

## Chapter 1

### Coalescence for *the Mahabharata's* Karna and Nietzsche's Superman

#### Glimpse of Karna's Life

The dissertation aims to find out the ideologies and vitalism of Friedrich Nietzsche's Superman reflected in the real hero Karna, a son of the Sun God, in a great Hindu epic, *the Mahabharata*. Nietzsche has mentioned superman in the prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and describes the qualities that the superman bears. He has conceived a man in his mind that is more than just human, a Superman. Such ideas were developed and pondered in his book expecting the necessity of such persons in this world.

The study is to delve into the life stories of Karna in search of virtuality and valiant personalities, connecting the superman of Nietzsche as a reference. Furthermore, it justifies the traits of superman in Karna who does not leave his vow to be accountable to his friend though he sees his defeat very soon. In connection with, lord Krishna fixes his victory without involving in war. That's why, the presence of a person is indispensable in human life.

Karna is one of the most powerful heroic characters having incredible skills and strength of the famous religious epic, *the Mahabharata*. He is always inspired by the principle that it is better to flame forth for the instant taken than to smoke away for ages. He acquires huge amount of respect from his master Parasuram. He is well known and well-loved character. The multi-dimensional literary incarnations throughout south Asian Literature have been interpreted Karna as famous though unknown Pandavas at the center of *the Mahabharata* narratives. Even remaining amidst his own limitations, he attempt to break them free doing noble and heroic deeds. This dissertation quests the heroic characters in Karna, a son of god Sun,

through the lenses of Nietzsche's Superman.

Karna was one of the warriors in that era who conquered the entire world. He singlehandedly and successfully conducted *Digvijaya Yatra*, a campaign in which he invaded all kings in every direction of the world, and was instrumental in establishing Duryodhan as the emperor of the world.

Karna was the son of Surya and Kunti who was born to Kunti before her marriage with Pandu. Afraid of being an unwed mother and having an illegitimate son, Kunti placed the baby boy in a basket and set him adrift on a river. He was raised by Adhiratha, a Charioteer of king Dhritrashtra and his wife Radha as their own son. He was named Vasusena and Radheya, the son of Radha too.

On the other hand, Superman is the significant concept of Nietzsche's thinking. It is the one who wishes to risk all for the sake of enhancement of humanity. Superman affects and influences the lives of common men. In Nietzsche's view, a superman should be able to affect history indefinitely. He keeps reinterpreting the world through other people's mind, and affects their thoughts and values.

This study looks Nietzsche's superman and his qualities in one hand and the qualities of Karna in another hand simultaneously. It is the critical perspective of studying two different heroes in a common trait. Especially, Karna will be viewed by the ideologies, vitalism, traits and perception of Nietzsche's Superman.

In spite of being the mightiest warriors and noble birth, Karna was never given the recognition throughout his life. He had to live with frustration haunted for the entire lifetime. Additionally, he had also been unfairly cursed several times, which led him to the ultimate defeat and death. The person who had equal power to his defearer had the very trivial murder which was against the term and condition of the war. That is why, the study aims to study him as a superhero with great respect and admiration

using Nietzsche's superman and to find out the heroic as well as failures traits in his lifetime and behavior reflected as Superman.

Some of the people always remain as the unturned pages of history though they have better capability than the people who are valued well. They are pushed away from their opportunity and rights. Karna is the representative character who could not enjoy his opportunity and birth. He had to get an equal opportunity as Pandavas and Kauravas. But he had to lead very impoverished life as being the son of *Suta*, a person of lower caste. He was deprived of the rights and humiliated telling trivial birth. Karna had equal power and skills as Arjun in archery. In this context, Arjun is regarded as victorious person whereas Karna as defeated. Sprouted from difficult life, he learnt skills and knowledge that proved him as a chivalric warrior. Even at the present time, Karna's value is shadowed in front of Arjun. That is why, the significance of the study is to depict the generosity and heroic qualities of Karna which has been hitherto neglected, but can be idealized through the perspective of Nietzsche's Superman. Furthermore, this research will be the platform and the new insight for the new researches as well.

### ***The Mahabharata and Karna's Life***

*The Mahabharata* is the longest epic written in Sanskrit having the origins of oral tradition. The text is alive in both oral and written forms to this day. It is massive text, comprising traditionally some one hundred thousand couplets. The text is divided into eighteen books (*Parvas*), each of which is organized by sub-books and chapters.

The epic spreads daily life and consciousness in many parts of South Asia, and it is regarded as a sacred text in Hinduism, it is the part of *Smirti*- a set of text which interpreted the Vedas, and is based on oral tradition- the most ancient Hindu text. *The*

*Mahabharata* explores how to attain heaven, how Gods and human being interact, nature of sacrifice as well as mythology and ritual. It consists *the Bhagavadgita*, a text extracted from the narrative of *the Mahabharata* that is supposed to be the central and philosophical statement of Hinduism and *the Mahabharata*.

*The Mahabharata* is the story of a struggle and the civil war between Pandava brothers and Kauravas and their allies. Kauravas are being a set of one hundred brothers led by their eldest brother Duryodhana, and Pandavas led by Yudhistira. In the war, Pandavas get victory in the extreme. All people from Kauravas side are dead but Pandava's side, the five brothers, their common wife, *Panchali* and Arjuna's daughter in law Uttara are alive. The Pandavas are aided by Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu and the foremost divine presence in the book. The survivals of the war are three of the parents of the Kauravas and the Pandavas: Dhristarastra and Gandhari, and Kunti.

This summary covers the surface of an elaborate and complex plot and structure. The plot includes the philosophy, ritual theory and myth. It doesn't always tell its story in a straight forward manner. This is never true and complete than with the Karna narrative, which is revealed as a mystery rather than as a biography. As artful as this narrative, Karna's identity is only a surprise and the most important of *the Mahabharata*.

Karna was born from the union of an unmarried Kunti, who belonged to the aristocratic warrior Ksatriya class, and Surya, the sun god. He was born with golden earrings and impenetrable golden body armor. His feet were identical to his mother's. She got afraid from the society that unmarried girl had a baby, she abandoned him on the *Asva* River. He was found by Adhiratha, a charioteer (*Suta*) and handed over Radha, his wife. They both had a son named Shon after Karna's adaptation, who

became his younger foster brother. They cared him as their own son with love and affection. Growing up, Karna prayed every day to the Sun and vowed that any Brahmin that approached him while he was praying would receive alms from him. One day, while Karna was praying, Indra in the guise of a Brahmin requested Karna's body armor and earrings as gift. Despite being warned that this was a trick, Karna cut them off his body and handed them to Indra. In return, Karna received an infallible weapon that could only be used once. This was *Amoga Shakti* which was so deadly that once invoked while chanting the name of target, it would definitely be the same. However, Indra warned him that he could use this *Shakti* only for one in his life time.

Karna's incredible military skills made him the only great archer. Arjun could fight with him, but difficult to defeat. The Pandavas were taught that Karna was from low birth. At that time, such people were not given a chance to learn weapons. That's why, thinking the low-birth man to compete with him, Arjun developed a lifelong hatred to him and vice versa. The Pandava's cousins, the eldest Kaurava, Duryodhan, gave Karna a kingdom, made him a de facto Ksatriya class, and claimed Karna's steadfast friendship.

