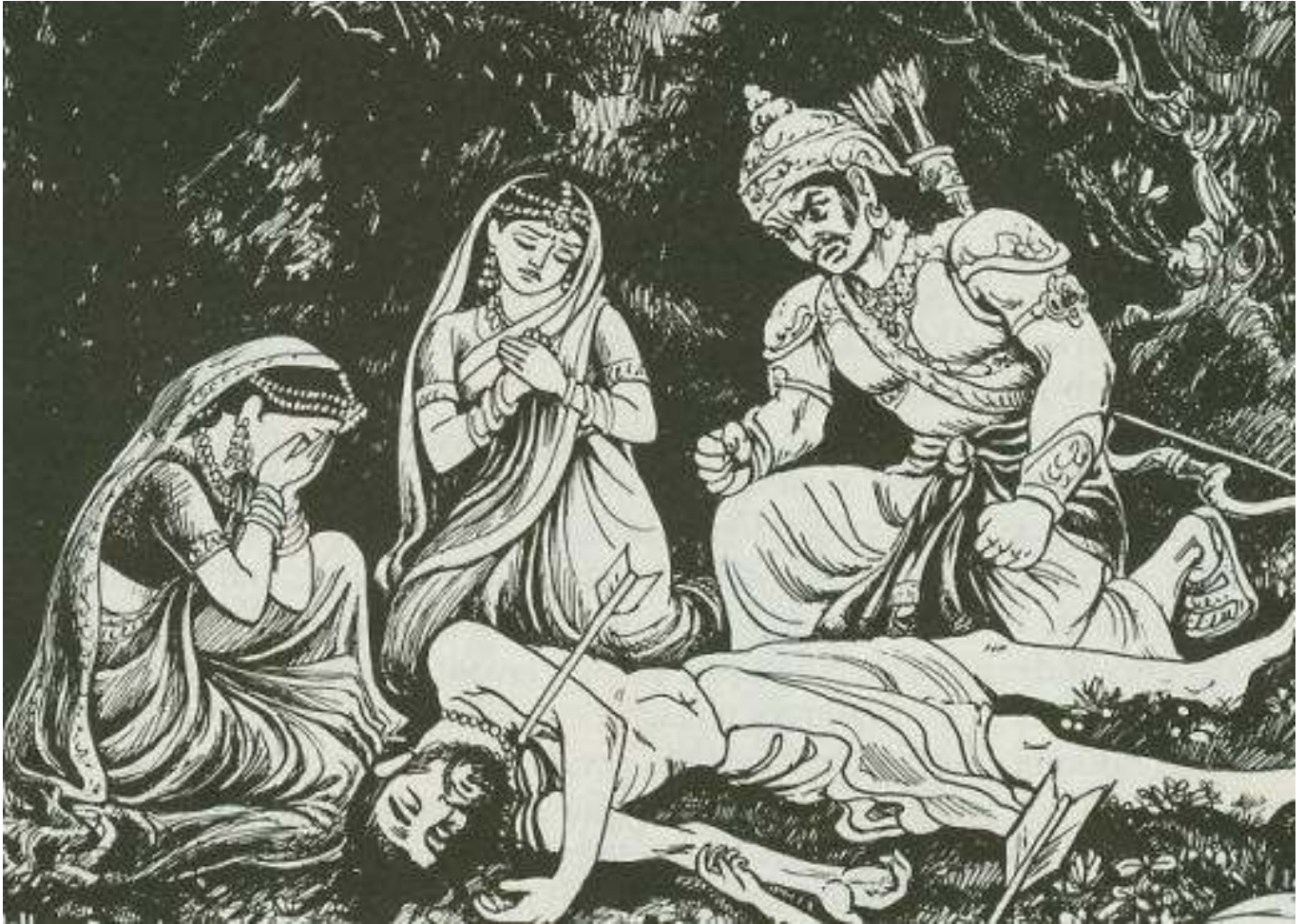


## MAHABHARATA – Part 2

(Birth of Pandavas and Kauravas)



All of us go to school. In school we learn the laws of physics, chemistry, and so forth! These laws govern how the world works. But the story of the Mahabharata happened more than 5,000 years ago! It happened in a different age, called the Dwapara Yuga. Things were much different then. Warriors were very strong! Sages could pronounce curses on people that came true! Gods came from heaven and visited people on Earth. So, to listen to these stories, you need to forget some of the laws of physics, chemistry, etc. that you learn in school.

