

## **The Mahabharata**

### **An enquiry in the human condition**

Scripture Written by Sri Krishna-Dvaipayana Vyasa

Book By

**Mr Chaturvedi Badrinath**, publisher- Orient Longman,

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#### **Chapter -1 : Introduction to the Mahabharata :**

It covers concerns of everyday life everywhere, provides answers like what is happiness/ unhappiness, what is health/ sickness, what is pleasure/ pain, what is wealth/ poverty, what is truth/ untruth. In what relation mind exists in the body. What is nature of sex pleasure, what kind of energy is sex, what are conditions in which it flourishes and what are the conditions in which it dies, what is violence , from where does violence arise. What kind of relation is there between what one does and thinks and what one becomes, what is it freedom/bondage, who is wise / fool , what is it to be saint, what is pilgrimage, why did a thing the way it happened, is one free to make what one is or is one determined by some other force : fate or God. What is right ordering of one's relationship with one self and with others, What relation does it have with time and place, what is governance, what are its foundation, what is order/ disorder, what relation they have with time and place, what is death, and what is that which is deathless etc etc. Enquiry is into the four ends of human life, they are ***dharma*** , the foundation of all relationships, personal and social; ***artha***, or the material condition of life; ***kama***, ***sexual happiness***, or used in wider sense , fulfillment of desire; and ***moksh***, freedom liberation, what are paths of *moksha*, what is *moksha* in relation with other three. The question of history and meaning, The three , *desh*, *kala* and *patra*, i.e. the proper place, the proper time and proper person, determine the appropriateness of an act, and thus its meaning. A very large part of Mahabharata is concerned with governance or raja-dharma or duties of the state towards

people and justice , and relationship between ends or means. Can the ends justify means?

Enquiry in Mahabharata revolves in the first place with one's self , with one's physical body , desires, hopes, fears, and search for meaning. One's relationship with one's self and the other is central concern of Mahabharata .It shows that until one's relationship with self is right that one's relationship with the other can be right, and the two being inseparable, it is by achieving a right relationship with the other that comes to one self, fulfilled. **Disturbed in my relationship with myself, I will be disturbed in my relationship with every one else.**

**18 Chapters in Mahabharat** text having one lac *shloks* in sequence are:

Adi-parva, Sabha-parva, Vana-parva, Virat-parva, Udyog-parva, Bhism-parva, Drone-parva, Shalya-parva, Saupitaka-parva, Stri-parva, Shanti-parva, Anushasana-parva, Ashvamedheka-parva, Mausala-parva, Mahaprasthana-parva, Swargarohana-parva concerned

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### **Chapter 2: Food, water and life:**

25.Whatever lives on this earth , is born of food, and at the end reverts to earth. The material body , made up of the nature of food and its anna-maya,sap is suffused with prana, vital breath, by virtue of which all beings live. There is subtler substance , the mind , with which the material body and vital breath are completely suffused(mano-maya). Distinct from these three, there is subtler substance , intelligence, with which material body , vital breath and mind are completely suffused(vijnana-maya), there is subtler substance, pure bliss,are completely suffused (ananda-maya).Distinct from these five , but suffusing them completely , is the atman, the self, which is the same as Brahman and it is ultimate reality.

27. The various form of learning were collectively designated as nama-name, vac-speech, manas-mind, samkalpa-will, chitta-consciousness, dhyan-meditation, vijnana-understanding , bala-force,anna-food,apas-water,tejas-heat,akasha-space,smara-memory, asha-desire, prana-life.

28. The physical world is assigned to speech, the space to mind, and heavens to life. Whatever is knowledge, is speech , whatever is subject of enquiry, is mind and whatever is mystery is life

29. A portion for the unknown guest: equally important with 'the act of giving , is the attitude, the feeling, with which food and water are offered. The word *dana* does not mean 'charity' or 'alms giving'. The word *dana* means sharing, communicating, imparting, paying back(as in debt), restoring, adding to. The Ayurveda speaks of four *dosh-defects*, in the cooked food. The *kala dash* (the food that has been kept for too long and turned stale),the *rasa dosha* ( the food that lost its flavor and taste, the *samsarga-dosha* ( the food that has been touched with unclean hands or in which insect has fallen. The worst is *bhava-dosha* (the food that is offered wilh ill grace, without feeling of affection. such food is not food , it is poison).

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### **Chapter 3: The spiritual and the material in the Mahabharata**

1.The relation ; between spirit, the body and the mind; between them and emotions and feelings; between emotions and perceptions, between perceptions and acts; between acts and motives-all these have been central questions in actual living of human life. In one form or another they appear in the principles of economics, politics, law and governance. Modern psychology is rooted in them. The quality of relationships is decided by the quality of our understanding of them, which is self knowledge and knowledge of others. The root meaning of adhyatma is 'enquiry of into the nature of self', and knowledge of the self is main subject of all Indian thought

As per Taittiriya Upanishad

There are word adhyatama or ‘spiritual’, relates to human body and its attributes e.g. it says

“ One group of reality consists of the earth, the sky, the invisible and the four directions.

Another group consists of the fire, the wind, the sun, the moon, and the planets

Another group consists of water, vegetation and herbs, the space and the body. They are material groups.

The spiritual group of reality exists in the human body and its faculties, the eyes, the ears, the mind the speech and the touch

Although these three groups are distinct, they are intimately connected with each other and form an unbroken unity. Whatever is, is unity; the outer completing the inner, and the inner completing the outer

2. The Mahabharata shows the unity of the material and spiritual; and furthermore shows both relational. Artha, material prosperity is sacred, Kama, sexual fulfillment, is sacred, Sukha ,joy, is sacred. Nyaya and samata, justice and equality, are not separate from spiritual; and spiritual is suffused with law and governance, danda, of which self governance is best. The atmana , self , is not an isolated entity; nor is moksha, freedom , a solitary state, the return of the self to self. For what is suffused with prana-maya, life is suffused with ananda-maya, joy. Spirituality is not a profession like that of lay and medicine, to be practiced and promoted by people as ‘spiritual leaders’. Mahabharata says true spirituality is to be found in ordinary men and women

### **3. Perceptions of the self:**

The philosophical perception of the self in the Mahabharata may be arranged around their three main aspects

1. That the self is a wholly distinct entity, not to be confused with the body and its faculties , and does not die when physical body comes to an end

2. That the self is not perceived by any of the sense organs and its faculties, touch , hearing, seeing , tasting. It is experienced directly , for it is the self that is the ground of all perceptions
3. That the self has to free itself from the entanglements with nature, `and return to its own essence

In the long conversation on the subject Maharishi Bhrigu tells saint Bhardwaj as follows on description of creation

On death of an individual the self is not destroyed. What is destroyed is the body he leaves behind ; but the self transmigrates to any other body. Even with the destruction of the its host , the self does not die. Just as the fire itself can be seen when the fuel is burnt up; the self can be experienced likewise. The fire , on the fuel being burnt up,can not be had, for it then remains in the unseen form in the space; and it is true that without a host the fire can not be had; but the fire itself is not destroyed. In the same way, after death , the self exists in its unseen form in the space. Being a subtle substance , it can not be perceived anymore than the fire can be perceived on being extinguished. The fire sustains life. Consider the self likewise. The wind keeps that fire within the body; breathing stops when the wind leaves and, with it the fire

The fire in the body extinguished, the body falls on the earth dead, and the earth claims the physical. The wind goes to space, and the fire likewise. The space, the wind, the fire : these three come together; and the earth and water remain on the earth. The wind is where there is space and fire is where there is wind. Although formless they acquire a form in the body.

Even the mind has the five elements of Nature as its constituents; it is nothing distinct from them. Only the Self is conscious of the body. Only the self is of the body. Only the self senses and experiences form, taste, smell, touch, sound, and other attributes of life. Pervading the physicality of life, every part of it, the Self , experiencing pleasure and pain , is the witness of the mind as well. When its relation to the body comes to an end, the body and, with it, the mind can sense neither pleasure nor pain. When the body made of five elements of Nature senses

neither form, nor touch, not warmth, and the fire within dies, the Self, on leaving the body, does not itself die.

Consider the person to be the self , the goodness in all beings *sattava, rajas and tamas*, the three forms of energy of consciousness, the energy of action and energy that suffocates and depresses, are the main attributes of the self as person. The Self remains in the innermost of all beings , and can be perceived by penetrating intelligence of those with knowledge.

