

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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## Kurukṣetra: The Battlefield Of The Inner Being and the Outer Realm

॥ श्री ॥

The **first** chapter of the Bhagavadgītā the **Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga - The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna.**

We begin this session by seeking blessings of Ma Tulsi, whose presence frees us from all ailments and hurdles; and is the favourite of Bhagavān. We invoke the luminance of knowledge by illuminating the lamp through the traditional lamp lighting ceremony. We then pay obeisance to Ma Sarasvati and the composer of this enlightening work, Veda Vyāsa ji; and Jñāneshvara mauli,

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानंद विग्रहम् ।  
पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दमीशं आलन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

Salutations to Shri Jñāneshvara mauli! of Alandi who is the embodiment of the Supreme peace and blissfulness; to such a Sadguru who embodies the Supreme Bramhan, I forever pay my obeisance..

We pray obeisance to this Divine land of Bhārata and also the Bhagavadgītā; for those who are blessed with ITS knowledge are fortunate indeed, as it opens up the path for their upliftment. For Bhagavān Himself becomes our guide; as HE guided Arjuna as a charioteer on this battlefield of Dharma towards Victory. Finally, we seek blessings from our Gurus to help us in this endeavour of learning Gītā. May HE shower us with HIS blessings as we continue on this Divine path of learning Gītā.

We begin this discourse by Yogeśvara through this beautiful prayer,

ॐ कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ॥  
प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविंदाय नमो नमः ॥

May Bhagavān Krishna, in HIS form of Govind, who destroys the sufferings, tribulations and pains of HIS devotees and maintains a graceful gaze on HIS devotees, also bestow HIS blessings on us; take away any

tribulations and obstacles for us...

Bhagavadgītā is the Eternal Song of Bhagavān, that was sung from the battlefield of Dharma, the Kurukṣetra. It is our guide towards enlightenment; for, if we desire **Niśreyasa**: the release of the Jīvātman from the body, and its reunion with the primary and universal Source; the Brahman and **Abhyudaya**: our rise and prosperity then the study of Pārtheya (Arjuna) of the Bhagavadgītā becomes most important. Technically a short shastra (700 shlokas), we have now started to decipher some of ITs teachings and trying to emulate a few.

However, the first chapter does not contain HIS guidance, nor can one hear HIM speak; apart from a single instance where HE simply was indicating Arjuna, as whom he shall be up against in this epic war. Still it is considered to be an important chapter for it helps set up the scene before the battle; the context and the gravitas of the moment of this elixir of knowledge. This chapter provides an insight into the mind of the greatest of warriors; who had become despondent anticipating the death of his loved ones, where he had to fight against them.

What made him so? What were the factors surrounding this event? And what made him surrender to Bhagavān to ask for discipleship. There are many questions that are set in this chapter....

This shortest of shastras provides the most expansive knowledge; such is the greatness of Gītā. There have been many renowned saints and philosophers, great men who have tried to explore ITs depth.

**Sant Gulabrao ji** had proclaimed that the Gītā shall become the foundation of all Dharma Shastras one day and shall be the foremost across the world. We are witnessing its spread today.

IT is an enlightening scripture that brings a shift in our vision; we begin to notice this Divine existence with our eyes of knowledge and not just there physical form. Even Lokmanya Tilak ji had acknowledged ITs greatness as he called it the "**Kohinoor of all literature and scriptures**". This eternal knowledge, that arose from HIM; cleanses our **Antaḥkaraṇa** (inner being) as the ganges purifies all dirt; It mitigates the *Vikaras* like desire, anger, envy, greed and pride, purifying our inner being transforming us from within.

We say that the cause of this Divine Knowledge was due to Arjuna's despondency as the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas stood against each other on the battle-field. Yet, these 2 sides also exist within us. This friction and conflict is also constant within us, just as the descendants of the Kurus were... Gītā is that Ganga that purifies us. The Gītā Māhātmya by **Śrī Śaṅkarācārya** states,

"मलनिर्मोचनम पुंसामजल-स्नानम, दिनिनेसकृत गीतामृत स्नानमसंसार-मल-नाशनम ॥"

One may cleanse himself daily by taking a bath in water, but if one takes a bath even once in the sacred Ganges water of Bhagavad-Gītā, for him the dirt of material life is altogether vanquished.

