

INTRODUCTION

bibheti gahnAth shAstrAth narassthiktAdivoushadhAth . bhArata:
shAstrasAroyaM atha: kAvyAthmanA: krta (~ BhaviShyat Purana)

Meaning: Man is afraid of the shAstrAs like a diseased person is afraid of a bitter medicine. Hence it is that the essence of the shAstrAs has been used to bring forth this mahAbhArata as a delightful poem.

The mahAbhArata is an upAsana-shAstra. The story is historical and also a metaphor for truths of shAstra, particularly those relevant to upAsana - called bhakti yoga.

This bhakti yoga - upAsana - is the chief means prescribed by the shAstra to attain bhagavAn. It is of the form of incessant meditation on Brahman like the flow of oil, spanning thousands of janmas, adopting the brahma vidyAs of the upanishads and culminating in a vision of bhagavAn's divine form in the mind (sAlambana yoga). This will allow the yogI to progress to nirAlambana yoga, which is meditation on the brahma-svarUpa characterized by satyam, j~nAnam, anantam, Anandam and amalAtvam. The vision of the svarUpa is the attainment of moksha.

This bhakti is supported by karma yoga - desireless actions, with fruits dedicated to bhagavAn, for realizing true nature of the jIvAtma as j~nAnAnandamaya and subservient to Brahman as his sharIra (the sharIrAtma bhAva). Karma yoga can also lead to j~nAna yoga which results in same vision of the jIvAtma. Karma and j~nAna yogas are limbs of bhakti. Needless to say, all gods and rishIs are mostly bhakti yogIs. The path is arduous and requires self-effort - physical and mental strength.

All this is well and good. But an alternative means exists in shAstra called sharaNAgati. This path involves a complete relinquishment of self-effort. bhagavAn stands in as the means instead of upAsana and delivers the fruit quickly. It is easier and also allowed for all, whereas bhakti yoga is only for the higher varNAs.

Now, here is an anomaly. bhagavAn is attained by 2 means - one of self-effort and another of no-effort. Why do 2 contradictory means exist? In nyAsa tilaka, shrI vedAnta desikan, when listing differences between bhakti yoga and prapatti, declares - "**tvat pAratantrya ucitA**" - sharaNAgati is suited to the extreme dependence of the jIvAtma on paramAtma by nature, as it involves no effort. In contrast, bhakti yoga, which requires self-effort, is not suited to this dependent nature of jIvAtma.

What is the implication of this? It means, bhakti yoga is against the nature of complete dependence. Self-effort results from great strength. Such great strength results in pride over such prowess. The yogI begins to think he is very great on account of executing this Yoga successfully. Though there is no pride in the sense of considering oneself independent, or due to learning/wealth etc., as he is a parama-bhakta, there is this "inner delight" in one's prowess, which is a sUkShma-ahaMkAra. And this very subtle ego is enough to destroy the upAsana.

This is mentioned in Taittiriya Samhita as follows,

**yavad eva brahmavarchasam tat sarvam karoty ati brahmavarchasam kriyata ity
Ahus**

["As much indeed is the splendour or glory of Brahman (brahmavarchasam), all that he produces for himself by bhakti yoga - he gains it's experience. Ego is produced which surpasses or overcomes the nature of the self, which is a property of Brahman", so say the Acharyas.]

Where "**ati brahmavarchasam**" is explained as follows - "**brahmavarchasam**" is the self, which is the splendour or vibhUti of Brahman, and hence is dependent on him. This upAsana, though ridding a bhakta of all sorts of ego, leaves behind the "ego" of self-effort - delighting in his own strength. This ego is "**ati brahmavarchasam**" - It exceeds the nature of the self which is a dependent (vibhUti) of Brahman and thus shouldn't have this ego.

Ishvaro dushcharmA bhavitor iti mAnavi schau dhAyye kuryAd yad vai kim cha manur avadat tad bhesajam

[The independent yogI (IshvaraH) will become one who attains this "miserable prakR^iti" - ie, his mukti is delayed. He should contemplate on the verses of Manu that kindle knowledge. Whatever is spoken by Manu, that is medicine.]

The bhakti-yogI is called "**Ishvara**" since he has the ego that he is attaining bhagavan by his own independent strength. He doesn't attain bad births; he can be born as prahlAda, as brahmA, rudra etc. But all this falls under "**dushcharmA**" - "**duH sthita charmA**" - prakRi^ti signified by "skin" which is inherently sorrowful. Thus, the Veda recommends Manu's words in manu smR^iti where he says j~nAna is wasted by ego.

mahAdeva, foremost amongst bhakti yogIs (**vaishnavAnAm yatha shambhuH**) has himself been gently chided by bhagavAn for harboring this subtle ego of self-effort:

rakShitaM naiva shaknoShi svAtmAnamapi shaN^kara . yuddhe kiM jeShyasi tvaM mAM (~ kUrma purANa)

[vishNu said, "shaN~kara! you are not capable of protecting even yourself. How can you win over me in a war?"]

The war is sAdhana. In the war, the bhakta conquers bhagavAn by his bhakti.

Here, bhagavAn is saying, *"You do many auspicious meditations on me, so you are called shaN~kara. Due to those meditations, you have that delight in your self-effort or prowess in Yoga. So you are unable to protect yourself, ie, your true nature of dependence to me is not protected against this subtle ego. How can you then conquer me by your bhakti in your sAdhana?"*

This is not to say that bhakti yogIs are bad. They are parama-bhaktas and sAttvikAs. Who would deny bhISHma, prahlAda, rudra etc are bhaktas and great gurus? Our AcharyAs have lavished praise on bhakti yogIs as well and consider them as great AchAryAs. Even the author of the mahAbhArata who is pointing out these tattvAs is a bhakti yogI himself, the great veda vyAsa!

They are aware that their path is inferior to sharaNAgati, it is just that they haven't yet the desire to relinquish their self-effort to resort to this. They are scholars, so they know and appreciate prapannAs. But they lack the ruchi themselves for total surrender. Note that any condemnation of this path is only in relation to sharaNAgati. But in comparison to other people, bhakti yogIs are very exalted. Nahi nindA nyAya.

upAsana is an inferior mArga to prapatti. That being the case, why has upAsana been recommended everywhere in shAstra? Not everyone is willing to drop all their glories and surrender to bhagavAn. So, he has prescribed bhakti just as he has prescribed meat consumption for those inclined to eat meat. That is also why sharaNAgati itself has been prescribed as a limb of bhakti yoga too, to entice them to that path.

Coming to the topic in hand - the battle between bhIma and duryodhana is described as a battle between upAsana-tattva and the body in udyoga parva. The subtle

ahaMkAra as described above is the deciding factor in this battle. I described it in detail so that people can understand why bhIma had a hard time against Duryodhana.

Duryodhana is a prapanna of balarAma. When Samba married Duryodhana's daughter, the latter was incensed and abducted Samba. When balarAma threatened to destroy hastinapura, Duryodhana was frightened and thus, bhIShma and others performed sharaNagati on his behalf to balarAma, as his AchAryAs.

bhIShmadroNakRRipAdInAM praNamyA vadatAM priyam . kShAntam eva mayety...

[balarAma bowed to bhIShma, droNa, kripa who spoke pleasing words (of surrender on behalf of duryodhana) and said, "I am satisfied".]

Duryodhana returned Samba with his daughter to balarAma and made himself obedient to the latter. Thus, he had the anugraha of balarAma due to sharaNagati.

Since bhagavAn never looks at the doshAs of prapannAs (**yadi vA rAvaNa svayAM - even if he be rAvaNa, I will protect him**), balarAma ignored all of Duryodhana's vices.

shrI vedAnta desikan has praised balarAma's dayA, saying he was always intoxicated with drink so that he would not see or hear Duryodhana's faults - he was willing to bring ill-repute on himself, for the sake of Duryodhana. That is mentioned in mahAbhArata itself,

nanu rAmo.abravIdrAjAMstvAM sadA yadunandanaH . duryodhanasamo nAsti gadAyAmiti vIryavAn . shIghate tvAM hi vArShNeyo rAjansaMsatsu bhArata . sa shiShyo mama kauravyo gadAyuddha iti prabho

Meaning: balarAma, who delights the clan of yadus, has always said that there is no-one equal to duryodhana in the battle with the mace. He used to boast all the time everywhere, "That Kaurava, is my siShya".

This is the great mercy of bhagavAn. See how he exalts an evil person because he is his prapanna, as he exalted the fallen clan of Yadus!

On account of this, Duryodhana had a kavacha of balarAma's anugraha, which bhIma couldn't conquer by normal means. Since balarAma is Adi Shesha with a svarUpAvesha

of bhagavAn, this sharaNAgati is towards bhagavAn himself, and the protection is also offered by Adi Shesha.

With the understanding that Duryodhana = body, bhIma = upAsana and the inherent pitfall of ego in upAsana, I will begin the translation.

Bhima's Assurance to Krishna

YudhiShThira told Duryodhana that if he was able to defeat bhIma, he would become the victor in the battle.

bhagavAn was dismayed at that and conveyed his displeasure as follows,

balI bhImaH samarthash cha kRRitI rAJA suyodhanaH . balavAn vA kRRitI veti
kRRitI rAJan vishiShyate

Meaning: bhagavAn said to yudhIShthira - "King! bhIma, the strong one, has capability to fight due to his strength. Suyodhana is possessed of devotion to his preceptor. If it is between a strong one by nature, or one with devotion to his preceptor, then the one with devotion to his preceptor prevails."

"kRRitI" - Who gets righteous acts to his preceptor done. It means, Duryodhana was a prapanna, one who surrendered to balarAma. And though bhIma had the capability or eligibility to fight him, due to being a student of balarAma himself, a prapanna can never be defeated by one who is merely strong.

In AdhyAtmic terms, since duryodhana is the body, it possesses "kRRitI" - Ability to do acts that bewilder the jIva. Even a strong upAsaka cannot beat the body. But let us stick to the superficial meanings for now. Seeing bhagavAn so upset, bhIma strives to assure him as follows,

madhusUdana mA kArShIr viShAdaM yadunandana . adya pAraM gamiShyAmi
vairasya bhRRishadurgamam

Meaning: MadhusUdhana! Yadunanadana! Do not worry. Today, I shall reach the goal of this extremely difficult battle.

"madhusUdana" - You have destroyed the asura Madhu and fetched prosperity for the gods. Similarly, with you on our side, you will help us destroy Duryodhana and fetch us prosperity.

"yadunandana" - The Yadus were a fallen clan, not fit to be Kings. You exalted them. Would you not exalt us similarly, who were driven into the forest by this wicked Duryodhana?

adhyardhena puneneyaM gadA gurutarI mama . na tathA dhArtarAShTrasya mA
kArShIr mAdhava vyathAm

Meaning: This mace of mine is heavier than Duryodhana's by one and a half times. Therefore, do not grieve, mAdhava!

bhIma comforts bhagavAn by showing his mace. A mace in shAstra always stands for intellect. Thus, if bhIma is upAsana of the jIva (yudhIShThira), the gada here is the intellect - the love of Brahman (kR^iShNa-kAma) which is the strength that supports upAsana. Duryodhana in contrast is the body and his mace is the strength of loukika kAma.

"mAdhava" - "Keeping Lakshmi in front as puruShakAra bhUtai, I request you to shed your sorrow and aid us!"

Because bhIma invoked mahAdevI who never fails to unite bhaktAs with bhagavAn, latter bestowed his anugraha.

tathA saMbhAShamANaM tu vAsudevo vRRikodaram . hRRiShTaH saMpUjayAm Asa
vachanaM chedam abravIt . tvAm Ashritya mahAbAho dharmarAjo yudhiShThiraH
. nihatAriH svakAM dIptAM shriyaM prApto na saMshayaH

Meaning: Hearing those words of bhIma, vAsudeva, overjoyed at bhIma's concern for him, spoke these words, worshipping bhIma, "Taking refuge in you, mighty-armed one, dharmarAja yudhiShThira will eliminate his foes and get back his own effulgent wealth, there is no doubt".

bhagavAn, who had said he had doubts about bhIma's victory, immediately said bhIma would defeat duryodhana - because bhIma had worshipped him through lakShmI.

"saMpUjayAm" - bhagavAn gratefully worships those who worship him, so he worshipped bhIma, praising his previous exploits. Then, finally he said,

hatvA duryodhanaM chApi prayachChorvIM sasAgarAm . dharmarAjasya kaunteya
yathA viShNuH shachIpateH . tvAM cha prApya raNe pApo dhArtarAShTro
vina~NkShyati . tvam asya sakthinI bha~NktvA pratij~nAM pArayiShyasi

Meaning: bhagavAn said, "Killing Duryodhana, bestow this Earth with her Oceans on dharmarAja, just as viShNu bestowed Svarga on Indra. The sinful son of dhR^itarAShtra will be destroyed attaining you as his foe. You will accomplish his vow by breaking his bones."

As shruti says, "**paramaM sAmyaM upaiti**", bhaktas have the same strength as bhagavAn, by his sankalpa, so he compares bhIma to himself.

AdhyAtmic meaning - bhIma being upAsana tattva, he is compared to bhagavAn who is the means in prapatti mArga. Finally, bhagavAn adds a note of caution.

yatnena tu sadA pArtha yodddhavyo dhRRitarAShTrajaH . kRRitI cha balavAMsh
chaiva yuddhashauNDash cha nityadA

Meaning: Son of kuntI! Always fight that son of dhR^itarAShtra with care, ie, remembering me. He has devotion to balarAma, strength & ever delights in battle.

"yatna" - bhIma has to always take care to remember bhagavAn and not think his own strength will see him through in battle. Otherwise, he cannot defeat Duryodhana who has the anugraha of balarAma. In other words, bhagavAn is telling him to avoid delighting in his own strength. Remember that I explained the pitfall of upAsana in the introduction.

bhagavAn calls him the son of kuntI to show he has great affection for bhIma, due to the latter being the son of his aunt.

Preparations for the Battle

Duryodhana invoked balarAma's anugraha for the battle as follows.

rAmasAnnidhyamAgamyA putro duryodhanastava . yoddhukAmo mahAbAhuH
samahR^iShyata vIryavAn

Meaning: Your son, duryodhana of mighty arms, having arrived at the proximity of balarAma, desirous of battle (for victory), became full of joy.

While, bhIma, had the anugraha of garuDa.

tato bhImo mahAkoTiM gadAM gR^ihyAtha varmabhR^it . bibhradrUpaM mahArAja
sadR^ishaM hi garutmataH

Meaning: Then bhIma, grasping a highly excellent mace, clad in armor, bore a
form, O King, that was indeed the likeness of garuDa.

As vAyudeva supports garuDa's wings, the latter is very well-disposed to vAyu. Also,
if we consider that bhIma is upAsana in the inner meaning, garuDa is verily the leader
of bhakti-yogIs, as vedAtma, whose anugraha is needed for bhakti yoga.

Look at this irony, the two great servants of bhagavAn - garuDa and Adi Shesha - on
opposite sides helping bhIma and duryodhana. Is it not an incredible leela?

Adi Shesha is the leader of prapannAs, and garuDa is the leader of bhakti-yogIs. An
upAsaka needs to be pure for eligibility to upAsana - bhIma was a great bhakta. A
prapanna can even be impure, so Duryodhana, the evil one, was a prapanna.

First Phase of Battle - An Even Contest

From here onwards, I will explain this battle in two ways - the first will be the
superficial meaning of the battle and the second, the AdhyAtmic meaning (in pink, of
all colors (lol)!) considering bhIma as upAsana and duryodhana as the body.

Note that I may call bhIma as "upAsaka" or "yogI" in the inner meanings, but in
reality, it is yudhIShThira who is the upAsaka and bhIma is the upAsana in terms of
actual tattvas. But what the upAsana does, impacts the upAsaka anyway.

abhavach cha tayor yuddhaM tumulaM loma hArShaNam . jigISHator yudhA
anyonyam indra prahrAdayor iva

Meaning: The battle that happened between the two was hair-raising, each longing
for victory, like Indra and prahlAda.

Indra defeated prahlAda using the power of vishNu, when the latter snatched away
the Kingdom of Indra. Similarly, bhIma is empowered by bhagavAn, whose kingdom
has been snatched away by Duryodhana. Also, Duryodhana is a disciple of balarAma,
just as prahlAda also was a bhakta.

tathA tasmin vartamAne saMkule tumule bhRRisham . ubhAv Api parishrAntau
yudhyamAnAv ariMdamau

Meaning: After that violent battle between the two had lasted for some time, the two conquerors of their foes became fatigued.

Inner Meaning: By virtue of bhakti yoga, supported by karma yoga, the body becomes "exhausted" - ie, it loses his potency to attract the yogI to sense objects. However, the yogI too becomes exhausted - because this immunity lasts only as long as he keeps practicing bhakti yoga that requires tremendous physical and mental strength.

tau muhUrtaM samAshvasya punar eva paraMtapau . abhyahArayatAM tatra saMpragRRihya gade shubhe

Meaning: Those scorchers of foes, rested themselves for a muhUrta, then taking up their beautiful maces, they brought it near each other for attack.

Inner Meaning: When the upAsaka feels tired, he ceases his meditation. Then, for a short while, he may be born in many births without upAsana, like how jaDa-bharata became a deer. But bhagavAn ensures he retains his knowledge to commence upAsana again in future births, so the body too does not harm him. So both are at a truce for awhile, but both also slowly regain their influence. This is the significance of both taking rest for a "muhUrta" - signifies many births.

pragRRihItagadau dRRiShTvA duryodhana vRRikodarau . sAMshayaH sarvabhUtAnAM vijaye samapadyatae

Meaning: Seeing duryodhana and vR^ikodara carrying maces, all beings doubted as to who would gain the victory.

Inner Meaning: The mace signifies intellect in shAstra. As "gold" signifies any object of desire, a golden mace is basically knowledge associated with desire. Duryodhana's golden mace signifies the knowledge of sense objects with the gold covering of lust - desire for their experience. bhIma has the golden mace which is knowledge of Brahman with the gold covering of lust for experience of Brahman - kR^iShNa kAma.

Loukika kAma is a great enemy to bhagavad kAma of upAsakas, so much so that none knew which would be the victor. Note that by "loukika kAma", merely money or women are not meant. Even the positions of gods, rishIs etc are part of this kAma. Also, during upAsana, various superpowers like anima, garima etc are obtained which the yogI desires highly. All these fall under "kAma".

"sarvabhUtAnAM" signifies the senses - who knew which way the senses would be swayed to? Thirumangai Azhwar too has expressed doubt about bhakti yoga's success.