A picture of the physical and psychological apparatus of human personality is following: The physical aspects of human self , as indeed all human beings, is made up of five elements of Nature viz. space, wind, fire, water and earth. By their *swabhava*, inherent disposition , they combine and separate. Consciousness, heat, and breath-form a combination of these three arise the sense organs, the mind, the life force, awareness the inherent disposition, and various changing forms they take leading to all acts. The ears, the skin, the tongue, the eyes, and the nose are five *karma-indriya* , organs of physical sensation. Suffused with consciousness, and when combined with mind, they become both the means and the subject of cognition. The *jnana-indriya*, organs of cognition, are correspondingly five: sound, taste, touch, form and smell. With external material object as sixth element, they remain the organs of cognition till the very end of a person's life. In all physical Acts and cognition, before they take , before they can take place , the physical organs of physical sensation; the five organs of cognition; manas, the mind, as the eleventh; and the faculty of differentiating, buddhi, as the twelfth element has to combine . *Ahamkara*, 'the individual will', and above all consciousness, *citta*, as the ground of all sensing and experience, complete the psychophysical apparatus of the empirical Self. It is this Self that has a beginning when it is born, and has an end when it dies; all its psycho-physical elements degenerate and separate, each returning to its inherent ground- akasa, the space. It is this psycho-physical that feelings attach. It is *this* self that touches and is touched by the world

Feeling of delight, love, joy happiness, and peace of mind , whether they arise with or without cause , are known as the energy of sattava

Feelings of discontent , regret, sorrow, greed, and intolerance are the energy of rajas

Lack of judgment, blinding confusion, blinding confusion of perceptions, carelessness , dreams, and laziness , no matter how they arise , are different forms of energy of tamas

It is the psycho-physical self, of which there are as many as there are living beings, that is suffused with these three energies, existing together but in many different proportions. The predominance of one over the other two gives an individual his or his *swa-bhava*, his or her specific disposition, distinct tendency , which may remain constant or may change.

### **The manifest self: the un-manifest self**

What has four attributes of a beginning with birth: a maturing ; age and a progressive dissolution; and an end with death-is vyakta or that is manifest.

The reality that is its opposite is avyakta, or which is un-manifest: the Self; of which there are two : the individual Self and the Greater Self. The manifest originates from un-manifest . What is manifest called ‘the field of acts’, kshetra, and the un-manifest Self ‘the acting agent’, ‘the doer’, kshetrajna

The mind, the intelligence and the will, these three although in their essence independent of the organs of sensing and cognition; they are connected with them all the same , and can not go beyond them. But just as tortoise opens its limb s outwards and then withdraws them into itself, intelligence spreads the organs of sensing towards the corresponding objects and then withdraws them from them.

The steadiness; the skill of argument; memory; confusion; imagination; reconciliation; good or ill resolution ; and fickleness- are nine characteristics of the mind

To discriminate between what is good and what is ill; to judge and differentiate ; to evaluate ; to resolve doubts; and to decide – are five characteristics of the intelligence , buddhi

Governing the organs of sensing and of cognition, the intelligence is akin to their self. In experiencing them, it takes many forms of emotions and feelings, and then makes the mind likewise

The varied human emotions and feelings arise from the three energies of sattava, rajas, and tamas. The three energies and the self are both subtle entities; the difference being that one is subject of cognition and the other is unseen

Life in the world like a mighty river . The five sense organs are its water. Greed its banks. Anger its sludge. It is exceedingly difficult to cross it. Yet those endowed with knowledge do. Time is assailing in the form of confusion and it is blinding. Keep that in mind

The mighty river of Time is flowing. The night and day its flow . The years its whirls, the months its impetuous waves, the change of seasons its force. The fortnights are creepers and straw floating on it. The hours and the moments are its foam. The successive ages are its center. The erotic in it captivates, seizes, and swallows. Material prosperity and desire are its water. Truth and freedom are its two banks. Knowledge and sacrifice the two boats; dharma the island of refuge. With trees of violence floating on it, the river of time are flowing all created beings, towards their end. But the human self is not helpless , Mahabharata offers strength and hope being inherent qualities, *guna*, of created self .

**Radical shift in Mahabharata .** In perception of the self, and followed from them, there was a radical shift in the Mahabharata , it may prove of great importance for human living today, in its collective form as much as in the personal. Its main features are as follows: he Mahabharata had marked a radical shift from the *atman* to *dharma*, and was not prerequisite of the other. The Mahabharata keeps stressing, the need for self discipline in relation to one's self. This will remain true independent of Atman. The favorite metaphor employed in the Mahabharata in this regards is that of a chariot drawn by five horses: the body is chariot , the five senses are horses , the mind is charioteer . The person who holds firmly the reins of five sense organs is a happy charioteer. And there is no heaven and there is no hell apart from what the sense organs, disciplined or left wild , create for one self. Acts being also of mind and speech, these are to be disciplined, as well.

Self knowledge is through contexts and situations in which one finds oneself, and also which one creates for one self. It is through *the given and self created* that , understanding one's self in the distinctive character of one's self as a person, one begins to have also the knowledge of one's self as a fragment of large common human reality. That is the journey of understanding the self and the world on which the Mahabharata takes us, and on that journey,it whispers into our ears , without making a metaphysics of it, belief in the atman is of no particular help, nor is disbelief in any such entity any hindrance.

There is the energy in the self that brings love and joy and clarity and sattwa, inner peace. There is energy that brings dissatisfaction, discontent, aggression , and greed, rajas. And there is energy that depresses, disturbs, suffocates and chokes, tamas. Even without its metaphysics, it will experientially true that self is field of these three energies. With self knowledge and self discipline the self can channel the energies within. That is what the Mahabharata is concerned with- not the knowledge of atman but living in dharma.

### **Self, energy and relationships**

That life is a complex system of energy is evident. It is equally evident that *prana*, life –energy , flows in many channels. It assumes many forms: the energy in the earth and water, and the energy of the human mind and of human heart. Some forms of energy are immeasurable beauty, some ugly and grotesque. Energy takes many names, love is energy hatred is energy too. What is true , although not evident, is that there exists , at very heart , a profound paradox. The highest form of energy arises from complete inner stillness- the paradox of energy. It completes itself in the truth that inner stillness is the natural goal of all energy, even as it is its origin. When energy moves away from its origin and its goal, it turns upon itself, as it always has, and destroys everything, the self and the other, in their individual and collective sense.

Yoga shows that the energies of the body and of mind are inseparable in a way that one determines other. It suggests ways of disciplining them so that they flow without obstruction by wrong attitudes and passions we ourselves create. Yoga

properly understood, takes us, by disciplining our energies towards simple human happiness , and towards beatitude

The paradox of energy comprises, firstly , the paradox of *kala*, as primordial energy or force. It states in the Aadi parva that

**“Time** creates all beings; and Time destroys what is created. Destroying what is created. Time is then pacified by Time

Time is the doer of all that happens in the universe: of the good and bad alike

Time sleeps, and Time is forever awake; no one can transgress Time

What was in the past, what will come in future, and what is now, are creation of Time. Keeping this , do not loose your faculty of discrimination

Time is the root of all that is: all that is not; happiness and suffering alike”

This is the view of the author of Mahabharat, Vyas. Vyas perceives all human relationship s as being maintained by Time: the coming together , the parting , the loving and hating ; being gentle and tender; being nasty and brutal; being indifferent; going to war and reconciling in the attitude of peace. Bhishma , a prominent figure in Mahabharata rejects that view. Yoga- vasalsishtha also rejects Time. Its main thesis is that, like material world, Time is wholly creation of mind, which is the moving energy. Thus the paradox of energy remains

Every self has a past, with its memories that bring joy and happiness and give to human life its worth. Every self has a past with memories that are tamsic. That is to say, they disturb, distress, exhaust, and suffocate. Memory has an enormous influence on the present, to a degree that present becomes extension of the past. The paradox of memory is now transferred to the present. The paradox of the present is that the present can only be lived by transcending it.. The paradox of memory can neither be resolved or nor it can be dissolved.

The Mahabharat discusses man’s relation with history. In the form of my *sanchita karma*, the inheritance of acts, am I my past alone? Am I what I am in the present? Rooted in my history, am I my history alone?

One finds in philosophical treatise sometimes statements that advocate separateness, and other times statements that advocate identity, of the Self with the ultimate reality. Acknowledging this contradiction, but not in the spirit of argument, one should go beyond that.

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## **Chapter 4: The Foundation of Life and Relationships**

Since dharma was defined also as *shreya*, ‘the good, it gave rise to fresh problems with that definition; for there were many opinions on what the ‘good’ is

The modern wrong understanding of dharma consists in its translation as ‘religion’. Religion in its institutional form is divisive; dharma unites. A religion excludes all that it is not; dharma includes every form of life. Religion must be separated from the state and governance, as it has been in the modern west, for a sane world. Every shade of political thought and practice , and every act of governance , must necessarily have their foundations in dharma for us to a sane world.

### **The radical shift in Mahabharata: the universality of dharma**

All the saying of dharma are with a view of nurturing , cherishing ,providing more amply, enriching , increasing , enhancing all livings: in one word , securing their prabhava. Therefore, whatever has characteristic of bringing that about is *dharma*. This is certain. Whatever has its beginning in justice, that alone is called dharma. Whatever is unjust and oppressive is *adharma*. This is the rule settled by those who can be respected.

If one dharma is destructive of another dharma, then it is wickedness in the grab of dharma. If there is conflict between one dharma and another, one should reflect on their relative weight, and then act accordingly; what does not denigrate and obstruct the others is dharma.

What he does not find agreeable when done by others unto him, that he should not unto others. He must know what is unhappy for him can not be happy for others. (shanti parva 259.20)

Whatever is not agreeable to him, that he should not do unto others. This, in brief, is dharma, all else is selfishness (anushashan parva 113.8)

The wealth should be earned through dharma and never through adharma. True wealth, individual and social, is that wealth which creates: nurturing, cherishing , increasing, enhancing all being, providing amply, enriching , which supports , sustains bring together , uphold all living beings; and secures for living beings freedom from violence, freedom from fear. These are three foundation of artha

The force of sexual impulse, i.e. kama be subject to dharma. True sexual pleasure is that which , in fulfilling itself: one, nurtures, cherishes, increases, and enhances the other; two, supports, sustains , brings together , and in bringing together upholds the other; and three, secures for the other freedom from violence, freedom from fear. These are three foundations for fulfilling sexual pleasure, kama, and they are three attributes of dharma.

