

SIGNIFICANCE OF MAHABHARATA IN TODAY'S WORLD



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INROUCTION:

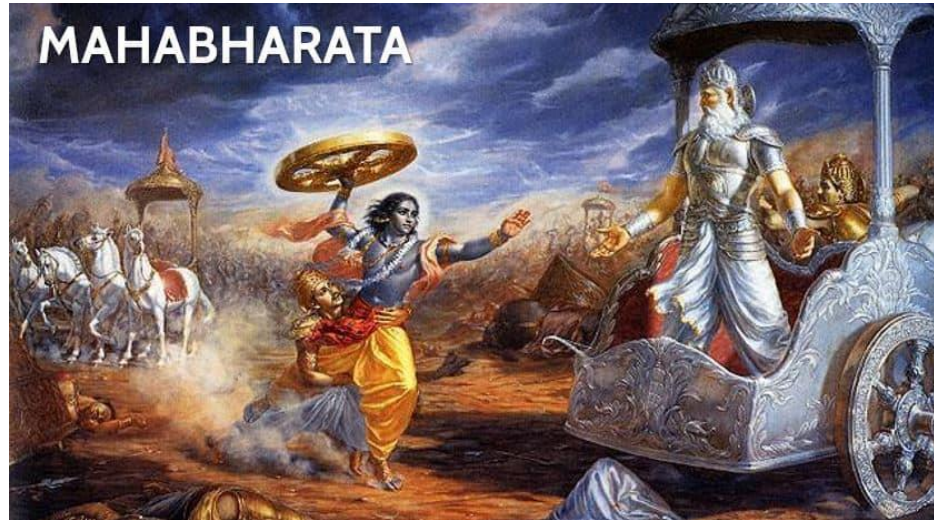
Here in the introduction I would like brief the Mahabharata with its important scenarios and glimpses.

The Mahabharata is an epic that comprises one hundred thousand stanzas of verse divided into eighteen books, or parvas. It is the largest single literary work in existence. Originally composed in the ancient language of Sanskrit sometime between 400 BC and 400 AD, it is set in a legendary era thought to correspond to the period of Indian culture and history in approximately the tenth century BC. The original “author” was Vyasa who tried to tell about the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas - cousins who claimed to be the rightful rulers of a kingdom.

The evil brothers were envious of their cousin Yudhistira and started scheming to dethrone him. Their first attempt to kill the Pandavas was by burning them inside a palace. The Pandavas managed to escape, but then the evil brothers once again attempted to gain control. One challenged the eldest brother Yudhistira to a game of dice which led Yudhistira to lose everything, including his and his brothers' wife, Draupadi. He, along with his brothers and their

wife Draupadi, were exiled from the kingdom. For twelve years they had to live in the forest and upon the thirteenth year they were to hide in a city in disguise. It was during those thirteen years that the brothers grew to learn what it was like to live with the bare minimum and became more knowledgeable. After the thirteenth year Duryodhana decided that he would fight against them which led to a huge war and the deaths of many. Many died from both sides and after the war, they realized that nothing was really gained. The most dramatic figure of the entire Mahabharata, however, was Krishna who was the supreme personality of Godhead himself, descended to earth in human form to reestablish his devotees as care takers of the earth, and who practiced Dharma. Krishna was the cousin of both parties, but he was a friend and advisor to the Pandavas, became the brother-in-law of Arjuna, and served as Arjuna's mentor and charioteer in the Great War. Krishna is portrayed several times as eager to see the war occur, and in many ways the Pandavas were his human instruments for fulfilling that end. Throughout their lives and the terrible Great War, there were examples of the ethical gaps between men which were never resolved. In the aftermath of the war, Yudhishtira alone was terribly troubled, but his sense of the war's wrongfulness persisted to the end of the text. This was in spite of the fact that everyone else, from his wife to Krishna, told him the war was right; even the dying patriarch, Bhishma, lectured him at length on all aspects of the Good Law (the Duties and Responsibilities of Kings). In the years that followed the Great War, the only survivors on the part of the Kauravas, Duryodhana's parents, King Dhritarashtra and his queen, Gandhari lived a life of asceticism in a forest retreat and died with yogic calm in a forest fire. Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas was with them too. Krishna departed from this earth thirty-six years after the Great War. When they learned of this, the Pandavas believed it was time for them to leave this world too and they embarked upon the 'Great Journey,' which involved walking north toward the polar mountain that is toward the heavenly worlds, until one's body dropped dead. One by one, beginning with Draupadi, the Pandavas died along the way until Yudhishtira was left alone with a dog that had accompanied him from the start. Yudhishtira made it to the gates of heaven and there refused the order to drive the dog back, at which point the dog was revealed to be an incarnate form of the God Dharma (the God who was Yudhishtira's actual, physical father), who was there to test Yudhishtira's virtue. Once in heaven Yudhishtira faced one final test of his virtue: He saw only the Dhartarashtra Clan in heaven, and he was told that his brothers were in hell. He insisted on joining his brothers in hell, if that were the case! It was then revealed that they were really in

