

# Akram Youth

August 2021 English

Dada Bhagwan Parivar



**Bhishma**

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# Editorial

Dear Friends,

We are all familiar with the famous epic of ancient times, Mahabharat, and its great characters. Mahabharat is full of great characters such as Pitamah Bhishma, Vidoor, the five Pandavas, Kauravas, Lord Krishna, Karna, the great teacher Drona, the head guru Krupacharya, and several others. Each of these great characters have their own distinct traits. If we fully understand the life events of these great characters, then that understanding can be very helpful in our lives.

With this noble objective, we have tried to introduce and cover the main events of one of the magnificent characters, Pitamah Bhishma in this month's edition of your favorite Akram Youth.

You may ask, why Bhishma? There are so many other magnificent characters in Mahabharat. However, friends, Pitamah Bhishma is unique due to his magnificent personality and due to the fact that he possesses the necessary characteristics that help us become successful in every field of life. He was an invincible warrior, a scholar, a skilled politician, a proponent of truth and religion in a cruel kingdom. He was a strong pillar who possessed infinite exceptional strengths and qualities.

I hope that the study of this edition, which is dedicated to such a great man, who possessed various qualities, will be interesting and full of excitement. Along with that, it will provide inspiration to our lives.

- Dimplebhai Mehta

# Bhishma's Vow



Prince Devavrat became famous as Bhishma due to his powerful vow.

**"I, the son of Ganga, Devavrat, with the earth, sky, and all four directions as my witness, vow that I will remain celibate for my entire life. In this life, I will not marry. I will live without a lineage, and I will die without a lineage. This is my unwavering vow. "**

He took this vow, but what were the challenges he encountered in fulfilling it? Despite enduring many insults he was faithful to his vow, he fulfilled his promise responsibly and became immortal in history.

Let us appreciate some events of his life and learn from them....



## Event 1

Devavrat, who became famous in history as 'Bhishma Pitamah' for his rigorous vow, was the son of Shantanu and Ganga. When he came to Hastinapur, everyone except his father Shantanu was happy. Devavrat tried to find the cause of his father's grief. He learned that his father Shantanu was in love with a fisherman's daughter named Satyawati and was eager to marry her. However, Satyawati's father was against this marriage, so Devavrat immediately went to meet Satyawati's father.

**Devavrat:** O Nishadraj! I have come to you to ask the hand of your daughter Satyawati for my father Shantanu. Give them your permission to get married.

**Father:** O son of Ganga, Devavrat! I will give my permission for this marriage only if you assure me that Satyawati will get the honor of the Queen Mother and that only the son born to my daughter will be the heir to the throne of Hastinapur. But this is not possible as long as you are in Hastinapur.

Without even a moment's delay, Devvrat assured him and said...

**Devavrat:** We will both remain in my father's life. Listen Nishadraj! If this is the only reason then, **I, the son of Ganga, Devavart, am taking a vow right now that I will observe celibacy for life and I will not become the ruler of Hastinapur.** Until my last breath, I will fulfill all the responsibilities as a commander to the king sitting on the throne of Hastinapur.



## Event 2

Satyavati's father agreed and gave his permission for the marriage. Knowing the depth and greatness of Devavrat's rigorous (Bhishan)vow, mother Satyawati and Shantanu were very pleased with Devavrat, and gave him the name, 'Bhishma'.

But internally, they were worried about this rigorous vow taken by Devavrat, so one day they both told Bhishma to break his vow.

**Shantanu and Satyawati:** Dear son, Bhishma! Things have been done as per your wish... Now there is no need for such a rigorous vow. You can break it.

**Bhishma:** No mother, that is not possible. **No matter what circumstances come my way, the vow will not be broken.**

## Event 3

Years passed. Over time, King Shantanu passed away. His two children were Chitrangad and Vichitravirya. The eldest son Chitrangad also passed away. Since Vichitravirya was very young, the question arose as to who would sit on the throne. This is when the dilemma arose.

**Satyavati:** Bhishma, now I request you to give up your vow and take care of the throne of Hastinapur.

**Bhishma:** Mother, I understand your grief, but **I cannot break the vow that I have taken.** I will take care of all the responsibilities until Vichitravirya grows up, but we will make Vichitravirya the heir to the throne. Grant me your permission, mother!