As you remember Bhishma from the last story, he promised never to have children, and never to rule the Kingdom, so that his father could marry Satyawati. His father, King Shantanu, and Satyawati, did have two children, but they both died before they could have any children. Then Satyawati pleaded Bhishma to get married, so that Kuru dynasty won't end without an heir. But, Bhishma is a man of word, and didn't agree her proposal to become a king and get married. So Sage Veda Vyasa, who was Satyawati's son through a boon before her marriage to Shantanu, blessed the widows of one of the sons with two children, Dhritarashtra and Pandu. He also blessed the maid of one of the queens with a third son named Vidura, who grew up to be very wise.

In ancient times, the King was the eldest son of the family. Dhritarashtra was the eldest and should have been king. But there was a problem. He was blind. So, the younger brother, Pandu was made King. Pandu made a good King. He was strong and wise. He protected his subjects, called the Kurus from outside invaders. Back then, Kingdoms weren't big countries like the United States or India is today. They comprised city – states and the surrounding countryside. Other Kings looked to King Pandu for help and protection.

Dhritarashtra married the Princess of Gandhar, called Gandhari. She saw that her husband was blind, so she also wore a blindfold the rest of her life, wanting her experience in life to be the same as her husband's. Pandu married two wives, Kunti and Madri. Everything was going well until....

One time King Pandu went on holiday to Himalayas. He left the kingdom in the hands of his brother Dhritarashtra and grandfather Bhishma. Then he went out hunting with his bow and arrow. He saw two deer playing together at a great distance, and he shot at them with his bow, fatally wounding both of them. BUT – something bad had happened! Back then, sages could turn themselves into animals at will. I know you think this may not be possible, but remember, this was a different age and different things happened then. The two deer Pandu saw frolicking were actually a sage and his

wife. The sage was very angry at Pandu! As he lay dying, he said “You will never have children! And if you ever touch one of your wives again, you will instantly die!” Of course, Pandu felt very bad about killing the sage. He had never intended to do it. But it happened, as sometimes bad things do happen.

You might wonder, how could sages curse people like this? It happened because they always spoke the truth. Whoever always speaks the truth, whatever they say then becomes true.

Not being able to have children and continue his dynasty, Pandu let his brother Dhritarashtra rule the Kingdom. He chose a simple life living in the forest with his two wives. But, as time passed, Pandu began to suffer from a deep depression that he will not have any children because of the sage’s curse. Kunti painfully noticed it, and she was very concerned about Pandu’s situation. She revealed a secret that she kept in her heart until then, in order to make her husband happy. She said: “When I was a young girl, sage Durvasas visited my father’s home. As you know, sage Durvasas is very hard to please. But I served him well. Perhaps knowing my future, he gave me a mantra by which I could have children by invoking any god I choose.”

What Kunti probably didn’t tell him was a dark secret. When still a young girl, she decided to test the mantra and see if it worked. She said the mantra, thinking of Surya, the Sun God. Immediately she gave birth to a son, the son of the Sun God! He was not an ordinary boy. He had golden earrings and his body was covered with golden armor. She was really frightened by this. She did not know what to do then, as she did not know how to explain it to her parents. She put the baby in a little raft and floated him down the river. Later he became known as Karna.

Pandu was delighted that he could now have children! He asked Kunti to use the mantra. Using it, she had one child named Yudhisthira, who was the son of Yama Dharmaraja, the God of Righteousness. Then she had a second son called Bhima, the son of Vayu, the Wind God. Her third son was called Arjuna, who was the son of Indra, King of the Gods. She gave the mantra to Madri, who used it and had two more sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, the sons of the twin Ashwini Devatas. They began to grow up together in the forest, strong and well behaved, with their mothers and Pandu. The five brothers were called the Pandavas, which means the sons of Pandu.

