

## 7 Peace Messenger

Krishna set off with Satyaki in His chariot. This chariot was specially meant for travelling at high speed. It had two great wheels resembling the sun and the moon. It was beautifully decorated with carvings and small bells and precious stones. Krishna's chariot was pulled by four horses. There was a large dark blue banner with the emblem of Garuda. The charioteer's name was Daruka. He urged the horses forward and they sped away.

Krishna was headed on a special mission. For a long time the Kurus headed by Duryodhana were on the verge of a war with their cousins, the Pandavas. Earlier Duryodhana had organised an unfair dice game in which the Pandavas had lost all their wealth and property. Their wife Draupadi had been mistreated in public. Besides this, the Pandavas had lived in exile for thirteen years.

They had tolerated everything. Now as true Kshatriyas, the Pandavas wanted at least some of their property back so that they would rule it and live in peace.

The wise elders of the Kuru family advised Duryodhana to give back the rightful share to the Pandavas. But Duryodhana was surrounded by men like Karna, Shakuni and Dushasana, who misguided him. Duryodhana's father Dhritrashtra was blind and due to attachment for his son he was unable to make proper decisions.

Krishna was travelling all the way to Hastinapura to personally talk to Duryodhana and convince him to stop the war.

As they sped towards Hastinapura, Satyaki looked around and saw various omens like lightning flashing, rivers flowing backwards and fires on the horizon. Although Satyaki saw these terrible signs, he noticed that the area around the chariot was mild and calm. There was a

cool breeze carrying fragrant lotus petals and drops of water.

They passed through various provinces and were greeted by thousands of people standing on either side of the roads. Some were throwing flower petals, others were chanting. At the end of the first day's journey they arrived at Brikasthala. They rested for the night and continued the journey next morning.

On the day before Krishna's arrival, Dhritrashtra had called an assembly to discuss how to greet Krishna.

Dhritrashtra said, "Krishna is the Lord of Creation, the source of all power, wisdom and opulence. Let us welcome Him with great respect and honour. I will offer Him the most opulent palace of Dushasana and sixteen golden chariots drawn by excellent horses and many costly gifts. Let us decorate the city. Tomorrow we will declare a festival in honour of Krishna."

Vidura agreed with Dhritrashtra but also added, "What you are doing is good but don't think you can win over the Lord of the Yadus by offering Him wealth. His real desire is that you give at least five villages to the Pandavas."

Duryodhana said, "What Vidhura is saying is correct. There is no use of offering gifts to Krishna because He will think that it is a sign of weakness. Bhisma shook his head, "Krishna will not become angry whether He is properly received or not. We cannot insult Him nor can we win Him over. Whatever He desires will happen and we cannot check Him by any means. We should follow His directions O King, and make peace with the Pandavas."

Duryodhana had already discussed his wicked plans with Shakuni and Karna. Therefore these words made Duryodhana's eyes filled with

anger. "I will never share power with the Pandavas. When Krishna enters, I will take Him captive. Then the Yadus, Vrishinis, Pandavas and the whole world will be at my disposal."

Dhritrashtra was shocked to hear his son's words. "O child do not speak in this way. A messenger should never be harmed in any way, what to speak of one such as Krishna. He is our relative and dear to all of us."

Bhisma spoke with fury, "O king, your son chooses only evil and never good. You follow him on this unrighteous path towards certain ruin. I do not want to listen to any more words from this sinful person." Saying this, Bhisma strode out of the assembly hall in a rage. Dhritrashtra ended the session and everyone left.

Soon Krishna and Satyaki approached the outskirts of Hastinapur. Crowds of people lined the roads to greet Krishna. Ladies stood on the balconies and showered fragrant flowers. The sounds of musical instruments and conchshells filled the air.

Krishna dismounted the chariot. Fifty tall and well-armed soldiers walked ahead of Him to clear a path through the crowds. Loud shouts of "O Govinda!" were heard everywhere.

Krishna was brought directly to Dhritrashtra in the royal court and received with great respect. It was decided that there would be a full assembly on the following day when they would hear Krishna's message. Then taking Dhritrashtra's permission, Krishna left the court and went to Vidura's house to see Kunti.

Vidura was overjoyed to see Krishna approaching his home. They embraced each other lovingly. Then Krishna went inside to see His beloved aunt Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas. Kunti greeted Him and shed tears, thinking of her sons. Krishna saw that His aunt had become weak through fasting and grieving for her sons. They sat down to talk.



in a choked voice Kunti inquired about her heroic sons and how they had suffered.

