

# BHISHMA STUTI

(Based on commentaries by U.Ve.Sri BhAshya simhAsanam

Purisai NadadUr Sri.KrishnamachAriAr swAmy)



Translated into English By

Sri nrusimha sEva rasikan

**Oppiliappan Koil Sri.VaradAchAri SaThakOpan**

with a special article as an appendix by

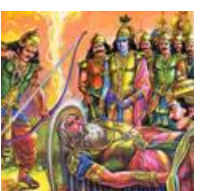
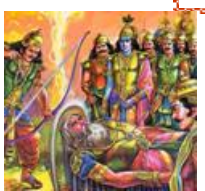
vedanta vidwAn

**Dr.N.S.AnanatharangAchAr swAmy**



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His Holiness 42nd PaTTam Srimad Azhagiya Singar of Ahobila MaTham



॥ श्रीः ॥

# ॥ श्रीभीष्म स्तुतिः ॥

## SRI BHISHMA STUTI



Sri-Bhishma on arrow bed - Thanks: Sau. R. Chitralkha

### INTRODUCTION:

*The birth of Sri Bhishma Stuti*

Sri Bhishma Acharya, the grand sire of the Kaurava and Pandava clans was lying on a bed of arrows after a fierce battle with the Pandava army. Lord Krishna, who had vowed not to take any weapons during the Mahabharata war was

driven to use His chakram to destroy the threatening BhIshmA. Earlier, BhIshmA had pierced the kavacham of Lord Sri Krishna with his fierce arrows and the Lord was bleeding from the wounds. Arjuna was about to be attacked severely by BhIshmA. That is when, Sri Parthasarathi jumped down from Arjuna's chariot with Chakram in His hand to destroy the threatening BhIshmA. When BhIshmA saw the Lord rushing at him with dust covered tirumEni from the day's exertions and the blood flowing out of the wounds from his arrows, he was overcome with devotion and thought of the rare bhAgyam of the darsanam of the Lord in the battle field towering over him.

We have to remember that BhIshmA's Kshathriya dharmam required him to support his king (DuryOdhana of evil mind) as the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army, although he had no heart to attack or kill the PAndavas. On the subha-darsanam of the Lord rushing at him, ten sLOkams poured out of the mouth of BhIshmA to celebrate his bhAgyam.

These ten verses constitute BhIshma Stuti or BhIshma sthavarAjam. We will summarize the meanings of these ten sLOkams from Srimad BhAgavatham that were considered for recitation as nityAnusandhAna kramam by HH the 42<sup>nd</sup> Jeeyar (InjimEttu Azhagiya Singar) of AhObila Matam every day. The translation is from Vaikunta Vaasi U.Ve. Sri BhAshya SimhAsanam Sri Purisai NadadUr Sri KrishnAmAchAr Swamy, the grandson of the revered 42<sup>nd</sup> Jeeyar of AhObila Matam (in Jeer's poorvAsramam).





Vaikuntavaasi SrI purisai swamy

sadagopan.org







# श्लोकान् and commentaries



Shining radiantly with pItAmbaram

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## SLOKAM 1

त्रिभुवनकमनं तमालवर्णं रविकरगौरवराम्बरं दधाने ।

वपुरलककुलावृताननाब्जं विजयसखे रतिरस्तु मेऽनवद्या ॥

tribhuvana kamanam tamAla varNam

ravikara gouravarAmbaram dadhAnE |

vapuralaka kulAvrtAnanAbhjam

vijaya sakhE ratirastu mE anavadyA ||

### MEANING:

May the appearance of this most beautiful thirumEni in all the three worlds with the blue (effulgent) hue like the tamala tree, shining radiantly with the golden yellow pIthAmbaram reminding one of the bAla sooryan and the charming curly black tresses adorned face stay forever in my blemishless mind!

### COMMENTS:

Here BhIshmA prays for the attachment of his mind in the subhAsrayam of the Lord without seeking any returns (anavadyA rati:). Praying to the Lord with expectation of a boon is adhamAchAram. Seeking and enjoying His darsanam without any expectation of rewards is uttamAchAram (superior way).





## SLOKAM 2

युधि तुरगरजोविधूम्रविष्वक्कचलुलितश्रमवार्यलङ्कतास्ये ।

मम निशितशरैर्विभिद्यमानत्वचि विलसत्कवचेऽस्तु कृष्ण आत्मा ॥

yudhi turaga rajO vidhUmra vishvak-

kaca lulita SramavAryalankrtAsyE |

mama niSitaSarai: vibhidyamAna-

tvaci vilasatkavacE astu KrshNA AtmA ||

### MEANING:

As Sri ParthasArathi drives the chariot with great speed in the battle field, the dust arising from His rapid movement raises a lot of dust that settles on His face and hair. As the Lord conducts sArathyam with great speed, the curly tresses fall on His cheeks and He does not even have the time to move them away and to tie them in to a bun. Lord has such intensity to help in destroying the enemies of the PAndavAs. The exertions from these efforts result in the formation of beads of sweat on His face and yet the beauty of His face does not diminish even by an iota. Meanwhile, the wounds caused by my sharp arrows lead to a copious flow of blood from His chest. May my mind achieve layam in the Lord of this rare beauty as He serves His bakthan, Arjunan!

