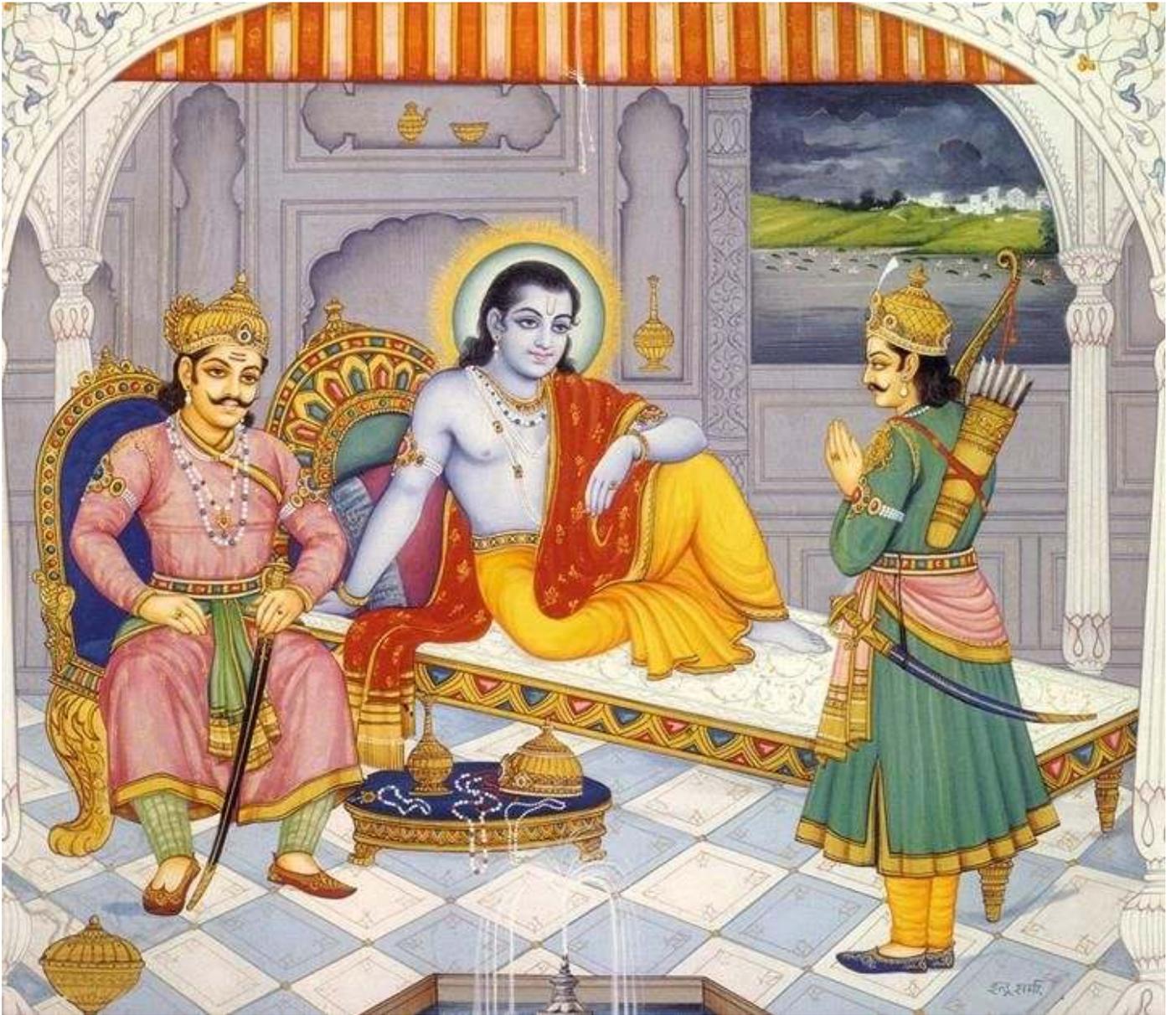


MAHABHARATA – Part 15

(Peace Missions Failed and War Preparations Started)



The Stirrings of War

Many guests arrived at Viratanagar for the wedding of Prince Abhimanyu and Uttara. Before they departed for their respective places, consultations were held among all the elders, princes and chieftains. They were the allies and well-wishes of the Pandavas, and wanted to help them decide upon the course to be adopted by the Pandavas to secure their kingdom. As you may recall, the Pandavas were the legal heirs to the Kingdom. But they were sent into exile. After the exile, the Kauravas were supposed to give back their kingdom. But they did not give it back.