In the following years, Karna also developed a hatred for Draupadi, the Pandava's common wife because she did not let him compete in her groom-choice ceremony, *Swoyambara*. Karna in turn taunts Draupadi when she was humiliated at the Kaurava's court.

Karna went to the Brahmin warrior, Parasurama to learn arts of war. He disguised himself as a Brahmin, but was eventually found out and cursed by Parashurama. He would lose his knowledge of weapons at the time he needed it the most. During that same period, Karna was also cursed by a Brahmin so that one day, when he was in the midst of a battle; his chariot wheel would be stuck in the mud.

In the Battle, after Arjuna killed Bishma, Karna entered the battle as the chief of the commander. During the war, Karna fought well and did in fact defeat and spared the lives of three of the Pandava brothers; Yudhistira was particularly humiliated. Karna participated in killing Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. When Ghatokacha, the son of the Pandava Bhima, threatened to destroy the Kaurava's side, Duryodhana asked Karna to use his infallible weapon on Ghatotkacha.

When Arjuna and Karna finally met, their duel is at first long and inconclusive. At one point, Karna fired an arrow which was really a snake that scraped from a forest named Chandara when Arjuna had burnt down. Krishna, acting as Arjuna's charioteer, lowered the ground beneath Arjuna's chariot and the snake arrow only disguised Arjuna's diadem. The arrow returned to Karna and asked to be fired again, but he did not refire it. Eventually, Karna's chariot wheel did get stuck in the mud, from that position, he asked Arjun to provide him time to release his chariot. At that point, Karna lost all his knowledge of weapons and was rendered defenseless. Encouraged by Krishna, Arjuna killed Karna.

After the war was over, it was revealed to the Pandavas that Karna was their eldest brother. Yudhistira in particular was inconsolable. He regretted not having noticed the similarity in feet between Karna and Kunti. Yudhistira through his life had been haunted by images of Karna.

### **Review of Literature**

There are various critical opinions about the legendary hero, Karna, in the most important religious epic, *the Mahabharata*. Many writings have already been created. Many interpretations and analyses have already been made through various perspectives about the heroic presentation, the ill-fated, and alienated life of Karna.

Many kings from different parts assembled in Droupadi's court aspiring

herhand. Kauravas with Karna, Arjuna with Krishna, and Balarama attended in the expectation of her hand. The person who succeeded in the contest could get her hand. When the ceremony began, one after another king came and picked up the bow, but could not get success. It is only then Karna who walked towards the bow and fixed the arrows that everyone including Pandavas expected him to shoot the bird with success. But, Karna could not because he belonged to the son of *Suta*. Connection with this scenario, Sonde tells the ill-fate of Karna, "Draupadi protests loudly declaring that she will not marry the son of a *Suta*. This was one more occasion when Karna had to withdraw from a contest. He lifts his eyes sadly heavenward to Surya and withdraws with embarrassed smile" (42). Time and again he was defeated not by his own skills and talent but by his birth. He could not get his own prestige that he had to get. He was ill fated that he had to be humiliated by his half-brother calling him the son of a *Suta*. But he attempts to rise beyond those aspects. This is the proof of his supermanship.

Bhattacharya presents Karna as the loyal and a dedicated friend to Duryodhana. He states, "As Karna tells Krishna, if the kingdom was to be given to him by Yudhistira, he would offer it to Duryodhana" (31). Karna is the representative character about the true friendship which above individual interest.

Furthermore, Ganguli presents his views about the birth of Karna saying, "Karna, happens to be the eldest son of Kunti, as a maiden, she playfully involves the Sun-God with her mantra and is blessed with a child. Feeling disreputed, she lets the child afloat on a river, which is found by the charioteer, Adhiratha and brought up as Karna" (45). The society could not tolerate the birth by an unmarried woman. Kunti had the fear of disrepute and effused the baby on the water.

Rajagopala Acharya presents the ill-fated life of Karna. Parasurama, the guru

of Karna, cursed him when he knew that he was not a son of Brahman. Rajgopal Acharya illustrates, "It was because of this curse that at the crisis of his last fight with Arjuna, Karna was not able to recall the *Brahmastra* spell, though he had remembered it till then" (25). The person who had such power even than Arjuna had to be knelt down because of the curse. He was double sufferer. First of all, he had to live very difficult life though he had noble birth. And the second, he had to face the curse. Still, he comes out of these situation to prove his supermanship.

*The Mahabharata* sets itself forward as reality. This is a life, not a play: there is no post-theatrical stroll in which to experience catharsis. David Shulman points:

*The Mahabharata* is coterminous with the world... there is no escape built into it from its relentless, bleak vision. It presents itself not as a work of art, but as reality itself. Even in recitation, it functions not as an imaginative venture in narrative, but as the vehicle of what might properly be termed 'realistic' insight. (11)

He argues that the text like *the Mahabharata* and the Karna's narrative in particular show the Sanskrit literature is indeed aware and capable of moods that can even surpass the emotional impact to western tragedy. It releases the fears and emotions to give relief of catharsis.

Madeleine Biardeau continues to be fresh and provocative and it is emphatically concerned with what *The Mahabharata* says. She explains, "Every Hindu knows at least implicitly, that in relying officially on the Vedas and keeping it as the supreme reference, *The Mahabharata* is in fact the foundation chapter of what in India is called the religion of bhakti; of devotion and that the Vedic texts hardly lend themselves to this new interpretation" (28). Biardeau's *bhakti* is not the same as the later medieval *bhakti*; rather it is a precursor of the later exuberant movement that



is a religious system based on a more positive valuation of the world and the activities that keep it in place.

Most *dharmasatra* approaches to the epic are much subtler than the fairly prevalent reading of the epic as a battle between good and evil. Susthakar writes, ". . . the war on the mundane plane has been deepened into a cosmic war between the idealistic conflict between antagonist principles, the ceaseless opposition between Justice and Injustice between Dharma and *Adharma*" (93). There is, of course, evidence in the epic itself which points towards this reading, but it seems outweighed by the rest of the work. It is found impossible to agree with those who interpret the battle in the epic as an allegory of the battle between good and evil.

The interesting trend in the literature is the connection between Karna's story and caste critical themes. In intellectual circles, Karna has become the model for the military dispossessed. Dinkar displays his view on this way:

The concern for a resurrection of Karna's character is proof that the recognition of human values is on the rise in society. The pride of good family or high caste is disappearing. In the future, a man will rise to the position appropriate to his capabilities and not a position that was bestowed upon him by family or caste . . . in some ways, the resurrection of Karna's character is an effort to establish this new humanity . . . the present age is the age of the uplift of the low and neglected. (27)

This is somewhat true of *the Mahabharata's* Karna, but the way his narrative is structured can be construed to allow for both conservative and radical readings of his talents.

The chariots of time have crossed its long distance since the composition of

*the Mahabharata*. In its course, it attracted the various interpretations. The character Karna also did not remain untouched. However, the traits of his character show that he bears the super humanistic ideas of superman as proposed by Nietzsche. In this sense, the study captures its own value, giving an innovative touch of novelty to the study of Karna's character from the perspectives of superman as postulated by the great thinker and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

### **Organization of the Study**

This thesis studies the reflection of the characteristics of imagined character Superman to the chivalric figure of *the Mahabharata*, Karna. The dissertation takes into account of the life style, relations, behaviors as well as activities of Karna done to human kind. It has been divided into four chapters.