She ended, "O Keshava, I do not grieve for the defeat of the dice game, the loss of the kingdom or even the separation from my sons. I grieve for my dear daughter-in-law Draupadi who was insulted in the court of the Kurus."

Krishna consoled His aunt, "You have given birth to five great heroes. Your sons are known for their virtues, they have controlled sleep, laziness, anger, joy, hunger and thirst. The time has now come for them to be installed as kings and surrounded by prosperity."

After respectfully bidding farewell to Kunti, Krishna returned to Duryodhana's palace. The palace was as high as a mountain. It was built of white marble and decked with precious gems and gold engravings. Krishna passed through three main parts of the palace and at last reached the central hall. Duryodhana was seated amidst a thousand kings and warriors. Next to him were Shakuni, Karna and Dushasana. Duryodhana welcomed Krishna warmly and personally worshipped Him, offered Him the traditional gift of a cow. He folded his palms and said:

"We welcome You, O Govinda. What can we do for You? Please accept an invitation to dine with us. We have prepared Dushasana's palace for Your residence, which is even superior to my own palace."

Krishna replied gravely: "I will not eat with you, O hero, nor shall I stay in Dushasana's palace."

Duryodhana smiled and spoke with false humility. He tried to convince Krishna to accept their hospitality. "Are we not as dear to You as the Pandavas?"

Krishna explained that He had come only as a messenger and would agree only after He had fulfilled His objective. "One should eat another's food only if there is love or if one is in distress." He also told Duryodhana that it was wrong of him to bear malice for the virtuous Pandavas. He would rather eat in the simple house of Vidura.

Leaving Duryodhana fuming, Krishna left the hall and went straight to Vidura's house. Vidura greeted Him and they ate happily together. Later they talked to each other. Vidura mentioned that Duryodhana was influenced by evil-minded people and would not accept good advice. Krishna told Vidura not to worry. He explained that He had come on a peace mission and would do His best to prevent the war.

After speaking to each other for a long time Krishna and Vidura rested briefly.

Next morning after completing their morning baths and worship, they set off for the assembly hall of the Kurus.

In the hall the Kuru elders waited with anticipation. Krishna entered the hall holding Vidura's and Satyaki's hands on either side of Him. He was greeted warmly by everyone and made to sit on a beautiful jewelled throne. With His divine vision Krishna saw many rishis approaching from the sky wishing to join the assembly. He asked Dhritrashtra to offer them proper seats. The rishis were duly offered golden seats and worshipped with great respect.

Krishna looked at Dhritrashtra and came straight to the point. He said, "May there be peace between the Kauravas and Pandavas. May no heroes be slain on either side. Only for this have I come O king, I have nothing more to say."

Then Krishna explained in detail how the noble Kuru dynasty was known

for its virtues and urged Dhritrashtra to come to the right path and not listen to his evil minded son, Duryodhana. He spoke for a long time but Dhritrashtra remained silent. Some rishis like Narada Muni, Parshurama and Kanwa also spoke. They agreed with what Krishna was saying. During these peace talks Dhritrashtra agreed with Krishna but was saying that he was helpless. Duryodhana was becoming more and more angry. As the discussion went on, Dhritrashtra spoke to Duryodhana and convinced him to make peace. Duryodhana was furious. He could not hear any more. He got up and strongly opposed Krishna's message of peace. In fact he cunningly blamed the Pandavas for all that had happened and finally said, "I will not give the Pandavas even that much land which can be pierced by the point of a needle."

Krishna chastised Duryodhana in a stern voice. By now even some of Duryodhana's brothers were convinced that peace was the only solution. Dushasna also had begun to favour peace. But Duryodhana could not tolerate the situation any more. He stormed out of the assembly hall. His ninety-nine brothers and ministers followed him.

After this Krishna tried again to speak to Dhritrashtra. He said many things and concluded, "One man should be sacrificed for the sake of a race, a race for the sake of a town, the town for the benefit of the country and the earth for the sake of the soul." But Dhritrashtra was too attached to his son to take this advice.

Dhritrashtra invited Duryodhana's mother Queen Gandhari to the assembly. Gandhari came to the assembly. She was also in favour of peace. Duryodhana came back. In a gentle voice she tried to convince him but he remained as obstinate as before. Gandhari tried to explain to her son but he did not want to listen. She said, "You have heard this advice again. One who ignores the good advice of well-wishers will regret it later. But his enemies will rejoice."



