Twitter Thread by AParajit Bharat ■



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Whenever we discuss about Mahabharata, we discuss same characters again & again. I thought we should discuss about lesser known but significant characters.

My #thread on Shalya, he was Charioteer of Karna & how he played an important role in the duel between Arjun & Karna. ■■



Shalya was King of province called Madra. He was also known as Madra Naresh and he was the brother of Queen Madri, 2nd wife of King Pandu & Maternal Uncle of Nakul & Sahdev.

Pandavas called him Mama. Mama Shalya had pledged his supports to Pandavas, but then comes a twist.

Pandavas had gathered 7 Akshauhini Sena, while Kauravas had 9 Akshauhini Sena

According to epic Mahabarta, one Akshauhini contains four different types of armed forces
21,870 chariots
21,870 elephants
65,616 horses
109350 infantry

Pandavas knew Shalya has 2 Akshauhini Sena

With Mama Shalya joining Pandavas, things would have been squared at 9 Akshauhini Sena each. But Shakuni tricked him.

While Shalya was travelling towards Kurukshetra, Shakuni arranged excellent hospitality for him along the road for him & his Sena. Shalya was highly impressed.

Shalya was under the impression that this has been arranged by Yudhistir. After Madri went Sati, Nakul & Sahdev lived with Kunti instead of living with their uncle. Hence Shalya barely got chance to meet his nephews

He met Duryodhana on his arrival & he thought it was Yudhistir

Shalya immediately made a vow saying I pledge myself & my Sena to you, thinking that he is pledging his allegiance to Yudhistir. There were 2 reasons why Shakuni wanted Shalya on his side. One was his 2 Akshauhini Sena & 2nd Shalya was one of best Charioteers of that time.

There were 3 best Charioteers in Kurukshetra war, we all know Krishna was one, Shalya was another & 3rd was Nakul who was also a master in that art. If it wasn't for Krishna, then Nakul would have been the Charioteer for Arjun. Shakuni wanted Shalya to be the Charioteer of Karna.

When Shalya realised that he was tricked, he went running to find Krishna & Yudhistir to narrate wat had happened. This made Nakul & Sahdev furious & they wanted to kill their uncle whr Yudhistir stopped them saying you should respect your Uncle.

Vow had utmost value those days

Krishna could immediately sensed why Shakuni played that trick. He secretly asked Shalya to make a promise that he will distract Karna during the duel between Arjun & Karna. To which Shalya agreed & he then joined Kauravas.

Pandavas had 7 & now Kauravas had 11 Akshauhini Sena ■■

We all know Bhishma didn't allow Karna in the war, but after Bhishma fell, Karna entered the war & Shalya was asked to be his Charioteer. Shalya was fairly loyal to Karna as it was his Dharma but things changed on the 17th day when the final clash between Arjun & Karna took place

Shalya knew that he promised Krishna to distract Karna. He began with his mission, he started giving wrong advices to Karna & kept praising Arjun for his superiority. Karna was quite furious with him, he would have liked Shalya to be mute but Shalya just won't stop.

Karna had 2 advantages over Arjun, one was Shakti Astra given to him by Lord Indra when Karna gave his Kavach Kundal & 2nd was Nagastra

Karna was forced to use Shakti Astra on Ghatachkoch hence he was left with only one

Nagastra was not a real Astra but a serpent fired on enemy

During Ramayan, Indrajit fired serpents on Lord Ram, Garuda saved Ram from these serpents & Krishna saved Arjun in Mahabharata.

Nagastra was Takshak Nag himself who wanted to take revenge on Arjun for burning the forest of Khandavprast, which was later renamed as Indraprastha.

While Shalya kept manipulating Karna, Karna asked Shalya not to underestimate him against Arjun. Finally whn Karna took out his Nagastra, Shalya knew this was that moment why Krishna had asked him for that promise. Shalya knew Karna won't take his advice, so he gave honest advice

Shalya told Karna to fire this Astra on Arjun's chest, to which Karna looked at Shalya with Agony & Karna decided to aim at Arjun's forehead whr there was no armour to protect him. When Karna fired, Krishna pushed the Chariot into the ground, hence lowering the height of Chariot.

We all know that Nagastra struck Arjun's mukhut & thus Arjun survived that weapon. We also know Krishna saved Arjun, but had Karna taken Shalya's advice, things would have been different. Shalya kept his promise which he had made to Krishna. After this Karna lost the battle.

Apart from all these stories, we tend to miss an important point. When we know Krishna & Shalya were expert Charioteers & specially chosen for this battle. It means the chariots were constantly on move saving the warrior from the opponent's attack. Remember God's were watching it

But when u see BR Chopra's Mahabharata or any other Mahabharata, its shown that during the battle, Chariots were parked in the middle of the ground, Krishna & Shalya being the spectators ■

Chariot fight is something we can't even visualise, filming it is altogether a diff thing

Despite being 4 Akshauhini Sena short of Kauravas, Pandavas triumphed over their opponents with all brave Pandavas walksd alive & victorious out of the Kurukshetra war. Mahabharata has many interesting characters like Shalya.

Let me know in comments if you liked my thread. ■■