Then, tragedy struck. Remember the curse of the sage? Forgetting the curse of the sage, Pandu accidentally brushed up against Madri. He instantly died then and there.

Madri did not want to live without her husband Pandu. She asked Kunti to look after her two sons, and threw herself onto the Pandu's funeral pyre, burning herself up too, so she could join him in heaven.

Now, Kunti was a widow, all alone, with five sons. She went back to the capital of the Kurus, called Hastinapura. (Hastinapura means "City of the Elephants"), where she could get help raising them. In Hastinapura, the young Pandavas met their cousins, who were the sons of Dhritarashtra. The eldest son was named Duryodhana, and he had 99 brothers, and one sister named Dushala. These cousins were called the "Kauravas". They studied together under the guidance and direction of Bhishma, who was called the "grandsire".

### **Questions:**

What do you remember about Veda Vyasa from the first story?

What age (yuga) did the Mahabharata happen in?

Why wasn't Dhritarashtra made King?

Did Gandhari make a sacrifice for her husband? What was it?

What does a good King like Pandu do for his subjects?

What curse did the sage make on Pandu? Why?

Why did the curses of sages work back then?

What was the name of Kunti's FIRST child? Who's son was he?

What did she do with him?

Should she have told her parents about the first child? Why do you think she didn't?

Give the names of Kunti's other children, and whose sons they were.

Bhima was the son of Vayu. Who else do we know was a son of Vayu?

Give the names of Madri's children, and whose sons they were.

What were the five sons of Pandu called?

How many sons of Dhritarashtra were there?

Who was the eldest son?

What name were the cousins called by?

What did they call Bhishma?

### **Stotras for this week:**

#### **MahaLakshmi Ashtakam**

### **Namstestu Mahamaye Shripithe Surapujite SankhaChakra GadhaHaste MahaLakshmi Namostute (1)**

*Salutations to Devi Mahalakshmi -*

*Salutations to the Mahamaya (the Great Enchantress), Who is Worshipped by the Devas in Sri Pitha (Her Abode)*

*Who has the Conch, Disc and Mace in Her Hands; Salutations to that Mahalakshmi.*

**Namaste Garudarudhe Dolasura Bhayankari  
SarvaPapaHare Devi MahaLakshmi Namostute (2)**

*Salutations to the One Who Rides the Garuda, Who is the Terror to Kolasura,  
The Devi who Removes All Sins; Salutations to that Mahalakshmi*

**Sarvajne Sarvavarade SarvadáshtaBhayankari  
Sarvadásuhare Devi Mahalakshmi Namostute (3)**

*Who is All-Knowing, Who is the Giver of All Boons, Who is the Terror to All the Wicked,  
The Devi who Removes All Sorrows; Salutations to that Mahalakshmi.*

**SidhiBudhiPrade Devi BhuktiMukti Pradayini  
Mantramurte Sada Devi Mhalakshmi Nmostute (4)**

*The Devi who Gives Success and Intelligence and Gives Wordly Enjoyment and Liberation,  
The Devi who Always abides as the Embodiment of Mantra; Salutations to that Mahalakshmi.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5Pq1RoMJP4>

**Morning Prayer** - This is to be recited in the morning as soon as we get up from the Bed and has to be chanted looking at the palm of our hands:

**Karaagre Vasate Lakshmi  
Kara Madhye Saraswathi  
Kara Moole Tu Govindah  
Prabahate Kara Darshanam**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twudODE6Ppw>

*Meaning: On the tip of fingers resides Lakshmi, the Goddess of prosperity and wealth. In the middle part (the palm proper) of hands is Saraswathi, the Goddess of knowledge and learning. Govinda, Lord Vishnu, resides at the root part of hands (the part of the hand near wrist). Visualizing in this manner, take darshan of hands every morning.*

*Therefore, every morning, one should have a respectful look at one's hand which symbolizes honest labor.*

## Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

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R P E Y  

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R E A E G  

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T L A A F  

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Coloring exercise: Pandavas