### **Dharma and the question of relativism**

The value of an act , depends not only on one's motives wholly, but also upon *dehsha and kala*, the given place and the given time (cycle of time). The same act is dharma or adharma for different people, depending on time, place and person concerned.

Dharma as relationship of the self with the self and with the *other*

Whatever is obtained by love and friendship, all that is dharma; its opposite is adharma

Q- whether there is anything that could deliver human beings from the fear of sorrow and death?

Ans- Neither friends nor relatives, nor wealth, nor superior lineage, nor learning , nor chanting of some mantras, nor one's strength , put together can deliver a man from sorrow. It is only sila (in Hindi speak as *sheel*). (shanti parva 286.15)

Meaning of sila (in Hindi speak as *sheel*) consists in the right relationship with the other. Sri (a form of woman) said “ Dharma, Truth, Wealth ,Strength and I-all of us rooted in sila. Of that, there is no doubt.” (shanti parva 124.62) and “ Freedom from malice towards any being , in act, thought, and speech; benevolence towards all; and sharing is sila” (shanti parva 124.66)

**Dharma** , the innate human order in which every thing is sustained, is personified . Dharma has thirteen wives who are, in their English name: Faith, Intellect, Intelligence, Strength, Action, Wealth, Resoluteness, Satisfaction, Splendor , Success , Fame, Modesty, and Peace. They have fifteen sons. From Faith Desire . From Intellect, Learning. From Intelligence, Awareness . From Action, Governance, Resoluteness and Rule. From Satisfaction, Contentment. From splendor, Commerce. From Success, happiness. From Fame, recognition. From Modesty, Good breeding, and from Peace, Comfort.

**Adharma** , the human disorder, is personified aswell. Violence is his wife, and they have Untruth as their son, and dishonesty as their daughter. And in turn , they give birth to Fear, Hell, Illusion, Pain, and Death.

From **greed** arises every conceivable act of harm to one self and to others, and to a great pain and suffering thereby. From greed arises anger, confusion, egoism, and intolerance, shamelessness, loss of prosperity , worry, and ill reputation. From greed arises miserliness; excessive ‘thirst’ arrogance of one’s high family; arrogance of high learning; arrogance of beauty; arrogance of plentiful wealth; aggression; distrust and deviousness towards all beings. Ignorance is root cause of greed and greed feeds ignorance. So long as one exists , the other must exist too .(shanti parva158.2 to 158.7 and 159.10). Greed, *lobha*, as the main cause of human disorder comes in the Mahabharata repeatedly.

There is in this world no dharma greater than the conquest of the self. Who has conquered his self has feeling of friendship towards all; dignity of conduct; cheerfulness; and self-knowledge.

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### **Chapter 5: Ahimsa-Not Violence, the foundation of life**

*Ahimsa paramo dharma* i.e. Non violence is the highest dharma, resound in Mahabharata many times. Yet the whole of the Mahabharata is about violence- to one's self and to the other. And thus the whole Mahabharata is about freedom from violence, about *abhaya –dana*, the gift freedom from fear, being the greatest gift to all. Since the Mahabharata shows that everything in life is relational, everything concerning man is discussed relationally, and , in that in the pair of opposites.. there is only one enemy of man ; there is no other enemy such as ignorance, clouded by which man acts in ways most cruel.

#### **The rationality of not-violence**

**Nothing does one love in this world more than one's life.** One should be kind to others , seeing in other one's own self. **To every living being , death is a disaster ; at the time of death all living beings shake fearfully** ( Mahabharat- Anushasana-parva-116.8,22, 17). It is for this reson that the man of intelligence praise not-violence as the gihest dharma. For just as one desires one's life , the others desire their life likewise.

#### **Justification of anger on being wronged**

Nothing is ever absolutely good nor anything ever absolutely bad, and that the same act is good or harmful depending on place, time, and the character of the persons involved. There are two conflicting truths, and both are woven into every kind of human relationship, personal as well as social. *Bala* , or force , for self protection and justice; *kshma*, or forgiveness , for freedom from hatred and revenge. Both have their own indisputable rationality. Are there not in life occasions when anger is justified, and to avenge a wrong, just?

There is story of Aurva in Adi parva of Mahabharata, with a view to acknowledging that there are occasions in human life when anger is justified and revenge as justice equally so. In the person of an angry Ashvasthama, the grieving son of Guru Drona, the Mahabharata honestly explores the question whether acts of revenge would be ethically wrong. His moments come at the end of the war, in which only three Kauravs are left alive from the side of Kaurava: he, Kripacharya, and Kritavarma

Through its last part, the Mahabharata is saying “hatred and the spirit of revenge are the weapons that destroy the world. The power of physical weapon is increased beyond description by the power of anger and hatred and revenge breathed into them. Even a piece of straw becomes a weapon of the greatest force when touched with great hatred and the greater resolve to revenge. Once fired, the weapons of hatred and revenge can not be withdrawn- except by those who have greater power of self control, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

### **The rationality of forgiveness and its limits**

**Lord Krishna** describes kshma, ‘forgiveness and reconciliation’ as the highest pilgrimage of all. Forgiveness is the true compassion. It is forgiveness that holds the world together. **Draupadi** argues ‘neither force nor reconciliation is good always. He who is always forgiving invites several defects. His relatives, his subordinates, his enemies, and even those who are neutral to him, behave towards him with disrespect ; nor does any body ever show him courtesy, because forgiveness is seen as weakness, and weakness invites disrespect. Therefore, to forgive always is unwise even for wise. According to different contexts, *desh and kala*, one should be now gentle and then forceful. There is time for forgiveness; and there is time for force. Bhisma pitamah also expresses same view and says , ‘according to the circumstances, take recourse to gentleness and firmness’

### **The argument against enmity and war**

As per Yudhishter: By the time war ends, the defeated army would have killed the loved ones of many a soldier among victorious. Thus, though the victorious, they are left with no strength. On seeing their sons and brothers killed, they loose

concern with their own lives, withdraw from everything. Neither of the two sides are seen anywhere to be victorious; nor are both seen to be defeated. What is seen, though, is the destruction of their prosperity alike. Peace obstructed, war starts. The learned and the wise think it to be akin to a fight between two dogs. When enmity that can produce only suffering starts in a family, it is never pacified. There are always those who keep stoking its memory. Thus, so long as even one person is alive in that family, the enmity does not end.

### **Violence in speech and words**

All functions of the world are tied with speech. Just as *vani*, speech, expresses love, affection and friendship, it is an instrument of violence. He who can see the subtlety of dharma, and wishes to cultivate proper speech, should speak in a way that what he says is true as well as free from violence and denunciation of others.

### **Effect of hurtful and dry words are indicated as follows**

They are like arrows that burn the bones and the heart and life of the victim, who day and night pained by them. The wise man should therefore forever give up hurtful speech. The trees pierced by arrows or cut by axe grow again, but the dreadful wound by nasty words does not ever heal. The ear-shaped arrow, or the spear, arrow made of iron, can still be removed from the body, but it is impossible to remove the arrow of hurting words, for it gets embedded in the heart.. One should not therefore hurt where it is most vulnerable. Do not speak cruelly and lower others, or speak in a manner that agitates others. Harsh words make instant enemies of friends, even those of long standing and the ones who are honored, for the sting of sharp words can not be removed from the mind. The wound of hurtful speech is never healed.

Of five causes of enmity, hard speech is one, woman, property, natural conflict, and previous offence comprise the rest.

The wise should not denigrate another in the assembly of men, indeed, not even speak the truth if it is hurtful. Speak truth, speak pleasantly, but do not speak the truth if it is unpleasant.

**Silence** is the **first** quality of speech; speaking the **truth**, the **second**; **speaking pleasantly**; the third; and **speaking according to dharma**, the fourth

A friend is one who can be trusted like a father, others are mere companion

### **Violence to one self**

*Sannyasa* is not renunciation of the world and its joys, and that *samyama*, or self control, is neither denial, nor abstinence, becomes perfectly clear if we just look at the root meaning of the word *sam*, which a prefix to many words. *Sam* means ‘holding together’. When it is used in the word *sam-nyasa*, and the word *nyasa* means ‘holding together the foundations, or ‘to know the proper place of everything. Thus, the state of *sam-nyasa* is not a state of withdrawal or renunciation but a state of knowing the true place of human attributes in their natural unity. Similarly the word *sam-yama* was wrongly perceived as meaning ‘abstinence from sexual intercourse’, when it actually means ‘to hold together’, ‘govern’, ‘guide’. These two examples will show how, completely misread, those states of the mind that affirm the proper place of everything that is human and thus invoke the joy of life, are turned into negativity and its gratuituous violence, to one’s self most of all.

Dharmic thought had never maintained that to inflict pain and suffering on one’s body are prerequisites of finding one’s self.

