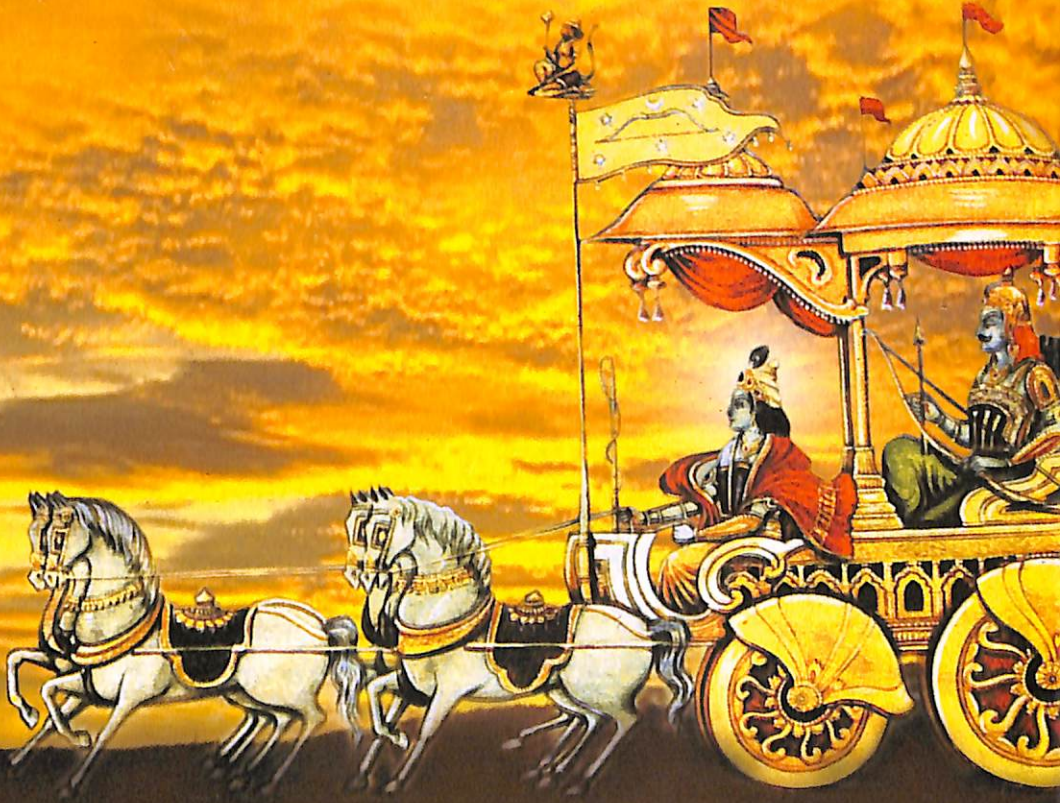


Golden Jubilee of India's Independence Series-17



INSPIRING TALES FROM THE MAHĀBHĀRATA



RAM LAL VERMA



RASHTRIYA SANSKRIT SANSTHAN

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INTRODUCTION

The Mahābhārata is our national epic. The scholars have termed it as an encyclopedia. The statement, *Whatever has been described here has happened in Bhārata*, denotes the vastness, the universality and the eternity of the epic. The composer of the epic is Vyāsa, who was the son of Pārāśara and Satyavatī. Pārāśara was a sage who inhabited in an island situated in river Kālindī and Satyavatī was the daughter of the head of the fishermen.

Though Hastināpura, Indraprastha, and Kurukṣetra are the axles of the incidents in the Mahābhārata, yet the whole rise and fall of the contemporary society such as pilgrimages, the religion, the philosophy, the tradition, the culture, the political strategies and human values are described in a very simple and lucid way.

The sage, Vyāsa has presented the then ideals that prevailed then and the social degradation without any inhibition.

The author of Mahābhārat is himself a witness to the contemporary events. He is also forefather of Kauravas. He is agonised by immoral and unethical conduct of the society. He also knows his limitations. To resolve his real dilemma the author tries to show the correct and virtuous path to the whole nation through the charismatic personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was one of the most

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------|
| Foreword | iii-iv |
| Introduction | v-vi |
| 1. Garuḍa---The ardent devotee of his mother. | 1 |
| 2. Marriage---A means of ancestor's redemption | 4 |
| 3. The curse of a Sage's Son | 7 |
| 4. A yajna that remained incomplete | 9 |
| 5. No wed-lock with Guru's daughter | 12 |
| 6. Youth donated to father | 15 |
| 7. Punishment for the abduction of cow | 18 |
| 8. From Devavrata to Bhīṣma | 21 |
| 9. Severe punishment for a small offence | 24 |
| 10. Favouritism of the Guru | 26 |
| 11. Friendship of a kind and a poor | 29 |
| 12. Groom chosen out of a hunt | 32 |
| 13. Fortune smiled on Indraprastha | 35 |
| 14. The killing of Bakāsura | 38 |
| 15. Perishing of brothers in lust | 40 |
| 16. Manu---The creator | 43 |
| 17. Not five but hundred and five | 46 |
| 18. Devils ward Duryodhana off suicide | 50 |
| 19. The hunger of Durvāsa | 53 |

the house of the Vasus. He cursed them to take birth on the earth for the crime of theft they had committed. When the Vasus came across the sage's curse they, taking the cow and the calf, reached his hermitage trembling and requested him to forgive them. The sage said that he couldn't take back his curse, they had to bear the punishment for the offence. Yet its effect could be lessened. They had to live on the earth for at least for one year. Their demise would instantaneously follow their birth. And they would regain their heavenly abode. But Dyau had to live on the earth to face all the consequences of his deed. He wouldn't get the pleasure of wife and child. He would be deprived of married life and would suffer all the pleasures and pains of the earth. The Vasus, cursed by the sage went to Ganga and requested her to help them redemption by keeping them in her womb and throwing them in the Gaṅgā-water soon after their birth. Gaṅgā was bound to come on the earth in some other reference so she accepted the Vasu's request.

Descending on the earth, Gaṅgā accepted the proposal made by Śantanu, a descendant of Ikṣvāku dynasty, on the condition that she wouldn't check her for any of her deed. The day he interfered in her acts, she would leave him. Infatuated with the beauty of Gaṅgā, Śantanu accepted the terms laid by her. They were wed-locked. Ganga delivered eight babies while living with Śantanu. She threw seven of them in the Ganga water immediately after their birth. When she was going to throw the eighth one into water, Śantanu couldn't restrain himself. Calling her killer of children, he asked her



RASHTRIYA SANSKRIT SANSTHAN

**56-57, Institutional Area, Janakpuri,
New Delhi-110058 (India)**