Gītā is Bhagavān Himself in the form of literature. As described before, an individual needs both **Abhyudaya** and **Niśreyasa**. *Abhyudaya* brings us material prosperity which is essential for our physical wellbeing. However, sometimes one can lose the path of righteousness while seeking material success. One forgets that this body is mortal, and we all have to leave our current existence. We forget this important truth, while accumulating material objects as if they shall forever be with us; Sometimes, this results in exploitation of nature. Our Scriptures thus, make an important intervention and distinction "**Dharma**"...

As stated in the Vaiśeṣika sūtra,

यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ॥

"Dharma (is) that from which (results) the accomplishment of Exaltation and of the Supreme Good..."

Thus, that which helps in achieving the materialistic progress as well as the ultimate benefit (mokṣa) is Dharma...

**Swami Govind Dev Giri ji** Maharaj has emphasized that the goal stated in the Bhāgavata, “**ātyantika-duḥkha-nivṛtti**” getting rid of all sorrows to attain ultimate bliss; is attainable if one followed the path illuminated by the Bhagavadgītā,

“अत्यंतिका-दुःख-निवृत्ति, पूर्वक परमानंद प्राप्ति।”

One can attain the Supreme blissfulness, as all sorrows depart from him...

It enlightens us, towards the path for navigating this world; It teaches us both the “**Art of Living**” and the “**Art of Leaving**.”

Bhagavadgītā is thus called the ultimate guide for psychology. This was corroborated by a personal anecdote; where the Gītā was named the most ancient amongst psychotherapy books, in a medical conference!!

It is this Divine Knowledge that relived the despondency of Arjuna, an ancient wisdom that still upholds the most basic principles, following which one can live a fulfilled life. It is said, that **the Mahābhārata is the essence of the Vedas and the Gītā is the essence of Mahābhārata**. Thus, **Arjuna is the medium through whom we too gain the milk of knowledge of the Upanishads, milched by Shri Hari Himself**. Therefore, to understand the Gītā, one has to understand Arjuna. To understand him, one has to understand his state of mind.

The knowledge of this ancient wisdom is eternal but also relevant; the conflicts and situation may change but their causes are still prevailing. We are surrounded by them which eventually results in depression.

Guru ji always has emphasized the quote by Billy Graham that if “Wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost something is lost; but if character is lost, everything thing is lost”..adding that if confidence is lost, then everything is lost forever”

Confidence is the very foundation of our success; hence, understanding this background where a strong warrior became despondent over fighting a war becomes even more essential. The first chapter gives us a peek into Arjuna’s state at this moment in time.

Jñāneshvara mauli expressed,

अहो अर्जुनाचिये पांती । जे परिसणया योग्य होती ।  
तिहीं कृपा करून संती । अवधान द्यावे ॥ ६२ ॥

**Jñāneshvara ji said**: “all of you saints who are fit to hear Gītā in the company of Arjuna, may kindly give your attention to what I say.”

Jñāneshvara ji proclaimed that those who like Arjuna are capable of concentrating on this Gītā; when surrounded by chaos (as Arjuna was in the battlefield); those who are in his company amidst the various tribulations and struggles in our life, behold! Pay Attention!

**Tukaram Maharaj** in his beautiful *abhanga* highlighted this constant conflict, that the senses wage with the outer world. Some of its excerpts,

रात्रंदिन आम्हां युद्धाचा प्रसंग ।  
अंतर्बाह्य जग आणि मन ॥१॥  
जीवाही अगोज पडती आघात ।  
येऊनिया नित्य नित्य करि ॥२॥

तुका म्हणे तुझ्या नामाचिया बळे ।  
अवघीयांचे काळे केले तोंड ॥३॥

Here, Maharaj described that he had to fight a dual battle; one against the world and the other against his mind. This was a battle he could fight only by taking HIS name, pursuing his enemies and vanquishing them only through HIS name.

