

The Mahabharata: The Complete Story

Introduction

The Mahabharata, written by Sage Vyasa, is one of the greatest Hindu epics. It narrates the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, leading to the great Kurukshetra war and the teachings of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

1. Birth of the Kauravas and Pandavas

King Shantanu of Hastinapura married Ganga, and their son was Bhishma. Later, Shantanu married Satyawati, and their son Vichitravirya had two wives, Ambika and Ambalika. Due to Vichitravirya's untimely death, Sage Vyasa fathered Dhritarashtra (born blind) and Pandu. Dhritarashtra married Gandhari, who gave birth to 100 sons—the Kauravas, led by Duryodhana. Pandu's wives, Kunti and Madri, bore five sons—the Pandavas: Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva.

2. Pandavas' Exile and Return

Due to a curse, Pandu died, and Dhritarashtra ruled Hastinapura. Duryodhana, envious of the Pandavas, attempted to kill them. The Pandavas and their mother Kunti escaped a fire trap and lived in disguise. Arjuna won Draupadi's hand in a swayamvara, and she became the wife of all five Pandavas. They returned to Hastinapura, where half the kingdom was given to them. They established Indraprastha.

3. The Dice Game and Exile

Duryodhana, with his uncle Shakuni's deceitful dice game, defeated Yudhishtira and sent the Pandavas into 13 years of exile. The final year was spent in disguise in King Virata's court. After their exile, the Pandavas demanded their rightful kingdom, but Duryodhana refused, leading to war.

4. The Great Kurukshetra War

Both sides prepared for war. Arjuna hesitated, leading to Lord Krishna delivering the Bhagavad Gita's teachings. The war lasted 18 days. Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and Duryodhana were defeated. Bhima killed Duryodhana, and Ashwatthama slaughtered the Pandava's children in revenge.

5. Aftermath and Yudhishtira's Rule

With victory, Yudhishtira ruled righteously. Gandhari cursed Krishna that his Yadava dynasty would perish. Years later, Krishna's prophecy came true, and the Pandavas, grieving, renounced their kingdom.

6. The End of the Pandavas

The Pandavas embarked on their final journey to the Himalayas. One by one, they fell, with only Yudhishtira reaching the gates of heaven, accompanied by a dog, who was Dharma in disguise.

Conclusion

The Mahabharata teaches dharma, devotion, and the transient nature of life. The Bhagavad Gita remains a spiritual guide for humanity.

Jai Shri Krishna!