"vR^ikodara" - a voracious eater - experiencer of unlimited bhagavad guNAs.

acharad bhImasenas tu mArgAn bahuvidhAMs tathA . maNDalAni vichitrANi sthAnAni vividhAni cha

Meaning: bhImasena moved in many types of ways, in wonderful circular motions, in different postures.

Inner Meaning: The upAsaka meditates using different and varied "mArgas" - the brahma vidyAs such as prANa vidyA, dahara vidyA, etc. This way, he moves in many "sthAnAs" - the forms of Brahman which are abodes of kalyANa guNAs called "maNDalAs" since they limit or restrict one from experiencing other things. Thus, it signifies that the upAsaka is meditating on bhagavAn.

Next, the various manoevers adopted by both are descibed.

gomUtrikANi chitrANi gatapratyAgatAni cha parimokShaM prahArANAM varjanaM paridhAvanam

Meaning: He moved in wonderful zig-zag motions, advancing & moving back, retreating, making attacks, abandoning attacks & escaping his foe.

Inner Meaning: Having described bhakti yoga, this shloka describes the actions of bhIma. It should be taken that duryodhana also executed such moves, so the above holds for duryodhana too.

In the case of bhIma, the movements he does correspond to karma and j~nAna yogAs which support such bhakti, as below.

"gomUtrikANi chitrANi" - "gomUtra" is a purifying substance. "gomUtrikAs" refers to the senses which are doing purifying actions like thinking about the self, talking about it etc as gIta 2.29 says.

"gatapratyAgatAni" - advancing and moving back - advancing means doing actions of karma yoga and moving back means abstaining from the idea that one is the doer.

"parimokShaM" - retreating - abandoning fruits of actions, dedicating it to bhagavAn.

"prahArANAM" - attacks - meditations on bhagavAn's divine form which attack kAma.

"varjanaM" - abandoning - j~nAna yoga, which is freedom from prakR^itic distress through vision of the self attained by restraining activities. Karma yoga leads to this j~nAna yoga. Or, such meditation is also a part of karma yoga itself.

"paridhAvanam" - Escaping from the vision of sense objects by bhakti yoga.

This is upAsana and each of these takes innumerable births. Now, here is how the body counters it, signified by the same movements made by Duryodhana, as below.

"gomUtrikANi chitrANi" - **"gomUtra"** is also a product of cow, likewise, the body is a product of prakR^iti. **"gomUtrikANi"** are the karmas that create this body, which bind the upAsaka to fruitive actions.

"gatapratyAgatAni" - The body in some births advances, ie, makes the upAsaka attain higher worlds for experiencing fruits of puNya. At other times, it moves back, makes him attain lower worlds when the fruits are exhausted.

"parimokShaM" - The body in this manner, retreats from or "empties" the experience of the higher worlds, thus making the upAsaka yearn for more experiences.

"prahArANAM" - The body uses kAma, krodha etc. to attack the upAsaka who is filled with anger at not being able to regain experience of the higher worlds.

"varjanaM" - The body abandons discriminatory knowledge of the self due to above.

"paridhAvanam" - The body escapes the self-effort of karma yoga to quell it, ie, samsAra is sustained.

All this is described in gIta 2.62-63.

abhidravaNam AkShepam avasthAnaM savigraham . parAvartana saMvartam
avaplutam upaplutam . upanyastam apanyastaM gadAyuddhavishAradau

Meaning: Those two conversant with gadAyuddha ran at each other, challenged using taunts, stood their ground, remained firm not yielding, turned around to meet, jumped down to strike, violently attacked each other, came near to their opponent and stole away to gain some respite.

Inner Meaning:

"abhadravanam" - The body and upAsana target each other - body tries to destroy bhakti using loukika kAma, bhakti tries to destroy the body using bhagavad kAma.

"AkShepam" - The upAsana "censures" the body, rejecting it's nature of causing feelings of independence by sA~Nkhya yoga (knowledge of the self), the body obstructs upAsana to "censure" true nature of subservience & promote independence.

"avasthAnaM" - Body sometimes becomes favorable in a birth for the upAsaka due to being primarily sAttvika; likewise, upAsana may nurture the body, engaging senses in services, making it attractive in appearance.

"savigraham" - In some births, the upAsaka may feel the body is invincible. In other births, he feels his upAsana is firm.

"parAvartana" - The body may "turn around" the upAsana, ie, bewildering it and meet it to strike, causing ignorance obstructing meditation. The upAsana may also revolve around the body, ie, avoiding bewilderment and meet the body to strike - the yogI is not impacted by worldly activities due to his knowledge of the self.

"avapluta" - The body "jumps down" at unawares on the upAsaka, just as viShvAmitra was seduced by Menaka suddenly. The upAsana "jumps down" on the body, the yogI sometimes feels incessant meditation is exceedingly easy.

"upapluta" - The body sometimes distresses the upAsana by tApatraya. At other times, the upAsana afflicts the body, torturing it due to the heat of penances.

"upanyastam" - The body sometimes is placed near the upAsana, ie, it creates a feeling of pride in one's strength. I have mentioned that upAsana is associated with this subtle ego or delight in one's strength. The upAsana may also come near the body, ie, yogI may use the body to serve bhagavAn, showing his subservience.

"apanyasta" - The body may let go of the upAsana - it's strength will fail, disrupting his meditation. The upAsana may let go of the body - ie, the yogI will realize that it is not feasible to destroy sins obstructing bhakti yoga by his own strength. So he will perform sharaNagati as anga-prapatti, not depending on the strength of the body, to attain success in bhakti yoga. This anga-prapatti will lead to bhakti yoga, as it destroys sins obstructing it.

This back-and-forth battle between upAsana of the form of karma yoga and the body spans tens of thousands of births. By the anugraha of bhagavAn, the upAsaka even if he loses j~nAna in one birth, regains j~nAna in another birth. After many such births, anga-prapatti is performed for proceeding to bhakti yoga. Now, the upAsaka who was a karma yogI becomes a bhakti yogI.

vikrIDantau subalinau maNDalAni pracharatuH .

Meaning: Those two of exceeding strength, sporting with each other, moved in circles.

Inner Meaning: It is as if those two, the body and the upAsaka, were playing for the amusement of bhagavAn - "lokavattu Iila kaivalyaM", is it not? They were moving in "maNDalAs" - the various abodes of samsAra that restrict the jIva from moksha. It means, it happened for many births.

Second Phase of Battle - Duryodhana gains the upper hand

dakShiNaM maNDalaM rAjan dhArtarAShTro .abhyavartata . savyaM tu maNDalaM tatra bhImaseno .abhyavartata

Meaning: King! The son of dhR^itarAShtra approached turning right in a circle, while bhIma approached while turning left in the circle.

Inner Meaning: Now, the upAsana has moved to bhakti yoga. The body approaches the upAsana in "dakShiNaM maNDalaM" - the mind which is the abode of pleasant experiences of sense objects that tries to destroy the upAsana. "dakShiNaM" means amicable or pleasing. "maNDalaM" is the abode - mind.

upAsana approaches the body in "savya maNDala" - the mind (maNDala) which is "savya" or contrary to the experiences of prakR^iti - due to meditation of Brahman. If we take upAsana as svarUpa-virodha, it is also contrary to the true, subservient nature of the self due to that sukShma ahaMkAra.

tathA tu charatas tasya bhImasya raNamUrdhani . duryodhano mahArAja pArshvadeshe .abhyatADayat

Meaning: Thus, as bhIma was moving in the field of battle, mahArAja, Duryodhana struck him in the region of his ribs.

Inner Meaning: When the upAsaka is meditating on Brahman, the body strikes with the mace of desire in "pArshvadesha" - the area which is closest to the experience of Brahman, ie, the mind.

Ahatas tu tadA bhIMas tava putreNa bhArata Avidhyata gadAM gurvIM prahAraM tam achintayan

Meaning: Being struck by your son, bhArata, bhIma began to swing his heavy mace, thinking to strike back.

Inner Meaning: Self-explanatory. When desire strikes the mind, the "heavy mace" which is the intellect associated with the great experience of Brahman, is employed to wean away the mind again. The yogI at this point, has the confidence that this is just a blip in his upAsana, as he has great pride in his strength.

AvidhyantaM gadAM dRRiShTvA bhImasenaM tavAtmajaH . samudyamyA gadAM ghorAM pratyavidhyad ariMdamaH

Meaning: Seeing bhIma intending to strike him with his mace, your son, that conqueror of his foes, raising his terrible mace, struck him.

Inner Meaning: At this point, upAsana is failing. The body is harming the upAsana (bhakti yoga) by generating attachments & desire to sense objects. upAsana is stronger than the body, but delays in bestowing fruits. The body is weaker, but quicker to sway the jIva towards material things. The quicker one always wins.

sa charanividhAnmArgAnmaNDalAni cha bhAgashaH . samashobhata tejasvI bhUyo bhImAtsuyodhanaH

Meaning: Suyodhana, coursing through various motions and circular movements by turns, possessed of great splendour to subjugate his foe and equal luster, prevailed over bhIma again.

"Suyodhana" - One who fights exceedingly well, due to the anugraha of balarAma.

Inner Meaning: As intensely as bhakti yoga illumines the guNAs of bhagavAn, of greater intensity is the body that illumines objects of desires. Suyodhana - that body fights exceedingly well. Such a body moved through various "mArgas" - objects of

desire which are sought after and "maNDalAs" - the attachments which limit or bind one to such objects.

AvidhyantaM gadAM dRRiShTvA bhImasenaM tavAtmajaH . samudyamyA gadAM ghorAM pratyavidhyad ariMdamaH ... gadAmArutavegaM hi dR^iShTvA tasya mahAtmanaH . bhayaM vivesha pANDUMstu sarvAneva sasAtyakIn

Meaning: Seeing bhImasena swing his mace, Duryodhana, that destroyer of foes, also raised and swung his mace. Seeing that mace of Duryodhana - who possessed high intelligence of battle - swing with the speed of the wind, the pANDavAs, somakAs and sAtyaki were afraid.

Inner Meaning: The mace of Duryodhana is the knowledge of sense objects covered with desire, which moves with the speed of wind. The pANDavAs, somakAs and sAtyaki are various good qualities of the mind, services to Brahman etc who become agitated by this now. In the Udyoga Parva, detailed description is provided as to who represents which quality, but I won't reproduce it here for brevity.

Third Phase of Battle - Bhima gains the upper hand

evaM tadabhavadyuddhaM ghorarUpaM parantapa . parivR^itte.ahani krUraM vR^itravAsavayoriva

Meaning: In this manner that cruel battle of a terrible nature occurred, in the close of the day, like that between vR^itra and Indra.

vR^itra was a bhagavad bhakta, like Duryodhana was surrendered to balarAma.

Inner Meaning: "vR^itra" means "coverer" and signifies the darkness of prakR^iti.

dRRiShTvA vyavasthitaM bhImaM tava putro mahAbalaH . charaMsh chitratarAn mArgAn kaunteyam abhidudruve . tasya bhImo mahAvegAM jAmbUnadapariShkRRitAm . abhikruddhasya kruddhas tu tADayAm Asa tAM gadAM

Meaning: Your mighty son, seeing bhImasena persevering, moving in even more wonderful ways, rushed towards the son of kuntI. bhIma, with great force and anger, struck that gold embellished mace of the angered Duryodhana.

“kaunteya” - The name suggests bhIma is the son of kuntI, a bhagavad bhakta. Thus, it must be understood from this name that bhIma remembered bhagavAn in devotion at this point, which allowed him to strike.

Inner Meaning: The upAsaka's problem is kAma, due to insufficient love of Brahman. bhagavAn has prescribed that when an upAsaka is in trouble, he must do services to bhagavAn like taking care of his temples etc., listening to his leelas, remembering his guNAs so that he can conquer desire and commence his upAsana again. This is called “abhyAsa yoga” - it allows the upAsaka to develop the necessary love of bhagavAn needed for upAsana (meditation) proper, to overcome material desires.

So, this tattva is conveyed by saying bhIma is “kruddha” - angry or hostile towards prakR^iti. His mace of bhakti is supported by his anger at prakR^iti through abhyAsa yoga, and he strikes duryodhana's mace which is desire. prakR^iti (Duryodhana) is also “kruddha” - full of “attachments” which the Upanishads call “anger”.

vegavatya tayA tatra bhImasenapramuktaya . nipatantyA mahArAja pR^ithivi samakampata

Meaning: (That mace) hurled forcefully by bhImasena, caused that mace of duryodhana, to fall in a downward direction as he was holding it, making the Earth tremble.

Inner Meaning: When upAsana is failing, the merciful bhagavAn gives support to the upAsaka who performs abhyAsa yoga with a prayer to regain his upAsana. Thus, bhIma got the better of Duryodhana in this instance. abhyAsa yoga supported bhakti or meditation, which resulted in a perception of Brahman's divine form in the mind. This triumphed over the distress of the body.

In fact, saying the “Earth trembled” means bhakti with force of abhyAsa yoga, that manifested bhagavad rUpa in the mind, made samsAra itself metaphorically, tremble at the upAsana in fear.

Fourth Phase of Battle - Duryodhana gains the upper hand

tAM nAmR^iShyata kauravyo gadAM pratihatAM raNe . matto dvipa iva kruddhaH pratiku~njaradarshanAt . sa savyaM maNDalaM rAjann udbhrAmya kRRitanishchayaH. Ajaghne mUrdhni kaunteyaM gadayA bhImavegayA

Meaning: The Kauravya could not tolerate seeing his mace warded off in that battle and became angered like an elephant seeing its rival. Adopting the left circular motion, being resolute and whirling his mace, the King struck the head of bhIma with the violent force of his mace.

Inner Meaning: upAsana, despite all the help bhagavAn can give, is still reliant on self-effort. Hence, the respite the yogI got by doing selfless services is again countered when he commences upAsana. It is not enough to have a vision of bhagavAn's form; the main struggle in bhakti yoga comes from retaining that vision incessantly after gaining it, and finally proceeding to the elusive vision of brahma-svarUpa that confers mukti immediately on perception.

"kauravya" - That which belongs to "Kuru" - prakR^iti which does cruel things. Now, the body adopts **"savya maNDala"** - the mind which is the abode of thoughts which are "contrary" to upasAna. Ie, the old hankering of sense objects return to the mind and the subtle ego arising from strength of upAsana. The body counters perception of bhagavad rUpa in bhakti, by making the mind feel hankering and also revel in its self-effort; hence, makes the upAsaka fall.

Adopting this, it strikes the "head" of upAsana (bhIma) with the mace of desire - The "head" is the perception of Brahman, the samAdhi stage which was achieved after purification by abhyAsa yoga - and interrupts the upAsana.

tayA tv abhihatO bhImaH putreNa tava pANDavaH . nAkampata mahArAja tad
adbhutam ivAbhavat

Meaning: Struck by your son, the pANDava bhIma, did not tremble, which appeared wonderful to all.

Inner Meaning: Despite the onslaught of desire and loss of the perception of Brahman, upAsana which is sAttvika due to being associated with Brahman (pANDava), extremely strong (bhIma) did not waver. That is to say, the yogI resolutely tries to regain his vision of Brahman again by meditation, ignoring the desires pulling him. This is praiseworthy.

tato gurutarAM dIptAM gadAM hemapariShkR^itAm . duryodhanAya
vyasR^ijadbhImo bhImaparAkramaH . taM prahAramasambhrAnto lAghavena

mahAbalaH . sA tu moghA gadA rAjanpatantI bhImachoditA . chAlayAmAsa
pR^ithivIM mahAnirghAtaniHsvanAH

Meaning: bhIma of great prowess, took another heavier, more resplendent mace covered with gold and hurled it at Duryodhana. The latter, of great strength, warded it off with ease. That fruitless mace hurled by bhIma fell into the ground, with a loud sound like thunder, causing the Earth to tremble.

Inner Meaning: Being assailed by desire, having had his vision of Brahman cut off, the yogI decides, "Let me meditate with greater intensity and effort to regain that vision of Brahman and destroy the body". He puts all his strength into it.

This is signified by the heavier mace, covered with "gold" - ardent love of Brahman, so intense, to an unbelievable extent, as to exclude everything else. But even this, is not enough to destroy the body and attain liberation. That mace, ie, that knowledge of Brahman, did however produce a loud sound - great experience of Brahman, which did make samsAra tremble again. After all, meditation does destroy some karmas. So it did destroy some of the karmas for the yogI even if it wasn't enough for victory.

AsthAya kaushikAn mArgAn utpatan sa punaH punaH . gadA nipAtaM praj~nAya
bhImasenam ava~nchayat

Meaning: Taking recourse to the Kaushika motions, Duryodhana jumped up repeatedly, discerning the downward movement of bhIma's mace and deceived it.

Inner Meaning: Earlier, more intense upAsana of the yogI for moksha was frustrated, but it did destroy some of his karmas. Thus, he gets a body in svarga or upper worlds, or the positions of brahmA, shiva, indra etc. even if not moksha.

That is indicated by Duryodhana, the body, "jumping up" - taking births in devaloka. And the maneuver is called "kaushikAn mArgAn" - the objects associated with silk, signifying anything desirable. And when you are in devaloka, you get distracted by the desires there - obviously the position of a god like brahmA or rudra gives you so many powers. Or, you gain some powers of Yoga such as anima, garima etc which are extremely tempting and part of loukika kAma.

That is paired with upAsana (bhIma's mace) "descending", ie, reduce and thus it is deceived. Just as an upward movement is in response to descent of the mace, upward

movement to devaloka is a response to failure of upAsana to suppress kAma. That is why brahma and mahAdeva who maintain upAsana even in devaloka are praised highly.

Now, the upAsaka's meditation on Brahman (bhakti yoga) has suffered.

va~nchayitvA tathA bhImaM gadayA kurusattamaH . tADayAm Asa saMkruddho
vakSho deshe mahAbalaH . gadayAbhishato bhImo muhyamAno mahAraNe
nAbhyamanyata kartavyaM putreNAbhyAhatas tava

Meaning: That foremost of Kurus with great strength and anger, deceiving bhIma, struck him in the region of the chest with the mace. Struck by your son with that mace thus, bhIma was unable to use his senses & did not know what to do.

