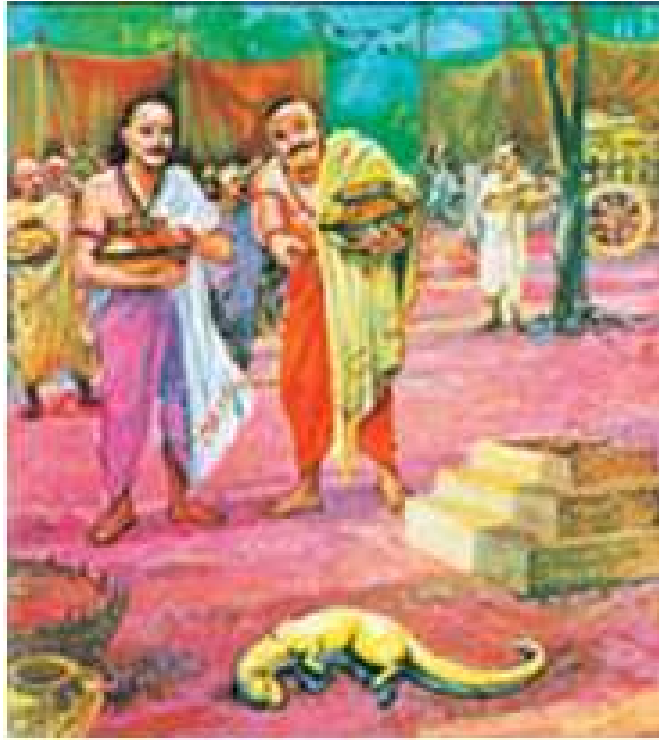


# MAHABHARATA – Part 9

(Yudhishtira and Mongoose;  
Pandavas lost Indraprastha in Gambling)



## **Yudhishtira and the Mongoose**

Hundreds of thousands of people attended the great Rajasuya Yagna that included great saints, Brahmins, Kings, and all sorts of people. People came from all over the world, even as far away as China and Greece, to honor Yudhisthira. They all brought him lavish gifts. When any party came, they would ring a bell. They would also see that their hands and feet were washed, and a continuous stream of water flowed out from the entrance to the palace. Soon the bell rang incessantly, never stopping. No one had ever witnessed so much wealth and opulence. At the conclusion of the Rajasuya Yagna, a great feast was served to all the guests.

Then Yudhishtira looked at Lord Krishna and wondered out loud, “Has there ever been such a wonderful yagna as this before?” Krishna smiled. Lord Krishna took Yudhishtira for a walk. They came across the feasting grounds, and saw a strange sight. There were particles of food left where everyone had eaten. A mongoose would run from one place to another, rolling around in the particles of food. Then it would look at itself. Then it would roll around in a new place. The strangest thing was that half of the mongoose had gold metal on its side. The other side was fur, like a normal mongoose.

Yudhisthira asked Krishna “What is this strange behavior of the mongoose – I have never seen anything like it.” Lord Krishna said “Let us ask the mongoose itself!” Through Lord Krishna’s magical skills, they were able to converse with the mongoose. The mongoose said:

Once there was a sage named Saktuprastha, who was very wise but very poor. He and his family valued dharma (doing the right thing) more than life itself. I used to live in a hole outside his hut. One time Saktuprastha and his wife, son and daughter-in-law were very hungry. They had not eaten for four days. On the fifth day, they managed to obtain some food, so they cooked it up. Just as they sat down to eat; there appeared a lean and famished Brahmin at the door who asked for food. The sage instantly gave his share; this was gobbled, and the visitor asked for more. Again, without a second thought, the faithful wife of the sage offered her share of the food. This was also quickly eaten, and more was asked for. The sage’s son and his pretty wife too offered their share. Even though they knew they would die of starvation, they still offered their food, because it is written that “Atithi Devo Bhava - guest is God”. So they followed dharma, the path of righteousness, rather than their own natural instinct to live.