### COMMENTS:

The Lord has aprAkrutha, Suddha satthva dhivya mEni. Therefore, He does not sweat, bleed or is covered by dust from exertions. Here, just to please His dear friend ArjunA, the Lord goes through this drama. Our Lord also



wanted to reveal to the world the power of BhIshma's arrows. To please both of His bhakthAs, our Lord set aside His avathAra mahimai and took on the role of ordinary human being. Even ArjunA did not get to see this extraordinary sight, where as BhIshma had the rare blessing to enjoy this svarUpam of the Lord as Bhaktha Kinkaran (the servant of His devotees).



BhIshma being blessed by bhakta kinkaran



Treasurehouse-doddamagge venugopalan-thanks sri sridhar

### SLOKAM 3

सपदि सखिवचो निशम्य मध्ये निजपरयोर्बलयो रथं निवेश्य ।

स्थितवति परसैनिकायुरक्षणा हृतवति पार्थसखे रतिर्ममास्तु ॥

sapadi sakhivacO niSamya madhyE

nijaparayOr balayO ratham niveSya |

sthitavati parasainikAyurakshNA

hrtavati pArthasakhE ratir mamAstu ||

#### MEANING:

On entering the battle field, Sri ParthasArathi listened to His friend Arjuna's command to position the chariot between the two armies. Our Lord accepted Arjuna as His master and obeyed His command (YathOkthakAri). With His glances directed at the opposing army from the middle of the battle field, He stole the "Ayus" (lives) of the Kaurava warriors and chieftains. May that Lord, who is the real cause for the destruction of the Kaurava army stay firmly in my mind!

#### COMMENTS:

Arjuna's tone when he ordered the Lord to position his chariot in the middle of the battle field was haughty (sEnayOr ubhayO madhyE ratham sthApaya mE acyuta) Draw up my chariot, O acyutA, between the two armies). Our Lord did not take offense at His friend and did as directed as Arjuna's charioteer (Sri PaarthasArati).

Then the Lord said to His friend, PArthan: O Arjuna! Behold these assembled Kauravas (uvAca pArtha paSyaitAm samavEdAn kurUniti).

AchArya RaamAnujA's commentary here is moving as he describes the Supreme One, who permits Himself to be directed by a haughty one like ArjunA: "Sri Sri KrishnA, the Supreme Lord -- who is overcome by parental love for those, who take shelter in Him, who is the treasure-house of knowledge, Power, Lordship, Energy, Potency and Splendour, whose sportive delight brings about the origin, sustentation and dissolution of the entire cosmos at His will, who is the Lord of the senses, who controls in all ways our inner and outer senses, Superior and Inferior--did immediately what ArjunA directed Him to do (to place the chariot in the middle of the battle field). AchAryA RAmanujA gives us a clear understanding of who is the Master and who is the servant. BhIshmA hints in this sLOkam that by mere glance, Lord Sri KrishnA struck at the lives of all the enemies of the PAndavA including him (BhIshmA). Their deaths came later like in a drama, where actors took on roles.



## SLOKAM 4

व्यवहितपृतनामुखं निरीक्ष्य स्वजनवधाद्विमुखस्य दोषबुद्ध्या ।

कुमतिमहरदात्मविद्यया यश्चरणरतिः परमस्य तस्य मेऽस्तु ॥

vyavahitaprtanAmukham nirIkshya

sva jana vadhAt vimukhasya dOsha buddhya |

kumatimaharadAtma vidyayA ya:

caraNarati paramasya tasya mE astu ||

### MEANING:

May my mind hold steadily the Holy feet of the Supreme One, who removed the ajn~Anam of ArjunA (deluded about his dhArmic duties) through the performance of His upadesam on Athma tattvam and Kshathriya dharmam. May my mind stay always at those feet of the ParamaathmA, who removed the delusion of ArjunA, whose mind was wrought with pain over the prospect of killing his opposing relatives and teachers in the war to ensue and thereby accumulate sins from those actions!

### COMMENTS:

Sri ParthasArathi performed GithOpadEsam for the confused ArjunA and instructed him that the killing of relatives in a moral war will not generate sins. He also advised ArjunA: "You are grieving for those, who do not deserve to be grieved. These warriors on the opposite side over whom you grieve have already been killed by me. You are just an instrument for their destruction. Hence sins will not come your way". BhIshma prays to that GeethAchAryan for the blessings of unflinching devotion at His holy feet.



