet too? Acting in that way, you have not done something that is agreeable to me.” Pleased with me, he spoke to me in that way. When he said this, I myself saw that my body had become radiant and handsome. Delighted, he told Rukmini, “O beautiful one! You will be supreme among women in fame and deeds. You will be supreme in the worlds. You will not suffer from old age or disease. You will not lose your complexion. With an auspicious fragrance emanating from your body, you will be seen to be worshipping Krishna. Keshava will have sixteen thousand wives. But you will be foremost among them and will obtain the worlds with Keshava.” Having said this to your mother, he again addressed me. “O Keshava! May your intelligence always be directed in this way, towards brahmanas.” The extremely energetic Durvasa, blazing like the fire, then departed. O son! Having said this, he vanished. Having instructed me about this radiant vow, he disappeared. O lord! I have done everything that the brahmana told me about. O son! With your mother, I have observed that vow. Cheerful in our souls, we entered the house. O son! When we entered our house, we found that everything had become new, all that had been destroyed or burnt down by the brahmana. Seeing that everything had become new and firm, I was overcome by great wonder. O Rukmini’s son! I mentally worshipped the brahmana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When Rukmini’s son asked me, I thus told him everything about the greatness of that foremost among brahmanas. You should always worship those immensely fortunate and eloquent ones with gifts. In this way, through the favours of brahmanas, I obtained prosperity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything that Bhishma has said about me is true.”

‘Yudhishtira said, “O Madhusudana! You should explain to me the vijnana you obtained through Durvasa’s favour. O supreme among intelligent ones! I wish to know the truth about the names of that immensely fortunate and great-souled one.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “After bowing down to Kapardin,¹⁴¹⁵ I will recount them to you. O great king! It is through this that I obtained what is beneficial. It is through this that I obtained fame. O lord of the earth! When I arise in the morning, I control myself, join my hands in salutation and recite the shatarudriya.¹⁴¹⁶ Listen attentively to this. At the end of his austerities, the great ascetic, Prajapati, created him.¹⁴¹⁷ O son! It is Shankara who created all the subjects, mobile and immobile. O lord of the earth! There is no other being who is superior to Mahadeva. He is the creator of all the beings in the three worlds. No one is capable of standing before that great-souled one. There is no being who is his equal in the three worlds. When he is enraged in battle, his scent makes the enemies tremble, lose their senses and fall down. Those that remain are slain. His fierce roars are like the thunder of the clouds. On hearing these in a battle, even the hearts of the gods are shattered. When the wielder of the Pinaka is angry, he assumes a terrible form. On seeing this wrathful visage, the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas and the serpents in the worlds can find no peace, not even when they seek shelter inside caves. Prajapati Daksha wished to perform a sacrifice. When that sacrifice was spread out, the fearless Bhava¹⁴¹⁸ roared loudly. He angrily shot an arrow from his bow and struck that sacrifice. There was no peace or tranquility then and the gods were filled with sorrow. Enraged, Maheshvara sought to violently strike the sacrifice. O Partha! All the worlds were anxious at the sound of his bowstring slapping against his palm. The gods and the asuras were incapacitated and miserable. The oceans were agitated and the earth began to tremble. The mountains started to move and the firmament was shattered. The worlds were enveloped in a blinding darkness and nothing could be seen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The radiance of the sun and all the stellar bodies was destroyed. Everyone was extremely terrified. Desiring the welfare of all the creatures and of their own selves, the rishis pronounced benedictions of peace. The valorous Rudra angrily rushed towards the gods. In rage, he struck Bhaga and tore out his eyes. He then attacked the handsome Pushan. As he ate the sacrificial cake, he struck down his¹⁴¹⁹ teeth. Trembling with fear, the gods bowed down before Shankara. Rudra again affixed an extremely sharp and blazing arrow. Witnessing Rudra’s valour, the gods and the rishis were terrified. The supreme among the gods sought Sharva’s¹⁴²⁰ favours. The gods joined their hands in salutation and meditated on the *shatarudriya* mantra. Praised by the thirty gods, Maheshvara was pacified. O king! Scared, the thirty gods sought refuge with me and earmarked a special share in the sacrificial offerings for Rudra. Because of his great anger, the sacrifice had been divided into many parts and these were brought together again. Everything that had been destroyed was restored.

“In ancient times, the valiant asuras had three cities in the firmament and these were made out of iron, silver and gold. Despite using all his weapons, Maghavan was incapable of shattering them. Afflicted, all the immortals sought refuge with Rudra. All the assembled gods spoke to the great-souled one. ‘O Rudra! Those animals are terrible in all their acts. O one who deserves honours! To save the worlds, slay the daityas and destroy their cities.’ He agreed. Having agreed, he made Vishnu his supreme arrow. He made Agni the shaft of the arrow and Vaivasvata Yama the tuft. He made the Vedas his bow and the supreme Savitri the bowstring. He yoked all the gods to his supreme chariot. He shattered them with an arrow that had three joints and three heads. That arrow was like the sun in its complexion. It was like the fire of destruction in its energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The asuras and their cities were burnt down by Rudra.