Then the visitor revealed Himself as none other than Mahavishnu, and took all the four noble souls to Vaikutha, his heaven. The Lord washed His hands after taking the food, and the water fell on the ground. I witnessed this all from a place I was hiding. Then I went and looked to see if any food was left on the floor. I rolled in the food that was on the floor, and my body touched the water the Lord had washed his hands with. Lo and behold!

That part of my skin that was sprinkled with the water and touched the food became golden. From that day I am looking for another host whose generosity would match that of the sage. If I could find such a host, I could make the other side of my body golden! Alas! I am yet to succeed. Oh! Worthy king, I have failed here too.

Before hearing this story, Yudhishtira had started to develop a little egoism, thinking “Oh, I am truly the greatest King!” But afterwards, as Lord Krishna intended, he felt truly humbled. Certainly, he had done a great Yagna. But being very rich, his sacrifice was very small compared to that of the sage’s family.

Moral: How many times we think that we are doing something BIG, GRANDIOSE things for people, but we are unaware that there are a few who keep doing many wonderful things in silence.

### **Shakuni’s Evil Plan**

On the way to Hastinapura, Shakuni revealed his evil plan to Duryodhana. He said, “Yudhishtira is fond of the game of dice, and none can beat me in this game because I use charmed dice. Your job is to persuade your father, Dhritarashtra, to I invite Yudhishtira to play dice with me in the presence of all the dignitaries in the court. Leave the rest to me.”

Soon after reaching Hastinapur, Duryodhana went to his father, and made him agree to invite Yudhishtira for the game. The Pandavas arrived at Hastinapura with their wife Draupadi on the invitation of Dhritarashtra for the royal dice game. They rested for the night in guest house, and reached the gambling hall on the following day. Other royal dignitaries also arrived and Dhritarashtra and his courtiers welcomed them.

On one side sat Duryodhana, uncle Shakuni, Karna, and Dushasana while the other side was occupied by Yudhishtira and his four brothers. Shakuni would throw the dice for Kauravas while Yudhishtira would do the job for Pandavas. Initially a small amount of money and jewelry was put at stake. The dice was rolled and Shakuni won the throw. Thus the game progressed on and on, every time Shakuni came up with requisite number with his magical dice. Yudhishtira was bound to lose as the game was already corrupted by Shakuni.

But as a losing gambler, Yudhishtira lost reason and discrimination. First he gambled away his wealth. Then, his kingdom. Then he put as a wager his brother. Eventually, Yudhishtira lost everything, his riches, his kingdom, his brothers, and finally even himself. The whole court was stunned to see this unusual betting from so righteous a person as Yudhishtira. Bhishma, Dronacharya, and Vidura could foresee the approaching catastrophe, but could do nothing. Their appeal for restraint and reason kept hitting on the deaf ears of Kauravas. After all it was a game, a sport, which was played according to set

rules; both the parties willingly participating. At last, the desperate gambler in Yudhishtira put Draupadi at stake. Everyone, almost everyone, in court protested, but in vain. As was destined, Yudhishtira lost the dice throw, and Draupadi too.

Victorious and lustful Duryodhana asked his brother Dushasana to bring Draupadi to the court. Draupadi was unaware of the calamity that had befallen on her family when Dushasana reached the guest house. She was amazed and shocked to hear that Yudhishtira gambled away every thing including her. Draupadi refused to go to the court. Dushasana, in the pretext of carrying out the orders of his elder brother, dragged her into the court by her hair. Her protest that Yudhishtira had no right to put her at stake was not heard in the court. Heads drooped with shame. King Dhritarashtra was silent. Not satisfied with that, Duryodhana ordered Dushasana to disrobe the lady. Bhishma, the grandsire of Kauravas and Pandavas, objected, Dhritarashtra trembled, but the lust, pride, and blind power of victory was not prepared to listen or see sense.

### **Lord Krishna Comes to the Rescue**

Draupadi looked around but there was no one who could rescue her. Her five Pandava husbands had been gambled into slavery. They could not help her. Draupadi had but one hope, one last hope to save her grace. Sri Krishna could alone, and would, save her from disgrace! She started repeating and praying for his grace, a savior of his devotees, the Master of the Universe.