The introduction opens with a brief background regarding, the main importance of this dissertation. There is a brief introduction of Nietzsche's Superman in connection with Karna. This chapter holds the introductory parts, hypothesis, problems, and the limitations. The sub- chapter deals with the review of literature. The portion consists of comments, anthology, ideas, and philosophy written earlier over *the Mahabharata* and Karna. The introduction traces some of the problems related to the study of Karna as the legendary figure of the history and mythology.

The Second chapter defines how the concept of Superman developed in the mind of Nietzsche has been characterized with the qualities of heroic representations. Furthermore, the chapter studies micro characteristics of Superman and how he deals every obstacle to bring changes for the sake of humanity in the society.

The Third chapter is an analytical part which deals with reflection of Superhuman attributes to the renowned character Karna. This section summarizes the supportive materials and situation to evaluate the connection of Superman to Karna

and his performance.

The fourth chapter offers certain observations pertaining to Karna in response to renowned and brave figure of *the Mahabharata*. This is an overall synopsis of the whole thesis. This section projects the heroic character that is famous even at the modern period with his generosity and kind heart for human kind.

## Chapter 2

### The Ideals of Superman

#### The Concept

Superman had something in Nietzsche's mind about how a man should be more than just human beings. All these ideas had been pondered on and developed through all his works. The concept then seems to reveal much about the way Nietzsche saw life. That's why, this chapter attempts to delve into the idea of Superman and his life from the point of view of Superman by Nietzsche.

The concept of the Superman is one of the strongest and fascinating ideas in the arena of philosophy. The doctrine of Superman is treated in detail in Friedrich Nietzsche's book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Through the prophet Zarathustra, Nietzsche expounds his diagnosis of modernity as decadence and absurdity. Zarathustra announced the death of the modern man and the advent of a new man, the Superman, who has liberated from the tyranny of reason. The Superman described by his creator is faster than bullet, more powerful than locomotive, and able to jump two buildings in a single bound. He is physically faster and superior than all current human beings.

Nietzsche used the German word "Übermensch" at first in his book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The first translation of the book into English was published in 1896 which was translated by Alexander Tille. "Übermensch" was translated as "beyond-man" in the Thomas Common translation, published in 1909. However, "Übermensch" was rendered as "Superman". The word has been translated as Over man, Superman, Hyper man, and Superhuman. The German prefix "über" means super that in meant as above or beyond. It can have the connotations of superiority, transcendence, excessiveness or intensity. "Mensch" refers to a member of the human species. The

adjective “Übermensch” means Superman in the sense of beyond human strength or out of proportion to humanity.

The idea of the “Übermensch” came in the mind of Nietzsche rather suddenly in the winter of 1882, when his life was in turmoil after other personal drawbacks. The early loss of his father had deprived Nietzsche to experience realistic and age appropriate disappointment. This left him with a lifelong tendency towards idealization. It became the source of repeated disillusionments and sorrow. The “Übermensch” may thus have been a culmination of this impulse to create altars and worlds before which he could kneel. Trying to cope with his own vulnerability, Nietzsche evoked on ideals of the “Übermensch” that was designed.

Nietzsche saw that secularism was rapidly advancing, the old institutions and ways of thinking were dying away, and that all of the things that once gave meaning to human life, religion, culture, tradition and so on, were slowly fading. The ultimate question for him was that what comes next? That is the “Übermensch”, in a nutshell. To be an “Übermensch” is to be a law unto oneself. The idea is not simply egoistic and selfish. It is psychologically strong idea that something is meaningful for everyone and create own values, instead of having other's values handed down after they were incubated by millennia of human life.

The Superman is the one who wishes to risk all for the sake of enhancement of humanity. To support this idea, Will Durant opines, "Perhaps the dominant mark of the Superman will be love of danger and strife, provided they have purpose; he will not see safety first; he will leave happiness to the greatest number"(427). The Superman easily deals with the dangerous situation. He searches the opportunity in difficulties.

In contrast to the last man who only focuses on sole desire and own comfort

creating anything beyond oneself in any form, Superman is someone who establishes his own values as the world in which others live their lives, often unaware that they are not pre-given. Kaufman interprets, "Übermensch" is a symbol of self-overcoming man who created his own values" (309-316). He adds that Superman is a creator of own values as a creator, who overcomes himself sublimating his impulses and passions. The Superman can affect and influence the lives of others. Furthermore, the Superman has his own values, independent of other which affects and dominates others' lives. The Superman is someone who has a life which is not merely to live each day with no meaning when nothing in the past and future is more important than the present, or more precisely, than pleasure and happiness in the present, but with the purpose for humanity.

Superman is able to influence history indefinitely. He will continue reentering the world through other people's minds and affect their thoughts and values. For instance, Napoleon who is highly admired by Nietzsche may be seen as an example here since he changed and created orders in Europe.

### **Will to Power**

Will to power is another significant idea. He asserts that life is the will-to-power. Although, it is hard to say exactly what he meant by that term, it can be describe as something, which underlines how human thinks, behaves and acts in all circumstances. In connection with the meaning, Leon Trotsky illustrates, "The will-to-power is at the base of the present and the future" (9). The will of the Superman is set on the bases of past, present and future. The desire and aspirations of Superman shape the way for overcoming the different. He views that a human being is always in a constant struggle to quench his own desire. This is shown in the context of power used to exclude desires of others that is in conflicts to his power that is used to

achieve what they desire. A living thing always seeks to discharge its strength, not only to survive, but to power and this sometimes results in violent behavior which is allegedly by Nietzsche, intrinsic to the nature of men. However, the Superman uses the will to power to influence and dominate the thoughts of others creatively from generation to generation.

Nietzsche has the answer to life that seems suffering. His answer, which is expressed in the same book of Zarathustra, is an attitude towards life that helps one overcome the feeling of its meaninglessness. It starts with the idea that life is an eternal recurrence with no beginning and no end, but a repetition of the very same life over and over again. With all sufferings, unhappiness and misdeeds in life, one may feel cursed and despaired if he inheritably were to repeat the same life with the same pain and joy. He has got the feeling of unity of creation and destruction, good and bad taste of life and able to say that life is good even it may seem terrible and questionable. He views all the past actions, silly or wise, accidental or achieving, as necessity of becoming himself. Therefore, he redeems himself and thus be willing to repeat the same life again. Living a life of the Superman is to live with the knowledge of what has already happened and constant reinterpretation according to it. The Superman is someone who can, with appreciation, face life that the basic conditions of life will not change even when he is the ideal slate of an Over man.