Human passions that assail the mind are also called *kashaya*. The literal meaning of this word is ‘to injure’, ‘to hurt’, ‘to destroy, kill’. The *kashaya* of Mahabharata constantly speaks, in every context, at every turn, are ‘greed’, ‘anger’, ‘vanity and pride’, ‘falsehood and insincerity’. They injure and hurt one’s self even before they hurt and injure the others. They certainly destroy and kill. That they do even in medical terms, there being an intimate relatedness between psyche and soma, the mind and the body. Violence to the one is also violence to the other.

### **Freedom from fear: freedom from the violence of history:**

Freedom from fear is akin to the gift of life. Therefore “the man who, suffused with the spirit of kindness, offers to all beings freedom from fear, is himself

offered by them freedom from fear (anushashasan 161.13). He alone is in unity with dharma who has compassion towards all being , is open and straight forward in his relations with others , and looks upon all beings as his own (anushashasan 142.28). It is also true that the memory of past unhappiness is unhappiness twice over , for now it is transferred to the present. To grieve for the past is to do violence to one's self. The best cure for unhappiness is not to think it too much . By thinking of one's unhappiness too much, it will not go away but will only increase (Shanti 330.12).

Just as signs of human footsteps get merged into the signs of an elephant's footsteps, so do the signs of dharma and material prosperity become inherent in not-violence. Who does no violence , lives in freedom from death.

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## **Chapter 6: What is 'Death'? The origin of Mrityu**

**Yaksha** asked Yudhishter "What is most astonishing thing in the world?" He had said : " Seeing that everyday people are dying , that those remainstill think that death would not come to them"

Just as life is relational in all its attributes, so is death. Vyasa narrates the story of creation of death, in the form of a woman, by Brahma. The woman objects on appointment of killer, weeps, as she will be object of hatred of relatives of the dead persons. Finally she submits, but says:

If the task can be accomplished by no one else than me, I shall obey you but you listen carefully to what I say now

Greed; anger, taking ill of others; envy and jealousy; ill-will; confusion of perceptions; shamelessness; and harsh words spoken to each other- these will devour the bodies of those who are embodied. This is death, from which arise all kind of diseases. Illness is the name of diseases which affect man. All living beings die at the end of their lifespan. Do not grieve, for that will do no good. All living

beings cause their own death. Death does not kill them with a stick in her hand.(Drona parva 54.37,54.38,54.45,54.50)

The creator of death, Brahma, had said to her

Your tears I took on my hands, but some fell on the earth. They will become the diseases born from the bodies of living beings, who will cause their own death, not you. Do not fear. You will be doing no adharma. With no partiality that comes with attraction and hostility, you destroy living being. Those given to untruth will cause their death by their adharma, not you (Drona54.40,54.42)

In the voice of Vidur, the Mahabharata says

There are six deadly swords. Too much pride and arrogance; too much of the vain talk; absence of self sacrifice, anger; to seek only one's own ends; and betrayal of a friend. These kill human beings, not death (Udyog37.10)

This being indisputably so, then why

The learned and the fools, the rich and poor , the one's born in family of quality and those not so fortunate , the honored and disregarded, all alike find their place in the place of dead

All that can be seen of them, and what is seen is without distinction , is their nakedness in death. And in their common nakedness is death, there is nothing to mark the one as one as more distinguished than the other

In the equality of death, when all sleep on the earth alike , then why do the mortal fools on this earth wish to cheat each other (Stree4.15 to 4.18)

Q- The life of humans is passing quickly. In that case, how a person should order his life? (Shanti 175.5).In a tone of at once hurried and tranquil, Medhavi speaks of biological death, and asks, 'Given death, why do not people learn to live?'

Given the complete uncertainty about the time of death would claim a person , he questions the notion that life can be ordered in to a confidently planned sequence. Do this, when a boy, do that when young , do this, when past middle age ; and do that when old. Rather he says:

What may be done tomorrow, do it today. What may be done in the evening , do it in the morning. For death, does not ask you whether your work has been completed or not. Therefore, engage yourself in the good today. Let time not slip away. For all your work, will remain incomplete, and death will carry you away. Who knows who will die when? The controller of the world, death, does not send an invitation in advance. Just as fisherman gathers the fish without their knowing, Death does likewise. Death is connected with life from the moment one is born. (shanti parva 175.14,175.15, 175.24)

That is to say, paradoxically , the process of living are, at the same time, also the process of dying. It is for this reason the Mahabharata says to us, that we should first free ourselves of the fear of death; or else it would become the fear of life as well.

The Mahabharata 's concern throughout is with life and not with death. Every living being has a biological death. But, the Mahabharata teaches, biological death alone is not death. Greed is death. Hatred is death. Violence to the other, in speech or thought is death. Untruth is death. Nor is death some ultimate event. There is a death that death takes place every moment, every day. We die to what we had once valued so high but wrongly. But we are dead to what we must intensely alive. There is , every day, a dying and inflicting death- the consequences of one's wrong relationship with one's self and with the other. And it is that death that Madhvi resolves to conquer.

Do no violence to another, I will seek truth. Removing from my mind and from my heart desires and angers, and perceiving pleasure and pain to be quite the same, I will thereby free my self from death. Both death and deathless reside in the human body. From the confusion of perceptions comes death, and from truth, that which death can never touch. It is only through truth one conquers death. (shanti 175.29 to 175.31)

**The essence of truth is not in knowing alone but living as well. The sense of truth is in living in the right relationship with one's self and with the other. In the perplex voice, Death is asking us: 'why do not you learn to live?'**

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## **Chapter 7- The Question of Truth**

Astonishing thing about human beings is that we all are together and alike when we lie; the moment we begin talking about truth, we fly at each other's throat. What can be more astonishing than this? There has hardly been anything in history that has produced violence and killing than the conflicting perceptions of what truth is. As per definition of truth in the Mahabharata

The way it was heard, the way it was seen, and the way it was done, to represent it through speech without distortion is truth (Anushashan 232.17)

### **Truth and the problem of relativism**

Everything in this world is a mixture of truth and untruth. Then how does one act in order to act as per dharma. What is truth and what is untruth? At what time must one speak the truth? At what time must one speak the untruth?

Ans- Undoubtedly it is good to speak truth ; for greater than truth there is nothing. Yet, I shall speak you of that which is exceedingly difficult to judge. Where truth turns untruth , it is better not to speak the truth; for there untruth is acts as truth. Whatever does not do violence , that certainly is dharma; for all saying in dharma are meant to prevent violence to living beings. Dharma is propounded with the aim of securing the good of all living beings; hence whatever fulfils that aim is dharma- this is certain. Whatever comes from love for all beings is dharma; this is the criterion to judge dharma from adharma. Dharma was created for the orderly progress and the welfare of the people. To save others from being killed is a most exalted dharma. If by speaking a lie, a life is protected, then speak the lie., and protect the life. The Tirukkural says: Even falsehood has the nature of truth, if it confers a benefit that is free from fault.

### **Truth is relational**

What is truth and what are its predicates?

The Mahabharata mentions thirteen attributes of truth. Including itself as predicate, they are : equality (samta), self control (dama), absence of envy(amatsarya), forgiveness (kshama), modesty(hri), endurance (titiksha), not to find fault with others (anasuya), renunciation (tyaga), concentration (dhyana), nobility of conduct (aryata), forbearance(hriti),and not violence (ahimsa)

Each of them is defined as follows, ( shanty parva 168.8 to 168.22):

1. 'Truth' is that which is undifferentiated, eternal and without any defect. It is obtained through discipline of not doing anything against dharma
2. 'Equality' lies in displaying the same attitude towards friend and foe; it is achieved by destroying the feelings of attachment, antipathy, desire and anger
3. 'Self –control' consists in not desiring things that belong to others; in the seriousness and steadfastness of purpose; in the absence of deviousness; and in the conquest of anger ; it is obtained by knowledge
4. 'absence of envy' consists in mental restraint while giving gifts and in doing one's appointed duty; it is achieved through truthfulness
5. 'Forgiveness' consists in being able to bear a conduct that is unbearable and a speech that is unpleasant; it is achieved through truthfulness
6. 'Modesty' consists of securing for others, without regret and always at peace within, what is good ; it is achieved by following dharma
7. 'Endurance' is the capacity to bear difficulties in pursuing dharma and one's desired objects; it is obtained through patience
8. 'Not to find fault in others' consists in seriousness; it is achieved by generosity
9. 'Renunciation' consists in giving up partially to things as well as sense gratification; it is achieved by rising above attraction and revulsion
10. 'Concentration' is achieved through silence

11. ‘Nobility of conduct’ consists in working consistently for good of others; it is achieved through giving up attachment of things for oneself
12. ‘Forbearance’ consists in rising above happiness and suffering; it is achieved by constant forgiveness, by sticking to truth, and by conquering fear and anger
13. ‘Not violence’ consists in malice towards none, in act or in thought or in speech, and in showing kindness and generosity to others

These thirteen distinct attributes of truth together point to truth, strengthen it and enhance it

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### **Chapter 8- Human attributes- neither neglect, nor idolatry**

The Mahabharata shows, in great detail, that disrespect to any human attribute, such as self –interest (*svartha*), or sexuality, or desire for material prosperity, or to the more fundamental desire for pleasure (*sukha*), must invite violence (to the individual and his/ her relationships). But it shows at the same time how their idolatry must invite greater violence (collective and extensive).