Inner Meaning: "vakShas" signifies Ox as well as chest and Ox is a metaphor for strength. This means, going to devaloka has disrupted karma yoga that is the strength of upAsana (bhakti yoga) as well.

sa tu tena prahAreNa mAta~Nga iva roShitaH .
hastivadvastisaMkAshamabhidudrAva te sutam . tatastu tarasA bhImo gadayA
tanayaM tava... upasR^itya tu rAjAnaM gadAmokShavishAradaH . Avidhyata gadAM
rAjansamuddishya sutam tava . atADayadbhImasenaH pArshve duryodhanaM tadA
. sa vihvalaH prahAreNa jAnubhyAm agaman mahIm

Meaning: Filled with anger at that blow, like an elephant, bhIma rushed at your son. He rushed at your son with uplifted mace...Approaching him, bhIma released the mace with skill. He whirled the mace in your son's direction and struck Duryodhana's rib. Duryodhana, agitated by the blow, sank down into the ground on his knees.

Inner Meaning: The yogI, who attained positions in devaloka, is incensed at the body/prakR^iti for disruption of karma yoga. The "anger" is nothing but practice of sA~Nkhyā yoga - constantly reflecting that the body is different from the self to counter this new attack. By knowing the self as distinct from the body, one restrains oneself from temptations.

With sA~Nkhyā yoga, the upAsana again "rushes to meet the body" , ie, starts executing desireless works dedicated to bhagavAn - karma yoga is re-started. And

this time, upAsana again is achieved in the form of perception of the jIvAtma in it's pure state - the goal of karma yoga. However, bhakti yoga is not yet regained.

With such upAsana (karma yoga), the body (Duryodhana) is struck in it's "pArShva" - attachment that is proximate to it. The mace of bhIma is the meditation on bhagavAn's form to quell kAmA. The body sinks down into "Earth" - ie, upAsana sees the body as made of prakR^iti and regards it equal to a clod of Earth. But the body supports itself by it's "knees" - puNya and pApa that cause movement.

Thus, the yogI who lost both karma and bhakti yoga, has now regained karma yoga through sA~Nkhya yoga. The perception of the self can also be considered as j~nAna yoga since both karma and j~nAna lead to the same goal.

utthAya tu mahAbAhuH kruddho nAga iva shvasan . didhakShann iva netrAbhyaM
bhImasenam avaikShata

Meaning: Duryodhana rose up in anger, breathing like a snake. He looked at bhIma, as if burning him with his eyes.

Inner Meaning: The eyes of the body are senses. Self-effort is never enough to quell the body, which is like a venomous snake according to Thirumalai AnantAchArya.

tataH sa bharatashreShTho gadApANirabhidravan... sa mahAtmA mahAtmAnaM
bhImaM bhImaparAkramaH . atADayachCha~Nkhadeshe na chachAIAchelopamaH...
udbhinnarudhiro...

Meaning: Then, that foremost of bhAratas, the bearer of the mace, rushed towards bhIma...Duryodhana of great intelligence in battle, struck bhIma of great prowess, who has a mind full of self-regard, on the forehead in that battle. Struck in that battle, bhIma did not move, like an immovable mountain. He looked beautiful as he bled.

"mahAtmAnaM" - bhIma is a mahAtma because he has mind that prides in his great strength. This was the reason he was struck.

Inner Meaning: Again, the body strikes the upAsana which is now of the form of karma/j~nAna yoga. The body is "bhArata-shreShTha" - the foremost of those that delight (rata) the luminous self (bhA) by providing experiences of sense objects.

It strikes the forehead of the upAsana (karma/j~nAna yoga) - perception of the jIvAtma in it's pure state. But despite this loss, karma yoga, upAsana (bhIma) does not shake as it is "bhImaparAkramaH" - formidable prowess due to dedication of fruits to bhagavAn. The blood signfies "passion" - it means he is engaging in worldly actions but is not being affected by it.

tato gadAM vIra haNIm ayo mayIM; pragRRihya vajrAshanitulyanisvanAm
atADayach Chatrum amitrakarshano; balena vikramya dhanaMjayAgrajaH

Meaning: The elder brother of dhananjaya, the harasser of his enemies, taking up the mace which had felled so many warriors, made of iron, producing a sound similar to the Vajra, struck his enemy with force, by his strength.

bhIma is the brother of dhananjaya, who has the anugraha of bhagavAn. Hence, that is mentioned here as the reason for the success of his strike.

Inner Meaning: dhana~njaya is the mind which has gathered j~nAna and vairAgya for bhakti. Thus, the one who is born prior to that is karma yoga or j~nAna yoga - since both have the same goal, they are considered the same path. Such karma yoga harasses enemies, the sins obstructing bhakti.

The mace is the intelligence that bhagavAn is the master of all and enjoyer of all offerings. It is made of Iron - ie, this conviction is very strong. It has felled it's enemies like kAma, krodha etc. Such a mace, hit the body (Duryodhana).

It produced a sound like Vajra - vajrAshanitulyanisvanAm - meaning, the experience of the self produces qualities like fearlessness, freedom from hunger etc which are similar to the qualities of the self in the pure state, called "Vajra" as it is immutable.

sa bhImasenAbhihatas tavAtmajaH; papAta saMkampita dehabandhanaH .
supuShpito mArutavegatADito; mahAvane sAla ivAvaghUrNitaH

Meaning: He, your son, struck by bhIma, fell down, his limbs trembling, like a flower-decorated sAla tree in a great forest uprooted by a gale.

Inner Meaning: Respite for the yogI. The limbs of the body are the senses.

tatha sutas te pratilabhya chetanAM; samutpapAta dvirado yathA hradAt... sa
pArthivo nityam amarShitas tadA; mahArathaH shikShitavat paribhraman
atADayat pANDavam agrataH sthitaM; sa vihvalA~Nga jagatIm upAspRRishat

Meaning: Then your son regained awareness and rose like an elephant rising from
a lake....That King, who is always full of anger and who is a mahAratha, flying
around with great skill, struck the pANDava standing before him. bhIma, limbs
afflicted by the blow, fell down to the Earth.

Inner Meaning: Over time, the perception of the self is difficult to sustain, again
due to self-effort involved. The body has now struck the "pANDava" - the sAttvika,
meaning, it has removed the sattva guNa in the mind which is required for upAsana.
Thus, "vihvalA~Nga" - all the limbs of Yoga are agitated, in danger of failing. The
upAsana falls into the Earth - the yogI falls in samsAra bhoga.

sa smiha nAdAn vinanAda kauravo; nipAtya bhUmau yudhi bhImam ojasA bibheda
chaivAshani tulyatejasA; gadA nipAtena sharIrarakShaNam

Meaning: He, the Kaurava, made a loud sound of victory having struck bhIma to
the ground. Striking with strength, which was like the lightning bolt in power, his
mace destroyed bhIma's armor.

Inner Meaning: The body born of prakR^iti, the doer is "Kaurava". Now, his mace of
desire, having struck the mind to remove sattva guNa, has removed the armor -
vairAgya, which is the armor to upAsana.

tataH parAn Avishad uttamaM bhayaM; samIkShya bhUmau patitaM narottamam....
tato muhUrtaD upalabhya chetanAM;

Meaning: Seeing bhIma, that foremost of bhaktas, fallen on the ground, a great
fear entered the foes (of your son)...bhIma recovered his awareness in a short
while.

Inner Meaning: "Fallen on the ground" means immersed in worldly bhoga. But due to
the anugraha of bhagavAn who says his bhakta never perishes, after a few janmas,
the yogI regains awareness of the true nature of the self, as distinct from the body
(s~Ankhya yoga).

If you are wondering why this keeps repeating, that is very much the nature of samsAra and upAsana. One keeps disrupting, the other keeps rejuvenating in an endless cycle.

pramRRiIya vaktraM rudhirArdham AtmanaH .

Meaning: bhIma cleansed his face which was bloodied.

Inner Meaning: He removed rajo guNa signified by "blood" from his mind (vaktra) and purified it.

dhRRitiM samAlambya vivRRittalochano; balena saMstabhya vRRikodaraH sthitaH

Meaning: VR^ikodara, rolling his eyes (in pain), taking recourse to firm resolve, supported himself by his bhakti.

bhIma was a bhakta, thus "bala" here refers to bhakti since he was now weak of bodily strength. "dhRRitiM samAlambya" - power of discrimination, he was thinking of nothing else but to fulfill his vow.

Inner Meaning: "vivRRittalochana" - mind agitated still by the body. However, he took recourse to "dhRRiti" - mind firmly fixed on the self. "bala" - karma yoga, which is desireless services to bhagavAn.

Bhagavan's Advice to Arjuna

Though there are inner meanings in this section, I prefer to focus mostly on superficial meanings. Because, it is not always that inner meanings are superior; sometimes the superficial meaning is the primary one. And bhagavAn's speech is extremely beautiful.

samudIrNaM tato dRRiShTvA sAMgrAmaM kurumukhyayoH . athAbravId arjunas
tu vAsudevaM yashasvinam .anayor vIrayor yuddhe ko jyAyAn bhavato mataH .
kasya vA ko guNo bhUyAn etad vada janArdana

Meaning: Seeing this violent battle between the foremost of kurus, Arjuna asked vAsudeva, "Between these two who are both endowed with fame in fighting, who are both valorous, who will win in this battle? Who is superior? Who has the merit? Tell me this, janArdana."

"janArdana" - One who is the destroyer of the foes of his bhaktAs. So not only can he gauge the strength of their enemies, he can also aid in destroying them.

upadesho .anayos tulyo bhImas tu balavattaraH . kRRitayatnataras tv eSha dhArtarAShTro vRRikodarAt

Meaning: bhagavAn - "The two are instructed equally by balarAma. bhIma is indeed stronger. But the son of dhR^itarAShtra is superior to vR^ikodara in performing a good act of surrender to his preceptor and striving to please him."

bhImasenas tu dharmeNa yudhyamAno na jeShyati . anyAyena tu yudhyan vai hanyAd eSha suyodhanam

Meaning: bhImasena cannot win this battle by dharma - his own strength. If he fights by virtue of my strength (through self-surrender), which is other than his own strength, he can defeat Suyodhana - who fights well due to balarAma.

"dharma" refers to the conduct of relying on his strength as a means, which is usually the case in a fair fight. The only way to defeat duryodhana, is by a means other than his own strength, ie, it is the strength of bhagavAn, attained by sharaNAgati.

mAyayA nirjita devairasurA iti naH shrutam . virochanastu shakreNa mAyayA nirjitaH sa vai . mAyayA chAkShipattejo vR^itrasya balasUdanaH

Meaning: By the wondrous and inscrutable power of bhagavAn who is the means, the gods won over the asurAs. By the wondrous and inscrutable power of bhagavAn who is the means, Indra won over virochana. By the wondrous and inscrutable power of bhagavAn who is the means, Indra destroyed the strength of vR^itra.

"mAyA" does not mean deception. The term has the meaning of "wonderful, inscrutable etc." Here, it refers to the wonderful power of bhagavAn, which is also inscrutable as it stems from the simple act of surrendering to him. Indra performed sharaNAgati to bhagavAn for defeating the daityAs.

tasmAnmAyAmayaM vIra AtiShThatu vR^ikodaraH

Meaning: Therefore, let vR^ikodara, the one with devotion towards me, resort to Brahman, who is full of wondrous deeds.

"mAyAmayaM" - bhagavAn who is filled with wonderful strength that can overcome anything. bhIma is a **"vIra"** - an upAsaka who already has bhakti to bhagavAn. So it shouldn't be difficult for him to extend that devotion into sharaNAgati, should it? This is what bhagavAn is advising Arjuna.

In the same manner, bhakti yogIs are encouraged to adopt sharaNAgati at some point.

UrU bhetsyAmi te sa~Nkhye gadayeti suyodhanam. so.ayaM pratij~nAM tAM chApi pArayatvarikarshanaH . mAyAvinaM tu rAjAnaM mAyayaiva nikR^intatu

Meaning: Dhananjaya! bhIma had formerly made a vow to break the thighs of Suyodhana in battle. Let him fulfill this vow swiftly. He must kill this King who is possessed of wondrous or inscrutable power due to balarAma's will, with my wondrous or inscrutable power (anugraha) arising from sharaNAgati to me.

"tvarikarshanaH" - Unlike self-effort which takes time, sharaNAgati gives the result quickly. bhagavAn does not want bhIma to break duryodhana's thighs with his own strength as that will never happen; he wants those thighs to be broken with his (bhagavAn's) strength.

He calls Duryodhana as "King" because that is how balarAma sees him as.

yady eSha balam AsthAya nyAyena praharishyati . viShAmasthas tato rAjA bhavishyati yudhishThiraH

Meaning: If bhIma were to fight in accordance to the established rules depending on his own strength, King yudhishThira will gain misfortune.

punareva tu vakShyAmi pANDaveya nibodha me . dharmarAjAparAdhena bhayaM naH punarAgatam

Meaning: Listen to me as I say again pANDava! It is because of the transgression of dharmarAja, ie, his ego, that this fear has overtaken us again.

What is the cause of upAsana's failure. It is that subtle ego, the delight in one's strength. If bhIma is upAsana, yudhishThira is the upAsaka who has ego. In the superficial meaning also, it was dharmaputra's ego that led him to propose that if Duryodhana won the fight, he won the war.

kR^itvA hi sumahatkarma hatvA bhISHmamukhAnkurUn . jayaH prApto yashaH
prAgryaM vairaM cha pratiyAtitam . tad evaM vijayaH prAptaH punaH
saMshayitaH kRRitaH

Meaning: Indeed, having performed the slaughter of kurUs headed by bhISHma, attaining victory and most excellent fame, he had attained the cessation of enmity (with their deaths). Now, having attained superiority in battle, he has created doubt (due to ego).

abuddhir eShA mahatI dharmarAjasya pANDava . yad ekavijaye yuddhe paNitaM
kRRitam IdRRisham

Meaning: This is a great lack of discrimination on the part of dharmarAja, pANDava, by which he has staked the battle in the victory over one remaining warrior, due to not realizing his strength was due to me.

“abuddhi” - dharmaputra does not realize that all his strength is due to me. He delights in his strength. Readers can guess the inner meaning of these 2 shlokas based on my notes in the introduction.

suyodhanaH kRRitI vIra ekAyanagatas tathA . api choshanasA gItaH shrUyate
.ayaM purAtanaH . shlokastattvArthasahitastanme nigadataH shR^iNu

Meaning: Suyodhana is skilled in making himself docile to his guru (kRRitI). He is valiant & firmly resolved in the destruction of the pANDavas. I have heard this verse sung by Ushanas in this regard. Listen to me as I recite it along with the essence of it's meaning.

punarAvartamAnAnAM bhagnANAM jIvitaiShiNAm . bhetavyam arisheShANAM
ekAyanagata hi te

Meaning: Ushanas has sung, “Those among the defeated, as remnants who wish to live (to kill the foe) and return again, should be feared, as they have one pointed resolve (of killing the enemy, for no benefit of theirs whatsoever)”.

This verse has a profound inner meaning. An upAsaka is one who performs sAttvika tyAga - he dedicates all fruits of actions to bhagavAn and meditates only on how he is ever dependent and subservient to bhagavAn. So he has relinquished all ego. However, he leaves one “remnant” of ego behind - his inner delight in his strength.

He feels, "*I have successfully attained that bhagavAn by meditation, so great and powerful I am*". This is the sukShma ahaMkAra - the remnant that bhagavAn is talking about here. That ahaMkAra has no purpose other than to kill the upAsana itself, since it stems from the very upAsana.

Similarly, Pillai Lokacharya says upAsana is like sucking out all the poison from milk but leaving behind a drop which again poisons the whole milk.

sAhasotpatitAnAM cha nirAshAnAM cha jIvite . na shakyaMagrataH sthAtuM shakreNApi dhana~njaya

Meaning: Even bhagavAn (Shakra) cannot stand before them, dhananjaya, who arise in enmity, who have no desire to live.

In the superficial meaning, bhagavAn is saying that those who arise in pure enmity and who seek to live to solely harm others, are usually those who surrender to bhagavAn to gain that strength. They have "Akinchanyam" and "ananyagatitvam". AshvattAma performed sharaNagati to destroy the sons of pANDavAs. Duryodhana is a prapanna of balarAma. So, even bhagavAn cannot stop them. "**shakra**" denotes bhagavAn here, not Indra.

Inner Meaning: Ego or delight in upAsana-bala arises as an enemy to the true nature of the jivAtma which is pAratantrya (absolute dependence). It is thus Atma-svarUpa-virodha. This ego has no desire to live independently, as it is closely associated with the sAdhana itself. bhagavAn can cure ego over wealth by removing wealth, he can cure ego over learning by removing the learning; but how can he remove ego arising from upAsana itself, the means to attain him!

suyodhanam imaM bhagnaM hatasainyaM hradaM gatam . parAjitaM vanaprepsuM nirAshaM rAjyalambhane

Meaning: Suyodhana was defeated, his army had been killed and he had descended into a lake. He, being defeated due to the slaughter of his brothers, had wanted to attain the forest, devoid of desire for procuring the Kingdom.

ko.anviShya saMyuge prAj~naH punardvandve samAhvayet . api vo nirjitaM rAjyaM na hareta suyodhanaH

Meaning: What wise person would again would invite such a person to a duel again, indeed for fear lest Suyodhana steals away the Kingdom won by them?

yastrayodashavarShANi gadayA kR^itanishramaH . charatyUrdhvaM cha tiryakva bhImasenighAMsayA

Meaning: He has learned the mace for thirteen years with continued practice of dedication to balarAma. He moves upwards and transversely for killing bhIma.

"charatyUrdhvaM cha tiryakva" - The inner meaning is, the body moves upwards to higher worlds causing pleasure and crookedly to lower worlds causing pain.

enaM chenna mahAbAhuranyAyena haniShyati . eSha vaH kauravo rAjA dhArtarAShTro bhaviShyati

Meaning: If bhIma of mighty arms, does not kill him using other means than his strength, ie, my strength through sharaNAgati, this kaurava, the son of dhR^itarAshtra, will remain King.

"mahAbAhu" - bhIma, who has pride in his mighty arms which are useless to kill duryodhana.

Will continue this in the next part.

Bhima surrenders to bhagavAn and defeats Duryodhana

dhana~nJayastu shrutvaitatkeshavasya mahAtmanaH . prekShato bhImasenasya
savyamUrumatADayat

Meaning: But Dhananjaya, despite listening to the words of Keshava the broad-minded one, struck his left thigh before bhImasena.

Unfortunately, Arjuna did not like the instruction. The "tu" indicates that what he communicated to bhIma contradicted the words of bhagavAn.

