

Chapter XXIV

The efforts of peace and preparation for War

Twenty fourth chapters describe the effort to peace and preparation for war. Drupada sends his priest to Dhritarashtra with the consent of Sri Krishna to advise him to settle the matter peacefully. He meets Dhritarashtra in the presence of Bhishma and Drona and advises him not to have any confrontations with Pandavas. Sri Krishna is their leader, Bhima and Arjuna are great warriors, Bhima has already killed Jarasandha the invincible person, he has killed three crores of Rakshasas who were present at holy places and were troubling pilgrims, he has killed jatasura. Therefore, give their share of kingdom to them without any confrontation. Dhritarashtra did not agree. When war became inevitable both the parties started preparation, Both Duryodhana and Arjuna proceeded to meet Sri Krishna who was pretending sleeping. Arjuna sat at his feet. When Sri Krishna got up he first saw Arjuna, He told Duryodhana that you have come first but I saw Arjuna first, therefore, I would like to treat you two on equal footing. I offer my help to one and send the Yadava army to the help pf the other. You choose one of them. Duryodhana chose the army and Arjuna chose Lord Sri Krishna himself. Duryodhana did not realize the supreme divine personality of Lord Krishna while Arjuna was always conscious of his divine supremacy. Duryodhana went to Balarama also. He did not agree to help him. Duryodhana gathered eleven akshauhini army while there was seven akshauhini army on Pandavas side. In the Pandava army Virata, Drupada, Kikuyu Dhristaketu, son of Jarasandha, King of Kasi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Satyaki were prominent, In the Kaurava's army Vinda Anuvinda, Jayatsena, Kalinga Ambastha, Srutayudha, Saindhava and Alambusa were prominent. Bhagadatta was especially invited by Duryodhana. Bhishma, Drona and Kripa joined Duryodhana to please Dhritarashtra. Shalya wanted to join Pandavas; however, Duryodhana had arranged a grand reception for him all along his way. Without knowing as to who had arranged it Shalya declared that he would support him who had arranged this reception. Consequently he had to join Duryodhana. Before he joined him he went to Pandavas to seek their endorsement. Arjuna suggested to him that he should humiliate Karna at a critical time. While preparation for war were going on as stated above, Dhritarashtra sent Sanjaya to impress upon Pandavas that fighting with their brothers i.e., Kauravas is not a dharma. Draupadi and Bhima had already told Yudhishtira that to pardon evil persons is adharma. It is the duty of Kshatriyas to fight when they are in a difficult situation. They should not beg for their requirements like Brahmanas. Yudhishtira told Sanjaya accordingly. Sri Krishna also endorsed it. Sanjaya returned and reported to Dhritarashtra. He censured him for his wrong approach and went away. Then Dhritarashtra called Vidhura and asked his opinion. He also said that giving their share of kingdom to Pandavas is the right course. Otherwise all your children will perish. However Dhritarashtra did not make up his mind to agree with this suggestion. Instead, he asked him about the supreme God to enable him to wash off his sins. Vidhura remembered Sanatana. He came and taught about the supreme God Vishnu. He also told that supreme God will not help evil persons. Next day Sanjaya reported his discussion with Yudhishtira in the presence of all Kauravas. Even then Dhritarashtra did not agree to

give the kingdom to Pandavas. Yudhishtira had told Sanjaya that if Dhritarashtra agrees to give us the kingdom, then, you come or send the message through Vidhura. Both of them did not come. Then he consulted Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna offered to go himself and propose what is good for both the parties. If they do not agree then they deserve to be destroyed. At this stage Bhima said let not the entire race be destroyed for our sake, we are prepared even to work under Kauravas to save the race. Though he was capable of destroying the Kauravas and desired to destroy them he said so to elicit the popular opinion. Sri Krishna retorted that destroying Kauravas is dharma. Bhima said I am strong enough to do so. Krishna said you are very strong and praised Bhima. The verse in which Bhima's remark is given suggesting his readiness to work under Kauravas to save the race has a double meaning. It also states that Duryodhana is responsible for the destruction of the race. After we kill him we take care of the race on this earth, Therefore, both Bhima and Sri Krishna were for the war and destruction of the Kauravas, There was never any disagreement between them. Sri Krishna convinced Arjuna also about the necessity of war. Nakula asked Sri Krishna to be tactful without realizing that Sri Krishna was supreme and needed no advice. Sahadeva supported war. Draupadi said those who have stolen our kingdom must be put down. Therefore, do not make any peace proposal.

Sri Krishna visits Hastinapur

Sri Krishna proceeded to Hastinapur with Satyaki. As he preceded people welcomed with flowers all along the way. Bhishma, Drona and all distinguished citizens received him. Sri Krishna entered Dhritarashtra's palace. He received the hospitality of Dhritarashtra. Though he went to Duryodhana's residence he did not receive any hospitality from him. He went to Vidura's residence and in the evening went to Kunti's residence. He did not go to the residences of Bhishma. Etc as they had been indifferent when Draupadi was humiliated. Next day he was invited to the assembly hall and was offered a golden seat. After exercising the courtesy greetings he told Dhritarashtra that he should give back the kingdom to Pandavas. This will be for the welfare of the race and your children. Dhritarashtra said my son does not listen and you directly advise him. Duryodhana did not care for Sri Krishna's advice and he left the hall with his associates to plan the arrest of Sri Krishna. Satyaki and heard the plan and informed Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna told Dhritarashtra I am everywhere and I cannot be arrested. Dhritarashtra called his sons. Sri Krishna revealed his Visvarupa. Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Sanjaya saw it. Duryodhana's vision was blurred by the flash of luster of the divine personality of Visvarupa. He restored the blindness to Dhritarashtra. Sri Krishna visited Kunti's residence again. She told him to ask Yudhishtira to fight. Then he went to Karna, took him away on a chariot and told him that he is a son of Kunti and invited him to join Pandavas in the battle. Karna did not agree. He also told Ashvatthama to be friendly with Pandavas. HE agreed to be so until his father's death. Kunti met Karna and asked him to join Pandavas. He did not agree but told her that excepting Arjuna he will not kill other Pandavas. Surya also appeared and told Karna to join Pandavas. He did not agree. He told Kunti whether I die or Arjuna is killed she will have five children.