**Discussion in shanty parva (Mahabharata),** Bhishm Pitamah speaks to Yudhishter, while lying on bed of arrows, before his death, regarding human self-interest

Whatever means are required to serve one’s self- interest, everybody in every matter adopts them.(320.43)

Circumstances often combine in such a way that an enemy turns into a friend, and a friend begins feeling of enmity. Friendship and enmity do not remain same all the time.( 138.13)

The fool who does not in any circumstances seek peace with the enemy, achieves nothing, gains nothing (138.16)

It is foolish to think that there is no alliance with enemy, and no falling out between friends. In his self –interest, the prudent men approaches the enemy with alliance and friendship, and gives up a friend, doing much good thereby (138.17)

There exists neither enemy nor friend: it is necessity that creates them, friends and enemies alike (138.139)

Neither is friendship permanent, nor is enmity permanent: it is due to self interest that somebody is now friend and then enemy (138.141)

With circumstances changed, sometimes friend turns into enemy, and enemy into friend. Indeed self-interest is the great force (138.142)

So long as the other serves one's self –interest, and on his death there is feeling of loss, only that long is one friend to the other (138.140)

It is self-interest alone that binds one to father and mother, to son, to uncle, and to nephew, indeed to all relatives and friends (138.145)

This material world is shot with self-interest , and no one is beloved of anyone. The affection between brother and brother, as between man and wife , is based on self-interest solely on self-interest . I know no love or affection without some purpose (138.152)

Friendship and enmity keep changing every moment, as the formation in clouds do.Today my enemy, you can turn my friend ; and today again become my enemy. So how unstable the two are, because of changing self-interest (138.160)

Everyone wishes to protect oneself: see self –interst is the essence of the world

Man is slave of self-interest. Self-interest is no one's slave. This is the truth. I am tied to Kaurav-s with the bond of self-interest.

One's self alone is one's friend, and also one's enemy. One's self alone is witness to what one does or does not do (Stree 2.35)

**Let one understand one's self through one's body and the mind . One's self is one's friend , and one's self one's enemy. Whoever has conquered his self , has his self as his friend. Conquered , the self is a friend ; left uncontrollable , an enemy** (Udyog 34.64 and 34.65)

It is neither bravery, nor wealth, nor friends, nor relatives, that can free one from suffering, but one's self, stable and self controlled (stree 7.72)

One he is human who does not let an act of kindness go in vein. The good that other did to one should be repaid by doing good to the other in even a greater measure (Aadi 161.14-15)

#### **Self-interest (*swartha*) and Prudence (*niti*):**

##### **It describes the effects of dry and hurtful words produce on others**

They burn the bones and the heart and the life of their victim: the prudent man should therefore give up forever speech that is hurtful.

The wound caused by an arrow is healed, and so is the wound caused by a sword is healed; but the wound of hurtful speech is never healed.

What is spoken without regard to time and place is bitter in result; is unpleasant; displays one's meanness; and is spoken without cause- that is not speech but poison

He whose speech is dry and whose heart is dry ; who by his speech hurts and causes pain to others; should among men be regarded as the poorest of all, carrying in his mouth poverty and death

Harsh words instant enemy of friends; even those of long standing and the one's who are honored; from the sting of sharp words can not be removed from the mind

Neither the splendor of ornaments, nor kingdom, nor bravery, nor learning, nor wealth, is comparable to **courtesy and gentleness**

**Silence** is the **first** quality of speech; speaking the **truth**, the **second**; **speaking pleasantly**; the third; and **speaking according to dharma**, the fourth

A friend is one who can be trusted like a father, others are mere companion

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## **Chapter 9: Human Attributes- *Sukha and Duhkha*, Pleasure and Pain**

### **Pleasure and Pain: experienced facts**

Whatever is agreeable to one is pleasure, whatever is disagreeable is pain  
(Shanty 201.10)

Every one wishes to have pleasure , and everybody is distressed by pain (Shanty 139.62)

Pleasures are of two kinds: physical and mental. All human tendencies are towards pleasure. Indeed *dharma, artha, and kama*, the three ends of life , have nothing but pleasure: it is for obtaining pleasure all act is begun (Shanty 190.9)

Pains are of two kinds: physical and mental; they arise from each other: without the one, the other can not exist (Shanty 16.8)

There is no doubt that mental illness arises from physical illness. And it is certain that when mind is sick, the body will be sick too (Shanty 16.9)

Physical pain has four causes: disease, accidents, hard labor, and the loss of person who are dear to one

Mental pain is caused by old age, loss of wealth, to have to live with those who one does not like and to those who one does, bondage, woman and on account of one's son. All beings suffer pain (Shanty 139.64)

There is no doubt that in life more pain than pleasure (Shanty 330.16)

### **The reasons why there is more pain than pleasures**

All objects of pleasure are transitory-beauty, youth, wealth, good health and the company of dear ones (vana 2.47)

Accumulation ends in destruction, rise ends in fall, the coming together end in parting, and life ends in death (shanty 330.20)

All things gained by human effort are unstable and perishable (vana 79.20)

For a moment , man is boy; for a moment a lovesick youth; for a moment , at the height of prosperity; then, at life's end , with limbs worn out by old age, and wrinkles adorning his face, like an actor he retires (Vairagya 50)

There is more pain than pleasures lies in desire itself. Its nature is such that it remains forever unquenched. For desire invariably turns into unending 'thirst', *trishna*

Existing in human body, 'thirst', *trishna*, has neither beginning nor end; it keeps destroying people even as the fire does (vana 2.37)

Not by appeasing it, is desire satisfied; with that it only grows, like fire when more fuel is added to it (Aadi 75.50)

Contentment does not come even if one should obtain that ends one finds pleasurable (shanty 180.26)

The same is true of sexual pleasure, as Yayati discovered after a thousand years of his resolute dedication to it. Yayati says "Not all the grain in the world , nor all the gold, nor all the women, are sufficient : man grows old , but not desire" (Aadi 85.13)

And desire is the greatest pain; not desire, the greatest happiness (shanty 174.63)

Whichever desire is given up, that brings happiness in that measure. The one who pursues desire, is by desire destroyed (Shanty 174.45)

Whatever things is desired by men, those things become the seed from which grows tree of pain. Wife, son, friend, wealth, house, property and money – from all these, the pleasure men get is not so much as opposite of it. (Vishnu 6-5.55 & 56)

Just all human beings are in constant fear of death, the rich are in constant fear of the king, water, fire, thief, and relatives (vana 2.39)

There are physical senses and faculties with their natural tendencies

First comes awareness of objects; then springs the desire for them; then resolution to obtain them; then the resolution to obtain them; ten the acts followed by their results. From such desires arises attachment , *raga*, and after words aversion, *dvesha*, then comes greed, *lobha*, followed by confusion, *moha*. Overpowered by these, he moves away from *Dharma* (vana 210.2 & 210.5)

Since there is in this world no substance that can fill a man's greed, which is like an ocean that never gets filled by all the rivers that flow into it. Greed leads man to endless striving and confusion, from which arise untruth, fear and aggression, indeed every conceivable human disorder (shanty 158.12,13)

It is ignorance that takes a person to darkness. It is ignorance that causes his sorry state. It is ignorance that brings sufferings and pain, in which he is drowned. (shanty 159.3)

Confusion of perception is the root of greed , conditioned by time; conditioned by time ; and with time as its cause , greed then dispersed (shanty 159.11)

He who has conquered greed and its deluding confusion has conquered his self (shanty 158.15)

### **Three different paths to happiness:**

- a. **Indriya- nigraha, disciplining the body –mind:**

The body is chariot, the five sense- organs its horses, and the mind the charioteer. The man holds firmly the reins of the five horses is a happy charioteer (Udyog 34.59)

Indulgence to sense-organs leads to all disorder, of this there is no doubt. Disciplined, they bring all fulfillment (vana 211.21)

The eyes, the nose, the skin, the ears, and the tongue, are the instruments through which all living beings sense the world. On the excessive greed , the obsessive ‘thirst’ for objects, coming to an end , these sense organs create happiness and joy (udyog 32.25)

Self-discipline increases one’s strength, and is the highest purity. Removing the disorders of conduct, the one who has achieved self-discipline has gained the universe (shanty 160.9)

Who has disciplined himself sleeps peacefully, and happily awakes, relates with the world with happiness , and is joyful at heart (shanty 160.12)

Disciplining one’s body, mind and intellect, let one conquer one’s self with one’s self; for one’s self is one’s friend and one’s self also one’s enemy (Udyog 34.64)

### **b. Vairagya, renunciation of the world**

Indriya –nigrah , self control , alone is not sufficient , although it is evidently necessary. Withdrawal from the world is even greater requisite. Since the body is the physical instrument of experiencing the pleasures, the offending aspects of the body itself are enumerated as follows

This world is a moving wheel. Being with loved one is transitory, passing . Brother, father, mother, friend are like companions on the road (shanty 28.41)

In one’s mind one should rather ask, where I am?, where will I go?, who am I?, why I am here?, why I am here?, For whom should I grieve?. (shanty 319.14)

One is alone in birth; one is alone in death. One is in crossing over. Father, mother, brother, guru, relatives and friends are of no help. They weep over his

body for a while when dies, and then turn their face away (Anushashan 111.11 to 13)

There are no eyes like knowledge, no austerity like truth, pain like attachment, and no happiness like renunciation (shanty 175.35)

To punish one's body, under the impression that one would secure true happiness thereby, was senseless. For the ascetic denial of the body must eventually lead to a hatred of all that is human

### **Moksha: Towards freedom from the human condition**

#### **As per Kathopnishad**

1: "*One is good, while the other is pleasant. These two having different objectives chain ( bind ) a man. Blessed is who , between these two, chooses the good alone, but he who chooses what is pleasant, loses the true end (goal)"*

Explanation: The statement, "both these chain a man" is very significant from the highest stand point of supreme goal. The path of pleasant abducts the persuer often into the dangerous jungles of crimes and sins thereby insuring him for a long lease of painful existence as conscious being born in the lower wombs (yonis)

Similarly, too, a conscious following of the path of Good, with a desire to enjoy the fruits thereof, would be demanding for our selves a transfer into softer planes of consciousness, the world of Gods, wherein such people will have to take embodiments to live through the fruits of their meritorious acts.