“Later, on seeing Panchashikha¹⁴²¹ lying down on her lap in the form of a child, Uma asked, ‘Who are you?’ Shakra was jealous¹⁴²² and struck him with the vajra. However, he paralysed the arm, which was like a club, with the hand still holding the vajra. The gods did not understand that this was the lord of the universe. With the Prajapatis, all of them were repeatedly confused about the lord’s nature. The illustrious and infinitely energetic Brahma meditated and got to know that this was the foremost one. He worshipped Uma and her consort. The gods also sought the favours of Uma and Rudra. The arm of Bala’s slayer was restored to its normal state.

“He became a valiant brahmana named Durvasa. He spent a long period of time in my house in Dvaravati. While residing in my house, he tried to perform many injurious acts. Though difficult to tolerate, I ignored them because of my generosity.¹⁴²³ He is Indra of the gods. He is Vayu. He is the Ashvins. He is lightning. He is the moon. He is Ishana. He is the sun. He is Varuna. He is time. He is the destroyer. He is death. He is darkness. He is

night. He is day. He is the months. He is the fortnights. He is the seasons. He is the sandhyas. He is the years. He is the creator. He is the ordainer. He is Vishvakarma. He is the one who knows everything. He is the nakshatras. He is the directions. He is the sub-directions. He is the planets. The universe is his form. His soul cannot be measured. The illustrious one is infinitely resplendent. He is one. He is two. He is also many. He is one hundred. He is one thousand. He is also hundreds of thousands. This is the nature of Mahadeva, the illustrious one. Even if I try for one hundred years, I am incapable of speaking about his qualities.”

Chapter 1827(146)

‘Vasudeva said, “O Yudhishtira! O mighty-armed one! V Listen to me. I will recite the names of the immensely fortunate and great-souled Rudra, who has many forms. He is spoken of as Agni, Mahadeva, Sthanu, Maheshvara, Ekaksha,¹⁴²⁴ Tryambaka,¹⁴²⁵ Vishvarupa and Shiva. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas say that the god has two forms—one is terrible and the other is auspicious. Those forms are again divided into many others. The form that is fierce and terrible is equated with fire, lightning and the sun. The form that is auspicious and benign is equated with dharma, water and the moon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Half of his body is also said to be the fire, while the half that is auspicious is said to follow brahmacharya. The fiercest of his forms is the one which destroys the universe and is said to be the great lord or Maheshvara. He burns down. He is sharp. He is fierce. He is powerful. Since he subsists on flesh, blood and marrow, he is said to be Rudra.¹⁴²⁶ He is great among all the gods and his dominion is vast. Since he saves the great universe, he is known to be Mahadeva.¹⁴²⁷ In everything that he does, in every way, he seeks to ensure what is auspicious for men. That is the reason he is known as Shiva.¹⁴²⁸ Remaining established above, he burns everything down. He is established in one place for the origins of life. He is always immobile in the form of a lingam. That is the reason he is spoken of as Sthanu.¹⁴²⁹ He has many different kinds of forms. He is the past, the present and the future. He is immobile and mobile. That is the reason he is said to be Bahurupa.¹⁴³⁰ He is said to be Dhurjati because he has the form of smoke.¹⁴³¹ The Vishvadevas are in him. That is the reason he is said to be Vishvarupa. He possesses one thousand eyes. He possesses ten thousand eyes. He has eyes in every direction. His energy and power flow through his eyes. He destroys through his eyes. He nourishes creatures and also sports with them in every way. Since he is their lord, he is said to be Pashupati.¹⁴³² He is established in the form of a lingam and always practises brahmacharya. Since he ensures greatness in the worlds, he is known as Maheshvara. A great-souled person should worship his image and his lingam. A person who worships the lingam always obtains great prosperity. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras always worship the lingam, which is stationed, facing upwards. When worshipped, the person who provides delight is Maheshvara. He is affectionate towards his devotees. Cheerful in his soul, he grants happiness to his devotees. This god always resides in cremation grounds. People who worship him there obtain the regions meant for heroes. In the bodies of creatures which face hardship, he exists in the form of death. In the form of the breath of life in the bodies of embodied beings, he exists as prana and apana. He has many terrible and blazing forms. These are also worshipped in the worlds and are known to learned brahmanas and the gods. He has many other names and meanings that are spoken about in the Vedas, based on his greatness, powers and deeds. Learned brahmanas recite the supreme shatarudriya from the Vedas. The great-souled Vyasa articulated it thereafter. He is said to be the great one who has provided all the worlds and the universe. That is the reason brahmanas and other rishis speak of him as the first being. He is first among the gods and Agni was generated from his mouth. In creating and sustaining many kinds of life, he faces various difficulties. He is the one who grants refuge. He saves the pure-souled ones who seek refuge and grants long lives, freedom from disease, prosperity, riches and all the objects of desire. He confers these on men and takes them away again. He is said to be the prosperity of Shakra and the other gods. In addition, he is always all the good and the evil that exists in the three worlds. He is said to be Ishvara because he is prosperity and all the objects of desire. Since he is the great lord of the worlds, he is known as Maheshvara. He pervades the universe in many kinds of different forms. This god’s mouth exists in the ocean in the form of the mare-headed fire.”’¹⁴³³