## Event 4

Bhishma, at the appropriate time, made Vichitravirya the king. The king of Kashi did not invite Vichitravirya to the swayamvara (a marriage ceremony where the bride gets to select a husband) for his three daughters Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika. However, mother Satyavati's wish was to get Vichitravirya married to these three princesses. To avenge the king of Kashi, Bhishma abducted the three girls to appease mother Satyavati.

Out of the three princesses, Amba was in love with the king of Shalva, so she got angry with Bhishma. She decided to take revenge on Bhishma. She told her story to Bhishma's guru, Parashuram, and asked him to help her. Due to Bhishma, such an event occurred in Amba's life, so Parashuram summoned Bhishma and then....



**Parshuram:** Bhishma, Amba is in this situation because of your misdeeds. Today, I order you to break your vow and marry Amba and if you don't want to do that, then fight me.

**Bhishma:** Salutations to you, Guruji! **I accept your call for war because I will not give up my vow until my last breath.**

Bhishma fought with his guru Parashuram but did not break his resolve. Such was Bhishma's unbreakable, unbending and unwavering vow!

**Let us see what Dadaji has to say about strong determination.**



## A Firm Determination, Will Help You Succeed

**Questioner:** What kind of strong determination should I make?

**Dadashri:** Whatever strong determination you have made, it will help you attain that goal. The Self has infinite energies, and those energies will manifest. The Self is in the form of the Real and your strong determination is needed. A wavering [determination] will not do! Just one strong opinion can make one renounce for the rest of his life! What happens if the opinion is slightly weak? When the karma unfolds, one will not have any control, he will slip. He will even get married!



# Experience

Jai Sat Chit Anand...

As a child, I was a big fan of the Mahabharat. Especially the scene where Bhishma Pitamah takes the vow. I was very impressed with this character of Mahabharat. Bhishma was my role model, and I had a desire to become a pure celibate like him. As a celibate, I have to say that my initial determination of celibacy was inspired by watching Bhishma's character.

I have some celibate friends; they too were inspired to follow the path of celibacy by seeing Bhishma's resolve. Today, many of Dada's youth are moving forward with determination towards the goal of lifelong celibacy by seeing the highest state of conduct in worldly interactions by Niruma and Pujiyashree.

Bhishma was a role model, a superhero and I wanted to be like him. By following him, I really became a much better person. It is extremely rare to see such love for the country along with an excellent goal, strong determination, and a firm resolve to fulfill that goal. How can we have reverence for our parents? How can we speak confidently and with great willpower? How can we always think about the salvation of others? Due to such great virtues, he became my role model!

This story that depicts his utmost **humility towards his teacher** has greatly touched me....

When Parshuram asked Bhishma to fight with him, he went to Parshuram and asked for his blessings. Guru Parashuram was so impressed by his humility that he blessed him with victory in battle.

O Bhishma Pitamah! Thank you so much for inspiring so many people, especially celibates. Needless to say, if you want to be determined, then be as determined as Bhishma Pitamah!



In Sanskrit, the word **Bhishma** means, 'One who takes a strict vow and fulfils it'.