We too struggle in this Kurukṣetra; the arena of *Kuru*, meaning "the act of doing". Thus, this is also the arena of Karma or action, indicative of the struggle faced by most individuals in their life.

**Kurukṣetra**....the battle-field of Dharma; where the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas stood on the arena on opposing sides; let us take glimpse of that moment, understand their motivation leading to events that led to the unfolding of this Ancient Divine wisdom..

## 1.1

### **dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre, ṣamavetā yuyutsavaḥ, māmakāḥ(ph) pāṇḍavāścaiva, kimakurvata sañjaya. 1.1**

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

Sañjaya, gathered on the holy land of Kurukṣetra, eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do?

The first verse marks a critical aspect of the whole setup; for, Dhṛtarāṣṭra represented the *Vikaras* in a human being. Dhṛtarāṣṭra literally means, the one who holds on to the Kingdom; where, **dhṛta**: 'holds on to', **rāṣṭra**: 'the kingdom'. He not only lacked vision of sight, but his sight of knowledge were also closed. He was so possessed of his body, that he only wanted his son Duryodhana to inherit the Throne, despite being unfit for that position.

It is fascinating that the first letter of Bhagavadgītā, is '**Dha**' from Dharma from the first Verse, beginning with "**dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre**....

However, the tone and the words used by Dhṛtarāṣṭra were far removed from Dharma.

In the first verse, Dhṛtarāṣṭra used '**māmakāḥ (ph) pāṇḍavāścaiva**' to distinguish between his sons and Pāṇḍu's sons. Technically, since the Pāṇḍavaś consider Dhṛtarāṣṭra to be their elder, he could have simply used **māmakāḥ**. This distinction was deliberately made and it reflected the character of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, which had always been cunning and selfish. This distinction is the cause of most strife and the cause of major conflicts, even within the closest of families.

Duryodhana was always supported by Dhṛtarāṣṭra for all the follies he committed against the Pāṇḍavaś. He was merely the instrument for Dhṛtarāṣṭra's desires. Thus, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the primary reason for the entire War.

The first quarter of this verse "**dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre**..reminds us of the incident with the Queen Ahilya bai Holkar ji...

While reading scriptures, one needs to know what is their type; They are classified into 2 based on their composition,

- **Simhamukhi Gomata:** In this type the beginning is tough, but later the scripture gets easier.
- **Gomukhi Simha:** Where the beginning is easy but there is an increase in the level of difficulty as we move forward.

Those that have an insight into the eternal knowledge, can grasp even the most difficult of shastras.

Once, when Ahilya ji wanted to learn the Gītā, a pandit ji had been appointed, as a tutor for the same. Note, that the Bhagavadgītā is a **Simhamukhi gomata**; Its beginning is the most difficult portion of the entire work. Thus, when the Pandit ji began with the 1st quadrant (charan) of the verse with "**dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre**"; Ahilya ji instantly realised its essence and she wrote it down to be read as "**kṣetre kṣetre Dharma Kuru..**" *doing Dharma in the field of fields (or in all fields)*. She was ecstatic! as she proclaimed that she understood the essence of the entire Gītā, knowing the first charan itself.

Here, **Kṣetre** alludes to an area or field. In this context, it can also mean duty. Everyone has their own area of duty; example a parent's duty, the duty of a student etc. Thus, it could mean "to uphold their Dharma in all their individual areas (Kṣetre Kṣetre)." This field however, is not just confined to the outside, but can also be denoted by our body, illustrated by the same Kṣetre, Kṣetre; where, it now alluded to the field of fields. The entire concept of Kṣetra is further expanded in the 13th chapter. In both cases though, what is highlighted is the importance of upholding Dharma.

Then to uphold Dharma, one must first know what is Dharma?