heaven, that this illusion had been one final test for him. In essence, the epic story represents an extended exploration of the responsibilities set forth by the code of dharma. In addition to recounting a heroic tale, the Mahabharata contains a collection of writings on a broad spectrum of human learning, including ethics, law, philosophy, history, geography, genealogy, and religion. It also features a number of legends, moral stories, and local tales all woven into an



elaborate narrative.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MAHABHARATA IN TODAY'S WORLD:

I would like to divide the significance or relevance into many parts as Mahabharata has significance not even in today's world but its also applicable in the future too.

1. RESPECTING WOMEN:





I've put this topic as my first significance because the Mahabharata encounters this topic in many places and it was one of the major reason for the Kurukshetra war.

The Mahabharata started when the honor of a woman was at stake. Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas was lost as a stake in a bet to her cousin brother-in-law. The most powerful speech is given in this context by Draupadi where she says that nobody can make her his own without her consent.

Dushasana pulls her by her hair in the middle of the royal congregation and at this very moment she pledges that she will not tie her hair until she washes it with Dushasana's blood. She represents the fierce woman who knows how to take a stand for herself.

It represents the fact that if any man touches a woman against her will, he will have to face the consequences and he will never be forgiven. Every man should know their boundaries and never overstep them.

2. DHARMA AND KARMA:

Dharma and *Karma* are concepts entwined in a symbiotic relationship in the *Mahabharata* epic. Death comes to all because what takes birth has to die but your deeds decide your death.

Many critics believe the *Mahabharata* is only a story and they have evidences to prove their statement. It is a story which has anything and everything that happens in the current world. Devastation and death come to those who take nature for granted. All of us are heading to the very same doom because of our actions. Earth has started rebelling and indicating that we have exploited it to the brim. It is time we realize that our actions will have dire consequences. The latest one was the Delhi smog.

3. GOOD FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE A BLESSING:

Pandavas had their cousin brother, Krishna and Kauravas had Karna. Both Krishna and Karna proved their undying loyalty towards their clans.

Krishna guided the Pandavas towards the right path and Karna fought most bravely for his friend Duryodhana. If both of them were not present, the end would have been very different.

So, there is a saying when you say who is your friend, one can know about the character of the person. So stay with people who make feel comfortable and spread positivity and love.

4. STANDING AGAINST ADHARMA :

In the battle field, Arjun has a realization that he is fighting against his own uncles, cousins and teacher. He feels despondent.

To this, Lord Krishna says that nothing is completely wrong or completely right. It is all relative.

He says that this a righteous war fought for Dharma. It implies that we should object the wrongdoers and fight against them even if they are our own.

We should never feel erroneous while standing up for the right.

5. DEVOTION :



Even though Karna was the son of mighty Sun and Kunti, he was never given the respect he deserved. He trained himself to be a perfect warrior. He could have avenged the Pandavas for the life he had to go through.

But he sacrificed his life just for the sake of his mother who sacrificed him the moment he was born. He gave up his kavajkundal when his mother asked him. Such devotion cannot be seen in today's materialistic world.