Chapter 1828(147)

Vaishmapayana said, ‘When Krishna, Devaki’s son, spoke these words, Yudhishtira again asked Bhishma, Shantanu’s son. “O immensely intelligent one! O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! In determining the reason behind anything, should one depend on direct perception or the sacred texts?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “It is my view that there should be no scope for doubt on this. O wise one! Listen to me. I will answer your question properly. O king! It is easy to have a doubt. It is extremely difficult to arrive at a determination. There are innumerable instances where there are doubts about what one has seen and what one has heard.¹⁴³⁴ There are those who are proud of their wisdom and are skilled in debating. They say that direct perception can be the only proof. They hold that everything that cannot be perceived is non-existent and cannot be true. However, even if they pride themselves on their learning, people who speak in this way are nothing but foolish. Or perhaps you may doubt how a single entity¹⁴³⁵ can be the cause. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is only capable of being comprehended by those who have fixed their senses and tried for a long period of time, thinking of this alone in the journey of life. No one other than such a person is capable of comprehending this single cause. This is the ultimate cause. When one reaches it, one has obtained supreme knowledge. This¹⁴³⁶ is extensive radiance that illuminates all the worlds. O king! When one reaches that truth, one reaches the ultimate cause. It cannot be grasped or bound down through words and those methods must be avoided.”’

‘Yudhishtira said, “O grandfather! Tell me about direct perception, what other people have proclaimed as leading to success, the ancient sacred texts that exist in the world and the many kinds of virtuous conduct.”’

‘Bhishma replied, “When dharma suffers through the strength of evil-souled people, it can be re-established for a short period of time by making efforts. Dharma, like grass, can cover the mouth of a well that is full of adharma. O Yudhishtira! However, listen to what happens. Those who are wicked in conduct and have discarded the sacred texts, those who are sinful and hate dharma, attack this good conduct and doubts arise because of what they say. Those who are satisfied at this state of affairs must approach virtuous people who possess the knowledge of the sacred texts and ask them. That will lead to satisfaction. Turn your back on desire and also on greed and confusion, which are followers. Approach learned people and ask them about dharma. Their conduct and tasks of sacrifices and studying never suffer. These three kinds of behaviour¹⁴³⁷ are also the foundations of dharma.”’

‘Yudhishtira asked, “My intelligence is again confused by a doubt. It is as if I cannot find a path to cross over and cannot even see the distant shore. If the Vedas, direct perception¹⁴³⁸ and conduct are the three yardsticks, they are seen to be different. If dharma is one, how can it be of three different types?”’

‘Bhishma replied “Dharma is seen to sometimes suffer because of the strength of evil-souled ones. O king! That is the reason you reflect and think that dharma is of three different types. Know that it flows as one, but can manifest itself in three different ways. That is the reason one’s intelligence thinks of it in three different forms. Truthfully follow the three different paths that have been laid down. You should never question dharma or hear about it being reviled. O best among the Bharata lineage! There should be no doubt about this. Without any hesitation, follow what I have said, like a person who is blind and dumb. O Ajatashatru!¹⁴³⁹ Non-violence, truth, lack of anger and generosity as the fourth—following these is eternal dharma. Follow your fathers and grandfathers in behaviour towards brahmanas. O mighty-armed one! These are the methods to reach the region of heaven. An ignorant man who is concerned with proof and lack of proof does not deserve to get any proof. He only generates debate. Respect brahmanas greatly, serve them and treat them well. Listen to me. All these worlds are established on them.”’

Chapter 1829(148)

‘Yudhishtira said, “Tell me about the ends obtained by those who censure dharma and those who follow it. O illustrious one! Where do they go?”’

‘Bhishma replied, “There are those whose consciousness is overwhelmed by rajas and tamas. These men hate dharma and go to hell. O great king! A man who always serves dharma and is devoted to truth and uprightness is

virtuous and enjoys heaven. Because they serve their preceptors, they are devoted to dharma. Those who serve dharma obtain the world of the gods. Whether they are men or gods, if they are devoid of greed and hatred and if they give up their lives in the pursuit of dharma, they obtain happiness. The learned say that Brahma's first son was Dharma. Those who follow dharma enjoy the ripe fruits that are desired."

'Yudhishtira asked, "What is the form of those who are wicked? What do virtuous people do? Tell me about the nature of virtuous and wicked people."