**"धारयति इति धर्मः"**

"That which is upheld (Dhāraṇa) is Dharma"

Though having several meanings, Dharma primarily denotes the importance of duties; and is used sometimes, to denote proper conduct through proscribed actions from scriptures. e.g. Duty of a woman is *Stree Dharma*, Duty as a human being is *Manushya Dharma*, etc.

Thus, a lot of the times, when one is in a conflict between two duties, Gītā provides clarity on those situations. As ITs personification, Yogeśvara takes us out of such conundrum, as HE brings about a lasting peace; For, the Gītā teaches us the basics like, "what is a correct action? How to choose between 2 conflicting choices?". In short, knowing what is the correct course of action..

Ideally, we should all be focussed on the upliftment of ourselves, meaning trying to develop Divine qualities. But in reality this is not the case. There is a divide in the world between good natured people (Divine Qualities) and bad natured people (Asuri tendencies). In Mahābhārata itself Kauravas had Asuri nature where as Pāṇḍavas had Divine nature. The might of the evil tendencies is strong; Even then, Bhagavān had to guide the Pāṇḍavas to attain victory against this evil. Here, the source of this evil though was none other than Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Jñāneshvara ji described Dhṛtarāṣṭra as someone blinded by filial affection;

**तरी पुत्रस्नेहे मोहितु । धृतराष्ट्र असे पुसतु ॥**

**म्हणे संजया सांगे मातु । कुरुक्षेत्रीची ॥ ८५॥**

Dhṛtarāṣṭra, blinded by his filial affection, asked Sañjaya, "Tell me the news of Kurukṣetra..."

The stream of evil is vast; the Pāṇḍavas representative of Dharma are described to be only 5 in number. And it all began with Dhṛtarāṣṭra; who was not just blind by sight, but also blind with love for his sons; and further influenced by Gandhari's brother Shakuni, who encouraged him to declare his son Duryodhana as the heir. For years, the Kauravas, led by Duryodhana, had victimized their cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, and governed over the kingdom of *Hastinapura*, which did not rightfully belong

to them.

Later, the Pāṇḍavas were given Khandava-van to establish their kingdom, where they set up the beautiful city of Indraprastha. Duryodhana, on seeing this city became envious and wanted to take it away from them. He invited Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍavas for a game of dice. Through foul play, the Pāṇḍavas were defeated and had to give up their city and were sent to exile for 13 years. Even Draupadi was humiliated, which ensured the destruction of the Kurus. Yet, despite Bhagavān being an advocate of peace, Duryodhana refused to let go of even 5 villages and declared that "he won't even let them have needle point worth of land". Through all this Dhṛtarāṣṭra remained at best a silent spectator; and at worse, acted as an enabler to Duryodhana through all his despicable acts.

Thus, the source of any conflict is generally the partial attitude towards dear and near ones of those with authority. We can find examples of these even today say, a judge being partial to their relatives during judgement.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra had forgotten that he was also a king and an elder of the clan and not just a father. Thus, the chain of events led to the ground being set for war. A total of 18 Akshauhini army had fought in this great war. The Kaurava army was of 11 Akshauhini while the Pāṇḍavaś had an army of 7 Akshauhini. Clearly the size of the Pāṇḍava army was way lower than the Kauravas.

Then Sañjaya, having been provided with Divine sight by Veda Vyāsa ji which was earlier refused by Dhṛtarāṣṭra was asked to narrate the events that happened in the 10 days he had been away. Hence, the use of the term "**kim-akurvata** (kim: what; akurvata: did they do)?" by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, to know what were his sons and Pāṇḍu's sons doing? This was then answered in the next verse by Sañjaya..

## 1.2

### **sañjaya uvāca drṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṃ(ṽ), vyūḍhaṃ(n) duryodhanastadā, ācāryamupasaṅgamyā, rājā vacanamabravīt.1.2**

Sañjaya said:

At that time, seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas drawn up for battle and approaching Droṇācārya, King Duryodhana spoke the following words :

Hearing the selfishness in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's query, Sañjaya addressed him, and sarcastically called Duryodhana as the King. He has used the term "**Rājā**". Duryodhana was not a King, but was born with a golden spoon. Both parents had ignored his various indiscretions. One was blindfolded, the other visually impaired; but this had also affected their sense of righteousness; it was almost as if their visual impediment gave them an excuse to ignore their son's behaviour. This led to Duryodhana being used to everyone following his command.

