

KARNA

THE EMPEROR

A New Possibility in the Mahabharata



DR. BELAVADI K PRABHAKAR
WITH PROSE + POETIC VERSE

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By

Dr. Belavadi K Prabhakar



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Introduction - A backdrop

The Wheel of Fortune

The great Kurukshetra battle, a pivotal part of the epic “Mahabharata”, had reached its midpoint, a critical phase where the tide of battle was turning. The pride of Duryodhana was gradually being obscured by the dust raised by countless warriors and the smoke billowing from the fallen Kaurava soldiers. The flag of the Kauravas, symbolising their dominance, was at risk of being lowered. Mama Shakuni, known for his cunning and scheming, was visibly anxious, biting his nails as he watched the unfolding chaos. It was at this juncture that Karna, the formidable warrior and the only hope for the sinking Kauravas fleet, was called into action, stepping onto the battlefield to turn the tide of war.

As dawn broke over the horizon, the sound of bugles echoed across the plains. The two greatest archers of their time, standing at opposite ends of the battlefield, were unaware that they had been born from the same mother. This confrontation was not a battle between two warriors but a clash of destinies, a duel between brothers fighting on opposing sides. For a fleeting moment, the battlefield was not just Kurukshetra but Kulakshetra, a land of familial conflict and moral dilemmas.

Sanjaya, the royal advisor and narrator, was describing the scene with palpable excitement. His narration created a mesmerising cliffhanger, capturing the attention of the court. The intensity of the moment was so profound that even a tossed coin, symbolising chance and fate, seemed to vanish into the blue sky in shame. King Dhritarashtra, blind to the chaos and uncertain of the outcome, was in a state of confusion, unable to grasp which way the tide of fate would turn. Suddenly, Sanjaya, overwhelmed by the dramatic turn of events, placed both his hands on his head and

exclaimed, “Oh My God!” His voice carried the shock and disbelief as he announced, “Karna’s chariot wheel is stuck in the sacred mud.”

This seemingly minor incident was, in fact, a pivotal moment—the stuck wheel symbolised the wheel of fortune, a metaphor for the unpredictable nature of fate. It signalled a turning point in the great war of the Mahabharata, heralding an unforeseen twist that would influence the course of history. The incident underscored the theme that even the mightiest warriors are subject to the whims of destiny, and that fortune can change in an instant, shaping the outcome of battles and lives alike.





Chapter 1

The Wheel of Fortune

The great war of Kurukshetra had entered its bleeding midpoint.

Duryodhana's pride, once towering like the Kauravas' banner, now trembled under the dust of fallen warriors. Shakuni, once the puppeteer of fate, gnawed at his fingernails. The tides were turning—and the Kauravas' ship was sinking.

It was time.

Time for Karna, the sun-born saviour, to ride into the fray—not as a shadow of lineage, but as the blade of destiny.

Mandala Verse

*Bugles cried as dawn arose,
Dust swirled into war's dire prose.
Two archers stood where fate forgot—
One in truth, the other not.*

*A womb once split without a name,
Now watched them draw in Dharma's flame.
Kulakshetra— bloodlined war,
Not of kingdoms, but of core.*

Sanjaya's voice soared through the palace halls. Dhritarashtra leaned closer, blind but bound to the thread of destiny.

“This battle,” Sanjaya gasped, “is no longer of kings and cousins—it’s the war of karma, the tremor of forgotten truths.”

Just then, his vision trembled. He clasped his head and groaned, “Oh my God... My Lord—Karna’s chariot wheel—it is stuck! Stuck in the sacred mud!”

Not just mud. Not mere battlefield earth.

This was the **Wheel of Fortune**—pausing not from terrain, but to herald a new twist in the Mahabharata saga.

Mandala Verse

*The coin tossed skyward lost its call,
Ashamed before this dharmic fall.
Wheel kissed earth with mystic grace—
Not to halt, but to retrace.*





Chapter 2

Paartha's Fortune

From Karna the Emperor: A New Possibility in Mahabharata

By Dr. Belavadi K Prabhakar

Karna, jolted by fate's cruel reminder, stepped down from his chariot. His saarathi strained at the wheel, sacred earth clinging to its spokes with divine defiance. The curse of Parashurama whispered through his thoughts like a ghost of forgotten glory. He placed his bow and arrows on the ground—his hands now devoted to a struggle beyond war: the war within.

Across the battlefield, Krishna—the Gaarudiga of Dharma—saw a time pivot. He urged Arjuna to seize this moment. But Arjuna, princely and proud, refused to aim at a weaponless foe. Morality is tangled with memory.

Krishna smiled. “What of Abhimanyu?” he asked. “Was fairness a guest in the Chakravyuha?”

Mandala Verse I: The Stuck Wheel

*A wheel resists the hero's plea,
Mud-bound, cursed, yet proud and free.
Karna bends, not to fate alone—
But to a lesson never fully known.*

Paartha, with fire in his heart, opposed Krishna's call. “I am not of the cowardly herd,” he said, “My arrows bear the grace of Guru Drona himself.”

Yet Krishna reminded him of Bheeshma—how even the divine had bent rules before.

The conversation rose, layered with memory, myth, and morality. Arjuna jested, “Why not unleash your Chakra and finish Karna now?” Krishna only smiled.

Then, the **Chakra swirled**.

No longer just a weapon—it became a **Dharma Chakra**, rotating not to destroy but to record. Krishna began to speak; his words layered with cosmic weight. Thus began the sacred *Bhagavad Gita*, not with ceremony but necessity.

Mandala Verse II: Geetopadesha Begins

*Swirl, O Chakra, record the flame—
Of truth, of time, of dharma’s name.
Paartha knelt—his pride now at peace,
In Krishna’s voice, the soul’s release.*

◆ Closing Reflection

Paartha, now bowing before Krishna, felt the turning of his inner wheel. His refusal became redemption. His hesitance became harmony. Not just a warrior—he was now the seed of *Geetopadesha*.

Indeed, a **fortune most profound**.



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