Almost everyone present in those discussions was ready to do battle. But King Yudhishtira and Lord Krishna did not want to go for a war right away. They said that a peace messenger should be sent to the court of Hastinapura to gently ask for the Pandava's portion of the kingdom. Bhima was not very happy with this suggestion but then Krishna stated, "War cannot be fought to finish off your enemies. War should be fought only when there is an Adharma prevailing and all the peaceful measures have been exhausted. A war cannot be fought just so that you fulfill your vows. Peace is more important than you succeeding in your vows."

It was decided that the royal priest would be sent to Hastinapura for delivering the message of Yudhishtira. In the court, the royal priest stated to King Dhritarashtra, "Emperor Yudhishtira has sent his respects to all the elders here and lots of love to his younger brothers. Emperor Yudhishtira does not want war and is hoping peace and justice will prevail." Listening to this Prince Duryodhana rejects this offer. Bhishma reprimands Duryodhana to treat the messenger with respect. To this the royal priest states, "You don't get manners through lineage." Karna was angry at the insult to Duryodhana, and tells the priest to inform the Pandavas to get ready for a war. At the end, King Dhritarashtra sends away the royal priest saying, "I need some time to think. We will send our message through a messenger soon." All the elders requested King Dhritarashtra to give back the land to Pandavas, but he did not agree.

He called Sanjaya, his loyal servant and charioteer, to his room, and instructed Sanjaya on the message which needs to be delivered. Sanjaya travelled to Upaplavya, and delivered the following message, "King Dhritarashtra sends his love to his sons. He pays his respect to King Drupada. His message to his eldest son Yudhishtira is here - Be happy as you are and where you are. You are a very peaceful person. I am sure you will be able to understand that there is nothing to be gained from this material world. If there is war, then it will only result in the destruction of the family line. You just stay where you are and live your life. I am sure you will be able to convince your brothers to follow peace." Emperor Yudhishtira and all the others present were red with anger. But still Emperor Yudhishtira did not desire war. He called Krishna for his guidance.

Both the parties started preparing for the war after the royal priest had left Hastinapura and when Sanjaya was on his way to Upaplavya. It was only Yudhisthira who was still hoping for peace. Both the parties had send messages to their friends and supporters requesting their confirmation on the impending war. Shakuni instructed Duryodhana, "The Dwaraka army (Narayani sena) is very strong. They are related to us just like they are to Pandavas, and they are our political allies as well. You should personally go and meet Krishna and get their support for the war." Thus instructed, Duryodhan left for Dwaraka. At the same time, Arjuna too had left for Dwaraka to gather support for his cause.

Thus both Arjuna and Duryodhana rushed to Dwaraka to seek help of Krishna and Balarama. Duryodhana arrived earlier; Arjuna reached some time later. Krishna was asleep at that time. Both Arjuna and Duryodhana could gain entry in his bedroom. While Duryodhana sat on a throne at the head of the bed, Arjuna stood at the foot with arms folded in respect. When Krishna awoke, his eyes first fell upon Arjuna and then turned towards Duryodhana. Duryodhana was the first to speak: "War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas may break at any moment. We both claim relationship with you. I came here before Arjuna, and I should be given preference." Krishna answered, "O Duryodhana, you may have come first, but my eyes fell upon Arjuna first. Moreover, the younger of the two should be allowed to make the first choice. I would offer the first choice to Arjuna. On one side I offer my services; I shall wield no weapons and take no part in actual fighting. On the other side, there will be the whole army of mine."

Arjuna said with reverence, "I will be happy if you are with us, through you may not wield any weapon." Duryodhana was extremely happy to receive the help of the entire army of Krishna. Duryodhana also sought help of Balarama, but Balarama decided to be neutral.

After Sanjaya's visit, the mood among the Pandavas, and their supporters were very aggressive. Though Yudhisthira also strongly felt that Dhritarashtra was not playing a fair game with the Pandavas, still he sought peace and was keen to avoid war. He very much desired that Krishna himself should go on a peace mission to the court of Hastinapura, though he feared it might be risky for his safety. Krishna readily agreed to go on the peace mission and said "I shall most willingly go to Hastinapura as your emissary. I shall try my best to secure your right without war. If my mission succeeds, it is for the good of humanity. We must omit nothing, no matter how slender our hopes for peace be. Have no fears for my safety." Yudhisthira also states, "If they do not agree to return their kingdom, ask them for five villages. If they give us those five villages, we will not fight." Draupadi was not at all happy with this development, but Krishna counseled patience to Draupadi.