His other names are as follows –

**Devavrat** - The original name of Bhishma, which means 'One who is devoted to the Gods.'

**Pitamah** - Grandfather (Pandavas and Kauravas used to call Him Bhishma Pitamah).

**Shantanav** - Shantanu's son. He received this name because he took a vow of celibacy for his father.

**Shwaetveer** - A true warrior, who is pure and brave and whose weapons are all white.

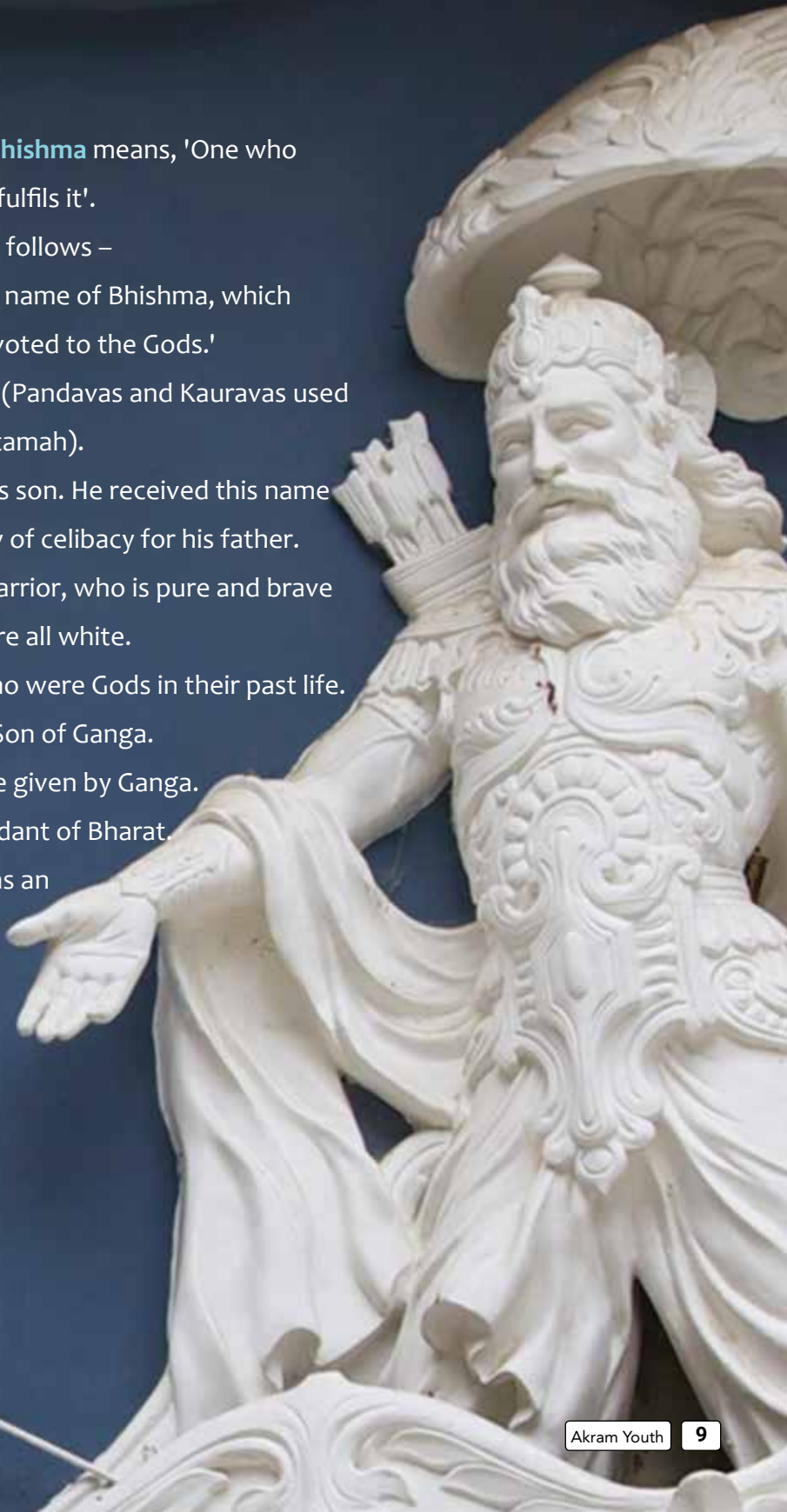
**Ashta Vasu** – Those who were Gods in their past life.