Superman is about self-overcoming. It involves an attitude towards life when one may feel despaired and life is meaningless. In his book, Nietzsche projects the self-overcoming Superman. Nietzsche clearly thinks that qualitative considerations - the chief topic of the book, as the qualitative dimensions of a self-relation. Nietzsche discusses:

Self-relation will, in present circumstances, make possible a yearning

for a self-overcoming and escape from mere contentment-will also rule out various contents. It is clear that he, and in this case Nietzsche as well, thinks that one cannot whole-heartedly and self-overcoming be a last human being or any of its many manifestations. Such types embody forms of a 'negative' self-relation that are 'reactive' and self-denying in a way that makes true self-overcoming and self-affirmation possible. (29)

It is about the way to deal with truth in direct manner with straight forward rules as in nationalism. Nietzsche represents a character who has will of power to overcome every obstacle.

### **The Apollonian and Dionysian**

The Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics are used to describe an Overman originated in his earlier work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this book, the notion of Apollonian and Dionysian principles are used with respect to his analysis of the Greek tragedy. They are used to describe two principles in human use in thinking which consequently determine actions. Apollonian principle is the principle of light, rationality, order and clear boundaries whereas Dionysian is the principle of the dark, irrationality, the collapse of order and boundaries. Adrian Del Caro expresses:

Nietzsche was preparing the manuscript of the Dithyrambs for publication when he became incapacitated after a series of nervous breakdowns in late 1888 and early 1889. According to the myth Ariadne is abandoned by her lover Theseus and only Dionysus, the demigod, comes to her ultimate rescue. Nietzsche elevated Ariadne to the symbol of the human soul, Theseus to the symbol of the male vanity, and all too human conceptions of the hero, and Dionysus to the



role of super-hero. (93)

Apollonian views an individual as separate from other reality and hence can be viewed dispassionately with rationality. On the other hand, the Dionysian views things as living whole where one is a part of a larger reality.

The Apollonian therefore involves no passion or emotion but pure reasons with order whereas the Dionysian is passionate, dynamic, and unpredictable.

Nietzsche believes that a balance of the two principles is essential in order to have some meanings in life. He seems to be very fond of art and viewed that artistic works, paintings, plays, literature or music should exhibit a great deal of Dionysian principle in the form of creativity. He views that the highest state attainable by a man can be achieved when life is conceived in terms of the realization of the Dionysian ideal of the Superman. That means one must realize and accept his own Dionysian nature and use it appropriately.

Nietzsche treats art as something higher than ordinary, mass conventional, logic and rationality such as that is science for he admired creativity and beauty in art above all things. A person who will be viewed by Nietzsche as the Superman is then more likely to be an artist who uses his Dionysian principle and way of thinking and feeling to create works that carry particular individual's picture or interpretation of the world.

In comparison to Aristotle, who views that the most desirable state of a person is a philosopher who contemplates, Nietzsche views traditional philosophers during his time as people who do not really affect the real world outside and usually their traditional philosophical works remain merely self- confession. Nietzsche accepts that Socrates did affect the history, which is characteristic that Nietzsche valued. Socrates was thought to have gone too far in defending rationality. Nietzsche even views that

we could use reasoning in everything so that the nature's flaws can be corrected. This is the view that does not accept human limitation, that men are powerless and have no control, but always places men on the top of everything. In contrast, Nietzsche views that the Superman is able to accept these limitations and faces it in the eternal recurrence. He feels that the western culture had put less and less significance on artistic creativity and passion. This mental and spiritual power, which create beauty in life, occupies fewer and fewer place in the modern society.

Emotion is one of the attributes of Dionysian, and is also one of the entities which Nietzsche defended. He views that emotion is natural. Its repression and suppression is psychologically disastrous. This also includes sexuality. He attacks Christianity for its traditional value that places bars on emotion and impulse, and this is viewed by Nietzsche as self-denying. He disagrees by inhibiting and thwarting human own nature. Rather the Superman accepts his own nature, and diverts the energy of primitive impulses into a culturally higher or socially more acceptable activity. To him, the Dionysian is not completely dark and evil as opposite to the Apollonian that is associated with light and reason. The Dionysian is rather viewed as natural, both good and bad just like any ordinary human being. It is in every human nature. With the right use a burst of creativity is the result. Nietzsche in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* writes:

What is great in man, Zarathustra declared, is that he is a bridge and not an end man is a rope, tied between beast and Over man a rope over an abyss. And man shall be just that for the Over man, a laughing stock or a painful embarrassment. Therefore, do not spend any time or energy on man! Mankind is not our goal but the Superman. (4)

However, it is usually the case that when the Apollonian principle mixes the

Dionysian, it tends to suppress the Apollonian. As a result, the Apollonian principle is expressed in a destructive way. Basically, the Superman is able to control this and divert the Dionysian power into something creative.

Dionysian is profoundly irrational rather than negatively or stubbornly irrational. Nietzsche creates the beauty of the product of Dionysian principle and feels that the right mix of Apollonian and Dionysian will make the world much nobler, not in the luxurious sense, but an aesthetic one. The world with no passion and emotion will be an unnatural one and this special property, among others, of human that differs from other animals will be lost.

Nietzsche might consider himself the Superman, but he surely determines to be a means or bridge that brings closer to reality an emergence of the Superman. In his view, men are not born equal. He always stresses on the difference of men, and hence in contrast to Karl Marx who includes everyone into his ideal society. For Nietzsche, there are only some capable and talented who qualify to be the Superman from his point of view. Therefore, he is usually perceived superficially which might have brought down the value of his thinking. It is a fact that is hard to swallow for all of us and quite skeptical on the ability of men. However, it is the case, at least through the history of mankind up to the present for men is educated differently and experience different things. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's thinking provides some spaces for this. He says that his ideal is not necessarily everyone's universal ideal. Each of us values things differently and therefore his Superman may not be the same as other's Superman. He consequently urges for reevaluation of traditional values such as the suppression of emotion, the wholeheartedly devoted rationalism. The Superman, in his view, should not be restricted by tradition nor bounded by convention but has independent values of his own. He must establish his own values.

In conclusion, we say that Nietzsche's Superman must be able to affect history indefinitely, conceives life in terms of Dionysian realization, and is able to divert Dionysian principle into something creative. With this kind of attitude and the realization of his own limitation in life, he would then be able to face life, look back with satisfaction, realizing that all pasts make him what he is today, and hence feel happy if he were to repeat the very same life eternally. The Superman should then be content with his own life and appreciate every bit of it even though some of them are painful and suffering. He spends each day of his life creating beauty which affects the minds of others throughout the time knowing that his life has values and meanings since his existence of will-to-power will live on indefinitely.

## Chapter 3

### Superman Meets Karna

#### The Projection of Karna's Heroism

It is generally assumed that it is better to flame forth for one instant than to smoke away for ages. Putting principle in the mind, Karna sprinkles the flame in his short coming in the earth rather than being unrecognized throughout life ever. The short journey of his life imparts glee in the history and religion as the chivalric figure. From the birth to the end, Karna represents himself as a chivalrous and heroic character with generosity in the famous religious epic, *The Mahabharata*. Throughout his life, he suffers from immense hardship and misfortunes, but he never gives up hope. Instead, he continues unflinchingly with his duty and finally achieves martyrdom. He quenches every nook and corner of his drawbacks in an artistic way showing bravery proving him as a figure of *daanveer*. He continuously tries to erase the hierarchy prevalent in the society on the basis of birth. Even stalwarts- Krishna, Bheesma and so on consider him as a noble spirit.