And the Lord does not wait when his devotee is in such a grave crisis. Sri Krishna invisibly provided unending lengths of cloth on the body of Draupadi. Here, Dushasana pulled one yard of her sari robe, and there two yards were added by the grace of Sri Krishna! The evil Dushasana went on and on, his hands aching and paralyzed with fatigue, but there was no end to the covering of Draupadi's body. At last Dushasana collapsed, completely exhausted. "Victory to Lord Krishna", exclaimed Draupadi, and fell down, unconscious tears rolling down her eyes.

But still, Duryodhana was not to be put off. Duryodhana ordered Draupadi, "You are my maid servant, come and sit on my thigh." After hearing that, Draupadi charged the elders with anger, "It is a shame for the race of Kshatriyas, to allow a chaste woman of their own family to be disgraced before their very eyes. I condemn the elders, the so called warriors, sitting here and watching me disgraced." Dhritarashtra was shaken up. He apologized to Draupadi, and returned their Kingdom Inraprastha for fear of the curse that may befall on the Kauravas.

Uncle Shakuni and Duryodhana were, however, silently grumbling for the "lost opportunity" of putting an end to the prosperity of Pandavas. He persuaded Duryodhana and Dhritarashtra to invite Yudhishtira again for the last and final game of dice. He

impressed upon the king that Pandavas were sure to take revenge for their ill treatment. In those days, although gambling was seen as sinful act by many, including Yudhishtira, a warrior and king was declared unmanly to refuse the invitation for such a game.

Next day, as Yudhishtira and his brothers were about to leave for Indraprastha, uncle Shakuni put into effect his last hope. He invited Yudhishtira for the final game on behalf of Duryodhana, and consented by Dhritarashtra. He himself put the condition for the game as, "O Yudhishtira, in this only game whosoever loses will relinquish his kingdom and go to forest exile for twelve years with additional one year of living incognito. If detected in the last year, again exile of twelve years will ensue." Yudhishtira agreed and lost the final game as well.

All the five Pandavas and Draupadi put on simple dress and left for the forest.

### **Questions:**

When would they ring the bell during the Rajasuya.

Why was there a huge stream of water flowing from the palace gate?

What did Krishna want to save Yudhistira from?

What was the sacrifice that Sage Saktuprashta made?

Where did he go?

What happened to the mongoose?

Why was that mongoose at Yudhisthira's yagna?

What does "sacrifice" mean?

If a rich man gives a dollar, and a poor man gives a dollar, is it the same amount of sacrifice?

Why were Duryodhana and Shakuni so jealous of Yudhisthira

How did they plan to conquer Yudhisthira, through warfare?

Was the game fair?

Did Yudhisthira fall for their trick?

What did he gamble away?

How was Draupadi taken from her chambers?

By who?

What did they try to do to her in the grand assembly?

Who saved her? How?

Did the Pandavas regain their kingdom?

Did they lose it again? What happened?

Do you think gambling is a good thing?

## Lingashtakam

Brahma Murari surarchita Lingam; Nirmala bhasita sobhita Lingam  
Janmaja dukha vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (1)

Devamuni pravararchita Lingam; Kamadahana karunakara Lingam  
Ravana darpa vinasaka Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (2)

Sarva sugandhi sulepita Lingam; Buddhi vivardhana karana Lingam  
Siddha surasura vandita Lingam; Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (3)

**Kanaka maha mani bhushita Lingam**  
**Paniphati veshtitha shobhita Lingam**  
**Dakshasu yajna vinashana Lingam**  
**Tat pranamami Sadasiva Lingam (4)**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p\\_z4oRinK3E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_z4oRinK3E)

*Meaning:*

*I bow to that Eternal Shiva Lingam –*

*Which is Decorated with Gold and other Precious Gems,*

*which is Adorned with the Best of the Serpents Wrapped around it,*

*And which Destroyed the Grand Sacrifice (Yajna) of Daksha.*

*I Salute that Eternal Shiva Lingam.*

**Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson**

T F S A E

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S L T U

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H W T R O

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A L M T E

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E A L N

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E C E S L I N

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O I S V R A

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Y R L O A

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P C T R O R U

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C S K H O

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Coloring exercise: Lord Shiva