Eternal Refuge - malaiyappa swamy



## SLOKAMS 5 & 6

स्वनिगममपहाय मत्प्रतिज्ञामृतमधिकर्तुमवप्लुतो रथस्थः ।

धृतरथचरणोऽभ्ययाच्चलद्गुह्रिरिव हन्तुमिभं गतोत्तरीयः ॥

svanigamamapahAya matpratijn~Am

rtamadhikartumavaplutO rathastha: |

dhrta ratha caraNObhyayAth caladgu:

haririva hantumibham gatOttarIya: ||

शितविशिखहतो विशीर्णदंशः क्षतजपरिप्लुत आततायिनो मे ।

प्रसभमभिससार मद्द्वधार्थं स भवतु मे भगवान् गतिर्मुकुन्दः ॥

SitaviSikhahatO viSeerNadamSa:

kshatajaparipluta aatatAyinO mE |

prasabhamabhisasAra madvadhArtham

sa bhavatu mE bhagavAn gatirmukunda: ||

### MEANING:

What an anubhavam it is to witness the Lord jumping down from His charioteer's seat forgetting HIS vow equal to the sacred VedAs to make true MY VOW (that I will make the Lord take His weapon in spite of His earlier vow not to use weapons in the war to ensue) and rushing at me like a lion intent



on killing an elephant! As He jumped down, the earth shook under His weight, his upper garment slipped to the ground without His knowing it and He rushed towards me with Sudarsanam in His hand. His armour has been punctured by my sharp arrows and He was bleeding from those wounds and He rushed at me to kill me, who was armed. That great Bhaktha-vathsalan, who gave PrANa dAnam to one Bhakthan (Arjunan) and fulfilled the vow of another Bhakthan (Myself) scored twice with His bhakta dAKshiNyam. May that Mukundan be my eternal refuge and succor!

## SLOKAM 7

विजयरथकुटुम्ब आत्ततोत्रे धृतहयरश्मिनि तच्छिद्येक्षणीये ।

भगवति रतिरस्तु मे मुमूर्षोः यमिह निरीक्ष्य हता गताः सरूपम् ॥

vijaya-ratha-kuTumba Atta-tOtrE

dharta hayaraSmini tat SriyE-IkshaNeeyE |

bhagavati rati: astu mE mumUrshO:

yamiha nireekshya hatA gatA: sarUpam ||

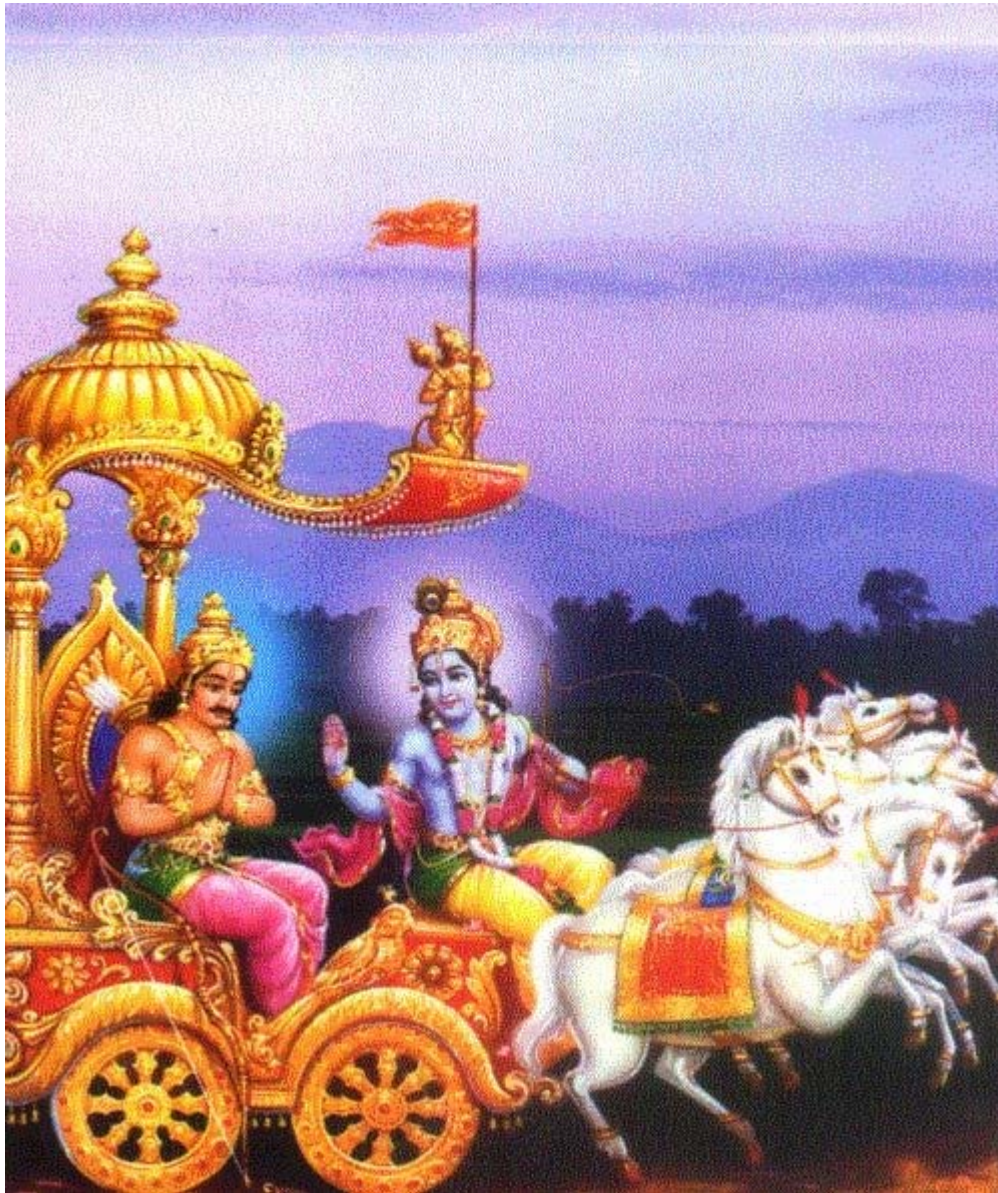
### MEANING:

At the last moments of my life, May my mind be rooted in that BhagavAn, who vowed that the chariot of ArjunA is the family to be protected by Him soundly, who held the whip in His divine hands to drive the horses and Who stole the hearts of all! May adiyEn be blessed to see that beautiful sight of Him as Sri ParthasArathi! It is indeed a fact that all those, who lost their lives in that battle field attained mOkshAm because they had the good fortune to see the Lord with their own eyes.

### COMMENTS:

Dharma Saastram declares that one should protect his family at all costs, even if some of those acts are not allowed normally. Lord ParthasarAthy seemed to have observed those injunctions of Dharma Saastram, when He abandoned His vow (not to take weapon in the battle between the PANdavas and the KauravAs). His intent was to save the Vijaya-ratha KuTumbam. Our Lord's sankalpam was to decrease the bhAram (the burden) of the Earth (BhU BhAram). Insignificant ones like us are not qualified to analyse His motives

for breaking His vow. BhagavAn has Yogic powers beyond description. BhIshmA was one, who secured MOkshAm by the blessings of Dhivya darsanam of the Lord during his last moments and his statements are adequate for us to follow.



SrI ParthasArathy

## SLOKAM 8

ललित गति विलास वल्गुहास प्रणय निरीक्षण कल्पितोरुमानाः ।

कृतमनुकृतवत्य उन्मदान्धाः प्रकृतिमग्निकिल यस्य गोपवध्वः ॥

lalita gati vilAsa valguhAsa-

praNaya nirIkshaNa-kalpitOrumAna: |

krtam-anukrtavatya unmadAndhA:

prakrtimagan kila yasya gOpavadhva: ||

### MEANING:

There is no surprise in the warriors achieving mukthi by following Kshathriya dharmam. Even the Gopis without sophisticated knowledge achieved Mukthi by enjoying the leelAs of the Lord. Gopis became the objects of the affection and respect of the Lord and they participated and reflected on the deeds of their Lord and attained MOkshAm. They became fortunate through the observance of the beautiful gait of the Lord, charming playful activities, bewitching smile, merciful glances and became objects of his affection and attained the supreme anugraham of MOksha Siddhi.



## SLOKAM 9

मुनिगणनृपवर्यसंकुलेऽन्तः सदसि युधिष्ठिरराजसूय एषाम् ।

अर्हणमुपपेद ईक्षणीयो मम दृशि गोचर एष आविरात्मा ॥

munigaNa-nrpavarya-sankulEnta:

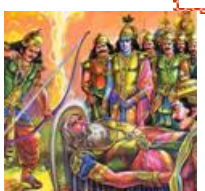
sadasi yudhishThira rAjasooya yEshAm |

arhaNam-upapEda IkshaNiyO

mama drusi gOcara yEsha AvirAtmA ||

### MEANING:

Those assembled in Yudhishtira's rAjasooya yAgam -- the ghOshti of sages, well known kings - praised the unmatched beauty, the most merciful glances of the Lord and offered their tributes. That Lord, who received all those salutations is standing in front of me and blessing me with His darsana soubhAgyam. My blessings have no match and are immeasurable.