Though born as a divine prince, he is treated as an outcaste throughout his life. Kunti should have acknowledged and celebrated the radiant Karna as her eldest son, but she abandons him. In spite of being the mightiest warrior, he is never given the recognition. He has to live with all these frustrations haunting him from entire lifetime. Added to that, he has also been unfairly cursed several times, which leads to his ultimate defeat and death during the war. Nevertheless, Karna is worth of the greatest respect and admiration for his amazing personality and great will to fight against all odds.

Superman frees of all social evils elevated among the inferior and moral obligations. He leads a life full of adventures, happiness, and joy amidst the

restrictions and chain of circumstances. As concerns the sufferings tied to social disturbances, the Superman must be absolutely freed from them. If there remains one mandatory task for the Superman, it is that of perfecting himself, which means the elimination of all that might resemble pity. The Superman falls if he allows himself to be dominated by feelings of pity, regret, and sympathy. According to Zarathustra, "The most horrible of misfortunes, is pity. If a person feels anything for the unfortunate. If he is touched at the sight of sorrow, his destiny has come to an end" (Trotsky 9). As presented conceptual Superman, Karna endeavors all the qualities that Superman has to lead the respectful life. In direct glance, Karna is the unfortunate one. Throughout his life, he has to fight against misfortunes:

Reluctantly, Arjun fixed his Gandiva with Pasupatha. For a moment, his hands faltered as he looked at the sun flushed face of Radheya . . . . He then stretched his Gandiva to its utmost limit, and then let divine weapon penetrate Radheya's chest. Bleeding profusely, he threw at Arjun feeble glance that seemed to say: 'You fought valiantly my brother. Let me bless you before I close my eyes'. (Kumar 327-328)

Arjuna throws his Gandiva when Karna is not ready for fighting because his chariot has been fixed in the ground. He is killed by deceiving which is against the rule of war. Even at last, he does not have anger and complain towards Arjun who betrays and kills him. Nevertheless, Karna blesses him and praises his courage.

In the journey of life, the two persons are indispensable- Krishna and Karna. Krishna is the one who fixes the war in his favor without holding any arms and the other is Karna who does not leave his friend though he knows the downfall of him. In contrast to the last man, who only focuses on sole desire and own comfort creating anything beyond oneself in any form, Superman is someone who establishes his own

values in the world. Karna represents the same character who does not attract towards temptation and does not change his choice. He denies the proposal of Krishna and Kunti to fight for Pandavas side:

But one thing I will never do- forsake Duryodhan, whom I love in spite of all his failings. This is because I earnestly believe that one has no right to sit in judgment over the actions of one's friend, right or wrong. Friendship believes only in commitment to love and loyalty. So our next meeting will be on the battlefield not in the heart of dark forest.  
(Kumar 194)

Though Karna knows the secret of his birth, he does not want to take the side of Pandavas. He does not forsake his friend Duryodhan who befriends him during that tournament when he is humiliated by everyone as a low birth, a *sutaputra*. He directly denies the request Krishna and replies to meet in battlefield.

With all sufferings, unhappiness, and misdeeds in life, one may feel cursed and despaired if he inevitably were to repeat the same life with same pain and joy. The superman is that who endures pain to redeem the sorrow of someone else. It makes him content with and happy to repeat that same life time and again. The abandonment of the queen Kunti at the very first stage of new life is the starting of the sufferings of Karna. Though he is sacked by his own mother, he does not have any complain in his adulthood even after he knows his birth. The torture from his step mother along with her partiality to her own son and Karna even doesnot lead him to have negative faith in her. He always impart love and respect to his step mother. He wants to be renowned all over the world by Radheya rather than Suryaputra and Kaunteya. Karna illustrates:

Blessed I am to have a mother like you. I do not have any complain to

you, it's my all destiny that leads me away from my intimate ones. But before I let you go away, I want you to keep secret of my birth sealed in your heart. I asked the same favor to Krishna as well. So let me known as Radheya to all. She did everything for me. I cannot change my recognition that I have been given. (Kumar 205)

The utterance has been replied by Karna when Kunti discloses the truth of his birth. He weeps and remembers the impoverished past life that he endures being accused as low birth. The Kshetriya has been named, behaved and nurtured in unrecognized caste. Even he takes each obstacle easily, tackles the situation and achieves success in every field.

Karna overcomes every difficult situation. He deals truth with truth not in a direct manner with straight forward rules as in rationalism. Finding out the absolute truth may lead to unsatisfied question that remain unanswered. The identity of Karna revolves around suspicion and bizarre. As said by Nietzsche, Superman tackles such difficulties, Karna takes it easy way and solves in cool manner. He is one who will then feel content and happy with the life that may be so questionable. The skills of Karna from *Suta's* lineage are surprising to general people. He is the one who revolts against prevalent custom and tradition. The dare personality is laudable trait of Karna which makes his vivacious character in *theMahabharata*. The two heroes– the superhero of Nietzsche's imagination and religious characters Karna share the same attributes, qualities and perception over life.

The dedication and pious relation towards friends have been depicted through the entrance of Karna in the battlefield. Before going to the war, he goes to meet to Bhishma, who is lying on a bed of arrows in a corner of the battlefield. When Karna seeks the blessing of Bhishma, Bhishma replies, "You are the son of Kunti, you know



that the Pandavas have right on their side. So you should join them and I shall tell them the truth. Having known all these truths, I always tried to protect you from joining the war” (Kumar 193). Karna is cool and adamant. He is not ready to betray his side at a crucial juncture. He replies, “I cannot betray Prince Duryodhan. It is who saved me when I was in trouble. And after all, how can a Kshatriya betray his friend at a battlefield?” (Kumar 270). Bhishma is happy on hearing Karna’s words and his loyalty to the Kauravas despite the advantages that may come out of the best offers thrown to him from many quarters. He blesses him. With Bhishma’s blessing, Karna enters the battlefield and takes commandship of the Kaurava’s force. Karna’s entry has a dramatic change on the war front. It creates great confidence among the Kaurava’s camp. Karna’s war strategies are superb and they fight with great might. The Pandavas suffer great casualties and struggle very much.

Karna indeed faces a deep ethical dilemma and his response to fighting a losing battle is neither nihilistic nor fatalistic, but he chooses to fight from Kaurava’s side, “It is the moment for action. Let us launch an attack on the city. If the Pandavas are living incognito in King Virat’s palace, they will surely come out into the open in defense of their protector” (Kumar 141). Karna supports the idea of Duryodhan to attack the kingdom of Virat. It is because they suspect that Pandavas are hiding in Virat’s kingdom disguising themselves.

Duryodhan gives him the kingdom of *Anga* and makes him the king. Though he knows that the activities of Duryodhan are not moral, he never leaves his friends. It is his affinity towards his friend. "The exhibition by Krishna, before assembled Rajas, of his *Yoga* power upon learning the evil counsels of Duryodhan and Karna; then Krishna's talking Karna in his Chariot and his tendering to him of advice, and Karna's rejection of the same from pride" (Ganguli 26). Karna does not want to be

fluctuated in his own decision. Rejecting the purpose of honorable person is difficult task that is done by Karna against Krishna, and states that he has taken an oath to serve Duryodhana in his difficulties ever.