The one whose command is followed is a King and calling Duryodhana thus, Sañjaya was taunting Dhṛtarāṣṭra that the real decision maker was Duryodhana and not him; he didn't deserve to be titled as King. Thus, the statement "**rājā vacanamabravīt**" is a reflection of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's state as a pawn.

## 1.3

## paśyaitāṃ(m) pāṇḍuputrāṅām, ācārya mahatīṃ(ñ) camūm, vyūḍhāṃ(n) drupadaputreṅa, tava śiṣyeṅa dhīmatā. 1.3

Behold, O Revered Master, the mighty army of the sons of Pāṇḍu arrayed for battle by your talented pupil, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, son of Drupada.

As mentioned before, the first chapter provided an insight into the primary characters on the Kurukṣetra; their motivations and their state of mind, that made them act in a certain manner. Previously, we understood the mindset of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; that he was coming from a place of ambition and selfishness. Now, this shloka reflects the **mind-set of Duryodhana**.

Here, Sañjaya narrated the activities of Duryodhana...

Duryodhana moved his horse near Droṇācārya (ācārya -master/teacher) and exclaimed, "to look at the vast army of the Pāṇḍavaś!"

Duryodhana then went on to mention that the formations had been arranged by Dhṛṣṭadyumna. It is important to note that in this shloka, he did not name Dhṛṣṭadyumna but called him as King Dhṛupad's son. This was deliberate, as there was known enmity between the two and this was a reminder to his teacher that Pāṇḍavas had knowingly put Dhṛupad's son at the helm of his army. Thus, Duryodhana was trying to drive a wedge between them.

One has to remember that while Dhṛupad was Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Draupadi's father, Dhṛṣṭadyumna's birth was for the specific reason of elimination of Droṇācārya.

We are all familiar with the story of the sequence of events that led to the enmity between Droṇācārya and Dhṛupad; their friendship in childhood, the journey of Droṇācārya to Pāñcāla kingdom due to his poverty, as he couldn't afford to even feed his son Aśvatthāma with milk, following which his wife Kripī had asked him to seek help from his friend.

After travelling far and meeting Dhṛupad. The King of Pāñcāla, in his arrogance declined to accept Droṇā as a friend, but offered to donate whatever he desired, as he was a Brāhmaṇa. Humiliated, Droṇācārya became angry and vowed revenge. He went to Hastinapura kingdom, where after teaching the princes he sought the defeat of Dhṛupad as his Guru Dakshina. The Pāṇḍavaś were able to fulfill this vow; but then Dhṛupad wanted to avenge himself; thus, he conducted a yajña where Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Draupadi manifested from the fire of Yajña.

Finally getting a son who would be his tool for revenge, Dhṛupad wanted to train him to be the best of warriors. After sending spies across different directions, only Droṇācārya was able to meet his requirements. Hence, he sent Dhṛṣṭadyumna to Droṇācārya to attain knowledge and training.

Again one can see the profound impact of Dharma. Such was the magnificence of Dharma, that Droṇācārya agreed to teach his own nemesis. It would be impossible for such a thing to imagine in our times but this also shows the magnanimity and righteousness of Droṇācārya who agreed to such a request.

He called him **dhīmatā**, here Dhṛṣṭadyumna was called wise, but this intelligence is different as the words were carefully chosen, where Duryodhana was trying to convey that "Look! You made a disciple who is capable to defeat you knowing that he would be the reason for your death, and he is intelligent enough to stand in your opposition despite you being his teacher!"

Duryodhana wary of his own army personnel, knowing that they all were here in coercion and their inherent support was to his enemy; targeted Droṇācārya and then described the formation and introduced his opponents in the next verse...