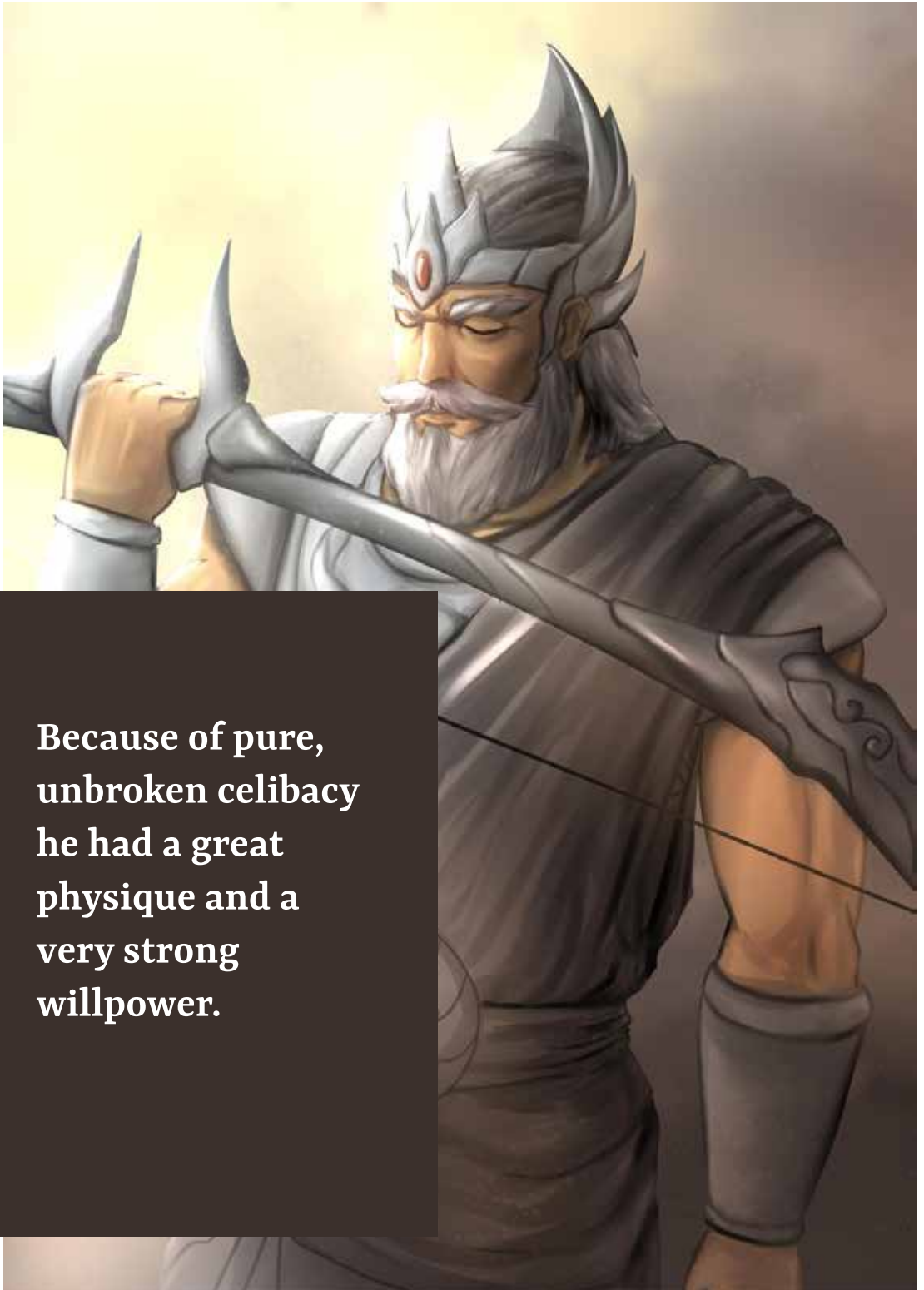
**Gangaputra/Gangay** - Son of Ganga.

**Gangadatta** - The name given by Ganga.

**Bharatvanshi** - Descendant of Bharat.

**Gaurang** – One who has an excellent body.





Because of pure,  
unbroken celibacy  
he had a great  
physique and a  
very strong  
willpower.

# The Power of Celibacy

“The food we eat is what makes our blood. Seven elements are created from blood. Then from these, the last and final creation is semen. Thus, the essence of eating food is semen. Everything in the world by nature goes down. Semen can also rise if saved. The subatomic particles of semen in their subtle form then manifest as vibrations of vital life force that rise to the brain. Once a strong determination is made, the glow can be seen on the face, the will power increases, and the speech becomes immaculate. There is sweetness in the speech. The conduct is pleasing. With it, the body, mind, and everything stays good. So those who want to follow this for six months should follow it! After following celibacy for just six months, drastic changes will happen to the body! Then whatever one says will have the impact of a bomb!”