'Bhishma replied, "Those who are wicked in their conduct cannot be disciplined. They are evil and foul in speech. The virtuous possess good conduct. That good conduct is their attribute. O Indra among kings! Those who follow dharma do not release urine or excrement on a royal road, amidst cattle, or in the midst of a cow pen. Virtuous people eat what is left after feeding the five.¹⁴⁴⁰ They do not talk while eating. They do not go to sleep with wet hands. A person who follows dharma circumambulates a fire, a bull, a god, a cow pen, a crossroads, a brahmana and a sanctuary. He yields the road to the aged, those who are bearing burdens, women, children, the afflicted, brahmanas, cattle and kings. He protects all the guests, servants, relatives and those who seek refuge, welcoming them. The gods have determined that men should eat in the morning and in the evening. A person should not eat in between and one who behaves in this way is regarded as one who fasts. A sacred fire waits for the time when libations will be poured into it. In that way, a woman waits for her season to come. A person who does not have intercourse with anyone else is said to follow brahmacharya. Amrita, brahmanas and cattle—these three are regarded as identical. Therefore, following the ordinances, one must always worship cows and brahmanas. There is no taint if one eats meat purified with hymns from the Yajur Veda. However, the meat from the backbone, pointless meat and the meat of one's son are equal and must be shunned. Whether one is in one's own country or whether one is in someone else's country, one must not make guests fast. After one's tasks¹⁴⁴¹ have become successful, one must always give something to the preceptor. One must offer a seat to the preceptor. One must greet him and worship him. Through worshipping the preceptor, the lifespan, fame and prosperity are increased. One must not censure an aged person, or use him as a messenger. One should not be seated while such a person is standing. Then the lifespan will not be diminished. One must not look at a naked woman, or at such a learned man. Sexual intercourse and eating must always be done in secret. A preceptor is the greatest tirtha among tirthas. The heart is the most pure among all objects that are pure. Knowledge is the supreme kind of sight. Contentment is supreme happiness. Morning and evening, one must always listen to all the words spoken by the aged. A man always obtains learning by serving the aged. In studying and in eating, one must use the right hand. One must always control one's speech and thoughts, so that the senses are not distracted. In a ceremony on the eighth lunar day, the ancestors, the gods and the aged must always be worshipped with properly cooked payasam, bits of barley, krisara and clarified butter. One must not shave without pronouncing benedictions. If one sneezes, one must have blessings pronounced on one's own self. For a long lifespan, blessings must be pronounced on all those who are diseased. One must not use the word *tvam* for someone who is superior.¹⁴⁴² Know that the learned are superior and using *tvam* for them is tantamount to slaying them. This word can be used for those who are inferior, equal or disciples. A person who is wicked in his heart always boasts about the wickedness he has committed. Even if a person willingly hides these sins from learned people, he is destroyed. Those who willingly commit wicked deeds often seek to hide them from the virtuous. 'Men have not seen me. The gods have not seen me.' However, struck by the wickedness of his sins, he is reborn as a wicked person. The sin increases like the interest on a loan and waits for his body to be destroyed. A sin can be destroyed through the practice of dharma and dharma can prevent sin from increasing. This is like salt dissolving, when water is poured over it. In that way, when there is atonement for a sin, it is immediately destroyed. Therefore, a sin must never be hidden. The act of hiding enhances it. Having done such a deed, one should recount it to the virtuous, thereby pacifying it. Objects are stored with hope. If they are not enjoyed at the right time, when one is separated from one's body, they are enjoyed by someone else. The learned have said that dharma is in the minds of all creatures. That is the reason all creatures have an inclination to follow dharma. One should practise dharma alone. One should not raise aloft the flag of dharma, since those who practise dharma in this way are regarded as traders in dharma. Without any pride, one should worship the gods. Without any deceit, one should serve the preceptor. Gifts made quietly are the store of riches that sustain a person in the journey to the world hereafter.'"

Chapter 1830(149)

‘Yudhishtira said, “If a person is unfortunate, even if he is strong, he does not obtain riches. However, if fortunate, even a weak person, or a child, obtains riches. When it is not the time for getting, even if one who makes exertions, one obtains nothing. And when it is the time for getting, even if one doesn’t exert oneself, one obtains great riches. It can be seen that there are hundreds of men who make fruitless efforts. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Had a mortal person been able to get all the fruits through exertions, why doesn’t he get them? Why are men unable to get those? It is seen that a man makes efforts, but is unsuccessful, despite resorting to the path of making hundreds of attempts to acquire riches. However, another person doesn’t resort to that path and is happy. Men who avoid perverse deeds are seen to be without riches. However, it is also seen that there are other people who resort to adharma and are rich. Even after studying all the sacred texts on good policy, one can be seen to be devoid of policy. An unaccomplished person is appointed as an adviser. What is the reason for this? There is an apparently learned person who is devoid of learning. A rich person faces hardships. If a man can obtain happiness by resorting to learning, a learned person should not be devoid of learning. Nor should he have to resort to an inferior person for subsistence. A man conquers thirst by resorting to water. If learning brought joy, then a man would not resort to ignorance. If one’s time has not come, one does not die, even if one has been pierced by a hundred arrows. However, if the time has come, a person does not live, even if he is touched by the tip of a blade of grass.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this world, if one has made attempts and does not obtain riches, one should resort to fierce austerities. Austerities lead to germination.¹⁴⁴³ One obtains objects of pleasure through donations. One becomes intelligent by serving the aged. One obtains a long life through non-violence. The learned ones have said this. Therefore, one must donate, not seek, and worship those who follow dharma. One must be pure and pleasant in speech and not show injury towards any creature. There is proof that power, happiness and unhappiness result from one’s own nature, even among mosquitoes, insects and ants. O Yudhishtira! Therefore, be patient.”