## SLOKAM 10

तमिममहमजं शरीरभाजां हृदि हृदि धिष्टितमात्मकल्पितानाम् ।

प्रतिदृशमिव नैकधाकर्मिकं समधिगतोऽस्मि विधूतभेदमोहः ॥

tam-imamam-ajam SarIra-bhAjAm

hrdi hrdi dhishTitam-Atma-kalpitanAm |

pratidrsam iva naikadhArkam yEkam

samadhigatOsmi vidhUta-bhEda-mOha: ||



He is in the hearts of yogis (Thanks: [srirangapankajam.com](http://srirangapankajam.com))



## MEANING:

I have now understood that the primordial Lord (without any birth) shines in the hearts of every one of His creations. Knowing this supreme truth, my ignorance has been removed now.

The Sun in the firmament is Only One and yet is seen by every eye. Even though there are multitudes of eyes that experience the Sun, that Sun which is being seen has no differences. The same Sun is seen as reflections in the waters stored in limitless vessels and yet has no variations.

Just like that, the ParamAthmA experienced by countless yOgis in their hearts is one and the same. I have now realized this supreme truth and have become fulfilled.

## COMMENTS:

Thus the grand sire of BhArathA clan eulogized Lord KrishNA in the battle field and surrendered his mind, speech and indriyAs at the holy feet of the Lord. Due to the command of the Lord, there was total silence at that time of surrender. The Athma JyOthi of BhIshmA, the great devotee of the Lord, reached the sacred feet of the Lord.

SrimadbhAgavatam, First Canto, Ninth Sargam: 33-42

॥ इति श्रीभीष्म स्तुतिः समाप्ता ॥



# appendix



The Supreme Lord

(Thanks: Sau. R. Chitralakha)

# THE MAHA BHARATHA - STRUCTURE AND STORY

VedAnta VidwAn Dr. N.S. Anantha RangAchAr Swamy



Srimath RAMayaNA and MahA BharathA are two great epics (ithihAsAs) that are like two resplendent pillars of our dharmA and culture. Of these two, MahA BhArathA is a mighty monumental work that enshrines the essence of Dharma in all its aspects. All the four purushArthAs are expounded elaborately in this great work. **"Whatever is here may be found elsewhere, but whatever is not here is not to be found anywhere"**. This praise is not an exaggeration, but a statement of fact.

## THE THEME OF MAHA BHARATHA:

The MahA BharathA presents in one place the internal as well as external nature of our culture, the aspirations of humanity and the achievements and goals of life in an inimitable way. It contains the wisdom of the VedhAs, VedhAngAs, and all SaasthrAs and one can easily get to know the quintessence of all of the above through a study of this epic.

## THE LOFTINESS OF MAHA BHARATHA:

This has been the source text to all poets that flourished further in Bharatha desam. MahA BhArathA has been assigned a lofty place, which is equal to the vEdhAs and is called the panchama (fifth) vEdhA because its subject matter in the ultimate analysis is the same as that of the vEdhAs.

## THE DATE OF MAHA BHARATHA:

MahA BhArathA has been studied intensively by various scholars. From those studies, Professor Sukthankar has published what is considered as one of the authentic version of the epic based on the careful study of the many recensions





of MahA BhArathA. His work is considered by some as a significant landmark in the study of this epic. It is the opinion of some scholars that the present day MahA BhAratham went through three stages known as "JayA, BharathA and MahA BhArathA". It has been pointed out that a number of stories were added to the original poem during the successive centuries (from 400 B.C to 400 A.D) leading up to its final form consisting of one lakh sLOkams. Tradition recognizes the whole work as one integrated piece.

### THE THREE STAGES OF THE EVOLUTION OF MAHA BHARATHA:

The core of the MahA BhArathA deals with the defeat in the battle of KauravAs at the hands of the PAndavAs. Later on, the entire story of "the BharathA race" came to be associated with this in all its elaboration. The epic was called "JayA" because it describes the story of the victory of the PAndavAs over the KauravAs. It was called "BharathA" since it dealt with the lives of the people of the BharathA race. It was called MahA BharathA or IthihAsA, since it recorded the chronicles of the monarchs of those times. First stage was the JayA stage. This consisted of 8800 sLOkAs and related to the main theme of the work, namely, the feud between the Kauravas and the PANDavas. This portion contains descriptions relevant to such a narration.