The Superman is the one who wishes to risk all of the sake of enhancement of humanity. Karna in same extent develops his courage to change the society. Though he is supposed as a low birth, a son of charioteer, he tries to learn the teaching of weapons. The *Sutas* are not given a chance to use any weapons and the learning about them. This is the remarkable achievement of Karna to depict the power of *Suta*. He does struggle for human kind. His father is not ready to let him learn military skills because low birth is not supposed to perform weapons skills. Apart from this, he overcomes the difficulties and faces lots of obstacles with sufferings.

In the case of learning, the human God Parashurama has taken an oath that he will not impart knowledge except Brahmins. However, Karna wants to be taught from him. That's why, he disguises his identity and learns the knowledge of Vedas as Brahmins do in a short period of time. Parashurama is quite happy to see the curiosity and the capability of Karna and gets ready to give knowledge to him. On the way to Parashurama, Karna has to pass lots of obstacles which are easily be tackled by him. In his learning, he learns each idea and technique within a time. His dedication and the success makes Parashurama be happy.

As a young man, Karna develops incredible military skills. At one point, he enters a military tournament, a festival intended to celebrate the end of the military training of the Pandavas and Kauravas Princes. The person who wins the occasion is supposed to declare as the unrivalled national hero, "The occasion carried the fanfare of a *Svayamvara*, although the prize to be won was not a beautiful princess but the glory of being declared the unrivalled national hero" (Kumar 32). The tournament, has

proceeded quite far when Karna arrives; in fact, the champions of the tournament Arjuna is about to be crowned. Just before the final ceremonies, Karna enters the arena and his very presence causes a stir. Karna then reduplicates all of Arjun's feats one by one.

Meanwhile, the young stranger was heard saying that he could out do each of Arjuna's feats. He let his first arrow touch Drona's feet as a gesture of respect, and then he started shooting from his bow, He shot an arrow into the sky that left a trail of snakes in the air. Next he shot an arrow near the dais, that day a crater in the around from which gushed out a fountain of water thunderous applause vent the air.

(Kumar 34)

There is one things left then for Karna, it is to challenge and defeat Arjun one -on-one combat. When Arjun and Karna prepare to fight, Karna is not given a chance to fight against Arjuna because of his birth. He does not only prohibit from the competition but embarrassed uttering the low birth, *Suta*.

Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, steps forward and makes Karna a de facto Ksatriya giving the kingdom of *Anga*. At that time, the sun sets and the tournament breaks down. The battle between Arjuna and Karna is postponed. Karna never forgives the Pandavas for the taunts and in the years that follow, Karna's anger and envy at the Pandavas only deepens and grows.

Nietzsche has argued that Superman is a symbol of self-overcoming man who creates his own values. Here from the birth to the death of Karna, whatever achievement has been made is of Karna's self-made. He does not get any help in his journey of education and revolt against prevalent society. He is grown up in *Suta* family. They are not given even to touch arms and armors. Penetrating the

obstructions, he searches his own teachers and learns the Vedas as Brahmins do. He gets love from his parents but no support has been given to fulfill his dream. Though he has knowledge and capacity, he is deceived time and again as a low birth. He is crowned as the king of *Anga* because of his own overcoming capacity and talent in skills show occasion. The journey of his life clearly depicts the ups and downs. All the hindering aspects are penetrated to overcome by his own effort.

The achievement of education is also not easy for him. He is denied by Dronacharya and no any way to be educated from gurus. He determines to start the voyage of his learning by his own effort. After crossing the obstacles, he reaches to Parashurama and makes him believe to give education. He achieves knowledge in a short period of time showing his diligence and skills over the technique and ways provided by Parashurama.

Like the traits of Superman, Karna establishes the name and fame all over the world. The world remembers him not only as a great archer, but also a renowned donor. At the very first time of Mahabharata war, knowing the capability of Karna lord Indra-king of heaven, disguises as an old Brahmin, approaches Karna early in the morning and asks his *Kavach* (armor) and *Kundal* (earring) in donation. Indra thinks that Karna never be defeated until and unless he has armor and earrings:

At that time Indra, the originator of all things, moved by the desire of benefiting his own son Arjuna, assuming the guise of a Brahmana, came to him, and begged of the hero his ear-rings and natural armour. And hero taking off his ear-rings and armour gave them unto the Brahman. And *Sakra* (accepting the gift) presented to the giver a dart, surprised (at his open handedness), and addressed him in these words: 'O invincible one, amongst the celestials, *Asuras*, men

*Gandharvas, Nagas, and Rakshasas*, he at whom thou hurlest (this weapon), that one shall certainly be slain!' And the son of Surya was at first known in the world by the name of Vasusena. (Roy 161)

When Karna donates his armour, he represents himself as an exemplary figure of history and even in the present era. He is the foremost of all wielders of weapons, the slayer of foes, and the best portion of the maker of day. Though he is cautioned by Surya about this, magnanimous Karna knowingly donates his *Kavach* and *Kundal* to Indra, which are the integral parts of his body since birth.

Lord Indra pleases with his generosity and says that Karna has done something that no ordinary mortal soul can afford. Because of his generosity and donation, everyone in the world praises him even in present era. He represents self as a burning candle which imparts light lessening self. He is role model who does not have fear about his death and believes his own skills and knowledge. He remains in the heart of every person as the benevolent donor.

While Karna is on his death bed, Krishna comes to him disguised as a beggar. Karna responds to the beggar by saying that he has nothing left to give him amidst battle field and that he can get anything he desires from his wife in Angadesh. The beggar indicates Karna still has some gold in his tooth which will be valuable to him. On realizing that fact, Karna takes a stone and breaks his tooth with gold and gives it to the beggar, epitomizing the way of life he leads. Krishna is pleased and says that the legend will live in hearts of people perennially and that he will be remembered for his great qualities of *daan* and *veer*. And so we know him as *Daanveer Karna*.

### **Karna's Will to Power**

Superman is able to influence history indefinitely. Karna is a symbol of someone who is rejected by those who should love him and becomes a man of

exceptional abilities willing to give his love and life as a loyal friend. His character is developed to raise and discuss major emotional and *dharmic* dilemmas. His story has inspired many secondary works, poetry and dramatic plays in the Hindu arts tradition in South-East Asia. He has written his name as a naive character in the history. He moves forward to make his own history, but destiny comes front and disturbs him time and again. He has to sacrifice his love, power and dignity because of his fate. Nevertheless, he does not lose his confidence, and rushes towards own history composition.

Will to power is the concept of Nietzsche who describes the Superman should have the main driving forces- achievement, ambition and the thriving to reach the highest possible position in life. These are all manifestations of the will to power. In connection with this theme, Karna develops his own ambition of creating the society having respect each other even in lower castes. The ambition of Karna on learning military skills, provokes him to search his teacher. When he is denied for teaching by Dronacharya, he makes his own destiny in search of his guru, Parashurama. He gets success in his dream and learns the difficult techniques that make him the best and renowned archer in the world. Karna becomes the best friend of Duryodhan and develops the ambition to win the whole world for the sake of Duryodhan. He also completes his *Digvijaya Yatra* without other supportive hands. The power and his ambition lead him toward his undefeatable success.