Why did Arjuna disobey bhagavAn? Because he is "dhananjaya" - One who has conquered the wealth of others by subjugating them. Being used to relying on his own strength, he failed to understand the upadesha of bhagavAn, who is called "Keshava" - the dispeller of distress for all and "mahAtma" - Who is never satisfied with what he does for his devotees; very generous. It signifies bhagavAn is very capable of eliminating all the obstacles if his help is sought.

bhagavAn wanted bhIma to stop fighting, lay down his mace and surrender to him, just as Draupadi let go of her clothing and surrendered to him in the Sabha. But Arjuna did not communicate this to bhIma.

Inner Meaning: Arjuna is the mind. Not understanding that self-effort cannot quell the body, the mind instructs upAsana to focus on destroying sins. The fact he struck his left thigh - "savyamUru" - and not his right one, shows that the mind is focused on destroying pApa karmas and the upAsaka actually still has an attraction for fruits of puNya like anima, garima and other powers gained by one's strength of Yoga.

bhIma understands the sign and becomes focused on hitting Duryodhana's thighs.

gRRihya saMj~nAM tato bhImo gadayA vyacharad raNe . maNDalAni vichitrANi
yamakAnItarANi cha

Meaning: Understanding the signal, bhIma roamed with his mace in the battlefield. He made wonderful circular motions and many defensive maneuvers.

bhIma is more defensive now because his armor has been stripped off.

Inner Meaning: Having had his vairAgya stripped off by the body, the upAsana now, reviving itself after some janmas by bhagavad anugraha, moves in karma yoga again.

yogI roams in samsAra for many births with the mace of knowledge regarding the self - sA~Nkhya yoga. He executes "maNDalAs" - actions which are done with the restrictive knowledge that one is not the doer and "yamakAs" - actions dedicated to bhagavAn that create restraint from desire for the fruits. He begins from scratch.

dakShiNaM maNDalaM savyaM gomUtrakam athApi cha

Meaning: bhIma sometimes adopted the right circular motion, sometimes the left, or the zig-zag pattern.

Inner Meaning: "dakShiNaM maNDalaM" - The easy abode which is karma yoga. "savya maNDala" - The abode (meditation) which is contrary to prakR^iti - constant reflections on the self, born of karma yoga itself, or it may be j~nAna yoga. Sometimes, "gomUtraka" - That meditation which produces "gomUtra" or purification - meditation on Brahman which is bhakti yoga. In this manner, several more births pass with the upAsaka practicing different yogAs.

tathaiva tava putro. api gadAmArgavishAradaH . vyacharallaghu chitraM cha bhImasenajighAMsayA

Meaning: Similarly your son, who is skilled in the art of mace fighting, roamed around, executing nimble motions for killing bhImasena.

Inner Meaning: As explained in previous section, the body can counter everything that upAsana can throw at it. This continues for more janmas.

tayoH praharatostulyaM mattaku~njarayoriva . gadAnirghAtasaM hAdaH prahArANAmajAyata

Meaning: The two struck each other equally like two infuriated elephants. The clashing maces produced sounds like thunder.

Inner Meaning: The mace of desire for true nature of the jIva vs the mace of desire for sense objects. There is a stalemate here.

ubhAvapi parishrAntau yudhyamAnAvarindamau . tau muhUrte samAshvasya punareva parantapa . abhyahArayatAM kruddhau pragR^ihya mahatI gade

Meaning: Both those destroyers of foes became fatigued and for a muhUrta, rested. And then again they began to battle with each other, filled with anger and grasping their great maces.

Inner Meaning: Same as previous section when the two rested for a muhUrta. The upAsana and body, both filled with anger against ignorance and anger of attachment respectively, resumed the fight.

duryodhanastu pArthana vivare sampradarshite . IShadutsmayamAnastu sahasA
prasasAha ha . tam abhyAshagataM prAj~no raNe prekShya vRRikodaraH .
avAkShipad gadAM tasmai vegena mahatA balI

Meaning: pArtha (bhIma) showed duryodhana an opening (a ruse). The latter, deriding him, came forward quickly. Seeing him come forward in the battle, vR^ikodara, the mighty, wise in the art of fighting, hurled his mace with force.

Inner Meaning: During upAsana, the upAsaka, realizing that ego is a problem, sometimes undertakes actions that outwardly seem impure.

He moves around sometimes laughing, sometimes crying, acts like a drunk etc. This is due to his experience of Brahman. He repeatedly censures himself as a sinner, etc.

These actions are done to generate "naichyAnusandhAna" - to consider oneself as low in order to rid oneself of ego. By this, the upAsaka seeks to constantly remind himself that he is not great, and is subservient to bhagavAn.

mahAdeva laughs or cries at times, drinks blood, wears skulls, goes around with dogs as bhairava and so on. These actions are part of his experience of Brahman, to express "naichyAnusandhAna" - he considers himself sinful though he is great.

This is a feint or ruse, because in reality, upAsakAs are both great and pure. By this, they hope to get rid of sins obstructing moksha and strike the body. This is called "sAttvika tyAga". This is the "ruse" of bhIma that seemed an opening for his foe.

avakShepaM tu taM dR^iShTvA putrastava vishAmpate . apAsarpattataH
sthAnAtsA moghA nyapatadbhuvi

Meaning: King! Your son, seeing the mace hurled at him, retreated from that spot where the mace fell into the Earth.

Inner Meaning: Even though upAsakAs perform sAttvika tyAga by renouncing their ego and declaring their servitude, there is still the "sUkShma ahaMkAra" - the subtle ego in the form of delight in their prowess and strength. It is as bhagavAn said earlier, if a remnant of an army is left to live, it will destroy everything.

The mace fell into the Earth. The mace of intellect regarding the Atma fell back into prakR^iti, ie, experience of sense objects. The body is unharmed. This degrading oneself (naichyAnusandhana) which is an aNga of bhakti yoga did not work.

mokShayitvA prahAraM taM sutas tava sa saMbhamAt . bhImasenaM cha gadaya
prAharat kurusattamaH . tasya visyandamAnena rudhireNAmitaujasaH .
prahAragurupAtACha mUrCheva samajAyata

Meaning: Freeing himself from that blow of bhIma with haste, your son, that foremost of Kurus, struck bhIma with the mace. Due to the flow of blood and force of that blow, bhIma of immeasurable strength was indeed unconscious.

I am not giving inner meanings here, as from here on, the inner and superficial meanings converge. Basically, bhIma has been defeated. Duryodhana had rendered him unconscious. But this is where bhagavad anugraha favored him. Because, note the words "**mUrCheva samajAyata**" - bhIma had attained the state of "**mUrCha**" - unconsciousness. What is this state? Lakshmi Tantra defines it as follows,

*mUrChAviShopaghAtAdau prANo. api vinivartate . kevalaM svAtmasattaiva tataH
shUnyastadA pumAn (~ pAncharAtra, lakshmi tantra 7.21)*

[In the states of unconsciousness, poisoning etc. even the prANa ceases to function. The jIvAtma is said to be with only his innerself (paramAtma) and is "shUnya" or void of any external cognition or activity.]

The state of unconsciousness is halfway to death according to brahma sUtrAs. bhIma was completely devoid of activity and cannot exert any self-effort. This is "**Akinchanyam**". In the state of unconsciousness, there is no cognition of anything with even the prANa not functioning, and thus, the objects seen in the waking state and dreams are not Ashrayas or supports for the jIva. So, it only has paramAtma, the innerself as it's Ashraya - this is "**ananyagatitvam**".

And what results from Akinchanyam and ananyagatitvam? It is sharaNAgati.

bhIma had not voluntarily surrendered to bhagavAn. However, bhagavAn took his state of unconsciousness as fulfilling the criteria of sharaNAgati - Akinchanyam and ananyagatitvam. This is how he helps those who are his bhaktAs. He finds some excuse, some window of opportunity, to bestow his anugraha on them.

Thus, in gIta also, it is said,

bahUnAm janmanAm j~nAnavAn prapadyante

[After many auspicious births of bhakti yoga, the wise one, realising that his self-effort cannot fetch moksha, surrenders to me]

This supports the inner meaning - the YogI after many births of self-effort, realizes sharaNAgati is the quickest and easiest means to moksha. Many bhakti yogIs often abandon their efforts to perform paripUrNa sharaNAgati in their final birth.

Now, the field was level. Duryodhana had been dominant due to his sharaNAgati to balarAma. bhIma has now performed sharaNAgati to kR^iShNa.

duryodhanas taM cha veda pIDitaM pANDavaM raNe . dhArayAm Asa bhImo .api sharIram atipIDitam

Meaning: Duryodhana did not know the pANDava was afflicted in that battle, rendered unconscious. bhIma, whose body was extremely afflicted with that blow, supported himself (due to the will of bhagavAn).

An unconscious bhIma was supported in a position as if ready to fight by bhagavAn only. "dhArayAm" signifies he was supported by bhagavAn; for he had no strength himself. This fooled Duryodhana, making him wary of landing another blow on bhIma.

Inner Meaning: Similarly, a prapanna does perform karma, j~nAna and bhakti yogas too, but none of it is a means or due to his own strength - it is all granted by bhagavAn only and done as a service to him. And so he appears to do it very easily, what upAsakas take janmas and janmas to do. Nammazhwar was an adept in aShtAnga yoga, and he gained it all in a moment due to being supported by bhagavAn's strength!

amanyata sthitaM hy enaM prahariShyantam Ahave . ato na prAharat tasmai punar eva tavAtmajaH.

Meaning: Duryodhana regarding bhIma as standing ready to strike in the battle, did not hit him again (which would have killed him).

As you can see, bhagavAn saved bhIma here. He gave Duryodhana the illusion of bhIma appearing ready to fight. And now, sharaNAgati, the true means, aids bhIma.

tato muhUrtam Ashvasya duryodhanam avasthitam . vegenAbhyadravad rAjan bhImasenaH pratApavAn

Meaning: After having rested for a while (in paramAtma), bhImasena, filled with the splendor of bhagavAn, rushed towards Duryodhana with force.

"tato muhUrtam Ashvasya" - As he was unconscious, he rested for awhile while Duryodhana mistook it for a combat readying position. It is called a "Rest" because bhIma had bhagavAn as his support in the swooning state.

"pratApavAn" - bhImasena, who is now a prapanna, is filled with the effulgence of bhagavAn that destroys all foes easily.

Inner Meaning: A prapanna "rests" for a time - He performs services to bhagavAn and waits for bhagavAn to give him moksha, living in samsAra itself without any self-effort. This is like sIta waiting for reunion with rAma while in exile.

tato muhUrtam Ashvasya duryodhanam avasthitam . vegenAbhyadravad rAjan bhImasenaH pratApavAn

Meaning: Seeing that furious bhImasena - filled with the immeasurable splendour of bhagavAn that subjugate foes - rushing upon him, Duryodhana, that foremost of bhAratas, wished to render his strike useless.

sthAne matiM kRRitvA putras tava mahAmanAH iyeShotpatituM rAjAmsh ChalayiShyan vRRikodaram

Meaning: Your son, who is haughty, decided to perform the avasthAna manoeuvre. He decided to jump upwards for agitating vR^ikodara.

Note that Sanjaya calls Duryodhana as "mahAmanAH" - proud one. Being over-confident, he failed to see bhagavAn supporting bhIma. Sanjaya also refers to Duryodhana as "putras tava" - he chastises dhR^itarAShtra - "He is your son, so he is also blind like you".

bhagavAn, the antaryAmin of Duryodhana, inflated that ego of his and made him do a manoever which would result in his defeat. This is as he says in gIta 16.19-20 that he pushes the asurAs down, inducing their bad qualities.

His ego induced by bhagavAn, Duryodhana forgot that bhIma had vowed to shatter his thighs, and performed this avasthAna manoever that exposed his thighs.

Inner Meaning: "avasthAna" is the final birth of a prapanna where he is born in a noble family, conducive for bhagavad kainkarya. He gains moksha at the end of this birth. Hence, Duryodhana jumps upwards - upward motion signifies a sAttivka birth. In gIta 6.41, bhagavAn says he makes the yogI be born in such a noble family.

udhyad bhImasenas tad rAj~nas tasya chikIrShitam . athAsya samabhidrutya samutkramya cha siMhavat

Meaning: bhIma understood the intentions of his foe, King! He rushed forward, rising to meet Duryodhana in the air, like a lion rearing upward.

sRRityA va~nchayato rAjan punar evotpatiShyataH UrubhyAM prAhiNod rAja~NgadAM vegena pANDavaH

Meaning: As the King moved upward again to avoid the blow, the pANDava struck the thighs of Duryodhana with force by his mace.

"pANDavaH" - One filled with sattva guNa, due to his sharaNAgati.

sA vajraniShpeSha samA prahitA bhImakarmaNA UrU duryodhanasyAtha babha~nje priyadarshanau

Meaning: That mace, striking like the sudarShaNu chakra, hurled by bhIma who performs formidable tasks with the aid of bhagavAn, shattered the two beautiful thighs of Duryodhana.

"vajraniShpeSha" - "vajra" here refers to the sudarShaNu chakra. bhagavAn imbued bhIma's mace with the power of that Chakra.

"bhImakarmaNA" - bhIma, who has killed kIchaka, baka, hiDimba, etc with the help of bhagavAn, finally defeated Duryodhana.

The inner meaning - sharaNAgati leads to mukti.

bhIma's ego angers balarAma

We have seen that upAsana results in that subtle ego, the delight over one's prowess. After the fall of Duryodhana, that topic is fully explored, by relating what bhIma did next.

sa vAmena padaA maulim upAspRRishat shirash cha rAjasiMhasya pAdena samaloDayat . tathaiva krodhasaMrakto bhImaH parabalArdanaH.... svabAhubalamAshritya prabAdhAmo vayaM ripUn

Meaning: Then bhIma, placed his left foot on the hair of duryodhana. He indeed agitated the head of that lion among kings with his foot. Inflamed by anger, bhIma, that destroyer of the strength of his foes....he said, "Depending on the strength of our own arms, we have tormented our foes".

bhIma exults in his own strength in quelling Duryodhana. In doing so, he has not understood bhagavAn was the one who had defeated Duryodhana for him. This was his act of adharma, in attributing success in battle to his own strength. sharaNAgati fails, when one resorts to his own strength after the surrender.

Striking Duryodhana's thighs was not adharma solely because bhIma had performed sharaNAgati. But attributing it to his own strength, nullified that sharaNAgati; this made the act also adharma. In addition, Duryodhana was a prapanna of balarAma, so hostilities should cease upon his defeat. This was another aspect which was adharma.

Inner Meaning: When upAsana succeeds, the yogI feels a delight in his strength. That ego is represented by bhIma placing his foot on Duryodhana's head. The head of Duryodhana who signifies the body, is lust or desire. "vAmena padaA" - "vAma" means crooked or contrary, "pada" means support. The crooked support of upAsana, resting on desire, is the mind filled with ego. The yogI delights in his own strength and exults, "I have overcome tApatraya by my own prowess of meditation on bhagavAn, so great am I!"

Though the earlier section had bhIma performing sharaNAgati for mukti, he still stands for upAsana tattva. So for this section, we take Duryodhana as the body causing distress of prakR^iti, temporarily subjugated by upAsana (bhIma) and not permanently as in previous section. The subjugation is by anga-prapatti, which is a quick surrender done to cross the effects of prakR^iti and proceed to bhakti yoga.

YudhiShThira was extremely upset by this and said,

**dhArmiko bhImaseno.asAvityAhustvAM purA janAH . sa kasmAdbhImasena tvaM
rAjAnamdhitiShThasi**

**Meaning: YudhiShThira - "bhaktAs like vidura, bhIShma etc formerly said,
"bhImasena is a dhArmika, one with no ego". Then why did you stand upon that
King (duryodhana)?"**

yudhiShThira knew Duryodhana had the protection of balarAma and thus they had transgressed by this act. The good conduct towards a fallen enemy is defined by rAma to vibhIShaNa as follows,

maraNAntAni vairANi nirvRRittam

**[rAma: Upon death, the enmity that rAvaNa had towards me, ends. Meaning, I
never considered him an enemy, only he thought of me as an enemy, which now
has ceased upon his death.]**

Duryodhana was dying, so bhIma should have ceased hostilities knowing he was favored by balarAma. This was adharma. He had also attributed victory to his own strength. This is also known to be adharma by yudhiShThira, who knew bhagavAn was the one who secured them the victory. bhIma's sharaNAgati was now void.

**Inner Meaning: upAsana which is regarded as a sAttvika sAdhana is now acting in an
adharmic manner, which the sAdhaka realizes.**

YudhiShThira now tells duryodhana,

**tvamekaH susthito rAjansvarge te nilayo dhruvaH . vayaM narakasaMj~naM vai
duHkhaM prApsyAma dAruNam**

**Meaning: yudhiShThira said to duryodhana: "King! You who are matchless,
fortunate due to anugraha of balarAma, shall go to that imperishable abode of
svarga. We will be associated with direction of naraka and will attain great
grief."**

The only way to assuage the anger of balarAma is to admit his mistake and apologize to duryodhana. As far as the inner meaning is concerned, the only way to remove the ego of upAsana is to express naichAyanusandhana, ie, think of oneself as lowly.

“svarga” and “naraka” here can also be interpreted as “vaikunta” and “samsAra”. Even a sinner can attain moksha if he has favor of bhagavAn. And a noble person can attain samsAra if he has angered bhagavAn. YudhiShThira feared the wrath of balarAma.

But it didn't work and balarAma was angry.

shirasyabhihataM dR^iShTvA bhImasenena te sutam . rAmAH praharatAM shreShThashchukrodha balavadbali

Meaning: Sanjaya - Seeing your son struck on the head by bhImasena, the strong balarAma, foremost among destroyers of the foes of his devotees, became angry.

balarAma became angry for two reasons as mentioned above - 1) bhIma denying Krishna was the means to his victory, 2) Duryodhana being his prapanna.

tato madhye narendrANAm UrdhvabAhur halAyudhaH . kurvan ArtasvaraM ghoraM dhig dhig bhImety uvAcha ha . aho dhog yad adho nAbheH prahRRitaM shuddhavikrame naitad dRRiShTvAM gadAyuddhe kRRitavAn yad vRRikodaraH

Meaning: Then, amidst those Kings, the bearer of the plough, with raised arms and great grief in his voice, spoke, “Shame, shame! bhIma! Oh! Shame on you, who have struck below the navel in the pure means of battle sanctioned by shAstra. I have never seen an act such as this done by bhIma in a gadAyuddha.”

adho nAbhya na hantavyam iti shAstrasya nishchayaH . ayaM tv ashAstravin mUDhaH svachChandAt saMpravartate . tasya tat tad bruvANasya roShaH samabhavan mahAn

Meaning: “shAstra has mandated that the part below the navel must not be struck. bhIma who is a fool ignorant of shAstra, acquainted with conduct against the shAstra, acts in independence.” Saying so, balarAma became greatly angry.