Chapter 1831(150)

‘Bhishma said, “If one performs virtuous deeds, or gets others to perform virtuous deeds, one obtains assurance because of those good deeds. However, the performer of wicked deeds does not obtain the assurance. In this world, it is time which afflicts creatures and also shows them its favours. It overwhelms the intelligence of creatures and drives them along dharma and artha. When a person’s intelligence shows him dharma and artha, he possesses dharma in his soul and obtains the assurance. His firmness of intelligence grants him that assurance. This alone is the sign of wisdom in creatures. A person who knows about both¹⁴⁴⁴ should look towards time and act accordingly. The men who possess this wealth are worshipped by other men. Those who know about dharma also honour these traits in their own selves. They never spend their time in polluting their practice of dharma with adharma. Therefore, they purify their souls so that they are reborn as those who practise dharma. They are like blazing fires and adharma is always incapable of touching them. Dharma is protected by time. Time acts so that dharma is victorious. In the three worlds, it is this that provides illumination. A man cannot seize an ignorant person and force him to act in accordance with dharma. Even if he practises dharma out of fear, he will resort to many kinds of deceit.”

Chapter 1832(151)

‘Yudhishtira asked, “What is best for a man? What should he do to obtain happiness? How can he be cleansed of his sins? How can he destroy his sins?”

‘Bhishma replied, “This is the lineage of the gods and this is the revered lineage of the rishis. O son! If one reads this during the two sandhyas, this is a supreme method to destroy all sins. The god who is the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, the one to whom all creatures bow down, the inconceivable one, the one who cannot be described, the life of all beings, the one who has not been born, the grandfather, the protector of the universe; Savitri, Brahma’s faithful wife; the origin of the Vedas, the creator Vishnu, the lord Narayana; Virupaksha, Uma’s consort; Skanda, the general; Vishakha, the devourer of oblations;¹⁴⁴⁵ Vayu; the radiant Chandra and Aditya; Shakra, the god who is Shachi’s consort; Yama, with Dhumorni;¹⁴⁴⁶ Varuna, with Gouri;¹⁴⁴⁷ the lord of riches, with Riddhi;¹⁴⁴⁸ the amiable cow, the goddess, Surabhi; the great rishi, Vishrava; the six seasons; the ocean; Ganga; other rivers; the diverse Maruts; the Valakhilyas, accomplished in austerities; Krishna Dvaipayana; Narada, Parvata; Vishvasu, Haha, Huhu, Tumburu, Chitrakuta, the famous messengers of the gods; the immensely fortunate daughters of the gods; the large number of divine apsaras; Urvashi; Menaka; Rambha; Mishrakshi; Alambusha; Vishvachi; Ghritachi; Panchachuda; Tilottama; the Adityas; the Vasus; the Rudras; the Ashvins; the ancestors; dharma; truth; austerities; initiation; resolution; the grandfather; night; day; Kashyapa, Marichi’s son; Shukra; Brihaspati; Bhoma;¹⁴⁴⁹ Budha; Rahu; Shanaishcharya;¹⁴⁵⁰ the nakshatras; seasons; months; sandhyas; years; Vinata’s son;¹⁴⁵¹ the oceans; Kadru’s sons, the serpents; Shatadru; Vipasha; Chandrabhaga; Sarasvati; Sindhu; Devika; Pushkara tirtha; Ganga; Mahanadi; Kapila; Narmada; Kampuna; Vishalya; Karatoya; Ambuvahini; Sarayu; Gandaki; the great river, Lohitya; Tamra; Aruna; Vetravati; Parnasha; Goutami; Godavari; Venna; Krishnavenna; Adrija; Dhrishadvati; Kaveri; Vamkshu; Mandakini; Prayaga; Prabhasa; the sacred Naimisha; Vishveshvara’s place, where the water in the lake is clear;¹⁴⁵² the famous and sacred tirtha of Kurukshetra, with many water bodies; the supreme Sindhu; austerities; gifts; Jambumarga; Hiranvati; Vitasta; the river Vekshumati; sacred parts of the earth, like Gandadvara; Rishikulya; Medhya; the river Chitrapatha; Koushiki; Yamuna; Sita; the river Charmanvati; the river Bhimarathi; the great river Bahuda; Mahendravani; Tridiva; Nilika; Sarasvati; Nanda; Aparananda; the tirtha of the great lake; Gaya; Phalgu-tirtha; Dharmaranya, surrounded by the gods; the sacred lake and river created by Brahma, auspicious and pure, capable of destroying all sins and famous in the three worlds; Mount Himalayas, full of divine herbs; Vindhya, covered with many kinds of minerals, tirthas and herbs; Mount Meru; Malaya; Shveta, decorated with silver; Shringavat; Mandara; Nila; Nishadha; Dardura; Chitrakuta; Anjanabha; Mount Gandhamadana; the sacred Somagiri and many other large mountains; the directions; the sub-directions; the earth; all the large trees; the Vishvadevas; the firmament; the nakshatras; and the planets. Let the gods I have named, and those I have not named, always save us. A man who recites this is freed from all sins. A man who cheerfully chants this is freed from all fear. A man who, without criticizing, chants this praise is free from all sins associated with a mixture of the varnas. After the gods, I will recite the names of the brahmanas, stores of austerities, who have obtained success through austerities. The recital of their names frees from all sins—Yavakrita; Raibhya; Kakshivat; Oushija; Bhrihu; Angiras; Kanva; the lord Medhatithi; and Barhi, the possessor of qualities. All of these are based in the eastern direction. In the southern direction there are the immensely fortunate Ulmucha; Pramucha; the immensely fortunate Mumucha; the valiant Svastyatreya; the powerful Agastya, the son of Mitra-Varuna; and Dridhaya and Urdhvabahu, the two famous and excellent rishis. Listen to the names of those who are in the western direction—Ushadgu; his valiant brother, Parivadya; the rishi Dirghatama; Goutama; Kashyapa; the maharshi Ekata, Dvita and Trita; Atri’s great-souled son; and the lord Sarasvata. Now hear about the ones who worship in the northern direction—Atri; Vasishtha; Shakti; Parashara’s valiant son; Vishvamitra; Bharadvaja; Jamadagni; Richika’s grandson, Rama; the rishi who is Uddaloka’s son; Shvetaketu; Kohala; Vipula; Devala; Devasharma; Dhomya; Hastikashyapa; Lomasha; Nachiketa; Lomaharshana; the rishi Ugrashrava; and Bhargava, Chyavana. These are enumerated as the names of the rishis who are revered by the gods. O king! If their names are recited first, one is freed from all sins. There are many rajarshis who are named—Nriga; Yayati; Nahusha; Yadu; the valiant Puru; Dhundhumara; Dilipa; the valiant Sagara; Krishashva; Yuvanashva; Chitrashva; Satyavat; Dushyanta; Bharata, the immensely famous emperor; Yavana; Janaka; King Dridaratha; Raghu, supreme among men; King Dasharatha; Rama, the destroyer of rakshasas; the brave Shashabindu; Bhagiratha; Harishchandra; Marutta; Jahnu, who was served by Jahnavi; Mahodaya; Alarka; King Aila; Karandhama, best among men; King Kadhmar; Daksha; Ambarisha; Kukura; the immensely illustrious Ravata; rajarshi Muchukunda; Chitrabhanu, the performer of agreeable deeds; King Trasadya; Shveta, supreme among rajarshis; the famous Mahabhisha; Nimi; King Ashta-