The second stage of "BharathA" evolved with the addition of the greatness of the personages involved in the family war. At this stage, the epic had 24,000 sLOkams. It contained the description of the glory of personages like BhIshmA, DhrONA, the stories relating to the birth of the KauravAs and the PAndavAs, their education and upbringing, the virtues of the royal class, the troubles and travails of the PANDavAs during their period of exile and particularly the one year of living incognito in the court of VirAtA, the efforts made to prevent the great war, the teaching of KrishNA to ArjunA, the description of the war that lasted for eighteen days and the final victory gained by the PANDavAs. All of these topics relating directly to the main theme were perhaps added on in the second stage known as BharathA with 24,000





sloKams. During the third and final stage, a number of upAkhyAnAs (other stories and anecdotes) were added on to this great work to make it, "MahA BhArathA". The size swelled up to 100,000 sloKams. In this form, MahA BhArathA became an encyclopedia of Knowledge and wisdom of humanity. The VishNu SahasranAmam, anugIthA, Bhishma stavam, Gajendra Moksham et all were added. Long and elaborate stories of DushyanthA and Sakunthala, SAVithri-SatyavAn, YayAthi, RAmA, MathsyOpAkhyAnA, Sibi chakravathy, the story of NaLa-Dhamayanthi have been added as major upAkhyAnams and the bulk of these constitutes nearly one fourth of this great work.

In the northern rescension of MahA BhAratham, there are 82136 stanzas and the southern rescension has 96586 stanzas. The description of the war is another significant feature of this work and this comprises one fifth of MahA BhAratham. Finally, the teaching about DharmA occupies the most prominent place in this ithihAsam. The Saanthi parvam is totally devoted to the teaching on DharmA. The teachings about Bhagavadh GitA, RAja dharmA, Apath dharmA, Moksha dharmA, the dhArmic teachings housed in AnusAsAsana parvA constitute together one third of MahA BhAratham. In addition to the 18 parvAs of MahA Bharatham, there is another parvA known as Hari vamsam, which is considered a "khila or anubhandA or an addition to the main text". This has a lot of focus on DharmA and contains 317 cantos and more than 16,000 stanzas.

### THE STRUCTURE OF MAHA BHARATHAM (MB):

There are 18 parvAs in MB. These are:

- (1) Adhi parvA
- (2) SabhA parvA
- (3) Vana parvA
- (4) VirAt parvA



- (5) UdhyOga parvA
- (6) Bhishma parvA
- (7) DhrONa parvA
- (8) Karna parvA
- (9) Shalya parvA
- (10) Soupthika parvA
- (11) Sthree parvA
- (12) Saanthi parvA
- (13) AnuSaasana parvA
- (14) AsvamEdhika parvA
- (15) AsramavAsi parvA
- (16) Mousala parvA
- (17) MahAprasthAnika parvA and
- (18) SvargArOhaNa parvA.

It is not clear when this kind of division into parvAs took place. The parvAs are of different length and there is no uniformity regarding their size. The shortest is MahAprasthAnika parvA containing only 120 stanzas, whereas the longest is Saanthi parvA. The combination of Saanthi parvA and AnuSaasana parvA yields 21,000 stanzas.

#### THE THEMES OF INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS OF MB:

The Adhi parvA gives an elaborate description of the lunar race and the birth of the PaNDavAs. The SabhA parvA deals with the game of dice to which





Yudhishtira was invited. The Vana parva deals with the experiences of the Pandavas in the forest and the Virata parva narrates their stay in Virata nagaram in cognito. In Udhyaoga parva, Lord Krishna goes to Hastinapur as a messenger of peace. Bhishma parva houses Srimad Bhagavath Gita, the commencement of the war, Bhishma's participation in it and the defeat of Bhishma. Drona parva narrates the death of Abhimanyu and the death of Drona himself. KarNa parva is devoted to the war that was waged by KarNa and his death. Salya parva deals with the role played by Salya and the death of Duryodhana. Souptika parva describes the slaying by Asvatthaman of the children of Pandavas, while they were sleeping. Stree parva is full of lamentations of the bereaved women. The teaching of the Dharmam to Yudhishtra by Bhishma Acharya is the subject matter of Saanti Parva. AnuSaasana parva has accounts of the stories relating to morals and righteousness. The performance of Asvamedha Yagam is described in Asvamedha parva. The Asramavasi parva narrates how Dhritarashtra retires into the woods for performance of penance and Mausala parva narrates the destruction of the Yadavas. Mahaprasthanika parva describes how the Pandavas set out on their final journey through the Himalayas and the Svargarohana parva describes how they ascended to heaven.

### THE TRADITION OF AUTHORSHIP:

According to tradition Sage Vyasa is the author of Mahabharatham. He is the son of Parasara, who gave us Vishnu puranam. He was a contemporary to the events that happened in Mahabharatham. The traditional salutation to Vyasa is: "I bow down to Vyasa, the son of Parasara, the grandson of Sakthi, the great grandson of Vasishtha, the father of Sukha Brahman of pure mind and who is full of the power of tapas."

### THE MESSAGE OF MAHA BHARATHAM:

Its message to humanity is in three directions:



(1) The Empirical

(2) The Moral and

(3) The Metaphysical.