In today's world where children leave their parents to live alone, such devotion is hardly present. We need to learn to be the perfect sons and daughters to our parents.

6. NEVER SUPPORT CHILDREN IN DOING WRONG THINGS:

Dhritrashtra was torn in the conflict between his love for his son and his conscience which told him that Duryodhana's greed was wrong.

His blind love for his son made him ignore all the red flags. If he had not supported Duryodhana then Mahabharata would might not even happen.

Thus, when we realizes the teachings Mahabharata incorporates in it, we realize that these are not some normal bedtime stories for children.

They have a much greater role to play, and perhaps much more lessons to teach.

7. GREED IS NOTHING BUT DOWNFALL:

Duryodhana always wanted to be the king. He got extremely jealous of the Pandavas and always questioned their right to the throne.

All this led to the start of Mahabharata. All the lives lost were just for the sake of a throne. So many relationships got spoiled.

We can easily relate this to the modern world which is filled with greed. Greedy people with greedy life. When your neighbor buys a car we wish them with greed. The modern world is going to face the downfall very soon because of this greed.

Like Mahabharata different countries may even end up in wars which may be uncontrollable.

Gambling was one of the major reasons behind the happening of Mahabharata. It was in the rush of gambling that Pandavas ended up placing their wife for the bet.

They suffered the consequences for the same later. Greed consumes everything.

8. HALF KNOWLEDGE IS DANGER:



This is a very famous quote you would see in every website when you search about Mahabharata's outcome.

Abhimanyu, Arjun's son, showed great courage and strength when he entered the Chakravyuh created by Kauravas in Arjun's absence. It taught us that no matter how worse the adversities are we should stand up and face them.

But we all know, Abhimanyu couldn't make it through and that's another life lesson right there. Sometimes we should not do what we are doing if we are not prepared fully for it.

We should have a clear idea about our future and what we are going to pursue in the future. In modern days to clear GRE or GATE or any similar exams you must prepare and gain knowledge not only technical knowledge but also which place would be better for you and the universities which offer the course you want.

Without complete background research you cannot step into a university directly.

9. WEAPONS AND IT'S SIGNIFICANCE IN TODAY'S WORLD:



Although there is another great epic, Ramayana, and it is also related to the war between Rama and Ravana, the weapons of Mahabharata demand more attention.

The reason being the number of valiant warriors with valuable war skills and knowledge were many in the Mahabharata war. But both the epics concentrate on military formations and mystic weapons of mass destruction.

The loss of innumerable human lives lost as a result of Mahabharata War brings us to the topic of mass destructive weapons used in those times. Did they have an advanced science technology?

And how come, this knowledge did not pass through to the present generation? Can we get the knowledge through the ancient texts? These are some of the questions that you find hard to get answers.

The recent times saw many making jokes of the ancient Indian science, but the fact is that a more advanced technology than the present day existed. How else could you visualize Sanjaya giving every minute detail of the Mahabharata war to Dhritarashtra?

Now you have the television to get every second detail. And the ancient weapons of mass destruction stand as a testimony that the technology of the Mahabharata times was far more superior.

10. NEVER ILLTREAT HANDICAPPED PERSONS:

There was a wonderful place of illusion built for Yudhisthira where pond seemed like a solid wall and vice versa.

Duryodhana fell into this pool that looked like a normal floor. At this moment, Draupadi says “andhe ka putra andha” which means that the son of a blind man is blind as well. Dhritarashtra, the father of Duryodhana was blind.

Draupadi should never have made fun of a man’s disability. This made Duryodhana furious and he started to target Draupadi which led to the further growth of hate towards the Pandavas.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

By doing this research project I got to know about new values which were hidden inside the great Indian epic “THE MAHABHARATA”.

This was a very good approach to learn new things about our nations epic and the modern society exactly fits in the way how the ancient people predicted to be. And the technologies of course, its still a hidden truth that many technologies were discovered and even invented in the period of Mahabharata and Ramayana.

Many scientists don't agree that their discovery is the first, but they accept that it's the first discovery in the modern era.

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