ka; Ayu; rajarshi Kshupa; King Kaksheya; Shibi, Ushinara's son; King Gaya; Pratardana; Divodasa; Soudasa, the lord of Kosala; Ela; rajarshi Nala; Prajapati Manu; Havighna; Prishaghna; Pratipa; Shantanu; Kakshasena; and other rajarshis who have not been named. 'Let me not face obstructions. Let me not suffer from sin. Let there be no impediments along my path. Let my victory always be certain. After death, let me go to the supreme destination.'""1453

Chapter 1833(152)

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhishma became silent then, like a picture that has been painted. Vyasa, Satyawati's son, thought for a short while. He then spoke these words to the King Gangeya, who was lying down. "O king! With all his brothers and the kings who have followed him, Yudhishtira, the king of the Kurus, has been brought back to a state of normalcy. The tiger among men is worshipping you, together with the intelligent Krishna. You should now give him permission to return to the city." Thus addressed by the illustrious Vyasa, the king who was the son of the river granted Yudhishtira, and his advisers, permission. The king who was Shantanu's son spoke these sweet words. "O king! Enter the city and let your mental anxiety be dispelled. O Indra among kings! Placing self-control and devotion at the forefront, like Yayati, perform many kinds of sacrifices and give away large quantities of dakshina. O Partha! Remain engaged in the dharma of kshatriyas and satisfy the ancestors and the gods. With your mental anxiety dispelled, engage in what is beneficial. Delight all the subjects and let there be natural tranquility. As is proper, honour all the well-wishers with the fruits. O son! For their subsistence, let all the friends and well-wishers follow you, like the birds seek refuge in a tree that stands at a sacred spot and is laden with fruit. O king! Return here again, when it is time for me, when the sun retreats and begins to move towards uttarayana." Having been thus addressed, Kounteya worshipped the grandfather. With his family, he left for the city of Nagasahvya. Placing Dhritarashtra and Gandhari, who was devoted to her husband, at the forefront, and with the rishis, all his brothers, Keshava, the inhabitants of the city and the countryside and the aged ministers, the king, foremost among the Kurus, entered the city of Varanasahvya.'

This ends Dana Dharma Parva.



Section Eighty-Eight

BHISHMA-SVARGAROHANA PARVA

This section has 84 shlokas and 2 chapters.

Chapter 1834(153): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1835(154): 34 shlokas

Svarga means heaven and arohana means ascent. Thus, this parva is about Bhishma's death and ascent to heaven.