At the empirical, worldly level, it gives a real picture of the terrible war between the great heroes of the times that was devastating. At the moral level, it points out that the war is an eternal one that is forever fought between the good and the evil forces, between dharmA and adharmA, between the Asuric and daivA (satthvA) forces and assesses the ethics of such a conflict. At the metaphysical level, it points out that the embodied one has to strive incessantly to go beyond these dualities of life destroying the darkness of delusion with the sword of knowledge under the guidance of the internal controller, our Supreme Lord, KrishNA.





## SRI BHISHMA, THE GRANDSIRE OF MAHA BHARATHAM

VedAnta vidwAn Dr. N.S. Anantha RangAchAr

### WHO IS BHISHMA?

BhIshmA is one of the great personages of the BharathA clan. He was respected by all as the "grand sire ". He was a great devotee of the Lord and was endowed with an unique spiritual insight and experience. The teaching of BhIshmA to YudhishtArA enshrines the supreme most wisdom. In valour, he was superior to every other hero of his times. It was he who fought with the great Sri ParasurAmA and proved to be his equal in valour.

### THE LINEAGE OF BHISHMA

The MahA BhAratham describes how a king by the name of MahA BhIshmA was born as Santanu on account of a curse and married GangA and how the eight Vasus cursed by Sage VasishtA were born as sons to Santanu and GangA. At the time of her marriage to Santanu, GangA had imposed a condition that Santanu should never interfere or obstruct her from doing anything she liked as a condition of marriage to him. She also warned Santanu that she would abandon him and go away, if he objected to her actions. GangA had promised the Vasus that she will throw them into the river, the moment they were born to free them from their curse of having an earthly life. GangA threw into the river the seven children born to her, one after the other, as soon as they were born saying "I make you pleased". The saddened Santanu did not obstruct GangA, though he was highly displeased. When GangA took her eighth son in her arms to throw him into the river as usual, Santanu could not bear the familiar sight. He shouted at his wife GangA and asked: "Who are you? Why are you killing your own children? Will you not spare this child at least?" Then GangA revealed her identity and the curse of Vasishta that required her to throw the seven of the eight sons, who were Vasus. She assured Santanu that the eighth son will be spared and that he would become a great person. It was this eighth son of



King Santanu and GangA who came to be known later as BhIshmA. Mother Ganga disappeared then with the child. She saw to it that her son was given the best education and training.

### SANATANU'S REUNION WITH HIS SON



Few years after GangA's disappearance with her newly born son, king Santanu went for hunting on the banks of GangA River. There, he saw a young boy stopping the flow of the mighty river through a dam formed by his arrows. The king was astounded by the might of that young boy.

At this time, GangA presented herself before the king and presented the boy named Devavrata to him and said: "This is our eighth son. I have taken care of him so far. He is proficient in arms and you can now take him with you." The achievements of the boy were described by Mother GangA as follows: "Do not think our son is an ordinary person. He has studied the VedhAs and VedhAngAs under Sage VasishtA. He has gained mastery in the ancient science of handling weapons. He is an equal to IndraA, when he wields the bow. He is a master of all the SaasthrAs known to Bruhaspathi He knows all the weapons known to Sri ParasurAmA. He is a master in RAja Dharmam also."

### THE SON'S LIFE WITH HIS FATHER

The father returned to his kingdom with DevavrathA. The king's joy was immense and he made DevarathA as the YuvarAja or heir-apparent. Time passed on. Once king Santanu went to the banks of YamunA for hunting and there he came across a beautiful maiden. He fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. The father of that woman was the chief of the fisherman tribe and let the king know that the condition for marrying his daughter was that the king should promise to make the son born of his daughter become Santanu's successor. Santanu could not agree to this condition as he could not ignore his noble son, DevavrathA. The king returned to his capital broken hearted and pined with love for Satyavathi, the daughter of the chief of fishermen.





In due course, DevavrathA came to know about his father's love for Satyavathi. He approached the father of Satyavathi and made a proposal for the marriage of his father with Satyavathi. DevavrathA took a vow right then and there that he would himself place the future son of Santanu and Satyavathi on the hereditary throne as the successor to Santanu. He also took a vow that he himself would never marry at all so that there may not be any fear in the mind of Satyavathi's father regarding the claims by anyone for the throne after his death. DevavrathA took this vow: "From today, I will observe the vow of celibacy. The eternal world will be there for me even without possessing a son".

### THE NAME BHISHMA AND HIS LIFE IN HASTHINAPURAM

DevavrathA acquired the name BhIshmA because of the unique vow that he took for the sake of making his father happy. Even the Gods admired the supreme sacrifice DevarathA made and gave him the name of BhIshmA. King Santanu was so pleased with his son that he granted a boon which made it possible for BhIshmA not to be overtaken by death, unless it was his desire.