Due to strong celibacy, Bhishma Pitamah became more and more powerful with increasing age and was able to faithfully stick to his goal of handling the throne of Hastinapur. For the first 10 days of the battle of Mahabharat, his bravery was the single point of discussion. Despite his old age, he was radiant and powerful. Every day he would defeat 10,000 soldiers of the Pandava army. No one could defeat him.

Father Shantanu had blessed Bhishma with the boon of dying as per his own will. On the 10th day of the battle, Bhishma's entire body was covered with a rain of arrows. His last wish on the bed of arrows was to see Hastinapur safe. His physical and mental personality was extremely strong due to his unbroken and pure celibacy. He suffered for a long time on the bed of arrows and when Yudhishthira became the king of Hastinapur, once he knew that Hastinapur was in safe hands, he left his body as per his own will with complete satisfaction.

# Bhishma's Gurus

Mother Ganga took Devavrat to various realms where he was brought up and trained by many famous sages.

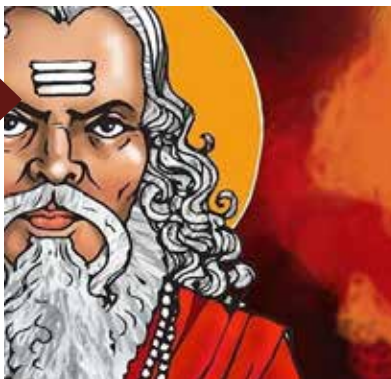
## Bhrughaspati:

He was the guru of the celestial beings. He taught Devavrat the duties of a king, politics and other scriptures.



## Shukracharya:

He was the guru of the demons. He taught Devavrat politics and other types of knowledge.



**Brahmarshi Vashishtha Rishi and Bhrigu Rishi's son Chyavan:**  
They taught Devavrat the Vedas and all the disciplines of the Vedas.







### **Sanatkumar:**

He taught mental and spiritual sciences to Devavrat.



### **Markandey:**

He taught the duties of an ascetic to Devarvart.



### **Parashuram:**

He trained Bhishma in the art of war.



### **Indra:**

He was the king of the celestial beings. He gave divine weapons to Bhishma.



# The Consequences of Stealing Nandini

Sage Vashishta was the son of Varundev. His ashram was on the Meru Mountain. He was engrossed in penance on Meru Mountain, which was always full of animals, birds, and vegetation. He had a divine cow named Nandini, who could fulfill any wish for the purpose of religion and penance. Under the protection of sage Vashishta, Nandini roamed around freely and fearlessly in the forest.

One day, eight Vasus (attendant deities of Lord Indra) and their wives descended upon this forest. As they wandered around admiring the magnificent forest, one of the Vasus named Dhu; his wife's eyes became fixed on Nandini. Seeing a cow who had a special body with auspicious qualities and symbols, she wanted to know more about it. Dhu told her that whoever drinks Nandini's sweet milk will remain young for ten thousand years. Hearing this, she immediately urged her husband to acquire the cow.

Even though Dhu knew that Nandini was in the service of sage Vashishta, he melted away at his wife's request. To appease his wife, he took the help of his brothers and together they stole Nandini. Captivated with love for his wife, he did steal the sage's cow. However, he forgot the possible consequences of his sin.

He will be deprived of a wife and children because he committed this crime to appease his wife. However, he will be a very virtuous and noble person in all respects and receive a lot of fame.



When sage Vashishta returned to his ashram in the evening, he did not see Nandini. With his supernatural vision, he learned that the Vasus had stolen Nandini. In a rage, he put such a curse on the Vasus that they would have to be born on earth to atone for their sins.

As soon as the Vasus heard the curse, they rushed to calm down sage Vashishta. After many attempts, the sage relaxed. Easing the curse, he said, "Seven out of eight Vasus will be saved from their mortal lives within a year of their birth, but the curse will remain as is for the main culprit, Dhu." The sage said, "Dhu will have to remain on earth for a long time. He will be deprived of a wife and children because he committed this crime to appease his wife. However, he will be a very virtuous and noble person in all respects and receive a lot of fame."