Karna learns from his destitution, and his birth that drive him to learning. Though the continuous effort of Karna is regarded as unaccepted custom at prevalent society, he splits every boundary and moves towards success. The achievement that he acquires is the result of his self-driving force that is will to power.

Nietzsche has the answer to life that one should go beyond the suffering. His

answer is an attitude towards life that helps one overcome the feeling of its meaninglessness. It starts with the ideas that life is a recurrence with no beginning and no end but a repetition of the very same life over again with all sufferings, unhappiness and misdeeds in life. One may feel cursed and despaired if he inheritably is to repeat the same life with the same pain and joy. The life of Karna is interweaved by sufferings since his birth. He does not get love and affection from his own biological mother. He has to leave the palace which is to be of his own. He has to grow up with little desire and right in charioteer family. When Kunti bears a child in her virginity, she gets scared about this scenario and wants to hide a child in any case. "She wondered what she should do with the child. To hide her fault, she placed the child in a sealed box and set it afloat in a river. A childless charioteer happened to see the floating case, and taking it, was surprised and delighted to see within it a gorgeously beautiful child" (Rajgopalcharya 23). After his birth, he is effused on a river, his life is uncertain. His life can be destroyed and finished.

Karna is rejected to teach from Dronacharya and other sages. He frantically wants to learn military skills, no one is there to teach him. That's way, he disguises as a Brahmin and goes in search of living God, Parashurama. He is confused whether he will teach him or not knowing the capability of Karna, Parashurama accepts him as a disciple and imparts knowledge. After the completion of his teaching, he is cursed by his own guru, Parashurama. It is only because of his low birth. Parashurama curses, "Since you deceived your guru, the *Brahmastra* you have learnt shall fail, you at the fated moment. You will be unable to recall the invocatory *mantra* when your hour comes" (Rajagopalacharya 25). The skills that he has achieved turns into futile while he needs it much.

Karna is humiliated even in the *Suayamvera* ceremony of Draupadi, the

daughter of the king of Panchala, who is known for her beauty all over the country. The competitors have to first unhook the bow, string it and then pierce the revolving fish's right eye by watching only its reflection in the bowl of oil. All the princes and the kings from different areas are unsuccessful. When no one is able to succeed, Karna, who is attended in favor of Duryodhana, goes near the table and unhooks the bow in just one jerk, and raises it in his right hand. A loud applause is heard in the hall. While he is going to pierce the revolving right eye of the fish, Draupadi does not allow him to do so and states, "He may be the king of Anga, but he is a charioteer's son" (Kumar 54). A hush falls over the hall and several eyebrows are raised. As Karna hears the word, he seats with anger.

At the peak of war, Karna is deceived and killed by Arjuna. It is very difficult for Pandavas to get victory over Karna. Karna counters each blow of Arjuna with a smile. At last, when one wheel of Karna's chariot gets stuck in mire. Karna jumps off his chariot to fix the wheel. It takes time to for Arjuna, "If you are truly chivalrous, would you allow me a few moments to fix this wheel? You may see that I am now knee-deep in the mire-and weaponless" (Kumar 327). At that moment, Karna tries to recall his *mantra* but he forgets because of the curse of his guru Parushuram. Knowing the best time for Karna's death, "Arjuna fixed his *Gandiva* with *Pasupatha*. For a moment, his hands faltered as he looked at the sun-fleshed face of Karna. Within himself, He also heard a voice saying to him; O Arjun, he is not your enemy but a limb of your body" (Kumar 328). Arjun finds the time is appropriate to fix *Gandhiva* with *Pasupatha*. He does so and kills Karna.

A person who is viewed by Nietzsche as the Superman is then more likely to be an artist who uses his Dionysian principle and way of thinking and feeling to create work that carry particular individual's picture or interpretation of the world. Karna



having Apollonian principles, mainly gives support to the antagonist of the story. Duryodhana, the representation of sin and *adharma*, is accompanied by Karna. It does not mean that Karna always gives positive remarks to the activities done by Duryodhana. Karna time and again reminds him and Duryodhana's maternal uncle Sakuni, for not involving in any conspiracy and sin. He is the only person who revolts time and again against the activities of his own friends. Warning to Yudhistira in dice playing ceremony, rushing to rescue for Pandava in *Lakshya griha*, controlling Sisupal for not insulting Drupadi are his laudable characters which put him at the highest rank of the Superhero in *the Mahabharata*.

The presentation of Superman principle into something creatively connects with this kind of attitude and the realization of his own limitation in life. The Superman will then be able to face life, look back with satisfaction, realizing that all pasts make him what he is today, and hence feels happy if he has to repeat the very same life eternally. The everlasting creative attitudes of Karna is not beyond the concept of Nietzsche. The Superman should than be content with his own life and appreciate every bit of it even though some of them are painful and suffering. In association with the spirit, every day is new and fresh for Karna. He learns new relation about the world and establishes his genuine heart as the role model. He spends each day of his life creating beauty which affects the minds of others throughout the time knowing that his life has values and meanings since his existence of will-to- power will live on indefinitely.

Nietzsche views that the Superman is able to accept the limitation and faces it in the eternal recurrence. He feels that the western culture has put less and less significances on artistic creativity and passion that mental and spiritual power which create beauty in life. The journey of Karna is not straightforward. His life is full with

obstacles. The birth itself is symbolized as divine birth. But it draws him towards his bad destiny. He cannot enjoy his royal birth. He has to face difficulties in his childhood. It is said that art cannot be controlled by the environment. The artistic capability of Karna or archery seems to be germinated. That is in his blood and heredity from his childhood. Though he is restricted to use arms and weapons, he learns knowledge over it by his own efforts. He is not confined by the social constructed truth, and he finds his own real nature.

### **The Great Show of Karna**

Karna Parva is the 8<sup>th</sup> of 18<sup>th</sup> Maha Parvas of *the Mahabharata* in which Karna has been revealed as the gallant figure. In this book, Karna has been described as the third commander in-chief of Kauravas alliance against Pandavas. The Parva recites how war commences to exhaust everyone who sought the little hope in between the war of two brothers. This Parva does not only show the chivalric performance of Karna, but also delineates how brutal war leads to horrifying reflections over the 18 days of continuous war. Though Karna is killed in a fierce battle with Arjuna at the end of the Parva, he has been praised by Ashwatthama who focuses on the characters of human beings.

The book praises Karnas's warrior abilities who defeats four of five Pandava Brothers— Yudhistira, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva. He is in an ordeal in between his promise to his mother Kunti and the accountability to be performed to his best friend Duryodhana. He never violates his oath that he does not harm any of four brothers rather than Arjuna. He can easily win the war by his single shot, but he is bounded with conditional periphery which controls him. This shows that his super humanistic qualities are beyond the level of ordinary man.

The second last day of this Parva does not get beyond the heart of the readers

that Karna and Arjuna engage in a mortal fight. Karna fights with his great strength which frightens Arjuna. It has been difficult for Arjuna to take a new strategy to defeat him. That's why, he gets suggestions from Krishna regarding the next steps to be taken and does accordingly. At mean time, the poor destiny comes in his way that is out of the control of human beings. Karna's chariot sinks into the ditch that is the deceiving scenario to trap Karna made by Krishna. Though Karna requests him to wait for a while till his chariot's recovery, Krishna finds that it is the suitable time for his murder and provokes Arjuna to release bows over him. Arjuna reluctantly throws his *Anjalika Astra* and kills him.