2. "*Both the good and the pleasant approach the mortal man; the wise man examines them thoroughly and discriminates between the two; the wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the ignorant man chooses the pleasant for the sake of this body through avarice (extreme greed for wealth or material things) and attachment*

Expl: Life is a series of challenges. At each challenge two paths, as it were , are open to us to follow. On one side we are temptingly beckoned to playfully dance through a seemingly well –lit *path of pleasant*, but the path ultimately leads to a dark cave of sorrow and endless death; and on the other side lies a quite un inviting path , ill used, winding and uphill, but that which ultimately leads us to the sunlit pasture lands and flowery-meadows of eternal living and happiness. This later path is called the *path of Good*

Man is his mind. As we cultivate and train the mind so shall we become. Tune our minds to the impermanent lower value of negativity and we become gross insensible two-legged animals. Train the mind to think and act in terms of the higher and permanent values of love, tolerance, mercy etc., and we get ourselves cultured and perfected to become signatories in our own appointments for the future.

There is no destiny beyond and above ourselves the architects of our future

3. These two, ignorance and what is known as Knowledge, are wide apart and lead to different ends or goals

Expl: The path of pleasant is the path of ignorance and the path of good is the path of knowledge

4. The ignorant, who live in the midst of darkness but fancy themselves to be wise and learned, go round and round deluded in many crooked ways, Just as the being led by the blind

5. The way to the hereafter is not apparent to the ignorant man who is childish, befooled by the glamour of wealth. "This is the only world," he thinks "there is no other." Thus he falls again and again under my sway (i.e Lord Yama)

**Conclusion points 1-5:** The two paths: of knowledge and good; of ignorance and pleasure. Deluded by the passing joys men fall into cheap materialism and become slave to Death

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Since pleasure and pain are invariably linked together , what is to be aimed at is not some form of pleasure that is devoid of pain, which would be impossible to find , but a state in which pleasure and pain as a set of opposite ceased to have effect on one's consciousness. It was admitted that neither of them could be eliminated as a physical and psychological fact, but through an understanding of their workings, and with certain discipline of the body and the mind. And that state is being called *Moksha*, the supreme Good , where all opposites within which human life is ordinary lived cease to operate upon a man's consciousness, freeing him thereby from incessant cycle of birth and death, because all his acts would then become no-acts

Moksha in that sense , however , so overwhelming difficult to achieve that .

### **A radical shift in the 'because-therefore' reasoning**

Each of the tree paths,viz. *indriya-nigraha*, *vairagya* and *Moksha* , to happiness and freedom from suffering has its reasoning , in the form of 'because-therefore'. One hears more of vairagya and moksha and less of

indriya-nigraha, self discipline. *Indriya-nigrah* is not denial of pleasure; rather, it is the very first condition of pleasure. Self discipline is not a moarse, joyless, dark discipline; rather , it is the very first condition of coming into the light and joyof being fully human. Self discipline is not an oppressive negation of one's self; rather, self-discipline is very first condition of finding one's self and reaching the other. King Alarka after for a long while, concludes that it is the reflective *yoga* with which he will conquer his Mind, his body, and the intellect, by bringing them in unity. The Mahabharata declares *to be at war with one's self is to be at war with every one else.*

### **The Mahabharata's teaching of happiness**

The Mahabharata teaches at every turn, in every context, that pleasure and happiness , sukha, and pain and sufferings , dukha, individual and collective, are created by certain conditions, some of them external some within.

Human beings thus keep having suffering and happiness both. Do not let them paralyze you with anxiety (vana216.10)

Suffering and happiness move in a cycle (shanty 174.19)

The suffering of the mind is to removed through understanding, and that of body, through medicine, that is within competency science (shanty 205.3)

But should there be some physical and mental suffering about which nothing could be done, or what was done was ineffective, then let one not worry about it (shanty 205.1)

There are thousand places for sorrow and a hundred places for fear, they affect only the ignorant, not the wise.

Leaving anxiety and worry, one should rather see how one can free oneself from pain and suffering, and act, and one does become free (vana 216.17)

Anxiety and worry do not help, they only increase one's pain. Only those who transcend the duality of 'pain' and 'pleasure' , or 'suffering' and 'happiness', are truly happy (vana 216.21)

To wanting and to its unrest, there is no end: therefore contentment is the greatest happiness (vana 216.23)

Happy are those who have inner contentment of knowledge and wisdom; the unhappy fools are always discontented (vana 216.22)

Sorrow destroys one's form ; sorrow destroys one's strength. Sorrow destroys knowledge and awareness; and sorrow leads to illness (Udyog 36.24)

Becoming aware of the disorders of one's self, and of the smell of pain and suffering that arises from them, one should try to gain knowledge of those disorders (shanty 301.52)

Those who have the happiness of the mind , and have gone beyond the play of opposites, and are free from envy, are effected neither by gain and prosperity nor by loss and adversity (shanty 174.35)

On transcending the conflicting opposites of 'truth' and 'untruth', 'sorrow' and 'joy', 'fear' and 'no fear', 'agreeable' and 'disagreeable' (shanty 174.53)

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## **Chapter 10: Material prosperity and Wealth, *Artha***

### **Importance of wealth in the Mahabharata**

#### **Arjuna's views :**

Neither is bondage in wealth , nor is freedom in moksha. Whether it is the one or will depend upon one's attitude towards having and not having (shanty 320.50)

Whoever is wealthy has friends as well; whoever is wealthy has his family and clan with him; only he who has wealth is known as a man; and only then he is considered to be learned (shanty8.18)

On wealth depends the rise of a family , and on wealth depends the rise of dharma; for who has no wealth , there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next (shanty 8.22)

Dharma and kama are the two limbs only of artha: it is by gaining wealth that they are obtained too (shanty 167.14)

### **Bhim's views:**

So long one lives in this world , and desires happiness, he should pay equal attention to the foundations , dharma; to secure material prosperity, artha; and the pleasures, kama

### **Views of Bhishma for a king, while on death bed:**

The strength of a king is based on treasury and army; army is based on treasury; the social order is based on army; and the people are based on dharma (shanty 130.35)

Great wealth can be earned neither by those who are too pure nor by those who are too cruel; follow the middle path, and thus collect great wealth (shanty 133.3)

Through wealth alone can one gain dharma and kama and next world as well; but wealth should be earned through dharma, never through adharma (shanty 71.7)

### **As per Panchatantra**

There is nothing in this world that can not be obtained through wealth; let a prudent man earn wealth by his effort (panchatantra 1.2)

Old men with wealth appear young; where as those who have no wealth turn old even in their youth

### **The other truth concerning wealth**

In respect of wealth and its place in life, the opposite view is stated quite as strongly , if read properly , the Mahabharata is not rejecting wealth and

material prosperity as of any value, or as natural human attribute. On the contrary it is showing its great importance in human attribute. On the contrary, it is showing its great importance in human affairs. Money and property are material objects, which bring with them ,however a host of attitudes; which mind , which having and not-having produce, with which the Mahabharata is more concerned; for they have consequences both for individual person and for the society. *The paradox of desire and its logic* come in focus in that context

**Views of Bhishma** on question by Yudhisthira, (what state of the mind should one strive for, if all one's efforts to make money bear no fruits)

Q- If a person driven by thirst for money still does not get it, what should he do that he might still be happy

Ans: an attitude of equality towards all, truthfulness, distance from the world and its working, avoiding fruitless labor; and excessive involvement-whoever has these five is indeed a happy person

Those mature in knowledge regard these five steps as the source of peace. They are believed to be heaven, dharma, and the highest happiness (shanty 177.2 & 177.3)

#### **Sage Manki's views:**

Striving for money is certainly not conducive to happiness. When obtained , one is overcome with anxiety to protect it. If lost, after gaining it, it is quite as painful as death. Neither is certain if, after making all the effortsto get it , one will get it or not. (shanty 177.26)

The suffering arising from loss of money and wealth , I think that to be the most painful; for who is deprived of money, even his relatives and friends show him scant respect (shanty 177.34)

He who is poor, for him are reserved a thousand of indifference. Poverty has in it many a great demerit; but also the happiness of having money and wealth is laced mostly with pain (shanty 177.35)

