

# MAHABHARATA – Part 27

(Dhritarashtra's Embrace; Gandhari Curses Lord Krishna)



## **Dhritarashtra's Deadly Embrace**

With the conclusion of the war on the eighteenth day, there was nothing for Sanjay to report to the blind king Dhritarashtra. The boon granted to him by Sage Vyasa, to be able to see and hear the happenings in the battle field, no longer worked.

Sage Vyasa called on Dhritarashtra to console him for his loss. The sage was aware that Queen Gandhari, due to her austerities, had the power to curse the Pandavas and bring disaster to them. He therefore advised her to get over her grief and think of the Pandavas as her own children.

Dhritarashtra assembled all the royal ladies and together they proceeded to the battlefield. He was received by Yudhishtira and his brothers with respect. The king expressed his desire to embrace each one of the five Pandava brothers. He first embraced Yudhishtira. Next on line was Bhima. Krishna knew that the king was harboring intense hatred for Bhima since he it was that killed all his hundred sons. Being the well-wisher of the Pandavas, he drew away Bhima and instead, pushed an iron image of Bhima towards Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra hugged the metal statue to his bosom in a firm embrace and then the thought came to him of how this man had killed every one of his sons, and his wrath increased to such a pitch that the image was crushed to pieces in his embrace, and let the mangled remains fall on the earth.

Then Dhritarashtra realized and cried loud that his anger deceived him, and made him to kill Bhima. Then Krishna said to the blind king, "Oh King! Bhima is alive and well. I knew that it would be thus and I prevented the disaster. What you crushed is only an image of Bhima which I placed instead before you. May your anger be appeased with what you have done to the statue. It is not proper that you should hate the Pandavas for what had happened. But for your encouraging your wicked son, there would have been no war and the near total destruction of the Kshatriyas could have been avoided. The Pandavas still consider you as their father, and you should consider them as your sons."

The king was composed somewhat and he embraced Bhima and the other Pandavas this time with affection, who then took leave of him and went to Gandhari.

## **Gandhari curses Krishna**

Leaving the old king, the Pandava brothers and Krishna went to meet Gandhari and the other ladies of the Kuru family. Despite Vyasa's advice, the queen had not got over her anger at the destroyers of her near and dear ones, in particular her own hundred children. Her eyes were hooded, but through the lower portion of her blindfold, her glance fell on Yudhishtira's toe as the prince bowed to her. The toenail was instantly burnt. Such was her wrath. She called Bhima heartless for having drunk her son's blood, and killing Duryodhana

by striking him below navel. Bhima denied that he actually drank Dussashana's blood, but only smeared it on his mouth. Bhima admitted that Duryodhana was invincible in combat and so he did in self-protection what was undoubtedly wrong, and begged for her forgiveness.

Krishna advised Gandhari to bury her hatred and receive the Pandavas with love. Gandhari's attitude towards the Pandavas changed and she blessed them. Her anger at Krishna was however not abated. She said, "Krishna, you were in the middle of this great war. You could have prevented the massacre of my hundred sons and the killing of the innumerable Kshatriya princes. Instead, you encouraged the Pandavas and even helped them to adopt unfair means in the war. Bear this in mind. Just as these Kshatriyas slew one another, thirty-six years from now so would your Yadava race perish, killing one another. As for you, you would meet with an inglorious end in the wilderness. This is my curse on you."

Krishna replied, "Your curse will certainly take its course since you are endowed with great virtue. Indeed the Yadava race will be wiped out due to infighting, since none outside could kill them."

The funeral rites were arranged for all those slain in the battle. It was then that Kunti revealed to the Pandavas that Karna was their brother. Yudhisthira was already very upset about having killed his cousins, maternal uncles, and gurus. The news that Karna was his brother brought him untold grief. He thought himself a great sinner. "I will renounce the Kingdom and go the forest and meditate, and try and remove my sin" he said. This made Draupadi and the Pandavas very upset. "We fought this whole war for you!" cried his brothers. "Now you want to renounce it? Why did we do anything at all?" Draupadi said "I lost all my sons for your kingdom, and now you want to leave it?" Krishna said "I have told you many times there is no sin in fighting for a righteous cause. It is your duty to serve as King. Do your duty." Thus Yudhisthira was convinced to remain King.

### **Bhishma Ascended to Heavens**

After the funeral rites were done, Krishna led Yudhisthira, his brothers, and Draupadi to the battlefield where Bhishma still lay dying. Bhishma was filled with Arjuna's arrows like a pincushions is filled with pins. It was a very solemn occasion. All the Pandavas bowed to the "grandsire." Yudhisthira said to Bhishma "Grandsire, please instruct me in dharma (right and wrong)." Then Draupadi, unable to control herself, let out a little snicker.