In this way, the first seven sons of Ganga, who were the seven Vasus, were liberated from this mortal lives as soon as they were born. The eighth son, Dhu, who was reborn, had to remain on earth for a long time. He was Devavrat Gangaputra Bhishma and he had to suffer the consequences of stealing Nandini.

Let's see what Pujoyashree has to say about stealing ...

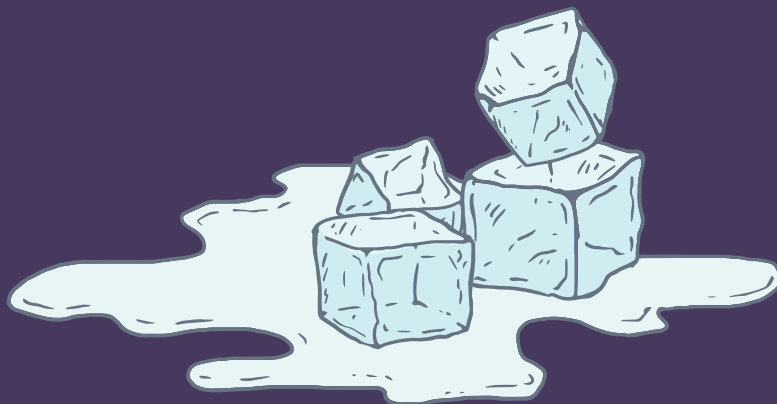


# Gnani

## With Youth

**Questioner:** Pujoyashree, what is the consequence of stealing? And if we have stolen something, how do we come out of it?

**Pujoyashree:** It is like this, whenever you hurt someone, in reality, you are only hurting yourself. Whenever you suffer a loss, you say, 'Why did this happen in my life?' However, if you commit a crime, you will have to suffer its consequence. Dada Bhagwan teaches us that whoever steals with his mind, speech, and body, will lose the favor of Goddess Lakshmi (money). He may not lose the favor of Goddess Lakshmi in this lifetime due to his merit karma of the past life. However, being happy by stealing today, will lead to a huge loss in the next life. Today, there are many people who do not have a job, nor do they prosper in business. This is because they have committed such crimes.





So, make a new decision not to steal with the mind, speech, and body, not to deceive anyone, nor harm anyone. Even if there is less income or not enough food, this is not a reason to commit a new crime. Then slowly success will come in business and work. Do you understand? Success does not stay very long for those who hurt everyone and try to get easy money.

**Questioner:** What kind of consequence does a computer hacker suffer who steals by withdrawing money from a bank account illegally?

**Pujyashree:** If you steal some ice on your way home, will it last? The ice will melt and you will be charged for the offence of the crime. Then you will have to face the consequences dearly! So, all this misappropriation of money, being a hacker, and withdrawing money from a bank account, how much does it hurt the victim? The poor guy has worked hard and put the money in his savings, and then someone takes away that money with deceit! It is his whole life's savings, and you unjustly stole it. Will it not incur you a huge loss? So, have a firm resolution that you will not do any wrong deeds in your life and if you make a mistake, you will repent a lot. In case if you have stolen a few hundred rupees, then double it and donate that money. Otherwise, you may return it back and say, "This is a gift to you from me". This is a huge offence.

Those who unjustly make money by stealing and take pleasure out of it will have to go to an animal life-form in their next life and will not be able to find food. If he becomes a human, he will not have success in his job or business and will have a lot of suffering. Did you understand?



So, have a firm resolution that you will not do any wrong deeds in your life and if you make a mistake, you will repent a lot. In case if you have stolen a few hundred rupees, then double it and donate that money. Otherwise, you may return it back and say, "This is a gift to you from me". This is a huge offence.



# Karma

of the Past Life



Bhishma was able to recognize Lord Krishna in his true form due to his outstanding insight. When Shri Krishna came to meet Bhishma, who was lying on a bed of arrows on the battlefield. He asked Shri Krishna...