Nobody has hitherto understood all the workings of money and wealth. The thirst for this body and life only keeps increasing (shanty 177.17)

**Other voices**, what is manifestly true:

**Bhagrithi said:**

All good qualities are dependent on money. There are many who, driven by their greed for money, often lose their lives. Such people perceive nothing but money as sole purpose of life

**Yudhishthira said:**

Born in a good family, and mature in age, should a person still take what belongs to another, then his greed destroys first his faculty of thought. Faculty of thought destroyed , the sense of shame is destroyed (udyog 72.18)

Shame destroyed, dharma is destroyed. When dharma is destroyed, all that is benevolent and good is destroyed. With that, man's prosperity is destroyed. And the destruction of a man's prosperity is akin to his death (udyog 72.19)

By advocating the perception of the primacy of money and wealth in human affairs is no advocacy of **poverty** either

When food for today and tomorrow is not to be seen, there is no situation more painful than that, as Sambara the wise said (udyog 72.22)

Falling into poverty , many chose to kill themselves; many left one place to go and live in another, some even in forest; and some left their homes, if only to kill themselves.(udyog 72.26)

In the state of poverty , a man is full of anger, which makes him lose his faculty of right and wrong, and then takes to cruel deeds (udyog 72.32)

For '*artha*', the wealth , not to put good use, becomes a source of *anartha* . The proper distribution of wealth is to be the principle

If wealth is not distributed, it will be wasted as the water stored in an unfired clay pot is wasted. It is therefore one's duty to preserve it. Wealth not properly distributed is wasted in a hundred different ways (vana 236.27)

More than social control, in one's own interest, there is necessity of self control. The first step is to understand the logic of having, and what leads to, unless disciplined. Taking up the social order, *lok-smagaha*, as one of the main concerns of human living, in unity with the ordering of one's individual's life, the aim of Mahabharata is to prevent the necessity of wealth turning into greed, and greed to lawlessness. The Mahabharata tells us , as the collective experience of life, that their fulfillment is possible within the wholeness of human attributes- in neither neglect nor in their idolatry (worshiper of idols or devoted admirer)

The wealth that has been lawfully earned, and lawfully increased, is also to be preserved with care- in order to secure the good of others. This is certain. (shanty 292.4)

The influence of wealth is, therefore, subordinated to the nobility of conduct, *sadachar*, Vidur said

A man may obtain wealth through force, constant effort, intelligence, and through one's prowess; but that not still give him the excellence of conduct of one's born in a good family (udyog 36.21)

The definition of the nobility of conduct is

Do not do unto others what one would not do unto oneself: this in brief is dharma. All else is selfishness (udyog 39.71)

Avoidance of *ati* , excess , was the final principle of prudence. Let one pursue what one would: excitement of sexual pleasure, exultation of great wealth, the power of political supremacy; but all these were eventually destructive if carried to an excess.

Conquered , one's self is the best friend one has, uncontrolled, one's only enemy (udyog34.65)

By all means endeavor prosperity, but give up aggression towards others  
(shanty 294.24)

Kautilya's Arthashastra indicates prevalence of deception and cheating in various ways; adulteration, false weight and measures; enhancing the value of articles and lowering their quality, deception in the manufacture of articles and in their sales; charging unauthorized rates of interest; claiming more than the amount loaned; misappropriation of deposits and wages, manufacturing counterfeit notes; fabricating accounts and king's orders; extortion and bribery; cheating by goldsmiths, dishonest judgments by judges; and unjust punishments

**Vyasa said:**

With arms raised I am shouting, but nobody listens to me: when both wealth and pleasure can be had from dharma, why do people not follow it?  
(swargarohan 5.62)

Earn the wealth which is free from the fear of the state, of the fear of being stolen, and free the fear that it all will end with one's death (shanty 321.46)

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## **Chapter 11- Sexual Energy and Relationships, *Kama and Saha-dharma***

Like everything else in Indian Culture, sex was perceived at many different levels. The problem is that sexual life in Indian Society was for the most part centered in the undeniable functionality of human being, but also moved away from it in different directions, exploring the limits of sex, often taking a course that was socially reckless ( Heedless of danger or the consequences of one's actions; rash or impetuous). Hence two languages of sexuality: one of functionality, the other of ecstasy (an overwhelming feeling of great happiness or joyful excitement). Sex is primeval (of the earliest time in history) force that moves every living being, and from which even gods are not exempt either. Like all forces of the nature , sexual force was raised to the status of a deity (kamadev). In this view , the force of sex

must be acknowledged with humility (The quality of having a modest or low view of one's importance), cultivated with knowledge and sensitivity, but all the times within limits. While *kama*, sexual desire, is human attribute, confusion, anger, ignorance, sorrow anxiety and fear are attributes of *kama*. In yet another view , the force of sex can be transmuted (Change in form, nature, or substance) into highest spiritual energy. The cosmic energy stored in sex , though it acts are mostly blind and wasteful, can be released into human consciousness by means primarily of those very acts. It is a psychic force that exists in a hierarchy of energy levels, the highest of which is *kundalini*, sleeping like a coiled snake, unmindful of its awesome power. Asceticism (Characterized by severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence) was another factor that sastric sexual ideal had to contend with. Indian asceticism has several faces, to be distinguished one from other. Their outward feature was their view of sensuousness, and therefore of sex, as a cosmic snare (a trap for catching birds or mammals, typically one having a noose of wire or cord. a length of wire, gut, or hide) into which thousand different ways, man is forever drawn, only to squander (Waste - something, especially money or time, in a reckless and foolish manner) his psychic energy. It was denial of body and its pleasures, of personal ties and their comfort, of social relation and their security. In its extreme form it starved the body and mind of their nourishment. Buddha discovered, in one sweep of magnificent vision, that salvation

(Preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss: Deliverance from sin and its consequences) was not in punishing the body, but in knowing casual chain of suffering and decay, and destroying that chain with singular determination.

### **Conflicting attitudes towards woman:**

There is the view of woman as divine fullness from which man draws sustenance (Food and drink regarded as a source of strength; nourishment) .Side by side there exists also the view of her wily (Skilled at gaining an advantage, especially deceitfully), mendacious (Not telling the truth; lying),a seeker of sexual pleasure regardless of time , place and person. Alongside the woman as *shakti*, divine energy, stood the women as *maya*, the deluder, a source at once of fascination

and fear, because she was believed to carry within her an insatiable (impossible to satisfy) sexual hunger, inviting confusion and ruin.

To correct the stupid impression that sexual need was a primary need of women only, the Mahabharata states

All men of this world desire women; likewise women desire men. This is evident and everybody in the world is a witness to it (anushasan 39.2)

Just as women desire men, so also men have the same feeling towards women (anushasan 43.15)

The relationship between wife and husband , as between woman and man, is very intimate and subtle, with sexual intimacy as its common characteristic (anushasan 45.9)

The women who are virtuous and noble are honoured in the world as mother and they sustain the world by their own strength; but the women who are inclined to waywardness (Difficult to control or predict because of willful or perverse behavior) destroy the family, need to be protected from themselves (anushasan 43.20)

But it is only a man who is noble and strong himself who can protect women, that is, if he is neither taken up too much by them, nor is jealous of them (anushasan 43.22,25)

Those men who deceive women who have no one to care of them, women who are old, women who are young, or a girl child, women who are fearful, women who have become ascetics, are certainly damned to hell (anushasan 23.64)

The father protects her in childhood; the husband protects her in the youth, and sons protect her in old age; for women there is no independence (anushasan 46.14).

Since this verse occurs in the manu-smriti, as well, Manu is depicted as enemy of women's freedom, the controversy is covered in following dharmic attitudes towards women in anushasana parva, few of them are

Desirous of good of many kinds, let father, brother, father-in-law, and brother-in-law honor her with jewels and clothes

If the woman wishes are not fulfilled, she cannot please her husband, if he is not pleased, the progeny (children) does not arise. Let women be honored and pleased always

Where women are honored gods reside; where they remain not honored there nothing can bear fruit

That family does not survive where daughters-in-law lament(sad). The homes that are cursed by them are destroyed as if by a malevolent (wishing evil of others) ghost; bereft (deprived)of fortune, those home do not prosper

The birth of progeny, the nourishing of young, and the happy progress of society , are seen tied to women. Only if they are respected and honored will everything succeed.

Women are the glory. If happiness and well-being are desired, let them be treated kindly with honor; when a women is protected and with loving care, she becomes splendor and good fortune

As for the woman as mother , the Mahabharata holds:

**In status**, greater than ten scholars is the teacher and the preceptor (trainer), higher than ten preceptor is father; and higher than ten fathers is the mother; she is higher in status even the entire earth. Their no guru greater than the mother

In the money and property of a woman inherited from her father, the daughter has a right as the son has, because as the son so the daughter. Daughter is like son, this is established principle

**Comparative pleasure of man and woman:** through story of king Bhangsvana, who was transformed as woman by god Indra. On comparative pleasure of man and woman Bhangsvana said: It was as a woman he experienced the deeper pleasure deeper pleasure of sexual union between man and woman than he did as a man. And that pleasure is indescribable. The children she had given birth to, as a

woman, were infinitely more dear to her than those he had fathered as a man. A woman has greater love for her son than a man has.