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By now Duryodhana was burning with anger. Everyone praised the Pandavas and criticised him. This time he left the hall and went straight to Dushasana's palace. There he spoke to Dushasana, Karna and Shakuni, "Krishna is swaying everyone's minds in favour of the Pandavas. We will quickly execute our plan to capture Krishna. We will grab Krishna and bind Him." Dushasana and Shakuni agreed. Karna was uncertain. Duryodhana laughed at his doubts. In the hall, Satyaki was watching Duryodhana carefully and he guessed that he was planning something. He whispered to Krishna about this. Vidura also felt that Duryodhana had some evil intentions.

When Duryodhana entered the hall, once more Vidura explained to him the glories of Krishna and of all the demons He had killed.

Finally, Duryodhana could take no more. He jumped up and ordered his soldiers to catch Krishna.

They rushed in with swords and bows. Krishna laughed and as He did so, His body flashed like lightening and began to grow. As He grew, many demigods issued from Him. Bramha sprang from His forehead. Agni appeared from His mouth. From His two eyes came Balarama and Arjuna who stood on His left and right sides. All the other Pandavas appeared and also hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasas. Krishna's weapons shone brilliantly. From His pores emanated light, sparks and clouds of smoke. Almost everyone in the assembly closed their eyes. Only Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Sanjaya were able to see Krishna as He manifested His universal form. The rishis also gazed upon Him, and offered prayers. There was the sound of heavenly music and showering of flowers.

Sanjaya described the event to Dhritarashtra who prayed for the vision to see Krishna, "O best of the Yadavas, I pray for the sight to see You." "O Kuru leader, let your eyes have sight." Immediately Dhritarashtra could see by the divine vision.

Outside the hall, a fierce wind blew. Huge waves were roaring over the ocean and thunder sounded in the sky and the earth trembled.

Krishna withdrew His mystical form and again assumed a two-armed form.

Taking permission from the rishis, He left the hall, holding the hands of Satyaki and Kritavarma. Gradually everyone left.

Only Duryodhana and his ministers remained seated. They were struck with wonder and unable to do or say anything. Their plan had failed miserably. Dhritarashtra and the Kauravas went to see off Krishna. Dhritarashtra begged Krishna not to blame him for his son's bad behaviour

Krishna got onto His chariot and set off.

Before leaving He once again visited Kunti and told her what had happened.

"O Krishna, my sons must now fulfil their destiny and take control of the earth. They will not achieve it through peaceful means. They failed to protect Draupadi in the assembly at the dice game. Her honour cannot be restored unless they fight. O Krishna, tell my sons I am well and they have my blessings."

Krishna got onto His chariot and headed towards Hastinapura. The Kurus watched as the chariot sped towards the city's gates.

Krishna's peace mission had failed and now the war was certain. Due to Duryodhana's envious nature, thousands of warriors on either side were going to be slain. The world was about to witness bloodshed as had never been seen before.



## Activity Time

Discussion:

Let's play a game of Blind Man's Buff.

One person is sent out of the room and is blindfolded. He is then brought inside and he tries to catch someone. If he touches anyone, that person is out. Then the one who is out is blindfolded and the game starts again. This game is enjoyable to play. See that the room is arranged in such a way that no one is hurt. Try and see everyone gets a chance to be blindfolded.

How did you feel when you played the game?

How did you feel when you were blindfolded?



Could you guess the name of the person you caught?

In this game one is blindfolded for fun. In the story we see that Duryodhana was 'blindfolded' by his own selfishness. Because of his selfish desires and envy, he could not see Krishna even though everyone else could.

All of us are also 'blindfolded'. When the devotees come and give us knowledge of Krishna Consciousness, we start seeing everything clearly just as if a blind fold is removed from our eyes. Therefore these are wonderful prayers which says :



Om agyana timirandhasya  
Gyananjana shalakaya  
Chakshur unmilitam yena  
Tasmai shri gurave namah

I offer my respects unto my spiritual master .  
He has opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge.

Duryodhana refused to accept the knowledge given to him by Lord Krishna and also by the spiritual master and other wise elders. Therefore he remained in ignorance and chose the wrong path..

Let us always seek the advice and blessings of the Lord through His representatives, the spiritual master and other senior devotees.



Make a bookmark

Take a piece of cardpaper 21 cms long and 5 cms wide.  
Now neatly write down the above shloka.  
Punch a hole at the top of the bookmark.  
Pass some colourful ribbon or lace through the hole.  
Decorate the bookmark in any way.  
Use this bookmark when you are reading .