In reality, bhIma had not acted against shAstra by striking duryodhana below the navel. He had performed sharaNAgati to bhagavAn to accomplish that. Even balarAma did not intervene immediately when bhIma had struck duryodhana below the navel.

The real source of balarAma's anger is mentioned at the beginning - **shirasyabhihataM dR^iShTvA** - He became angry only when bhIma struck duryodhana's head. bhIma did not acknowledge his victory was due to bhagavAn; he considered his own strength as

the reason. This made the entire act including striking the thighs as adhArma as it nullified the shArANAgati. Also, he had disrespected Duryodhana, a prapanna.

What is "shAstra"? They are bhagavAn's commands. So something is shAstric so long as he likes it and ashAstric if he doesn't like it. As bhIma failed to acknowledge bhagavAn as the cause of his success, his shArANAgati was invalid in balarAma's eyes.

It may be asked, Duryodhana also had lots of ego. Why wasn't his shArANAgati nullified? The answer is, he attributed his skill to balarAma, which he himself states again later on. But it is possible that if he had defeated bhIma, he too, like bhIma, would have crowed over his strength. This would have nullified his shArANAgati too, and balarAma himself may have killed him for all his sins! But then, as he had lost, he never had the opportunity to do all this, and so his shArANAgati was preserved, unlike bhIma's. Losing the battle was a great anugraha conferred on him by bhagavAn.

Inner Meaning: "adho nAbhyA na hantavyam" - nAbhi is bhagavAn, who is the center or prominent as the innerself of all beings. "adho nAbhyA" is the jIvAtma, which is below this bhagavAn, ie, subservient to him by nature. upAsana, which has this subtle ego, "strikes" at this very nature of subservience, by delighting in the independent strength of yoga. Because upAsana is prescribed in shAstra by bhagavAn, it is not adhArma. But because it is against the subservient nature of jIvAtma, bhagavAn only allows it and rather prefers shArANAgati. In that sense, it is "adhArma" as shAstra says the nature of the jIvAtma should never be compromised.

tasyordhvabAhoH sadR^ishaM rUpamAsInmahAtmanaH . bahudhAtuvichitrasya shvetasyeva mahAgireH...

Meaning: That form of balarAma who has a noble mind, appeared like a great, white mountain with ornaments resembling the metals in those mountains.

"mahAtmanaH" - One who has great bhakti to Krishna, and thus could not tolerate bhIma attributing the victory to his own strength. It can also mean, "One who is broad-minded to Duryodhana despite his faults and thus argued for him".

atha rAmaM nijagrAha keshavo vinayAnvitaH . bAhubhyAM pInavR^ittAbhyAM prayatnAdbalavadbaI .

Meaning: Keshava who is endowed with the form that subdues his brother, possessed of great strength, seeing balarAma, caught him and encircled him with his broad arms by his strength of supremacy.

"keshava" - Dispeller of the distress of the pANDavAs.

"vinayAnvitaH" - He has a beautiful form that subdues anger of balarAma, as latter is in love with that form. A lover becomes a slave to his woman's beauty, does he not?

"bali" - The strong one, as he is able to conquer balarAma by his divine qualities.

"prayatnAdbalavad" - He restrained balarAma by "force" - the force of his supremacy. balarAma who has krishna as his master will obey the latter.

sitAsitau yaduarau shushubhAte.adhikaM tadA . sa~NgatAviva rAjendra
kailAsA~njanaparvatau

Meaning: Foremost of Kings! The two foremost ones of Yadu-kula, one white in complexion and the other dark, looked extremely lovely when united together, like the white kailAsa and the black anjana mountains.

I quoted these 3 shlokAs to show how Sanjaya, while narrating, was temporarily distracted by the lovely forms of both Krishna and Balarama to describe them as above. He calls dhR^itarAShtra as **"rAjendra"** to imply, "You are born into a lineage that is foremost of royalty, but those two are born in a fallen clan of Yadus, yet they, by their innate greatness have uplifted that Yadu kula even above your lineage".

In both superficial and inner meanings, there is scope to take bhIma's act as dharma or adharma. So, Krishna himself defended the pANDavAs and argued with balarAma.

This debate between bhagavAn and balarAma has two layers of meaning. I will first give the superficial meanings, then the inner meaning.

Arguments of Krishna - Superficial Meaning

Krishna gives **five reasons** to balarAma, for considering bhIma's act as dharma.

AtmavRRiddhir mitra vRRiddhir mitra mitrodayas tathA viparItaM dviShatsv etat
ShaD vidhA vRRiddhir AtmanaH

Meaning: Krishna - "One's own growth, the growth of his friend, the prosperity of the friend of a friend, and inversely the decrease of one's enemy, the decrease of the friend of an enemy and the increase of the enemy of one's enemy - these are the six types of growth for oneself."

bhIma wanted his prosperity and that of yudhiShThira, his "friend". He wanted the prosperity of bhagavAn who is the friend of a friend (yudhiShThira). He wanted the decrease of his enemies (Kauravas), the decrease of the friends of his enemies - the kings who followed them and the increase of the enemies of his enemies - those who follow the pANDavAs due to enmity against Duryodhana but have no great acquaintances with them. Thus, bhIma was acting in dharma only.

Objection: However, an enemy only exists so long as he is alive. If he is defeated, he is no longer to be regarded as an enemy. So this does not justify bhIma putting his foot on Duryodhana's head. Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn says,

Atmany api cha mitreShu viparItaM yadA bhavet tadA vidyAn mano jyAnim Ashu shAnti karo bhavet

Meaning: When there is an adversity to oneself or to one's friends, the wise ones strive to assuage the mental anguish.

bhIma had been humiliated by duryodhana in many ways. And Duryodhana had caused panic in the final moments and come close to defeating them. This act of striking his head with his foot, was merely an outlet for his mental anguish. It is understandable.

Objection: Even so, he has committed an apachAra, for duryodhana, especially when he is defeated, is to be seen as a prapanna, who dedicated his acts to balarAma. One should not look at his faults anymore. Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn replies.

asmAkaM sahajaM mitraM pANDavaH shuddhapauruShAH . svakAH pitRRiShvasuH putrAs te parair nikRRitA bhRRisham

Meaning: The pANDavAs are our relatives, they are our well-wishers - bhaktas. They are of pure conduct. They are the sons of our father's sister. They have been brought down by the foes.

bhagavAn says - the pANDavAs have the sukR^ita of being related to bhagavAn in his birth. They are ever his bhaktas, wishing for his welfare. Their acts are services to

bhagavAn. They are also related to kuntI, a parama-bhAgavata. They had been humiliated by Duryodhana and thus deserve protection regardless of their faults.

Objection: However, bhaktAs should lack ego and dedicate all acts to bhagavAn. bhIma claimed his own strength as responsible for an act done by bhagavAn, which made him less of a bhakta. Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn says,

pratij~nA pArANaM dharmAH kShatriyasyeti vettha ha.suyodhanasya gadaya
bha~NktAsmy UrU mahAhave iti pUrvaM pratij~nAtaM bhImena hi sabhA tale
maitreyeNAbhishaptash cha pUrvam eva maharShiNA UrU bhetsyati te bhImo
gadayeti paraMtapato doShaM na pashyAmi mA krudhas tvaM pralambhan

Meaning: The fulfillment of one's vow is dharma for a kShatriya. Earlier, bhIma had vowed to break the thighs of duryodhana in the sabha with his mace. Maharishi maitreya had also earlier censured Duryodhana saying, "bhIma will break duryodhana's thighs with his mace". So, Killer of pralamba! I do not see any blemish in Bhima's deed.

A kShatriya by nature is one who protects and rules all. Thus, ahaMkAra is svAbhAvika in a kShatriya and pardonable. Even despite this ego, bhIma should only be considered as fulfilling his vow of striking duryodhana's thighs. Also, this vow was made by bhIma seeing the distress of draupadi, who was a prapanna herself. His act of crowing over his enemy is thus an outcome of the great sorrow he felt on seeing Draupadi, a favorite bhakta of bhagavAn, harassed.

2 most important things favoring bhIma are - Maitreya maharishi had cursed duryodhana that he would die by a strike to the thighs from bhIma. This is equivalent to an AchArya giving bhIma permission. So, bhagavAn sees no dosha in an act permitted by maitreya maharishi.

As bhIma has the consent of AchArya and bhagavAn, his act of ego does not make his victory adharmic.

balarama killed pralamba with his immense strength. Similarly, bhIma defeated duryodhana with his immense strength.

Objection: However, one can argue that a bhakta should follow the pleasure of bhagavAn irrespective of sAmAnyA dharma. varNa does not determine a bhakta's

actions; sorrow and enmity does not determine his actions; it is the pleasure or displeasure of bhagavAn. And bhIma has angered balarAma, a svarUpAvesha of bhagavAn and Adi Shesha himself, by his act. This amounts to bhAgavata-apachAra as well, despite an AchArya giving initial consent. Anticipating this, bhagavAn says,

**yaunair hArdairsh cha saMbandhaiH saMbaddhA sneha pANDavaiH . teShAM
vRRiddhyAbhivRRiddhir no mA krudhaH puruSharShabha**

Meaning: Our affection for the pANDavAs is based on connections associated with their very natures and the mutual affection arising from that. Their growth is ours, so do not become angry, best among my bhaktAs.

"hArdairsh cha saMbandhaiH" - sharIrAtma bhAva, associated with their natures.

"saMbaddhA sneha" - Because of that sharIrAtma bhAva, there are many types of relationships due to natural affection of paramAtma for jIvAtma and vice-versa, like AdhAra-Adheya, sheSha-sheShI, patI-patnI, etc. Body and self care for each other.

pANDavAs are also his sharIra and they have the types of relationships resulting from that connection. When the body is beautified, the self becomes happy. Therefore, their joy makes bhagavAn happy.

"puruSharShabha" - Best among bhaktAs who offer plenty of services and worship to bhagavAn (**puru sanoti**). Adi Shesha serves him in all ways. If bhagavAn is pleased, Adi Shesha (balarAma) who is his bhakta should also be pleased.

Though everyone is his body including rAVaNa, this is particularly in reference to bhaktAs, like the pANDavAs who have realized this relationship. Duryodhana being a prapanna and bhIma taking credit for the victory are the main reasons pANDavAs are being talked of as if they are offenders. Otherwise, the pANDavAs are dhArmikas.

Note that bhagavAn has not attempted to point out duryodhana's vices to balarAma - because balarAma, having accepted duryodhana as his prapanna, would ignore all his doShAs. bhagavAn accepts this as dharma and thus argues in another manner.

Arguments of Krishna - Inner Meaning

Bhakti yoga has been prescribed in shAstra as a valid means. Thus it is a dharma. But it causes an ego in one's strength that is against the subservient, dependent nature

of the self. This is adharma. bhagavAn, who is ever compassionate, takes up the cause of bhakti yogIs and defends their ego, as follows.

AtmavRRiddhir mitra vRRiddhir mitra mitrodayas tathA viparItaM dviShatsv etat ShaD vidhA vRRiddhir AtmanaH

Meaning: Krishna - "One's own growth, the growth of his friend, the prosperity of the friend of a friend, and inversely the decrease of one's enemy, the decrease of the friends of the enemy and the increase of the enemy of one's enemy - these are the six types of growth for oneself."

"AtmavRRiddhir" - Bhakti yoga is meditation on Brahman. The purpose of such meditation is svayam prayojana - it is an end in itself. So gaining the bliss of Brahman is one's own growth. One delights in this bliss and also delights in bliss of his own strength - his self-effort, an amazing ability to humble the foe of prakR^iti by Yoga.

"mitra vRRiddhir" - The yogI gains great bliss from such meditation and frees his "friend" - the mind - from the afflictions of samsAra - hankerings.

"mitra mitrodayas" - When the mind is freed from samsAric hankerings, it's "friend" - namely, Brahman, who abides in the mind and thus is the friend of the friend (mind) - prospers, ie, feels joy at abiding in such a mind.

Then, kAma, the main enemy is also decreased. And the friend of that enemy which are the aggregate of attachments or sins are also decreased.

While there is increase for the enemy of these enemies - namely the bliss of the individual self gained from j~nAna yoga, an anga of bhakti. The perception of the jIvAtma in it's pure state by j~nAna yoga is higher than prakR^iti, but is a lower goal to Brahman. It is thus, an enemy of the enemy (prakR^iti) but not exactly a friend.

By this, bhagavAn has stated the benefits of performing upAsana, saying it is fully in accordance with shAstra.

Objection: However, nature of the self is subservience and dependence on bhagavAn. Nature of bhagavAn is to be the means for all. Then, how is upAsana, involving self-effort as the means, in accordance with this dependent nature of the self?

sharaNAgati alone is conducive to this nature of the jIvAtma. Self-effort implies there is a subtle ego involved - not the ego of the form of considering oneself as independent, but the "ego" of delighting in one's strength to accomplish that end. Acharyas thus say that upAsana is thus, "svarUpa-virodha" - this ego over one's strength is not conducive to the utter subservience of the Atma.

Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn adds the following argument,

Atmany api cha mitreShu viparItaM yadA bhavet tadA vidyAn mano jyANim Ashu shAnti karo bhavet

Meaning: When there is an adversity to oneself or to one's friends, the wise ones strive to assuage the mental anguish.

samsAra is a frightening complex of avidyA, vAsana, ruci, karma and prakRi^ti sambandha. It causes adversity to the jIva and his "friends" - mind and senses. In such a situation, the bhaktAs are always eager to free themselves of sorrow.

It is understandable thus, if they are unable to muster the selflessness needed for prapatti and are enamored of bhakti yoga. When a person is in deep mental anguish, he tries to relieve it for his own sake with whatever tools and strength he has. And if he succeeds, naturally he delights in his prowess at meditating on bhagavAn.

Objection: However, even so, there are noble prapannas like vibhIshaNa, kshatrabandhu and others who despite such anguish, adopted the mArga of prapatti purely because it pleases bhagavAn. Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn says,

asmAkaM sahajaM mitraM pANDavaH shuddhapauruShAH . svakAH pitRRiShvasuH putrAs te parair nikRRitA bhRRisham

Meaning: The pANDavAs are our relatives, they are our well-wishers - bhaktas. They are of pure conduct. They are the sons of our father's sister. They have been brought down by the foes.

The bhakti yogi-s are "pANDavAs" - sAttvikAs. They may have this little sukshma ahaMkAra. Nonetheless, they are also "sahaja" - they manifest their strength as direct means along with bhagavAn as the indirect means. That is to say, they too realize the essential nature of subservience to bhagavAn, so latter remains the indirect means for them.

They are ever performing selfless activities of devotion to bhagavAn, wishing well for him. They are purified of other forms of ahaMkAra and mamakAra, so are of pure conduct. They are associated with other bhAgavatas like kuntI. Thus, it cannot be said prapannAs alone are true devotees.

They are suffering due to their karmas and adopt bhakti to relieve their suffering.

Objection: This can be countered by saying prapannAs are superior bhaktAs as they consider bhagavAn as the direct means (dharma) and do all of the rest, whatever pleases bhagavAn, more selflessly. Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn says,

pratij~nA pAraNaM dharmah kShatriyasyeti vettha ha. suyodhanasya gadayA bha~NktAsmy UrU mahAhave iti pUrvaM pratij~nAtaM bhImena hi sabhA tale maitreyeNAbhishaptash cha pUrvam eva maharShiNA . UrU bhetsyati te bhImo gadayeti paraMtapaato doShaM na pashyAmi mA krudhas tvaM pralambahan

Meaning: The fulfillment of one's vow (bhakti yoga) is dharma for a knower of shAstra (kshatriya). Formerly, upAsana (bhIma) had vowed to break the karmas (thighs) of this body that fights exceedingly well (suyodhana) with his mace of knowledge that is Yoga. The Veda that is a great seer of Brahman, well-disposed to all (Maharishi Maitreya) had also censured the body saying, "upAsaka (bhIma) will break karmas of embodied self with the mace of knowledge". So, Killer of pralamba! I do not see any blemish in the upAsaka's (bhIma's) deed.

A "kShatriya" is one who rules and protects - a bhakti yogI, who "rules" over the Vedas by having understood its' essence, and who protects bhagavAn, the goal of the Vedas, by meditation. Such a yogI is "bhIma" - of great strength. His vow is the attainment of bhagavAn, using the means of bhakti yoga mandated by shAstra.

Argument of bhagavAn is - shAstra mandates this Yoga as the means, so there is no doSha in seeing this Yoga to completion. As shAstra-dharma pleases bhagavAn who mandated it, he sees no dosha in ego of upAsakAs, it is shAstra-sammata-ahaMkAra. "maharishi maitreya" signifies the Veda in the inner meaning which mandates performance of such Yoga for destroying karmAs.

Objection: But then, not everything in shAstra is mandated because it pleases him. Some injunctions exist as he tolerates it - such as yAgas involving killing animals,

syena yAga for destroying enemies. He forces himself to consider these as pleasing him, though in reality, if shAstra did not prescribe them, they would be adharmā.

These prescriptions exist to cater to tendencies of various people who can only be cured slowly and led eventually to the higher truths. Likewise, he has resolved to permit bhakti yoga as dharma, even though it is not as perfect a means or to his liking as prapatti. So, the ego is not a sin only because he does not see it as sin.

Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn says,

**yaunair hArdairsh cha saMbandhaiH saMbaddhA sneha pANDavaiH . teShAM
vRRiddhyAbhivRRiddhir no mA krudhaH puruSharShabha**

Meaning: Our affection for the pANDavAs is based on connections associated with their very natures and the mutual affection arising from that. Their growth is ours, so do not become angry, best one among my bhaktAs.

Again, "pANDavAs" are bhakti yogIs - sAttvikAs. He says, even the bhakti yogi-s realize they are his sharIra by nature like prapannAs and they meditate on this relationship. They have the 9 types of relationship with him due to mutual affection.

Thus, if they gain bliss by their own strength of Yoga, bhagavAn is also pleased, just as the self is pleased by acts which beautify the body.

balarAma's response

bhagavAn cites these reasons in favor of pANDavAs in the superficial meaning and for upAsakas in the inner meaning. But balarAma's response is only one for both.

Because, the superficial meaning is that he thinks duryodhana is a prapanna and thus superior to pANDavAs who rely on self-effort. The inner meaning is that he thinks a prapanna is superior to upAsakAs. So, in balarAma's response, the glories of a prapanna are highlighted which covers both levels of meanings.