Hearing Draupadi laugh at such a solemn moment made Bhima want to kill her. Yudhisthira, Arjuna and the others felt great shame. But Bhishma understood her. "Please, my child, tell them why you laughed." "Oh noble grandsire" she said, "I am laughing at this: My husband has just fought a terrible war for dharma (righteousness). He

has been victorious. You fought for those who were against dharma. I think it strange and funny that he should ask you about dharma, you who fought against dharma. That is why I laughed.”

Bhishma said “My dear, you are quite right. I have always lived a righteous life. But living with the Kauravas, I ate their food every day. Their food was obtained through greed and wrong action. Thus the food poisoned my blood, and I wasn’t thinking correctly. That is why I sided with the Kauravas. Now Arjuna’s arrows have drained all my blood, the poison from me has been removed, and I can speak correctly about dharma.” Draupadi accepted his answer.

Yudhisthira asked the Grandsire to speak on the greatness of Krishna. Bhishma was very weak and had trouble speaking. Being all powerful, Krishna removed his pain, and entered his mind, so he could speak clearly. Then Bhishma said the 1000 names of Vishnu, which is recorded as the Vishnu Sahasranama. For many days, Yudhisthira questioned Bhishma on many subjects. Bhishma told him “Son, never wait until tomorrow to do what you can do today. Tomorrow is always uncertain, so if you can accomplish something today, do it then.” Thus he imparted many gems of wisdom to Yudhisthira and his brothers, talking on many subjects.

Vyasa told the grandsire, “O learned one, the war in the Kuru family is over and Yudhishtira has been restored his kingdom. It is in the order of things that he should now return to Hastinapura and take up the reins of government for a beneficial rule. Ask him to take up his duties, and give him leave.”

Bhishma told Yudhishtira, “As you know, I have a boon from my father to choose the time of my death. When the Sun changes his direction towards the North, my soul will depart from my body. Proceed now to Hastinapura, and return at that time, when my death would take place.” Yudhishtira did as his grandsire bid him. He returned to Hastinapura where he was duly installed as king amidst all pomp and ceremony. At the appointed hour Yudhishtira with his entourage arrived at Bhishma’s side. The old sage gave him and Dhritarashtra appropriate advice, the former on his responsibilities as a monarch and the latter on the need to get over his grief.

Bhishma turned to Krishna and said, “O Lord. I am fortunate to have you at my side when I depart from this world. Bless me and give me permission to leave. I strived my best to live a life of virtue and truth on this earth, and I now look forward to joining the Vasus above where I belong.”

Krishna said “You will receive the best in the next world, which is what you deserve.”

The dying prince adopted Yoga. Fifty-eight nights after his fall in the battle, his life breath left its corporeal and ascended to the heavens.

### QUESTIONS:

King Dhrtarashtra was blind. Did this make him weak? Why or why not?  
Who was Gandhari?  
Why was everyone afraid of her?  
Did Bhima admit he was wrong to Gandhari, or did he make excuses?  
Did she forgive the Pandavas?  
Who did she curse? What was the curse?  
Why did Yudhishthira want to renounce his kingdom?  
What convinced him not to renounce his kingdom?  
Why did Draupadi laugh at Bhishma?  
What did Bhishma say to her?  
Who took Bhishma's pain away?  
Where does Vishnu Sahasranama come from? What is it?  
What did Bhishma say the best way to get things accomplished is?  
How many days did Bhishma live after his fall in battle?  
What was he waiting for?

### Sri Venkateswara Suprabhatam

Sri Padmanabha Purushottama Vasudeva  
Vaikunta Madhava Janardana Chkrapane  
Srivatsa chihna saranagata Parijata  
Sri Venkatachalapate tava suprabhatam (22)  
Kandarpa darpahara sundara divya murte  
Kanta kuchamburuha kudmala lola dhrishte  
kalyana nirmala gunakara divya kirte  
Sri Venkatachalapate tava suprabhatam (23)

**Meena krite kamatakola Nrisimha varnin  
Swamin Paraswatah Tapodhaa Ramachandra  
Seshamsa Rama Yadunandana Kalki rupa  
Srivenkatachalapate tava suprabhatam (24)**

**Ela lavanga ganasara sugandhitirtham  
Divyam viyat sariti hema ghateshu poornam  
Dhrtva adya vaidhika sikhamanayh prahrishtah  
Sri Venkatachalapate tava suprabhatam (25)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucSm8aB\\_Mz0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucSm8aB_Mz0)

## Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

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I F G E R

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Coloring Exercise: Lord Ganesha