Chapter 1834(153)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king who was Kunti’s son honoured the inhabitants of the city and the countryside and gave them permission to leave for their own homes. The king who was Pandu’s son consoled the women who had lost their brave husbands and gave them a lot of riches. Having obtained his kingdom back, the immensely wise Yudhishtira was instated there. The best among men followed his own nature in everything. The supreme among the upholders of dharma obtained the benedictions of brahmanas, the foremost commanders of the army and the citizens. Having spent fifty nights in that supreme and beautiful city, the bull among men remembered that this was the period the foremost among Kouravas¹ had indicated. Surrounded by priests, he emerged from Gajashvya.² He saw that the sun had retreated and was proceeding towards uttarayana. Before leaving, Kounteya Yudhishtira took clarified butter, garlands, fragrances, silken garments, sandalwood, the best of aloe and also black aloe, all required for preparing Bhishma. There were expensive garments and many kinds of jewels. The intelligent bull among men placed Dhritarashtra, the illustrious Gandhari, his mother, Pritha, and his brothers in front of him. Janardana and the intelligent Vidura followed, and so did Kouravya Yuyutsu and the lord Yuyudhana.³ The king was surrounded by a large number of wagons with stores. O great king! Praises were sung. Fires were carried for kindling Bhishma. Like a king of the gods, he emerged from the city and arrived in Kurukshetra, to the king who was Shantanu’s son. O rajarshi! Parashara’s intelligent son, Vyasa, was worshipping him there and so were Narada and Asita-Devala. The remaining kings, who had not been killed, had assembled there from many countries. In every direction, the great-souled one was protected by the guards. The king saw that he was lying down on a bed meant for heroes. With his brothers, Dharmaraja descended from the chariot. Kounteya honoured his grandfather, the scorcher of enemies and Dvaipayana and the other brahmanas, who greeted them back. The undecaying one was with his brothers and with the officiating priests, who were like Brahma himself. They approached the bed of arrows, which was surrounded by the rishis.

‘O Kouravya! With his brothers, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira addressed the son of the river, the foremost among the Bharata lineage, who was lying down. “O king! O Jahnavi’s son! I am Yudhishtira and am bowing down before you. O mighty-armed one! If you can hear, tell me what I should do. O king! O lord! The time has come and I have brought the fire for you. The preceptors, the brahmanas, the officiating priests and my brothers are also here. Your son, the immensely energetic King Dhritarashtra, is also present, with his advisers and the valiant Vasudeva. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! All the kings from Kurujangala,⁴ who have not been slain, are also here. Open your eyes and look at them. Everything that needs to be done now has been arranged by me. Since this is the time you had spoken about, everything has been arranged.” Thus addressed by Kunti’s intelligent son, Gangeya looked at all those of the Bharata lineage who were standing there, surrounding him. Though Bhishma was strong, he could not move. At that time, the eloquent one grasped his⁵ strong hand and spoke in a voice that was as deep as a torrent of water or the roar of the clouds. “O Kounteya! O Yudhishtira! It is good fortune that you have come here with your advisers. The illustrious sun, the one with the one thousand rays, is returning. Fifty-eight nights have passed since I have been lying down here, on these arrows that are sharp at the tip. It has been like one hundred years. O Yudhishtira! The sacred month of Magha⁶ has arrived. One-fourth of shuklapaksha should still remain.” Gangeya spoke in this way to Yudhishtira, Dharma’s son. At that time, he also greeted Dhritarashtra and spoke these words. “O king! You know about dharma. Your doubts about artha have also been properly dispelled. You have served many brahmanas who are extremely learned. O lord of men! You know all the sacred texts of dharma associated with the Vedas, the four Vedas and all the Vedangas. O Kouravya! Since you know the truth about destiny, you should not grieve. From Krishna Dvaipayana, you have heard secret accounts connected with the gods. O king! Under dharma, the Pandavas are also your sons. They are always engaged in attending to their seniors. Remain established in dharma and protect them. Dharmaraja is pure in soul and always follows your instructions. I know that he is non-violent and is devoted to his seniors. Your sons were evil-souled and were addicted to anger and greed. Overcome with jealousy, they indulged in wicked conduct. You should not grieve over them.” Having spoken these words to the learned Dhritarashtra, the mighty-armed Kourava addressed Vasudeva. “O illustrious

one! O god of the gods! O one who is worshipped by the gods and the asuras! O Trivikrama!⁷ O wielder of the conch shell, chakra and the club! I bow down before you. O Krishna! O Vaikuntha! O Purushottama! Grant me permission. Protect the Pandaveyas. They are devoted to you. On an earlier occasion, I said this to the wicked and evil-minded Duryodhana. ‘Wherever Krishna exists, dharma is there. Wherever dharma exists, victory is there. O son! Use Vasudeva as a tirtha and have peace with the Pandavas.’ I repeatedly told him that the time had come for an alliance. However, that evil-minded and stupid one did not act in accordance with my words. Having destroyed the earth, he has himself been killed. O brave one! I know you as an ancient and supreme rishi. You spent a long period of time in Badari,⁸ with the god Nara. Narada told me this and so did Vyasa, the great ascetic. They told me that Nara and Narayana have been born as men.”⁹ Vasudeva replied, “O Bhishma! O king! I grant you leave. May you become a Vasu.”¹⁰ O immensely radiant one! I have not seen the slightest bit of deceit in you. O rajarshi! In your devotion to your father, you were like another Markandeya.¹¹ Like a servant with a bowed head, death was under your control.” Thus addressed, Gangeya again spoke to the Pandavas and to all his well-wishers, with Dhritarashtra as the foremost. “I wish to cast aside my breath of life. You should grant me leave. Strive to be truthful. Truth represents supreme strength. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!”¹² Always be with non-violent and excellent brahmanas, those who have controlled their souls, are devoted to dharma and always engage in austerities.” Having said this, he embraced all his well-wishers. Yet again, the intelligent one spoke these words to Yudhishtira. “O lord of men! Brahmanas, especially wise ones, preceptors and officiating priests, should always be worshipped by you.”