The fact that balarAma's response elegantly answers both layers of krishna's arguments shows that the former wins the debate.

**dharmāH sucharitaH sadbhiH saha dvAbhyAM niyachChati . arthash chAtyārtha
lubdhasya kAmash chAtiprasa~NgināH**

Meaning: balarAma said, "Righteous conduct which is worship of you (dharma) is practiced by all devotees. It is established by two aspects - the goal which is you (artha) for the bhakti yogIs and love of you (kAma), for the prapannAs."

"dharma" is righteous conduct - the worship of bhagavAn using shAstra. All accept this conduct is very virtuous and practiced by both bhaktAs and prapannAs. However, the nature of this worship is predicated by the inclinations of these two groups.

"arthash chAtyArtha lubdhasya" - bhakti yogIs have attainment of bhagavAn as the goal, to relieve themselves of the distress of samsAra. Thus, they practice upAsana of the form of self-effort. "artha" is bhagavAn, the goal of the Vedas. "atyArtha lubdha" is the bhakti yogI who has an exceeding desire for bhagavAn, which is necessary to be developed in bhakti yoga. Thus, their worship of bhagavAn (dharma) is tinged with a little bit of selfishness as their extreme love for bhagavAn is a means to attain bhagavAn and relieve their own distress, more than striving to please him.

"kAmash chAtiprasa~NginaH" - The prapannAs have as their goal, "kAma" - the love of bhagavAn. This love consists of seeing bhagavAn always happy. The prapannAs are called "atiprasa~NginaH" because they are exceedingly attached to bhagavAn, more so than the bhakti yogIs. They desire to please him; that is their main goal. So, they abide by their nature of subservience, not undertaking any effort and consider him as the means. So, their worship of bhagavAn (dharma) is selfless and devoid of ego.

A question may be asked; prapannAs like Draupadi wanted to save her honor, as opposed to surrendering for bhagavAn's pleasure. So can we say they were selfless? Answer is - prapannAs are selfless, as they do what pleases bhagavAn most - consider him as the means and not their own effort as the means. That makes him happy. So, his pleasure can be considered the goal of prapannAs wanting other things too.

dharmArthau dharmakAmau cha kAmArthau chApy apIDayan . dharmArthakAmAn yo . abhyeti so . atyantaM sukham ashnute

Meaning: They gain the unlimited bliss of seeing bhagavAn happy, who as prapannAs, approach dharma, artha and kAma without causing injury to any two of them due to loss of the third.

"dharma" is the nature of bhagavAn as the means. "artha" is bhagavAn as the goal to be attained. "kAma" is selfless love of bhagavAn, wanting to see him happy.

By saying prapannAs have all three and do not hurt two by loss of one, balarAma is implying that bhakti yogIs often lack one of these three. Let us see how.

dharmArthau apIDayan - The bhakti yogIs love to please bhagavAn, but they do not have "kAma" - the exceeding love to please him by considering him alone as the means. bhagavAn is an indirect means for them to attain him. Thus they cause injury to "dharma" - the nature of bhagavAn the means. Because if they don't consider him as the direct means, he feels a bit hurt and thinks that it is a blemish on his nature as one who can protect all without requiring external support. Since upAsana causes delay in mukti, it injures "artha" - the attainment of bhagavAn as the goal too.

In contrast, the prapannAs have the exceeding love to please him (kAma), so he is their direct means (dharma) and he is attained quickly too (artha).

dharmakAmau apIDayan - The bhakti yogIs are those who, enamored by the various powers that bhakti yoga grants, deliberately delay their mukti - attainment of bhagavAn - by practicing this yoga. This is despite knowing that sharaNagati yields mukti quickly. Thus, they do not have "artha" - the goal of attainment of bhagavAn, as they prefer to wait just to enjoy certain powers and benefits by their own strength. As they adopt bhakti yoga as the means for this reason, they cause injury to "dharma" - the nature of bhagavAn as the means, as mentioned earlier. Because they do not strive to attain him quickly, their "kAma" - selfless love to please bhagavAn who is ever anxious to see them attain him quickly - also suffers. As the Upanishad says, "sa ekAkI na ramate" - he does not like being alone without the baddha jIvAs attaining him. Then would not the delay make him sorrowful?

In contrast, the prapannAs want to attain him quickly because he desires it (and not because they want their sufferings relieved). So they have "artha", by virtue of which he is their means (dharma) and their selfless love (kAma) is intact too.

kamArthau apIDayan - The bhakti yogIs do not have "dharma" - considering bhagavAn as the direct means and have bhakti yoga as the direct means, with bhagavAn only as the indirect means. Thus, they cause injury to "kAma" - the selfless love to please bhagavAn - he is most pleased when accepted as the direct means - and "artha" - attainment of bhagavAn which is delayed by bhakti yoga.

In contrast, the prapannAs accept bhagavAn as the direct means (**dhArma**) in accordance to their nature of subservience. This preserves their excessive love to please bhagavAn (**kAma**) and they attain him quickly too (**artha**).

Thus the prapannAs gain "**atyantaM sukham**" - the unlimited bliss of seeing his pleasure when he receives their services in mukti.

As said earlier, all this does not mean bhakti yogIs are evil. This is just nahi ninda nyAya and a shAstric tattva that prapannAs are superior to bhakti yogIs, who are also very exalted. Nobody would claim likes of bhIShma, parAShara, etc. who practice bhakti yoga are adharmic, even our AchAryAs have worshipped them! But what seems a very tiny fault for bhagavAn and likes of us (this delight in self-effort), is seen as a great transgression by exalted prapannAs who shy away from this means.

ShrI LokAchArya says it is fine for bhakti yogIs to practice this yoga; all these warnings are for prapannAs to not resort to bhakti yoga upon performance of sharaNagati.

tad idaM vyAkulaM sarvaM kRRitaM dharmasya pIDanAt . bhImasenena govinda kAmaM tvaM tu yathAttha mAme

Meaning: Govinda! All this (dharma, artha and kAma) has been agitated by the injury to dharma - the nature of subservience - by bhIma, despite whatever you say out of love for your devotees, the pANDavAs.

bhIma, by his conduct of standing on Duryodhana's head has insinuated that he by his strength triumphed over Duryodhana. Thus he has caused injury to "**dhArma**" - his conduct of adhering to the true nature of subservience/dependence on bhagavAn.

By virtue of lack of adherence to true nature of the self, viz., subservience (**dhArma**):

- He has agitated his conduct of considering bhagavAn as the means (**dhArma**), which was gained by his sharaNagati when he was unconscious, due to ego in his own strength.
- He has agitated the attainment of bhagavAn's pleasure as the goal (**artha**). The attainment of the Kingdom by defeating Duryodhana was to be considered for the pleasure of Krishna, as a service to him. So Krishna's pleasure was the

goal. But by delighting in defeating Duryodhana by his strength, bhIma has only considered his own pleasure - relief from distress - as the fruit.

- He has agitated his selfless love of bhagavAn in wanting to please him (**kAma**), as what he did, crowing over his prowess, is not to the liking of bhagavAn.

Note that balarAma only says bhIma has disturbed dharma, artha and kAma - "**vyAkulaM**". End of the day, bhIma was still a great bhakta, so he has not actually destroyed them, merely agitated them by his conduct.

balarAma also calls bhagavAn as "**Govinda**" to say, "You appeared as a cowherd so that gopIs without vedAdhikAra can attain you. You saved Draupadi when she expressed her helplessness & called you by this name. You are sarva-sulabha, then why do these bhaktAs not realize that you alone are the means and not their self-effort?"

Krishna and Balarama forgive Bhima

Krishna realizes he has been defeated in his arguments. A prapanna is superior to a bhakti yogI. So now, he declares that bhIma is a prapanna!

aroShaNo hi dharmAtmA satataM dharmavatsalaH bhavAn prakhyAyate loke tasmAt saMshAmya mA krudhaH

Meaning: Krishna said, "You are celebrated in the Veda as one who never gets angry at prapannAs, of a virtuous mind that always favors them, fond of the dharma of self-surrender. So, calm yourself and do not be angry at bhIma."

bhagavAn is reminding balarAma that bhIma had performed sharaNAgati during the battle and thus is a prapanna himself. In general, a bhakti yogI performs anga-prapatti to proceed to bhakti yoga after all.

"aroShaNa" - Adi Shesha is one who never gets angry at faults of prapannAs.

"dharmAtmA" - He has a virtuous, broad mind always generous to prapannAs; he takes them up on his hood in moksha-sthAna to honor them.

"dharmavatsalaH" - He is fond of "**dharma**" - the path of self-surrender.

"loke" means "in the Vedas". Or in the world. This is the fame of Adi Shesha.

bhagavAn took bhIma's unconscious state for prapatti. So, he is using that to claim bhIma is a prapanna and gain protection for him from balarAma.

prAptaM kaliyugaM viddhi pratij~nAM pANDavasya cha AnRRiNyaM yAtu vairasya
pratij~nAyAsh cha pANDavaH

Meaning: Kali Yuga is here. Know the pANDava's vow - his sharaNAgati to me - and know his collection of sins which is a debt of the body, as gone. The pANDava has made that vow (of sharaNAgati).

"prAptaM kaliyugaM" - In the age of Kali, all have faults. So, rules are relaxed. Even sharaNAgati is difficult for those in Kali Yuga and one cannot expect it to be perfect. This is not true, as we shall see in the next shloka.

"viddhi pratij~nAM" - This does not refer to bhIma's vow to strike Duryodhana on the thighs. It refers to sharaNAgati, a vow of the jIvAtma to act in accordance to bhagavAn's wishes (Anukulyasya sankalpa and other aNgAs of sharaNAgati). bhIma's sharaNAgati when unconscious, is referred to here.

"pANDava" - By nature, bhIma is a sAttvika, devoted to me.

"AnRRiNyaM yAtu vairasya pratij~nAyAsh cha pANDavaH" - Debt is the collection of sins. Azhwar refers to sins as "debt". **"vaira"** - the hostile body. That is to say, the sins are committed by embodiment. Such sins have gone away by sharaNAgati.

The inner meaning is, bhagavAn considers the subtle ego of upAsakAs as arising from immense grief over their suffering in samsAra (which causes grief like Kali Yuga), and so overlooks it, not considering it a doSha since they had performed anga-prapatti earlier. Because upAsakAs also perform anga-prapatti, to progress to bhakti yoga. But it is not as exalted as svatantara prapatti since they do it only to progress to a path of self-effort.

dharmach Chalam api shrutvA keshavAt sA vishAM pate . naiva prItamanA rAmo
vachanaM prAha saMsadi

Meaning: Hearing Keshava's words, which indeed swerved from dharma - correct way to worship him - balarAma, not pleased, spoke these words to the assembly.

"dharmach Chalam" - The words of bhagavAn slipped from dharma or the righteous path of proper worship of him. Firstly, though sharaNAgati destroys all other sins, it is nullified if a prapanna resorts to his own strength after doing prapatti. As bhIma

had declared he had won by the might of his arms, that prapatti was void. This is the one sin that sharaNagati cannot destroy, but which destroys sharaNagati itself.

Also, it was not kali yuga yet; not as long as bhagavAn still remained on the Earth. bhAgavata purANa says kali set in only when he wound up his avatAra. Thus, bhagavAn was lying to protect bhIma by relaxing the rules for him using Kali as pretext.

See his magnanimity here. It is by his sankalpa and purity that he wards off Kali as long as he is on the Earth. By lying that Kali had set in despite it not being the case (as he is still here), he is basically casting doubts on his own purity and omnipotence. He is willing to risk loss of his reputation to save his bhakta, thus he is tyAgesha.

sahasranAma refers to him as **"chalaH"** - One who swerves from dharma - his vows - to protect his devotees. He took up arms against bhIShma despite vowing not to, he used his chakra to hide the sun for killing jayadratha. Here, he has swerved from dharma or the proper means prescribed to worship him, just to protect bhIma.

Similarly, though upAsakAs perform anga-prapatti, it is only an excuse for bhagavAn to bestow them their favored path of bhakti. In reality, they have this ego of self-effort after this sharaNagati which nullifies it; but bhagavAn who never lets his devotees down, has resolved that this anga-prapatti can make the entire path valid.

bhagavAn supports upAsana to protect his devotees. He is supporting it, because his devotees want that bit of self-indulgence, that delight in their prowess. This is despite the fact he doesn't particularly like it. He sacrifices his pleasure for their happiness. That is why he is **"keshava"** - destroyer of the distress of his devotees.

"naiva prItamanA" - balarAma was not pleased at bhagavAn's words, as they came at the cost of bhagavAn's happiness. It doesn't mean he was displeased with bhagavAn.

It is hard to say who is greater - Is it Krishna for defending even the ego of his devotees, overlooking his own happiness, or is it balarAma, who was angered at bhaktAs who do not put bhagavAn's happiness ahead of everything else?

jihmayodhIti loke .asmin khyAtiM yAsyati pANDavaH . duryodhano .api dharmAtmA gatiM yAsyati shAshvatIm

Meaning: balarAma said, "The pANDava will be called as one who fights in crooked manner. Duryodhana is of a virtuous mind devoted to me and will attain Svarga."

As bhIma considered his own strength as instrumental in defeating duryodhana, he is called a crooked warrior. In reality, bhIma defeated Duryodhana fairly by sharaNAgati, but as he did not acknowledge that, he gets this censure from balarAma.

By this, balarAma was protecting bhIma. By this censure, it will be made well known to bhIma that his conduct was improper, thus becoming an expiation for the act.

Duryodhana, despite being wicked and devoid of any merit, has always dedicated his skill to balarAma and so is considered to have a virtuous mind. As said earlier, he too would probably have crowed about his strength if he had won, but his defeat removed that danger. "gatiM yAsyati shAshvatIm" - svarga which lasts for a long time. Can also mean moksha eventually when he is purified.

Inner Meaning: An upAsaka is a "pANDava" - one who is pure as he is eligible for bhakti yoga. As it is a means approved by bhagavAn and thus sanctioned in the Vedas, it is dharma. Because it involves self-effort which is against the subservient nature of the self, it is a crooked or contrary means (adharmam) to attain bhagavAn. The upAsaka forgets that bhagavAn is the one empowering his upAsana and thinks his own strength is more important. Hence, the term "jihmayodhI". A prapanna is "duryodhana" - who by restraining from self-effort and considering bhagavAn as the means, cannot be conquered by prakR^iti. The latter attains mukti quickly.

Krishna's assent to Bhima's ego

tato yudhiShThiraM dInaM chintAparam adhomukham . shokopahatasaMkalpaM
vAsudevo .abravId idam .

Meaning: Then, vAsudeva spoke to YudhiShThira with bowed head, who was dejected due to balarAma's censure and filled with sorrow for their loss of reputation, whose resolve of victory had been taken away by that grief.

dharmarAja kimarthaM tvam adharmam anumanyase . hatabandhor yad etasya
patitasya vichetasaH . duryodhanasya bhImena mRRidyamAnaM shiraH pada
upaprekShasi kasmAt tvaM dharmaj~naH san narAdhipa

Meaning: "dharmarAja! For what purpose did you allow this act of adharmam - not pleasing to me - where you allowed bhIma to strike with his foot, the head of

duryodhana whose kin were all killed, who had fallen and was devoid of awareness. You who are cognizant of dharma, why did you disregard it, protector of men?"

Though bhagavAn staunchly defended his bhaktAs to balarAma, he corrects them in private. This is like a mother chastising her children privately but not publicly.

na mamaita priyaM kRRiShNa yad rAjAnaM vRRikodaraH . padA mUrdhny
aspRRishat krodhAn na cha hRRiShye kulakShaye

Meaning: YudhiShThira, said, "This is not to my liking, kR^iShNa, what vR^ikodara did to the King by putting his foot on his head due to anger, nor is the extermination of Duryodhana's brothers who are my clan."

"kR^iShNa" - Who brings joy to the Earth. Meaning, I know you helped bhIma defeat duryodhana and lighten the Earth's burden. It was not his own strength.

"na cha hRRiShye kulakShaye" - I do not take delight in vanquishing the Kauravas, our clan. That is to say, I do not become happy at bhIma assuming his own strength was the instrument for their destruction. I recognize you as the means for that.

Inner Meaning: Similarly, an upAsaka is inherently sAttvika despite the self-effort and he knows it is wrong to delight in his own strength. He does hit upon this realization at times and apologizes to bhagavAn even while doing it!

bhImasenasya tadduHkhamatIva hR^idi vartate . iti sa~nchintya vArShNeya
mayaitatsamupekShitam

Meaning: There is great grief in bhIma's mind on account of duryodhana's evil acts. Reflecting on this, descendent of vR^iShNi, I disregarded his act of ego.

"vArShNeya" - descendent of vR^iShNi, who are accessible to all easily - "I know it is you who make yourself accessible and we don't do anything by ourselves".

Inner Meaning: Despite knowing it is wrong, the upAsaka indulges that ego, like a child guiltily eating forbidden candy. This is due to distress of prakR^iti which he went through, it makes him feel powerful when his meditation on bhagavAn quells it.

tasmAddhatvA.akR^itapraj~naM lubdhaM kAmavashAnugam . labhatAM pANDavaH
kAmaM dharmo.adharmo.athava kR^itaH

Meaning: Therefore, let the pANDava attain his desire (of satisfying his ego), whether he has done dharma or adharma, upon killing Duryodhana who never did an act of intelligence due to anger, was covetous and ensnared by kAma.

Inner Meaning: So, still enamored by the path of self-effort, the upAsaka humbly requests bhagavAn to make it a valid path (dharma) sanctioned by shAstra, though it is adharma or contrary to subservient nature of jIvAtma. End of the day, bhakti yogIs are sAttvikAs and great bhaktAs, so even if they want to indulge in self-effort, they ask permission from bhagavAn for it! This is like a son seeking consent from father to earn money independently despite his father willing to give money for free. The father allows it, but he would have been happier had the son accepted his money.

ity ukte dharmarAjena vAsudevo .abravId idam kAmam astv evam iti vai
kRRichChrAd yadukulodvahaH

Meaning: Having been spoken to by dharmarAja thus, vAsudeva, propagator of the fame of Yadus, spoke, "Let this desire be attained" with difficulty.

"vAsudeva" - The son of the honest vasudeva, and hence always honest in his own dealings with his devotees. Or, the protector of all, and so the means for all ends.

"yadukulodvahaH" - He who propagates the fame of Yadus, a fallen clan, also restored the fame of the pANDavAs who were fallen due to that act of ego.