**1.4, 1.5, 1.6**

**atra śūrā maheṣvāsā, bhīmārjunasamā yudhi,  
yuyudhāno virāṭaśca, drupadaśca mahārathaḥ. 1.4  
dhṛṣṭaketuścekitānaḥ(kh), kāśirājaśca vīryavān, purujitkuntibhojaśca,  
śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ. 1.5  
yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta, uttamaujāśca vīryavān,  
saubhadro draupadeyāśca, sarva eva mahārathāḥ. 1.6**

There are in this army, heroes wielding mighty bows and equal in military prowess to Bhīma and Arjuna-Sātyaki and Virāṭa and the Mahārathī (warrior chief)

Drupada; Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna and the valiant King of Kāśī, and Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and Śaibya, the best of men,

and mighty Yudhāmanyu, and valiant Uttamaujā, Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā, and the five sons of Draupadī- all of them Mahārathīs (warrior chiefs).

Duryodhana continued his attempt to incite Droṇācārya to fight aggressively against the opposing army by calling out the mighty warriors on the other side. He chose each name carefully to elicit a reaction from Droṇā, since each of these warriors had a history with him.

**Dvesha**, hatred is a very strong emotion. The more they have this feeling against a person, the more they think of them; hence, Duryodhana compared the mighty warriors **śhūrāḥ** (powerful warriors) and the **mahā-iṣhu-āsāḥ** (great bowmen) with Bhīma and Arjuna; **bhīma-arjuna-samāḥ** (equal to Bhīma and Arjuna) when describing his opponents. This illustrates his obsession with them; Arjuna, who had defeated all the Kauravas alone and Bhīma, who had converted his destiny with death (being poisoned by Duryodhana) to his biggest strength, as he gained the strength of 10000 elephants by drinking the elixir in the Naga loka.

**Sātyaki and Virāṭa, Arjuna, Bhīma- the Mahārathīs**

Just as we have various ranks in the army that we recognise today like captain, colonel, Chief etc. There were gradations during that era as well. Arjuna, Sātyaki Virāṭa, were all considered Mahārathīs; warriors who could single handedly match the strength of ten thousand ordinary warriors

**Sātyaki/Yuyudhāna**

Yuyudhāna, better known as Sātyaki, was a powerful Yadava of Vrishni clan to which Bhagavān Shri Krishna also belonged. Head of the Narayani Sena and as Arjuna's top student, he fought on the side of Pāṇḍavas.

This was the same Narayani Sena of 1 Akshauhini that was gained by Duryodhana, as Arjuna had wanted Bhagavān to be with them; though HE had a condition that HE would not fight in that war. This certainly was beneficial to Duryodhana, for in his mind he would ask for the army instead of Bhagavān Narayana; for, these are the tendencies of Asuric people.

On the other hand, Arjuna, the possessor of the 26 Divine qualities asked for HIM even if HE would be unarmed, "Become my charioteer then! Be my counsel when I need guidance; navigate me through

the battlefield; caution me if I err; that is my only request Oh Keshava!"

Notice this stark difference between the 2 warriors who had almost similar background; yet, slight differences in their upbringing. **Bhagavadgītā is Yogeśvara personified, who navigates us through this Saṃsāra, as HE guided Arjuna through the battlefield of Dharma.**

(Note: An Akshauhini is described in the Mahabharata as a battle formation consisting of 21,870 chariots; 21,870 elephants; 65,610 horses and 109,350 infantry as per the Mahabharata. Thus one Akshauhini consisted of 218,700 warriors. The ratio is 1 chariot: 1 elephant: 3 cavalry: 5 infantry soldiers.)

Duryodhana mentioned Satyaki as he wanted to point out that although Arjuna's top student was fighting on his teacher's side, Droṇācārya's top student Arjuna was fighting against his teacher.