Selection of Salya for Karna's charioteer is the succinct cause of Karna's fall. The selection of Salya is the mistake of Karna. He calls his own death because of wrong charioteer. It is because Salya is not happy with Karna because Karna, a son of *Suta*, is chosen as the commander in chief of soldiers in the presence of Salya and he has to be a charioteer of *Suta*. Salya replied his anger to Karna:

You are insulting me to drive the chariot of someone who you think is superior to me. I do not consider the son of Radhya to be my equal.

Just behold these two massive arms which are as strong as thunderbolts.

Also, behold my bow by which I can conquer all men on the field of battle. Behold my chariot and horses which can travel at the speed of wind. Do you not see my mace covered in gold? With this weapon, I can split the earth or shatter mountains to pieces. The Supreme Being created the Kshatriyas from his arms, and the *Sutas* have been created from the castes that are servants of the *Sudras*. Karna comes from such a caste, and therefore, why he should not drive my chariot? I have undergone the ceremonies befitting a king. I deserve the praises and

worship that is due to a king. I will, therefore, never fight in such humiliating circumstances. I ask your permission to return to my kingdom. (Ganguli 5)

Salya is not happy being the charioteer of a *Suta*. So, Salya does not help him rather Karna is led towards difficulties. As Charioteer plays an important role to win or lose the battle, Karna's selection of him is his fault.

Salya is the maternal uncle of Nakula and Sahadeva. He cannot fight from his nephew's side because he has been deceived from Duryodhana by making him take an oath to fight for their side. That's why, Salya wants to take a revenge against Duryodhana. He finds that it is the proper time for taking revenge against Kauravas leading Karna to the difficulties. Even at the time of Karna's fall, Salya does not pass Vijaya Dhanus to Karna, although Karna requests him. If Karna had that Dhanus, no one would defeat Karna. Although Karna shows his skills and supermanship, he has been led by his infortune destiny. Despite complaining to Krishna and Arjun, he easily accepts his death that is the distinct capacity of Karna over supermanship than other general beings. That makes him eternal in the history of religious gallant.

In Treta Yuga, Sugriva, the son of sun god, kills Bali, who is the son of Indra with the help of Rama. To maintain the cosmic order in Dvapara, the son of Indra, Arjuna, kills the son of sun, Karna, with the help of Krishna. Even Karna's death becomes a death of superman who is sacrificed to maintain the cosmic order and balance.

At the time of Karna's death bed, Krishna tells to Karna that he has to pass his soul from worldly earth. At mean time, Karna inquires him about a question accepting his death easily. Karna asks the last question to Krishna whether he has been the great archer of the world or not, Out of difficulties, Krishna himself has to tell him to accept

his death. Krishna even as a God replies that he has to be presented over there to kill the gallant figure, Karna. In this regard, How can be the others the greatest

*Dhanurdhari* than him?

## Chapter 4

### Karna as Superhero

Karna is an idealist, unsung and actual hero of the great epic, *the Mahabharata*, who is admired and favored by the God. He is a loyal, righteous, and compassionate who devotes himself for the sake of human kind and his oath to serve his friend. He has a gentle soul which makes him renowned as the greatest *daanveer* of the world who never shuns anyone. The qualities of Karna and the imaginative figure of Nietzsche share each other to establish the reflective attributes of superman in Karna's life and behavior. He is quite generous for mankind that he is ready to give alms if anyone asks at the time of praying God, Surya without hesitation.

Karna has superhumanistic qualities; there is no one in the world who can defeat him in archery. Even the renowned archer, Arjuna cannot stand for a long time in the presence of Karna. He has skills, strengths and enduring capabilities which help him to conquer the whole world for the sake of his friend, Duryodhana without his vested interest. The superhumanistic characteristics of getting victory over whole world by single handed make him as a chivalric figure in the sheets of history and legend.

Though Karna has royal birth, he faces lots of pains and sufferings during his life. He never gets a chance to live prosperous life with respect and love. He has been thrown from royal palace to the mean hut of *Suta*, Adhirath. He does struggle in the childhood to overcome his journey. He never gives up his confidence and continues his troublesome trip of life. The heroic qualities make him get success in every obstacle befallen on his way. He is self-made man with God-gifted power for acquiring the solutions for every problem. He remains a brave hero, for showing impossible odds in his whole life and died with terrific courage, valor and honor to

rise to humanity in fame. He is especially famous for his generosity.

Karna is endowed with all the good human qualities, yet suffers from the human and mortal folly of not being able to choose proper and right. It is not to accompany him to the path of doom where he wants to go; but to bring him out of the thought and desire based on selfish motives which destroys a kingdom and people.

Instead of being roused to uncontrollable anger; Karna is happy that even at death he can donate something. He pulls over an arrow from his body and with the gushing blood gives away all his merits earned through his charity. After the death of Karna, he was granted *Moksha*. Though he was killed, he attained immortality through his superhuman qualities with charity and loyalty.

Karna is an example of how misjudgment renders all the fine qualities of an individual futility. Many consider Karna as man who fought against misfortunes throughout his life without a single pause. He never gets his due but never gives up his effort. Many of his contemporaries including Bheesma and Lord Krishna concluded Karna is noble spirit who rarely appears in the human race. He has superman qualities that are idealized as an inspiration for the struggling humanity not to lose heart.

The significant concept of Nietzsche's Superman vigorously is reflected through the life activities and personality of Karna. As superman, Karna is a real hero who has taken risk and generous heart for the enhancement of humanity. Getting beyond the royal love, facilities, and comfort, he is ready to bear every obstacle and search the viable solutions. Karna establishes his own value and identity as the noble figure that leaves nothing for the sake of human kind. So, Karna affects and influences the lives of common men. As superman is able to influence history, Karna devotes himself for the sake of change, equality and pursuit of happiness. The

perception of the people to Karna remains eternal in the mind of the people affecting their thought and values.

Karna is the self-made man who overcomes every obstacle faced as *Suta*, at a trivial birth. Sharpening him as the iron in the fire, he presents him as a Superman having extra qualities in search of newness in modernism. There is no character in Hindu mythology greater than Karna in an account of his birth, nurture, struggle and achievement. A general person, without advice and support from family, achieved everything by his own determination and passion. He copes with every difficult situation on the way to get education. In this regard, Karna possesses the qualities of superman in his life as the attributes of Nietzsche's hero, and presents self in his role and behavior to overcome a legend.

The modern Superman of Nietzsche quite meets to the character of *Dwapara* and the legendary figure of that time. The thinking of Nietzsche resembles with the characteristics, behavior and performances of Karna of *the Mahabharatah*. As Superman, Karna loves and accepts love of danger and strife and sacrifices his own happiness to the greatest number for human kind. The will to power and change are the main concepts of Karna that make him to conquer the difficulties. The struggle from birth to death for chivalric achievement and the service for mankind are the attributing characteristics of Karna that resemble the Superman, the ideal figure of Nietzsche's thinking.



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