"kRRichChrAd" - He allowed it with difficulty as it is basically adharma in essence. But as his bhaktAs (pANDavAs) wanted it, he provided consent. His consent removes sin in the act, making it outwardly dharma. He forgoes his own joy for his bhaktAs.

Inner Meaning: bhagavAn permits upAsana with difficulty as it involves self-effort and subtle ego, not to his liking. Bhakti yoga is only dharma as it is allowed by bhagavAn, who prioritizes the upAsaka's happiness over his own.

Will continue this in the next part.

Duryodhana's Accusations

Duryodhana may have been favored by balarAma due to a sharaNAgati he just about barely adhered to or deserved. But it doesn't make him a sAttvika. Full of hatred, he accuses bhagavAn of contriving to defeat him using adharmā, as follows.

**ardhonnatasharIrasya rUpamAsInnR^ipasya tu . kruddhasyAshIviShasyeva
chChinnapuchChasya bhoginaH**

Meaning: The half raised form of Duryodhana, that protector of men indeed, resembled that of a poisonous, angered snake, whose tail had been cut.

Like a wounded snake desiring to wound bhagavAn with the poison of hurtful words, Duryodhana rose up.

"nR^ipa" - One who is supposed to be a protector of men, was the cause of destruction of the kShatriya clan due to his lust, anger and greed.

**duryodhano vAsudevaM vAgbhirugrAbhirArdayat . kaMsadAsasya dAyAda
na te lajjA.astyanena vai . adharmeNa gadAyuddhe yadarhaM vinipAtitaH**

Meaning: Duryodhana pierced vAsudeva with cruel words. "Son of the slave of kaMsa! You appear to have no shame, having disregarded how I have been struck down by adharmā in the gAdayuddha."

He calls Krishna the son of kaMsa's slave (vasudeva) to highlight that he (Krishna) was not worthy of being a King. The irony is, bhagavAn by nature is sovereign regardless of how he is born, while Duryodhana who was born in a royal lineage is not even worthy of being a King!

Why are his words called cruel? Not only are they utterly false, but they are hurting bhagavAn. He has appeared in this world to rescue all the baddha-jIvAs who are his servants by nature. Yet, he is being targeted with such hurtful words, which pierce his tender form and pure nature. Sanjaya is very angry that Duryodhana is hurting such a soft natured bhagavAn.

Now, Duryodhana makes a set of baseless accusations which are not true. bhIma had not defeated duryodhana by adharma; since he had performed sharaNagati, the act was dharma. While it is true that balarAma claimed it to be adharma due to a later transgression of bhIma's, that privilege rests solely with bhagavAn. Because, bhagavAn can overlook the faults of his prapanna; but a prapanna cannot overlook his own faults!

Hence, while balarAma was correct in claiming the act was adharma, it was not adharma from the perspective of duryodhana. So what he said was wrong.

UrUbhindhIti bhImasya smR^itiM mithyAprayachChata . kiM na vij~nAtam etan me yad arjunam avochathAH

Meaning: bhIma's deceitful awareness to break my thighs was given by you. Do you think I did not know that advice which Arjuna communicated to bhIma?

This is a lie. Krishna did not instruct Arjuna to tell bhIma that he should shatter Duryodhana's thighs by direct combat. He merely told Arjuna that to kill Duryodhana, bhIma needed to surrender to bhagavAn and the latter would break his thighs (which would be fair). It was Arjuna alone who signalled to bhIma, disobeying Krishna.

**ghAtayitVA mahIpAIAnR^ijuyuddhAnsahasrashaH .
jihmairupAyairbahubhirna te lajja na te ghR^iNA**

Meaning: You killed those kings in thousands in battle, by crooked means. You have used many deceitful means to kill them. Are you not ashamed?

Each time Krishna instructed the pANDavAs to do one thing, they did another. The way bhISHma, droNa, bhUriShrava, karNa, etc were killed was not as per the orders of Krishna since the pANDavAs disobeyed him. So, the ones who used "crooked means" to kill the various Kings were the pANDavAs, not bhagavAn. So this was a lie again.

ahanyahani shUrANAM kurvANaH kadanaM mahat . shikhaNDinaM puraskR^itya ghAtitaste pitAmahaH

Meaning: Each day, you caused the slaughter of many valiant warriors.

bhagavAn had given Duryodhana a chance to avoid the war. But it was Duryodhana himself who kept being belligerent. Hence, this was again not bhagavAn's fault since all were dead due to Duryodhana's avarice.

shikhaNDinaM puraskR^itya ghAtitaste pitAmahaH

Meaning: You killed pitAmaha by placing ShikaNDI in front.

This is incorrect. It was Arjuna who did this and not bhagavAn. Latter had wanted Arjuna to kill bhISHma directly, but Arjuna flouted his order. So, Duryodhana is wrong again. Had written about it here -

<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1433327460343447558>

ashvatthAmnaH sanAMAnaM hatvA nAgaM sudurmate . AchAryo nyAsitaH shastraM kiM tanna viditaM mayA

Meaning: Causing an elephant named AshvattAma to be killed, you made AchArya lay down his weapons. Do you think I do not know that?

bhagavAn did not cause an elephant called Ashvattama to be slain. He merely told Arjuna to say that Ashvattama, the son of droNa, had been killed. It was the pANDavAs who killed an elephant. This was again a lie.

I had explained it here -

<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1479348510126346240>

sa chAnena nRRishaMsena dhRRiShTadyumna vIryavAn . pAtyamAnas tvayA dRRiShTo na chainaM tvam avArayaH

Meaning: When the valiant droNa was struck down by dhR^iShTadyumna, you saw it but you did not ward him off.

droNa had already attained mukti when dhR^iShTadyumna lopped off his head. Had explained his mukti here -

<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1485492062439243778>

Since droNa had performed sharaNagati and already attained moksha, Krishna did not let dhR^iShTadyumna kill him. Also, Krishna was never in favor of dhR^iShTadyumna defiling a prapanna's body. So this is again incorrect.

vadhArthaM pANDuputrasya yAchitAM shaktim eva cha . ghaTotkache
vyaMsayathAH kas tvattaH pApakRRittamaH

Meaning: For the sake of the destruction of Arjuna, a divyAstra called Shakti was solicited by karNa. You deceived it's aim in ghaTotkacha. Is there anyone who does more sinful deeds than you (in making boons of gods go to waste)?

Again, this is incorrect because karNa himself had not requested for a weapon to kill Arjuna and neither had Indra guaranteed it would kill Arjuna.

This is how karNa requests a weapon from Indra:

*ekamevAhamichChAmi ripuM hantuM mahAhave . garjantaMpratapantaM cha yato
mama bhayaM bhavet*

*[karNa: I desire slay one matchless enemy of mine, who is roaring, scorching his
foes and by whom I feel fear]*

He never asked to kill Arjuna directly. But since Arjuna was in his mind, Indra replied to him directly saying that Arjuna could not be killed, as below:

*ekaM haniShyasi ripuM garjantaM balinaM raNe . tvaM tu yaM prArthayasyekaM
rakShyate sa mahAtmanA... yamAhurvedavidvAMso varAhamaparAjitam .
nArAyaNamachintyaM cha tena kRRiShNena rakShyate*

*[Indra: In this great war, you may kill one incomparable, roaring enemy
(ghatotkacha). But the one you seek to kill, is protected by the One who is always
broad-minded in relation to his devotees...He who persons well-versed in the Vedas
refer to as Varaha, who by his invincibility assures victory for his devotees, who is
Narayana, who is incomparable to all other beings --- That Krishna himself is
protecting Arjuna.]*

Thus, Duryodhana was incorrect in saying Indra gave KarNa a weapon to kill Arjuna, or that KarNa requested for Arjuna's death.

ChinnabAhuH prAyagatas tathA bhUrishravA baI tvayA nisRRiShTena hataH shaineyena durAtmanA

Meaning: When bhUriShrava's arm had been cut off, he had entered the state of fasting unto death (in remembrance of Brahman). You caused him to be killed by the descendent of Sini, Wicked minded one!

This is another baseless accusation. bhUriShrava was supposed to have been killed by Arjuna, who disobeyed bhagavAn's direct order and merely chopped his arm off. Then bhUriShrava, who was a bhakta of bhagavAn himself, entered Yoga. But sAtyaki lopped off his head.

As bhUriShrava was a bhAgavata, this act was disapproved by everyone, including bhagavAn - **vAryamaNaH sa kR^iShNena pArthena cha mahAtmanA** - yet, Duryodhana is blaming bhagavAn here.

**kurvANash chottamaM karma karNaH pArtha jigIShaya .
vyaMsanenAshvasenasya pannagendrasutasya vai**

Meaning: karNa had performed a great deed for conquering pArtha. But you deceived that astra presided over by Ashvasena, the chief of serpents.

Duryodhana calls Arjuna as "pArtha" to imply that bhagavAn was partial to the latter for being his aunt's son.

karNa did not know that Ashvasena had occupied the arrow. bhagavAn saved Arjuna by pressing down on the chariot and ensuring that the snake only struck his crown and lopped it off - the crown was also the cause of Arjuna's ego, so it's destruction was for the good.

When karNa found out Ashvasena had entered his arrows, he refused to aid the snake, and then Arjuna killed it. So karNa never performed this deed for his part since he wanted to kill Arjuna in a fair fight by himself. karNa refused Ashvasena's help due to his own pride in wanting to kill Arjuna. And thus this was also a lie.

punashcha patite chakre vyasanArtaH parAjitaH . pApitaH samare
karNashchakravyAgro.agraNIrnR^iNAm

Meaning: Again, karNa's chariot wheel had sunk into the ground and he had been all but vanquished due to the calamity of the curse, and when that foremost of men, had been agitated by the wheel, you caused him to be killed in the battlefield.

This is again a lie. When karNa asked for a moment to extricate his wheel, bhagavAn reprimanded him asking how he is talking about yuddha-dharma, when he had earlier ignored dharma and insulted draupadi. And karNa, incensed by bhagavAn's speech, actually took up his bow and initiated the fight again from the ground.

krodhAtprasphuramANauShTho dhanurudyamya bhArata

[karNa, his lips quivering with rage (on hearing vAsudeva's words), lifted up his bow]

Thus, even here, it was karNa who expressed a desire to continue the fight from the ground. bhagavAn never told Arjuna to kill him when he was unarmed or helpless. He had all but given karNa a reprieve, which the latter rejected.

However, Arjuna certainly erred in not killing karNa as per the orders of bhagavAn, so he had committed adharma as I have explained here -

<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1445995676748300292>

Having made all these accusations to hurt bhagavAn who was blemishless, Duryodhana sums up his wicked thoughts:

yadi mAM chApi karNaM cha bhISHmadroNau cha saMyuge . R^ijunA
pratiyudhyethA na te syAdvijayo dhruvam . tvayA punaranAryeNa
jihmamArgeNa pArthivAH svadharmamanutiShThanto vayaM chAnye cha
ghAtitAH

Meaning: If you had fought against me, karNa, bhiShma, droNa in the battle by fair means, that victory would never be yours. By conduct which is not agreeable to those of noble men, by crooked means, you caused many

Kings, who were executing their kShatriya dharma, me and my brothers, and many of our relatives to be killed.

karNa and bhIShma were slain by adharma due to Arjuna's mistakes, not due to bhagavAn. droNa had laid down his weapons of his own accord; in any case, he had become a prapanna and attained moksha, and only his lifeless body was destroyed by dhR^iShTadyumna. The latter's act was also not approved by bhagavAn.

Duryodhana was not slain by adharma, because bhIma had performed sharaNAgati to Krishna, just as the former had performed sharaNAgati to balarAma. Thus, all his accusations were baseless.

Krishna's Reply

In reply to Duryodhana, bhagavAn does not deny the accusations though each one of them was untrue. Why? Saying he did not do any of what was said, meant that the pANDavAs would be blamed for them, when they had disobeyed him. So bhagavAn took the blame on himself. The name "chalaH" in sahsranAma says he even takes on ill-repute so that his devotees can prosper. He ran away from jarAsandha only so that bhIma could gain the glory of killing jarAsandha after all!

Krishna does not defend himself, but berates Duryodhana saying the latter deserved it and reminds him of all the evil he had done - poisoning bhIma, trying to disrobe Draupadi, killing Abhimanyu unfairly etc. I will skip translating that as it is common knowledge.

It was because of Duryodhana that bhIShma, droNa and karNa had to die. Then he says,

vR^iddhA nopAsitAshchaiva hitaM vAkyam na te shrutabh . lobhenAtibalena
tvam tR^iShNaya cha vashIkR^itaH . kR^itavAnasyakAryANi vipAkastasya
bhujyatAm

Meaning: (Krishna told Duryodhana): You did not worship those devotees of mine who were great in knowledge, like bhIShma, vidura etc. You never listened to the words which were said by me to you for your own benefit.

You became controlled by your insatiable greed and thirst of desire. For what acts you performed, experience their fruits now.

bhagavAn thus says Duryodhana himself is to blame for having performed only sinful deeds.

Duryodhana, upon hearing the words of Krishna when the latter reminded him of his evil deeds, mellows down somewhat. However, to bhagavAn's accusation that he has never worshipped bhAgavatAs or done a good deed, Duryodhana responds by reminding Krishna of his sharaNAgati to balarAma, and lists out reasons why he should be felicitated.

This is a wonder indeed - a wicked person reminds bhagavAn who is blemishless and omniscient, that he has some suKR^ita due to which he deserves the latter's anugraha!

The words of Duryodhana have two sets of meanings - The superficial meanings list out his achievements during his lifetime. In the inner meaning, he talks of himself as a prapanna, who despite all his doShAs, is deserving of mukti. Hence, I will first give the superficial meanings, then the inner meanings.

Duryodhana's Reply to Krishna - Superficial Meanings

adhItaM vidhivaddattaM bhUH prashAstA sasAgarA. mUrdhni
sthimamitrANAM ko nu svantataro mayA

Meaning: I have studied under balarAma (by surrendering to him), I have given him dakShiNA or service in accordance to my status as his siShya. I have ruled over the Earth with it's Oceans. I have stood at the head of my foes. Who is more fortunate than me?

Duryodhana at the outset, points out to Krishna the only suKR^ita he has - the sharaNAgati to balarAma which gives him immunity to naraka as well as the other benefits he mentioned. Due to the anugraha of balarAma, Duryodhana was called a King.

And due to his anugraha, he has been termed as a "dhArmika" in yuddha while his foe, bhIma was called a "jihmayoddhI" - hence, he "stood at the head of his foes" - he has been declared by gods as superior to the pANDavAs.

Who is more fortunate than Duryodhana, who had bhagavad anugraha to acquire all this despite all his sins?

yadiShTaM kShatrabandhUnAM svadharmamanupashyatAm . tadidaM
nidhanaM prAptaM ko nu svantataro mayA

Meaning: That abode which is desired by kShatriyas, who keep in mind their svadharma, that abode has been obtained by me (who didn't deserve it). Who is more fortunate than me?

It is balarAma who granted him this abode again. Note what balarAma says to everyone prior to the battle between bhIma and duryodhana,

*samanta pa~nchakaM kShipram ito yAmavishAM pate . prathitottara vedI sA
devaloke prajApateH . tasmin mahApuNyatame trailokyasya sanAtane . saMgrAme
nidhanaM prApya dhruvaM svargo bhaviShyati*

[balarAma said, "I will go swiftly to samanta panchaka (kurukShetra). It is celebrated as the altar of Brahman for offering the sacrifice of the self in devaloka. It is ever the foremost purifying spot in the three worlds. One who dies in battle there, will attain that Svarga which is long-lasting"]

As balarAma said this, all went to that spot and the battle between bhIma and duryodhana took place there. balarAma knew that if Duryodhana fell there, he would attain Svarga. Duryodhana attained this abode despite his evil acts.

devArhA mAnuShA bhogAH prApta asulabhA nR^ipaiH . aishvaryaM
chottamaM prAptaM ko nu svantataro mayA

Meaning: Enjoyments of humans, which are fit for gods themselves, and which are difficult to obtain for other Kings, as well as the supreme wealth of Svarga have been obtained by me. Who is more fortunate than me?

Svarga is a supreme goal in Vedas, higher than petty human goals & so is "aishvaryaM chottamaM".

Many virtuous Kings like Yayati attained Svarga only for it to be temporary and get hurled back down. However, Duryodhana is attaining enjoyments in Svarga fit for the gods and a long-lasting stay in comparison, due to balarAma's anugraha. He points that out here.

sasuhR^itsAnubandhascha svargaM gantA.ahamachyuta .yUyaM
garhitasa~NkalpAH shochanto vartayiShyatha

Meaning: Achyuta! I am going with my well-wishers & brothers to Svarga (by pleasing balarAma). You all, who are of contemptible resolves, grieve while living here.

"Achyuta" - "One who never lets his devotees slip" - Duryodhana acknowledges here that it was due to bhagavAn's anugraha (through balarAma) that he is gaining sat-gati.

"garhitasa~NkalpAH" - pANDavAs have bad resolves as they did not obey Krishna fully. Duryodhana clubs Krishna with them via "chatri-nyAya". Krishna doesn't have bad resolve.

Though Duryodhana was evil, he was considered as having fully pleased balarAma. The same cannot be said for the pANDavAs, who disobeyed bhagavAn in various instances.

Eariler, Duryodhana had blamed Krishna for killing bhISHma, droNa etc unfairly. But now, by bhagavad anugraha, he has realized that it was the pANDavAs who fought unfairly by disobeying Krishna, and so calls them as having contemptible resolves.

In this manner, Duryodhana finally acknowledged the greatness of Krishna.

Duryodhana's Reply to Krishna - Inner Meanings

Duryodhana, a prapanna, lists out the reasons he is great and deserving of mukti despite having doShas in the inner meaning, as below.

adhItaM vidhivaddattaM bhUH prashAstA sasAgarA. mUrdhni
sthimamitrANAM ko nu svantataro maya

Meaning: I have studied (reflected on) the true nature of the self as subservient to Brahman, I have offered the self to Brahman (balarAma) according to nyAsa vidyA prescribed by the Vedas. I have ruled over

Brahman with the ocean of auspicious attributes. By vairAgya, I am situated in Brahman, the Supreme Means, who is at the head of the other sAdhanAs, my foes. Who is more fortunate than me?

In the inner meaning too, Duryodhana begins by saying he has performed sharaNAgati to balarAma, who is verily Brahman, as he is the svarUpAveSha of nArAyaNa. This he has done, by first understanding the self is subservient to bhagavAn and then offering that self, according to nyAsa vidyA prescribed by the Vedas.

sharaNAgati results in j~nAna and vairAgya accruing to the self, which is described next.