**Drupada** also was someone that Droṇā disliked, as was pointed out earlier.

**Virāt:** King of the Virāṭa Kingdom where the Pāṇḍavas spent their 1 year of exile in disguise.

**Dhṛṣṭaketu:** Shishupala, father of Dhṛṣṭaketu had been killed by Krishna, yet he was on the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

**Cekitāna:** He was the only Yadava warrior not taking the side of the Kauravas.

The king of Kāśī was an exceptionally gallant warrior, and took the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

**Yudhāmanyu** and **Uttamaujā** were exceptional warriors from the Pāñcāla kingdom.

**Purujiit** and **Kuntibhoja** were Kunti's maternal brothers who were also related to the Kauravas, but chose the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

**Śaibya** was Yudhiṣṭhira's father-in-law, similarly related to the Kauravas.

**Abhimanyu**, Arjuna's son, was well versed in the art of breaking military formations.

**Prativindhya, Sutasoma, Shrutakarma, Shatanika** and **Shrutasena;** the UpPāṇḍavas were Draupadi's sons from the Pāṇḍavas. They were also described as *atirathis*. Duryodhana disliked Draupadi immensely, so her sons were pointed out as well.

All of them were leading men of their formations, of which Dhṛṣṭadyumna was the chief.

Next Duryodhana described warriors on his side,

**1.7, 1.8**

**asmākaṃ(n) tu viśiṣṭā ye, tānnibodha dvijottama,  
nāyakā mama sainyasya, sañjñārthaṃ(n) tānbravīmi te. 1.7  
bhavānbhīṣmaśca karṇaśca, kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ,  
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaśca, saumadattistathaiva ca. 1.8**

O best of Brāhmaṇas, know them also who are the principal warriors on our side- the generals of my

army. For your information I mention them.

"Yourself and Bhīṣma and Karṇa and Kṛpa, who is ever victorious in battle; and even so Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and Bhūriśravā (the son of Somadatta);

Duryodhana now wanted to talk to Droṇācārya about his army, having assessed the capabilities of the Pāṇḍava army.

After having lobbed an insult at Droṇācārya, and not having heard a response, Duryodhana now became scared that he had angered his army's main commander and his teacher. So he wanted to say something to appease Droṇā. Hence, he began his assessment of powerful warriors on their side, by putting Droṇācārya first.

It also illustrated one constant theme that defined Duryodhana's temperament; fear, he could see a vast army arrayed in front, which though small looked more intimidating than his own army that was behind him. Thus, his description of their army to Droṇācārya by taking his name, was more of an after thought; as if he was reminding himself of his own prowess by assessing the strength of his own army.

Duryodhana mentioned the exceptional heroes in the battle, all of whom were ever victorious.

**Vikarṇa** was the brother of Duryodhana, the only one who had objected to the betting of Draupadi by Yudhiṣṭhira and again protested when they tried to humiliate her. When he couldn't stop them, he left the court, for he couldn't sanction such unrighteous behaviour by his own brothers.

It is said that Bhīma had cried only twice in his life; the first time after the humiliation of Draupadi where he couldn't protect her. The second time when he had to kill Vikarṇa, who after his death lamented, "Alas, O Vikarṇa, you were just and knew what was dharma!"

**Aśvatthama** was the son of Droṇācārya.

**Kṛpācārya's** twin sister married Droṇācārya. Both were the gurus in the Kingdom of *Hastinapura*.

**Saumadatti**, or **Bhūriśravā**, was the son of the King Somadatta of the Bahlikas, who is also righteous in nature.

**Karṇa** was the half brother of Arjuna, as he was born of Kunti before her marriage with King Pandu.

However, contrary to Vikarṇa, Karṇa had become an Adharmi in the company of Duryodhana and Shakuni. His description in the Mahābhārata doesn't show many redeeming qualities for him, and shown to be full of vices and defeated several times. In fact, he was the one who insisted that Draupadi should be brought out; it was he who insulted her in the assembly; he egged on Duryodhana to dishonour her.

## 1.9

**anye ca bahavaḥ(ś) śūrā, madarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ,  
nānāśastrapraharaṇāḥ(s), sarve yuddhaviśāradāḥ. 1.9**

And there are many other heroes, all skilled in warfare equipped with various weapons and missiles, who have staked their lives for me.