One should enjoy all the three, dharma, artha, and kama, together. He who enjoys only one of them is most pitiable, he who is an adept in enjoying two of them is of middle class; but he who enjoys all the three in a harmonious way is the best (shanty 167.40)

**Sexuality and relationship in the Mahabharata:** through story of King Yayati, who after enjoying for one thousand years pleasure of kama, declares

In the very moments of his enjoying the pleasures he experienced, too, the melancholy (mental depression) that , given even a thousand years, they would all come to an end. Knowing the workings of Time, that certain prospect made him feel sad (aadi 85.7 &8)

The hunger of the pleasure can never be satisfied by more pleasure, just as the fire only grow higher when fed with more oil (aadi 85.12)

Not all grain in the world, not all the gold , not all the women, are sufficient for one man. Let one therefore renounce the ‘thirst’ of desire (aadi 85.13)

Exceedingly difficult to give up , by the ones wrong perceptions, which does not ever weaken although man does, and is like a fatal disease, only on renouncing that thirst of desire is true happiness (aadi 85.14)

b) The Mahabharata conveys at the same time another truth . Not only can the man-woman relationship not be limited to the satisfaction of desire alone, but also that erotic love , in order to be truly erotic, requires a sense of togetherness, *sam-bhoga*, which has meaning of ‘enjoying together, experiencing together’. What is saha-dharma? Saha-dharma is nothing more than a secondary attribute of marriage; and what husband and wife do together is given the name of dharma purely on functional grounds. The story of Ashtavakra for marriage narrates about the relationship of man-woman or saha-dharma. *Togetherness, with sense of direction, disha*. It is not a function of physical proximity alone. The Mahabharata avoids alike feverish persuit of sexual pleasure and abjuring it altogether. To steer

clear of all excess, of physical enjoyment and of ascetic denial alike, sexual pleasure is given a decided place: within the institution of marriage, hence kama is subject to dharma.

In a final movement of all the three, dharma, kama and artha, are then made dependent upon woman as wife. Being other half of man, the wife is declared the protector of wealth, of human body, of society, of social order, of heaven, and ancestors.

### **Kama subject to dharma:**

The artha of excessively greedy; and the kama of the one obsessed with it- both these do injury to dharma. The one who does no injury to dharma and material being by obsessive sexuality; or sexuality and dharma by the obsessive greed for wealth; or to material well being and sexual impulse by dharma misconceived, but enjoy them together, in their inner harmony, gains greatest happiness of all (shalya 60.21& 22)

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## **Chapter 12:**

### **Gihastha and Grahini, the House holder; Grihastha –ashrama, Life in family**

**Family as a stage in life:** man's life is divided into the familiar 'four stages' or ashrama; Brahmacharya, a period of study; grihstha, a time of raising a family, vanaprastha, a time for freedom from the cares of the family, and for reflection on the higher concerns of life; which literally means 'moving towards the forest', and finally sanyasa, the time for total withdrawal from the world. The life in family, that is most important , as it supports the other three.

### **The highest place for the householder and the family**

As per Draupadi in conversation with five brother

Once the wise weighed in a scale the relative weight of the four stages of life; and kept life in family on one side and other three on the other. Weighing them on the scale of close analysis , life in family was found to be greater weight; for in that the fulfillment of desires and the higher purpose of life , the earthly and the heavenly , get combined. (shanty 12.12,13 & 14)

Just as all living beings are able to survive owing to the loving care of their mothers, likewise all other stages of life are possible because of the support that households provide.(shanty 269.6)

### **Obligations and duties, and ‘three debts’**

Members of a family remained united by means of duties that were held to be sacred and not merely civil. No matter what the character or circumstances of a father or a mother might be, their children owed to them certain duties. Similarly, the parents owed to their children certain duties. Providing protection, loving care, a disciplined upbringing , and honest advice were the duties of parents towards children; obedience, holding them in honor, and looking after them in their old age were the duties of children towards parents. Furthermore, the family duties extended to animals also. Household is obliged not only to the living, but to the dead as well- and to the gods of the universe, too.

The three debts or *rna*, that every person owes , and must be discharged : a debt to one’s ancestors; a debt to one’s teachers; and a debt to society. The debt to ancestors is paid by raising a family; the debt to one’s teachers , by contributing further to the advancement of knowledge; and the debt to the society , by living a self regulated and self disciplined life. To these three debts is added two more.A debt to guests, for a person himself or herself , a guest to another household, and has been received with feelings of respect and affection.

But one owes a debt to one’s self, too. How is debt one owes to the one’s self to be repaid?

### **Not obligations and duties alone, also feelings**

In the Mahabharata, the foundations of family relationships are discussed not in terms of rules but in the language of feelings- through the stories of human situations everywhere. What it narrates also as the problematic, however, are moral dilemmas that often arise when there is direct conflict between one duty and another, both inviolable. The most famous example of this was the deep moral dilemma that confronted Arjuna at the very beginning of the war.

Life is a system of relationships, and relationships are lived through feelings. The quality of a life will be determined by the quality of relationships, and they, by the quality of the feelings that run through them. Feelings arise from perceptions, in which the mind and its instruments play a central part. But feelings can also cloud perceptions. In order to change feelings, philosophy in relation to the life-in-family is enacted everyday everywhere.

### **The place of the wife in life-in-family**

A house is not a home: only through the wife is a house called the home. Where there is no wife, that dwelling is like wilderness (desert or confused assemblage) , (shanty144.6)

The greatest wealth of a man is his wife. For him who is lost and helpless in the journey of life , his wife is his support (shanty144.14)

For him who is afflicted by illness, and troubled for long and deeply , there is no better cure than his wife (shanty 144.15)

There is no friend like wife, no support like wife, nor anyone in the world like the wife, who helps one live a meaningful life (shanty 144.16)

The wife is a man's other half; the wife is his best friend. The wife is the root of all order, of material prosperity, of the fulfillment of desires (aadi 74.41)

In the moments of deepest intimacy, of loving speech ; in the ordering of life, like father; and in the moments of crisis , the wife acts like a mother (aadi 74.43)

Sexual satisfaction, love, and the ordering of life, depend upon the wife. Let no man , therefore, even if angry, do ill to his wife (aadi74.51)

But

The home where the wife has in her goodness, nor is of pleasant speech , that man go in wilderness; for there is no difference between such a dwelling and wilderness (shanty 144.17)

A good woman enhances the family. A good woman nourishes the family. A good woman is goddess of good fortune, the source of sexual happiness, the embodiment (make actual)of what the family is founded upon, and of creation (Anushasana )

### **The place of a daughter in a family**

A daughter is the goddess of prosperity lives always. She is established in her always. A daughter is glorious, endowed with all that is good, to be honored at the beginning of every good work (anushasana)

Just as a precious jewel makes everything worthy, a daughter is like the great goddess of good fortune, for everything good in this world (anushasana)

### **The place of a mother in a family**

It is only the mother who gives comfort and heals those in distress. Only that long does a person feel protected as long as mother is alive; without mother he is unprotected wholly (shanty 266.26)

Thereis no better cover than the mother ; no greater support than she; neither a great protector ; and there is none dearer than she (shanty 266.31)

Respect and loving care for one's mother and fatherare greatly emphasized in the Mahabharata. They were not just duties towards the parents, to be performed somehow. Feelings of respect and loving care are equally emphasized.

For the one desirous one's welfare, there are five guru-s: father, mother, the fire, the Self and the preceptor (Rule or guide), (vana 214.27)

Whoever acts towards them well, will serve the life –in-family well. This is the abiding dharma of all the times (vana 214.28)

## **Conversation between husband and wife as part of family life**

What kind of life do two brilliant persons husband and wife, lead as house holder ?

Ans- They live the ordinary life of the life-in-family, grihstha, raise a family- and have brilliant conversations with each other

## **Life –in- family in the larger context of life**

The Mahabharata suggests that the personal concerns of an individual livening the life-in-family are not uniquely personal, and they are best understood in a way , however , that what exists beyond the personal neither devalues nor negates the distinctly personal. It is through happenings in a family, through the experiences of a man or a woman or of a child, that the Mahabharata reflects upon fundamental questions as regards the human condition that those experiences invariably give rise to. Yet it is also true growing vastly different historical and cultural conditions , families in different parts have different perceptions of life, of family itself. But whatever the diversities, the foundation of family is, everywhere and at all times , saha, ‘togetherness’. Togetherness, by definition requires existence of the self and of the other

In the marriage by vedic rites, the man and the woman together take seven steps around the fire before which the ceremony takes place , fire being witness, along bwith other elements of nature present. On taking seventh step, they turn to each other , and say: With these seven steps , become my friend. I seek your friendship. May you never deviate from this friendship. May we walk together . may we love each other and enhance each other.

May our vows be congruent (suitable, agreeing) and our desires shared.

Marriage as friendship , not as theater of a power struggle. Nor saha is limited to family. It is foundation of all relationships

Famous resolve , of teacher and student together says

May we together protect each other, and together nourish each other . May we gain strength together. What we have together learnt and studied , may it in splendor and force grow. May we never have for each other repugnance antipathy, aversion and dislike.

This follows the two word invocation that togetherness brings and repeated three times

Om shanty, shanty, shanti