

Why Kurukshetra is Called Dharmakshetra



Bhagavad Gita Collection

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Description: The sacred story behind Kurukshetra's designation as the land of righteousness in the Bhagavad Gita's opening verse

Tags: kurukshetra, dharmakshetra, bhagavad-gita, parashurama, mythology, hinduism

The sources primarily address the reason why Kurukshetra is also designated as Dharmakshetra in the opening verse of the Bhagavad Gita. The inclusion of Dharmakshetra alongside Kurukshetra is raised as a key question by commentators because it suggests the land holds special significance beyond its geographical name.

The Story Behind the Name

The reason the location (Kurukshetram) received the name Dharma Kshetram stems from an anecdote involving Parashurama and Maharishi Kashyapa:

Parashurama's Actions

Parashurama, born Rama, was enraged when his father, Jamadagni, was beheaded by the king Kartaviryarjuna. Parashurama went on a spree killing Kshatriyas who were deemed wrongdoers.

Creation of the Pits

During this time, he dug five pits and filled them with the collected blood of the slain kings to perform the Pitrumerda sanskaram (funeral rites) for his father.

The Name Panchas Yamantakam

The place where these five pits were dug was named Panchas Yamantakam.

Donation of Land 🙏

Parashurama acquired a vast amount of land from the kings he killed but had no aspiration to own the wealth. He decided to donate this land to someone, specifically Maharishi Kashyapa.

The Test of the Land 🐍

Kashyapa was worried that accepting land soaked in blood might cause pain to his spiritual practice (Taposhshati). While standing there, he observed a female snake inside an anthill. When another male snake attempted a forced relationship, the female snake rejected it, and her powerful Pativrityam (chastity/devotion) tore the male snake into pieces.

The Conclusion of Kashyapa ✨

Kashyapa concluded that because this land (Kshetram) was powerful enough to bestow the strength of Dharma, even upon a snake, it would not affect his spiritual power.

The New Name and Significance

Consequently, the Panchasya Mantaka Kshetram was given the name Dharma Kshetram.

The Deeper Meaning 🕵

Thus, the place was intrinsically linked to Dharma, and this is why Dhritarashtra mentioned it. This Kshetram (field or location) that bestows Dharma was deliberately chosen for the fight between the Pandavas and Kauravas so that Dharma would eventually prevail.

The use of Dharmakshetre Kurukshetra by Dhritarashtra in the first verse also highlights his underlying jealousy and greed, as noted by commentators. Despite knowing the nature of the Dharmakshetram, he refers to "my progeny"

(mamakaha) and "Pandu's children" (Pandavas cheva), combining his roles as a Raja and a father in a way that betrays his bias.



Reference

This blog post is based on notes taken from the following video: **Video Source: [Watch on YouTube](#)** For a more detailed explanation, I highly recommend watching the original video.



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).