"bhUH prashAstA sasAgarA" - bhagavAn is signified by **"bhU"** as he is the ground or innerself. **"sAgara"** means the vast ocean of his kalyANa guNAs. This is j~nAna - the prapanna has "ruled" Brahman, ie, understood his nature and experienced his guNAs.

"mUrdhni sthimamitrANAM" - The foes are karma/j~nAna/bhakti yoga etc. These are sAdhanAs requiring self-effort and cause attachment to them. Brahman is the Supreme Means and so is at their head as the chief or best of all means. This is the vairAgya of the prapanna - he has avoided other means, and considered bhagavAn alone as the means.

The prapanna has thus, gained the supreme abode upon death, and that is mentioned by Duryodhana next.

yadiShTaM kShatrabandhUnAM svadharmamanupashyatAm . tadidaM nidhanaM prAptaM ko nu svantataro mayA

Meaning: That abode which is desired by bhakti yogIs, well-disposed to the Supreme Master, who are cognizant of "svadharma" or their nature of subservience -- that supreme abode has been obtained by me. Who is more fortunate than me?

"kShatrabandhu" - Those who are **"bandhUs"** - well-wishers of bhagavAn who is called **"kShatra"** as he is the supreme master. This refers to bhakti yogIs who practice upAsana and recognize his mastery (seShitavaM).

"svadharmamanupashyatAm" – These bhakti yogIs constantly "see" or meditate on their nature as subservient to Brahman and having Brahman as their innerself. It means, they meditate on sharIrAtma bhAva. Or, it can mean they execute the duties prescribed by the Vedas using karma yoga, considering bhagavAn as the master and enjoyer, with themselves as subservient to him.

The prapanna has easily attained that abode which is desired longingly by bhakti yogIs, and which is attained by the latter only after great difficulty and delay.

Besides the supreme abode, experience of the self and Brahman has also been attained by the prapanna, as follows.

devArhA mAnuShA bhogAH prAptA asulabhA nR^ipaiH . aishvaryaM chottamaM prAptaM ko nu svantataro mayA

Meaning: Mine have been the fruits resulting from acts in worship of Brahman (karma yoga) and which are only obtained with difficulty by j~nAna yogIs --- qualities of the self, similar to Brahman. I have obtained the highest wealth --- the experience of Brahman (which bhakti yogIs attain)! Who is more fortunate than me?

"mAnuShA bhogAH" - The fruits resulting from **"mAnuSha-s"** - actions undertaken in worship of bhagavAn - karma yoga. This refers to qualities like fearlessness, freedom from hunger, thirst, etc., that accompany a vision of the self.

"devArha" - These are fit for bhagavAn called **"deva"** - It means, these qualities of the self attained by the karma yogI are similar to the nature of paramAtma himself.

"nR^ipaiH" - Those who protect or rule over their senses - refers to j~nAna yogIs who practice the path of meditation. The same fruits of karma yoga are enjoyed by j~nAna yogIs too, but it is a more difficult path than karma yoga.

Such fruits have been acquired by the prapanna who did neither karma nor j~nAna yoga.

"aishvaryaM chottamaM prAptaM" - The experience of Brahman, which is the supreme wealth of bhakti yogIs, has also been attained by the prapanna without doing bhakti yoga.

sasuhR^itsAnubandhascha svargaM gantA.ahamachyuta .yUyaM
garhitasa~NkalpAH shochanto vartayiShyatha

Meaning: Achyuta! With my AchAryAs who are my well-wishers and my descendents or disciples, I am going to the supreme abode called "svarga". You others (in samsAra), who are of contemptible resolves to enjoy samsAra-bhoga, wracked with sorrow, continue to revolve in samsAra.

When one is a prapanna, anyone associated with him, be they his AchAryAs or his sons or disciples, also get moksha. That is highlighted here.

"**Achyuta**" - One who never lets the prapannAs, his devotees slip.

"**garhitasa~NkalpAH**" - The prapanna is referring to bhakti yogIs here as those of contemptible resolves. Instead of doing sharaNagati which is an easy and quick path, suited to the nature of the self and to the liking of bhagavAn, they are undertaking this arduous path of self-effort, which delays mukti and may result in samsAra-bhoga. The delay in mukti also makes bhagavAn more anxious. This is nahi-nindA-nyAya only from the perspective of a departing prapanna. Bhakti yogIs are also virtuous people.

Duryodhana includes bhagavAn among these people as they are his bodies and he is their innerself, so technically Krishna is also remaining in samsAra with these bhakti yogIs. It highlights that a delay in mukti due to bhakti yoga also distresses the antaryAmin.

Duryodhana's Realization of Krishna (from Sauptika Parva)

Duryodhana due to the anugraha of balarAma, gains some clarity of thought before death, as seen in the Sauptika Parva, in his words to AshvattAma.

manyamAnaH prabhAvaM cha kRRiShNasyAmita tejasaH .

Meaning: I know the greatness of kR^iShNa, whose splendor in subjugating the enemies of his devotees is immeasurable.

Compare this to the puruSha sUkta, "**vedAhamedam puruSham mahAntam...**" bhagavAn who eliminates the foes of his devotees, is also accessible to those foes themselves, as Duryodhana declares next.

tena na chyAvitash chAhaM kShatradharmAt svanuShThitAt

Meaning: By him (through balarAma), I have not slipped from my observance of kShatriya dharma (whereby I have gained Svarga).

Duryodhana was not even fit to be a kShatriya. Yet, by the anugraha of balarAma, he is getting the same fruits attained by those who execute kShatriya dharma.

sa mayA samanuprApto nAsmi shoच्याH kathaM chana.

Meaning: He of great accessibility has been attained by me. None should grieve for me.

This means, *"He who has great accessibility, has been attained by me, a sinner, who censured him and even tried to lay a trap to kill him"*.

Thus, Duryodhana attained sat-gati.

Censure of the Pandavas by Gods and Assurance of Krishna

When Duryodhana finished relating the glories of his sharaNagati, the gods rained flowers on him and celebrated him, while they censured the pANDavAs. The following shloka describes the sorrow of the pANDavAs:

atyadbhutAni te dR^iShTvA vAsudevapurogamAH . duryodhanasya pUjAM
tu dR^iShTvA vrIDAmupAgaman

Meaning: Seeing the wonderful things and worship offered to Duryodhana, the pANDavAs, headed by vAsudeva, felt ashamed.

Why did they feel ashamed? Because duryodhana, a rank sinner, had abided by the wishes of balarAma. But the pANDavAs, who were celebrated as bhaktAs and virtuous people, had not obeyed their leader, kR^iShNa to the letter. This is hinted by *"vAsudevapurogamAH"*.

hatAMshchAdharmataH shrutvA shokArtAH shushuchurhi te . bhISHmaM
droNaM tathA karNaM bhUrishravasameva cha

Meaning: Hearing (from the gods) that they had slain bhISHma, droNa, karNa and bhUriShrava by adharmA, they became sad.

Disobeying bhagavAn's orders due to their ego, they did not kill these personalities in the manner desired by bhagavAn. Thus, the gods reprimanded them.

†AMs tu chintAparAn dRRiShTvA pANDavAn dInachetasaH . provAchedaM vachaH kRRiShNo meghadundubhinishvanaH

Meaning: Seeing the pANDavAs lost in sorrowful thoughts of their transgressions and dejected due to the censure of the gods, kR^iShNa, who gives joy to the Earth, spoke in a voice deep as the clouds and the rumbling of drums.

bhagavAn is one who never lets his devotees perish. He is soft-hearted and wishes well for them, ignoring their faults. Thus, he who appeared to give joy to the Earth, could not bear to see them sad and spoke reassuring words to them, as follows.

naiSha shakyo .atishIghrAstras te cha sarve mahArathAH . RRiju yuddhena vikrAntA hantuM yuShmAbhir Ahave

Meaning: Krishna - "These were all great mahArathAs and rapid in their use of weapons. You had no capability to kill these mighty warriors by fighting them in a battle according to established rules."

First, bhagavAn reassures them by saying, "It is true you killed them by adharmA, such as hiding behind shikaNDI and so on, because you had no means to defeat them fairly."

This is not true. It is quite possible to defeat these warriors "fairly" in a head-on battle - "**RRiju yuddha**" - if they had considered bhagavAn as the means. In fact, Krishna instructed Arjuna to face bhISHma head-on, rather than use shikaNDI. They would have won with honor had they considered him the means in every step of the battle, instead of winning with disgrace by disobeying him.

To comfort his devotees who erred in such a manner, he says *"You may not have won if you had fought fairly ----- on account of your fear, you employed adharma, so it is justified"*. This is his good nature.

The objection can be raised that they would have won fairly if they had obeyed him. Winning by adharma is fit to be condemned. bhagavAn thus points out next that in the end, they did not win by adharma, but by his will only.

upAyA vihItA hy ete mayA tasmAn narAdhipAH . anyathA pANDaveyAnAM nAbhaviShyaj jayaH kva chit

Meaning: This is why I performed diverse means to kill these protectors of men. Otherwise, pANDavAs (using adharmic means) could never have obtained victory.

The adharmic means employed by pANDavAs, by disobeying bhagavAn, would have anyway resulted in failure. But bhagavAn intervened in the end to make even those means fruitful. For eg: He told Arjuna to fight bhISHma head on, but Arjuna used shikaNDI as a shield. This was adharma and should have resulted in Arjuna losing the battle. But bhISHma, being a bhakta of bhagavAn, decided to do what bhagavAn wanted and laid down his arms. Thus, it was the will of bhagavAn that saved Arjuna in the end.

So, technically, he performed diverse means once the pANDavAs disobeyed him, to make their crooked means successful. Hence, it can be said he alone killed them and that the pANDavAs did not kill them by adharma.

However, this logic is incorrect. Though bhagavAn did finally kill their foes himself, the blemish of failing to obey bhagavAn's commands, which is adharma, still stands.

Anticipating this objection, bhagavAn next says they could not be killed even by following his commands! As below,

te hi sarve mahAtmAnash chatvAro .atirathA bhuvi . na shakyA dharmato hantuM lokapAlair api svayam

Meaning: These four - bhISHma, droNa, karNa and bhUriShrava - who were of noble minds - were atirathAs. They were not capable of being killed even by the gods using dharma - the merit from righteous conduct of the Vedas.

All four had great merit. bhISHma, droNa and bhUriShrava were bhagavad bhaktAs. karNa was the son of kuntI, a bhAgavata and thus had that puNya which protected him too. Thus, he too is called a "mahAtma" on account of associaton with kuntI. Due to this, they were all atirathAs.

They could not be killed even by the gods using "dharma" - the righteous conduct of shAstra (Vedas). Since shAstra consists of bhagavAn's commands, by saying they cannot be killed using merit from shAstra, it means they cannot be killed even by obeying bhagavAn's commands. Hence, the pANDavAs who used "adharm" - disobeying bhagavAn's commands - cannot be blamed!

This is improper logic of course. It is true that the Vedas consist of bhagavAn's commands and such conduct is not enough to defeat those 4. But then, such commands are of two types - "sAmAny" and "viShesha". The sAmAny shAstra dharma certainly cannot defeat them, but the viShesha dharma of considering bhagavAn as the means - his supreme command - can defeat them.

This is the magnanimous nature of bhagavAn - he goes to such an extent to hide his devotees' faults.

Anticipating the objection that the supreme command of sharaNAgati dharma can defeat these warriors, Krishna next points out that Duryodhana was protected by sharaNAgati and hence incapable of being killed by bhagavAn himself.

tathaivAyaM gadApANirdhArtarAShTro gatashramaH . ashakyo dharmato hantuM kAlenApi hi daNDinA

Meaning: And, this son of dhR^itrAShtra, bearer of the mace, who is situated in "effort" of pleasing his preceptor, is not capable of being killed

even by myself who am "kAla" or death, who possesses the rod of authority for "punishment of sins" (daNDin) using "dharma" - the Vedas.

Though it is true that "viShesha dharma" of the shAstra, namely, bhagavAn himself, standing as the means in sharaNAgati, can kill all the other warriors, even he cannot kill Duryodhana, who is a prapanna.

"ashakyo dharmato hantuM kAlenApi hi daNDinA" - This doesn't refer to yama. bhagavAn himself is kAla or death to all foes of his bhaktAs. He possesses the supreme rod of chastisement, to punish the jIvAs for their sins. But even such a powerful Brahman, cannot destroy one who has surrendered to him, using "dharma" or "Veda-shAstra". Because that Veda itself says:

tasmAd api vadhyam prapannaM na prati pra yacchanti (~ Taittiriya Samhita)

[Therefore, one who is surrendered (to paramAtma), cannot be turned away (by paramAtma), even if he is fit to be killed for his transgressions.]

It is true that a prapanna cannot be killed by bhagavAn himself directly, since the latter ignores the sins of a prapanna and thus does not punish him. However, the flaw in Krishna's argument is this - if the enemy of a prapanna is also a prapanna, bhagavAn has the power of "agatitagaTaNA-sAmarthya" - quality of reconciling contradictions.

Duryodhana was a prapanna of balarAma and so could not be killed by bhagavAn directly. So, bhagavAn made bhIma a prapanna, and made Duryodhana himself rise up and expose his thighs. He enhanced the ego of Duryodhana and made another prapanna (bhIma) break the thighs Duryodhana himself had exposed out of that ego. And because Duryodhana himself had desired battle with bhIma, it was possible to empower bhIma to defeat Duryodhana, if bhIma had surrendered to bhagavAn.

However, bhIma never surrendered to Krishna voluntarily. Krishna took bhIma's unconscious state as sharaNAgati, and later on, bhIma claimed his own strength had defeated the foe, which rendered that sharaNAgati useless. Hence, from the perspective of Krishna, Balarama and the gods, Duryodhana had been defeated by

adharma. So, bhagavAn is trying to defend the pANDavAs here by saying Duryodhana could not be killed even by him directly.

Recall that similarly, when garuDa and sumukha, two bhaktAs of bhagavAn had been at loggerheads, bhagavAn resolved that conflict by not taking any of their sides and ensuring garuDa himself protected sumukha, changing his mind!

Thus, while bhagavAn is correct in saying even he wasn't capable of killing Duryodhana directly, it is not proper logic to say Duryodhana could not be killed at all by surrendering to him. Indeed, he had achieved the destruction of Duryodhana even while speaking thus.

bhagavAn is out of arguments, so he finally resorts to sharIrAtma bhAva and tells the pANDavAs to consider him as the means even in their adharmic acts, as below.

**na cha vo hRRidi kartavyaM yad ayaM ghAtito nRRipaH.
mithyAcharyAchChalopAyairbahavaH shatravo hatAH**

Meaning: This King (Duryodhana) who has been killed, do not consider his killing in your minds as an obligation (of yours). The foes have been killed (by me) through false conduct not agreeable to dharma and by innumerable, unshakeable means.

"na cha vo hRRidi kartavyaM yad ayaM ghAtito nRRipaH" - "Do not consider that you killed Duryodhana. Reflect that I killed him, ie, consider me as the means."

If the pANDavAs think this way, it is equivalent to a form of sharaNAgati, which is called **"bharanyAsa"** - ceding one's burden of responsibility to bhagavAn. And so Krishna will then consider their adharmic acts also to have been done by him, using sharIrAtma bhAva. He bears the burden of responsibility of the prapannAs.

What bhagavAn means is, **"As you are my devotees, reflect that I have killed your foe. That will be bharanyAsa. If you do that, I will consider myself to have done the adharmic acts as well as the dharmic acts in killing these foes, as you are my bodies and I am the self,"**.

bhagavAn says he is using sharIrAtma bhAva to consider himself as having performed all the acts of his devotees who are his bodies. When we say, "Jack killed someone", the name "Jack", a designation of Jack's body which did the act - also extends to Jack's Atma. Thus, if we say, "Arjuna disobeyed bhagavAn", the name "Arjuna" denotes his innerself, who has the jIva Arjuna as his body.

Using this nyAya called "**sAmAnAdhikaraNya**", bhagavAn says he himself (as the innerself of pANDavAs) committed all acts of adharma and dharma!

"mithyAcharya" - Through false conduct of not obeying Krishna. This was done by the pANDavAs. These were acts of adharma.

"AchChalopAyair" - Infallible means. Krishna's acts such as pressing down on the chariot to save Arjuna from karNa, taking arrows intended for Arjuna, hiding the Sun with his discus for Jayadratha to be killed and so on. These were acts of dharma.

He also says that on account of sharIrAtma bhAva, all of adharmic acts of pANDavAs (**mithyAchAryAH**), can also be considered to have been done by him, in addition to his own acts (**AchChalopAyair**). This is possible, if the pANDavAs dedicate the killing of Duryodhana to him.

Since he is free of sins, doShAs of the body do not accrue to the self. So the blemish of adharma vanishes, if he considers himself to have done them as the sharIrI.

He next says this sharaNAGati (bharanyAsa) is the path followed since ancient times.

pUrvairanugato mArgo devairasuraghAtibhiH . sadbhishchAnugataH panthAH sarvairanugamiShyate

Meaning: This (bharanyAsa) is even the path that the gods followed to kill the asurAs (by taking refuge in me). That path (ceding burden of responsibility to me), which the gods have followed, can be followed by all.

Indra, Rudra and others all defeated asurAs by placing the burden of responsibility at bhagavAn's lotus feet as the means, once they realized their own strength was in vain. Thus, bhagavAn comforts the pANDavAs saying that by considering him as the means in

killing Duryodhana, their adharmic acts will be purged, since he himself will consider to have done them.

vAsudeva vachaH shrutvA tadAnIM pANDavaiH saha pA~nchAIA
bhRRishasaMhRRiShTA...

Meaning: Hearing the words of vAsudeva, the pANDavAs along with the pA~NchAIAs became extremely joyful...

"vAsudeva" - The son of Vasudeva, who is renowned for honesty. bhagavAn is likewise, always honest and sincere in his dealings with his devotees.

Later on, as instructed by bhagavAn, yudhiShThira attributes their victory to his (bhagavAn's) anugraha. In this manner, Sarveshvara comforted his devotees.

This concludes my write-up. From these sections, is it not clear that there is no god who can be equal to or greater than nArAyaNa? No other god, be it Rudra, devI etc. have ever been described in shAstra to possess the guNAs that bhagavAn exhibits, his selfless nature, his loyalty to his devotees and so on. Hari sarvottama is the highest import of shAstra.