### BHISHMA AND THE HAPPENINGS IN HASTHINAPURAM

BhIshmA was a witness of a number of events that took place in HasthinApuram such as the death of his father (Santanu), the coronation of his son, chithrAngadhA, the death of ChithrAngadhA and VichithraveeryA, the birth of DhritrAshtrA, PaaNdu, VidhurA, the birth and growth of PANdavAs and KauravAs. Throughout all these decades, BhIshmA was firm in the observance of his vow as a celibate. His guidance was sought and obtained by all of the generations of kings and their families. It was BhIshmA who gave proper education to the KauravAs and PANdavAs. His words of counsel to the KauravAs were of no avail and the MahA BhArathA war broke out. As a loyal subject of the reigning king, BhIshmA fought on the side of DuryOdhanA in that Great War. The pANdavAs were very dear to him and it was cruel fate that aligned him against his own grandsons. He was the commander in chief of the KauravA army and nobody could equal him in valor. BhIshmA was indeed an



invincible warrior. It was with the consent and the blessings of BhIshmA that YudhishtA, the eldest of the pANdavAs commenced the war.

### **BHISHMA AND HIS DEVOTION TO THE LORD**

BhIshMA was a great devotee of the Lord. He had taken a challenge that he would make Sri KrishnA wield a weapon against His (Sri KrishnA's) own vow of not using any weapon in that war. BhIshMA was fighting fiercely and the pANdavA army was broken up and fleeing in all directions. Though Sri KrishnA was encouraging the warriors and the generals of the pANdavA army, it was of no use. Sri KrishnA in a fit of fury declared that He alone would destroy BhIshMA, DhronA and others. Then He rushed towards BhishmA--after jumping down from the chariot of ArjunA--holding the terror-striking Sudarsanam in His hand.

The reaction of BhIshMA was reverential. He was unmoved and he addressed Sri KrishnA as follows: "Oh MaadhavA, Lord of all the Worlds! Come and do away with me. I shall gain all auspiciousness, if I am killed by Your hand. I shall be honored in all the worlds on account of this noble death". Sri KrishnA chose not use His chakram against BhIshMA.

Thus, BhishmA won in this challenge. The pANdavAs had to conquer BhIshMA by means of a plan hinted at by BhIshMA himself.

ArjunA had built a bed of arrows for BhIshMA as he waited for the advent of UttharAyaNam to shake off his mortal coils. After the war was over and after crowning of YudhishtA, Sri KrishnA advised YudhishtA to approach BhIshMA -- propped up on his bed of arrows-- and receive instructions on dharmA and all other aspects of ruling the kingdom. Sri KrishnA said all that knowledge would be lost, when BhIshMA would die and hence this exhortation was very meaningful.

We see another side of BhIshMA as a great savant and devotee. Lord Sri KrishnA Himself praises him in unique terms. The great saints, stages and





savants of the times such as VyAsA, NaradhA, Paila, SandilyA, Devala and others had assembled around BhIshmA and seeing Sri KrishnA their Lord there, BhIshmA praised Him. This praise is celebrated as "BhIshma sthavarAjA". Being permitted by BhIshmA, YudhishtA put him a number of questions to know the supreme secrets of DharmA and BhIshmA answered patiently and expounded the tenets of DharmA. BhIshmA taught YudhishtA Sri VishNu Sahasra nAmam and other supreme truths. At the end, BhIshmA set his eyes on Sri KrishnA and sought the Lord's permission to cast his body. The Lord said: "You shall attain the state of Vasus. There is nothing sinful in you. You are a great lover of your father. You are a royal sage. So death is under your control."

The last message of BhIshmA to YudhishtA was this: 'You must strive for truth. Truth is the supreme strength. One should be ever compassionate. People should be ever devoted to the VedA, righteous conduct and austerities'.

### **BHISHMA'S WISDOM**

BhIshmA's experience and wisdom were so vast that his teachings are universal and invaluable. He taught that non-violence, truth, forgiveness and conquest over anger are the characteristics of DharmA and that only by following the path of DharmA can one gain happiness.

"Mercy towards all beings and giving protection to all beings form the supreme dharmA. That DharmA is conducive to the good of all and which leads the universe to right action."

"Man should neither talk nor think carelessly of four things (viz). evil deeds, harsh deeds, carrying tales and uttering falsehoods".

### **BHISHMA'S POSITION IN MAHA BHARATHAM**

BhIshmA occupies a glorious position in the galaxy of the personages of Maha BhAratham. He is known for his supreme devotion towards the Lord. He is a





great "neethiparA" and was admired even by Lord Sri KrishnA.





ਠਲਪੋਏਏ ਸਿੰਠ ਠੰ  
ਝਪਾਨਵੇਵਾਠਝੋਲੇਠਵਲ-ਠੇਠਠੇਠੀਵਾਠੀ ਏਠਠਠੇਝ



Sundara simham - ahobila mutt

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