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, spoke these words to all the Kurus. O scorcher of enemies! Then, Kouravya remained silent for a while. In due order, he held himself in different stages of *dharana*.’¹³ Having controlled his breath of life, the great-souled one propelled it upwards. In the midst of those great-souled ones, an extraordinary event occurred. As Shantanu’s son released it along different parts of his body, because of being united with yoga, the wounds disappeared from those parts. While all of them looked on, in a short while, he was completely free of wounds. O king! With Vasudeva at the forefront, all of them were astounded on seeing this and that included all the sages, Vyasa and the others. He restrained his breath of life and controlled all the exits. Therefore, it pierced the crown of his head and ascended towards heaven. O lord of men! Like a giant meteor, it pierced Bhishma’s head and emerged, penetrating the sky and instantly disappearing. O tiger among kings! Thus did the king who was Shantanu’s son, the extender of the Bharata lineage, himself give up this world.

‘The great-souled Pandavas and Vidura collected many diverse kinds of wood and fragrances and prepared the funeral pyre. Yuyutsu and the other Kouravas looked on. Yudhishtira and the extremely intelligent Vidura wrapped Gangeya Kourava’s body in silken cloth and covered it with garlands. Over it, Yuyutsu held aloft an excellent umbrella. Bhimasena and Arjuna fanned it with whisks. The sons of Madri held the headdresses. Bhishma was the protector of the Kouravas and the extender of the Kuru lineage. On every side, the women stood around with fans made of palm leaves and fanned the body. The great-souled one’s funeral ceremony¹⁴ was performed according to the prescribed ordinances. Priests who knew the Sama Veda chanted Sama hymns. Sandalwood, yellow fragrant wood, black aloe and fragrances were used in the pyre. Gangeya was covered in these and the fire was lit. The kings, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, stood on the right side of the pyre. Thus did the supreme ones of the Kuru lineage perform the funeral rites of Gangeya, foremost among the Kurus. With large numbers of rishis, the extenders of the Kuru lineage then went to the banks of the Bhagirathi. They were followed by Vyasa, Narada, Asita, Krishna, the women of the Bharata lineage and the assembled citizens. Following the prescribed rites, the best among the kshatriyas and all the people offered water to the great-souled Gangeya.

‘When water was offered to her son, the goddess Bhagirathi herself arose from the water, weeping in grief. Lamenting, she addressed the Kouravas. “O unblemished ones! I will tell you what has happened. Listen. He was royal in conduct, with wisdom and a noble lineage. He honoured the elders among the Kurus, was devoted to his father and was firm in his vows. On an earlier occasion, Rama, Jamadagni’s son, could not defeat him.”¹⁵ He pos-

sessed divine weapons and was immensely valorous. He has now been slain by Shikhandi. O kings! There is no doubt that the core of my heart is made out of stone. Though I can no longer see my beloved son, it has not yet been shattered. For the *svayamvara*, all the kings and the kshatriyas assembled in the city of Kashi.¹⁶ On a single chariot, he defeated all of them and abducted the maidens. There never has been strength like his on earth. Yet, on hearing that he had been brought down by Shikhandi, my mind was not shattered. In Kurukshetra, the great-souled one fought with Jamadagni's son. Despite his being brought down by Shikhandi, I am not greatly afflicted." In this fashion, the great river lamented in many ways. The lord Damodara¹⁷ comforted her. "O fortunate one! Control yourself. O one who is beautiful to see! You should not grieve. There is no doubt that your son has obtained supreme success. O beautiful one! He was one of the immensely energetic Vasus and was cursed. That is the reason he was born as a man. You should not sorrow. He followed the dharma of kshatriyas and fought in the field of battle. He was brought down by Dhananjaya, not by Shikhandi. When Bhishma, tiger among the Kurus, was engaged in a great battle, no one was capable of bringing him down in that engagement, not even Shatakratu himself. O one with the beautiful face! Your son is at ease and has gone to heaven. O best among rivers! Therefore, you should not sorrow on account of that descendant of the Kuru lineage. O goddess! Be without anxiety. Your son has gone and has become one of the Vasus." In this way, the best among rivers was addressed by Krishna and by Vyasa. O great king! She abandoned her grief and controlled herself. All the kings, with Krishna at the forefront, honoured the river. Having taken her permission, all the kings then returned.'

This concludes Bhishma-Svargarohana Parva and also concludes Anushasana Parva.