On arrival at Hastinapura, Krishna was well received by the elders. Krishna stayed with Vidura that day. Next day in the royal court of Hastinapura, Krishna addresses the court and the King, "This court has great beings like Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Vidura. If there is

war, all this will be destroyed. It is the responsibility of this court to advise foolish Duryodhana that one's clan cannot be destroyed to support his stupid ambitions. He can make truce with the Pandavas and give them back their rightful land". The elders tried to gently persuade Duryodhana the kingdoom. When Krishna offered him the proposal to give at least five villages to Pandavas, Duryodhana said that he will not even give a needle point of land to the Pandavas. It showed the foolishness and stubbornness generated in a man when one is greedy and evil. Thus Krishna's peace mission was failed, and he planned to go back to Pandavas.

Before leaving Hastinapura, Krishna though it would be worthwhile to have a word with Karna. He tried to dissuade him from following the sinful path of remaining with the Kauravas, but Karna refused to change his loyalties. "I have only two people who love me and they are Duryodhana and my mother, Radha," said Karna. Krishna remained silent for some time and then talking about his parentage, informed him that his mother was Kunti and that the five Pandavas were his brothers. Karna gasped out and tears flowed from his eyes. "How I wished I had known it earlier!" said Karna. He knew well that calamity awaited the Kauravas, yet he could not desert those who had given him their love. "I must fight for my friends, though I may be slain in the war," was his firm reply.

Knowing that war was imminent and that brother would thirst for the blood of brother, Kunti sighed and wept and went to see Karna, lamenting the folly of her girlhood. "You are my son, O Karna, and Surya is your father. Come back to me and join hands with Arjuna," said Kunti. But Karna excused himself by saying, "Mother, it is now too late to win my support. You have never been my mother to me, nor do your sons regard me as their elder brother. How can I desert the Kauravas at this stage when they have put so much trust in me so far? I have power to slay Yudhishtira, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva but I promise to spare them. I will, however, fight with Arjuna. If I slay him, I will achieve fame; if I am slain by him, I will be covered with glory."

The war was imminent, and the preparations started in a full swing from both parties.

Questions:

Why was warring brewing between the Pandavas and their cousins the Kauravas?

In the group of the Pandavas and their friends, were there any persons trying to avoid war, or did they all want war?

Who did the Pandavas send as a messenger to Hastinapura? What did he say?

What did Duryodhana think of Yudhishtira's request for just five villages?

Was this a generous offer from Duryodhana?

Why did Duryodhana reject it?

What did Lord Krishna tell Karna?

Being the eldest, would Karna have ruled over all the Pandavas?

Why did Karna not join the Pandavas?

Sri Venkateswara Suprabhatam

**kausalyā suprajā rāma pūrvāsandhyā pravartate |
uttiṣṭha naraśārdūla kartavyaṃ daivamāhnikam || 1 ||**

(O Rama! Great Son of Kausalya, the Sun is about to rise in the Eastern skies; please arise to offer the early morning oblations)

**uttiṣṭhottiṣṭha govinda uttiṣṭha garuḍadhvaja |
uttiṣṭha kamalākānta trailokyaṃ maṅgaḷaṃ kuru || 2 ||**

(Awake! O Govinda! The holder of flag mast with the King of Aves-Garuda emblem; Cast aside your sleep to bestow your protection and solace to the Universe)

**mātassamasta jagatāṃ madhukaiṭabhāreḥ
vakṣovihāriṇi manohara divyamūrte |
śrīsvāmini śritajanapriya dānaśīle
śrī veṅkaṭeśa dayite tava suprabhātam || 3 ||**

(Sri Lakshmi, Goddess of riches! You reside in the heart of Sri Maha vishnu; O celestial beauty-one that captures the attention of the minds of humans, O bestower of all benefits to those who fall at His feet, O dear and betterhalf of Lord Venkateswara! I offer these morning Pranamams to you)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucSm8aB_Mz0

Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

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Coloring Exercise

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