**Bhishma:** Which demerit karma of my past life has come into effect that I must lay on this bed of arrows?

**Shri Krishna:** The life before your last 10 births, you were a prince who roamed from one forest to another on your horse. One day, when you were roaming in the forest like this, a snake was lying in your way. Without thinking much, you picked up the snake and threw it away. That poor snake fell into a thorn bush and as he tried to get out of it, the thorns began to prick his body more and more. The snake, after continuously suffering, later died. The snake had to suffer immensely at the time of death. As a result of that sin, you are suffering the pain of lying on this bed of arrows.

**According to the principle of karma, one has to suffer the consequences of having hurt someone whether it was done knowingly or unknowingly ...**



# Akrampedia



Name: Ayush Mehta  
Age: 21 years



"Do not make the same mistakes that I have made in my life. Listen to me, I'm a defeated warrior."

The last scene of Mahabharata was playing as Ayush turned on the T.V. In this scene, Pitamah Bhishma is taking his last breath on the bed of arrows and is telling Yudhisthir to learn a lesson from his own life.

**Pitamah Bhishma:** Yudhisthir, the time has come for me to leave my body. At this time, all I have to say to you is, do not make the same mistakes that I have made in my life. Listen to me, I'm a defeated warrior.

Yudhisthir! Nothing is more important than the country. It was my vow that drove me away from my country. With this pledge, I turned to treason. I am the reason why Hastinapur was divided. Every arrow that has pierced through me tells me to recognize this sorrow. I am a Kshatriya who remained a slave to his vow. So Yudhisthir! Do not make any such vow that would go against you and separate you from your country. Remember, **the country is not for the king, the king is for the country.**



O Emperor Yudhisthir! Religion should not surrender to rituals and formalities. Religion is about balancing our duties and the rights of others. Make sure to follow religion. The duty of a king is higher than the duty of a citizen. You should not allow the country to be divided. You should not do what I did. Make sure to respect women. Make sure to protect the citizens.

Ayush listened to the entire dialogue. But he wondered how hard it must be to tell someone what not to do in life. What a confession!

Then he read the importance of confession as told by Niruma in a satsang. Along with that, he watched a video of Niruma explaining the importance of pratikraman at the time of death ...



**Niruma:** Isn't it a huge deal that he had this intention, even on his death bed? No matter how many mistakes one has committed in his life, if he heartily confesses, does pratikraman, and resolves never to make the same mistake again, even an hour before dying, his whole internal state can change. All the sins committed can be washed away. The reason is, before death, all the illusory attachments of the world leave. At that time, the energy of the Self gains overwhelming power. All this power will come into effect. So, we used to tell many people and we are still telling them, "At least at the time of death, create a balance sheet of your entire life and at that time, wash off all your sins by doing penance wholeheartedly. Otherwise, all these sins will carry forward and you will move towards a lower life-form. By doing this penance, your internal state will completely change, and you will progress towards a higher life-form. Even if one has murdered someone, if he does penance, he will acquire a celestial life-form."

After watching Niruma's video, Ayush understood the depth of Pitamah Bhishma's confession.

**He felt really fortunate that Dadashri has shown us beautiful and simple ways to get rid of this endless wandering of infinite lifetimes through Akram Vignan by showing us the unfailing results of confession, pratikraman, and the resolve to never repeat a mistake!**



## #Poem

Purve bharat varshe thai gaya, ek veer yodha mahan...  
Surya lai shodhata pan, koi na male Bhishma saman...

Jemni pratignya aajey, dradh nischay nu pratik che...  
Jemne dekhadyu, sheel saachavnaaro ati dhanik che...

Jivan jennu, nisvarth karma ne karma falni katha che...  
Itihaas ma ekaj vaar, lakhayeli shouryagatha che...

Suvarn jevu sat hova chatta, jivan jemnu sangharsh che...  
Khudno kyarey vichaar nahi, ne rajya nu heet pratham che...

Neeti-mati-vivek-vinay jeva, sadgunoni je pothi che...  
Chatta emnu aakhu jivan, pashchatape badi jyoti che...

Shikhava jevi shikh che, je pote vanchava jevu shastra che...  
Sadgunoni shaiya par setu, Itihaase ananya aa patra che.



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