As we know, Bhagavadgītā is **the guide for victory**. It is the essence of the knowledge from the Mahābhārata. It helps in eliminating the different *Vikaras* in us. It is the scripture of **Abhyudaya** and **Niśreyasa**; helping us live a fulfilled life, ultimately leading us towards mokṣa. The 2 essential components to achieve this, are the qualities of **discernment** (to choose correct action) and **samattva**, equanimity of vision and mind; both of which can be attained through application of the teachings of Gītā in our life.

Gītā is not separate from the Mahābhārata; hence, one should always have context in mind when reading IT; as the teachings of Yogeśvara in the Gītā were given to Arjuna; Thus, his background and knowing the events preceding the war for proper context, were essential to gain ITs true understanding.

Coming back to the verse, after giving the names of his prominent warriors; Duryodhana claimed that along with the above, there were many Heroic warriors, skilled in the art of warfare, who were prepared to lay down their lives, **tyakta-jīvitāḥ**; for his sake.

Duryodhana seemed to be more interested in the opposing forces than his own. This was due to his fear that even those great warriors who were fighting on his side had a soft spot for the Pāṇḍavas. The Pāṇḍavas had a just reason, and Duryodhana perhaps understood this at a subconscious level displaying his mindset of insecurity and fear.

Hence, although he had a much larger army at 11 Akshauhini than the Pāṇḍavas at 7 Akshauhini; he was nervous about his victory and was overcompensating by naming his warriors. He was expressing that they too were mighty and equipped with different weapons and abilities and were ready to sacrifice their life.....just for him.

## 1.10

**aparyāptaṃ(n) tadasmākaṃ(m), balaṃ(m) bhīṣmābhirakṣitam,  
paryāptaṃ(n) tvidameteṣāṃ(m), balaṃ(m) bhīmābhirakṣitam. 1.10**

This army of ours, fully protected by Bhīṣma, is unconquerable; while that army of theirs, guarded in everyway by Bhīma, is easy to conquer.

This verse could be interpreted in two different ways, all due to the usage of **aparyāptaṃ** (as it could mean unlimited as well as insufficient), thus there are different interpretations of this verse.

In one version, Duryodhana proclaimed his army to be sufficient to defeat the army of the Pāṇḍavas, guarded by Bhīṣma; as the meaning of aparyāptaṃ here is taken as unlimited; while the other side protected by Bhīma (instead of Dhṛṣṭadyumna), doesn't seem to be **paryāptaṃ**, sufficient; here meaning their side (Pāṇḍavas) looked insufficient in comparison to the Kauravas.

The acknowledgement of Bhīma as the warrior to beat was a testament to his prowess, and a sly against Dhṛṣṭadyumna.

In contrast, in the other version, Duryodhana doesn't feel that his army was sufficient, as so many of his warriors were only standing by his side due to some issues, and he feared none of them were happy that they were in his camp.

## 1.11

### **ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu, yathābhāgamavasthitāḥ, bhīṣmamevābhirakṣantu, bhavantaḥ(s) sarva eva hi. 1.11**

Therefore, stationed in your respective positions on all fronts, do you all guard Bhīṣma in particular on all sides.

The winds on the Kurukṣetra were roaring with strength; as was Duryodhana's mind. Filled with anxiety and contrary thoughts, this son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra summoned all of his army; in an effort to assure his chaotic mind. Remind himself, that he was in control and commanded them (despite, Bhīṣma being their chief)- "to stand ground on their battle formations and to protect Bhīṣma!!"

This great warrior who was acknowledged by all, the Patriarch of the Kurus; the mighty Bhīṣma surely must have felt amused at the sight of someone with far fewer abilities, ordering people to 'protect' him. He also understood that Duryodhana was insecure, that he wouldn't fight for him with full dedication, as they were confronted with his beloved Pāṇḍavas. Hence, his next actions were to pacify and reassure his grand nephew...

## 1.12

### **tasya sañjanayanharṣaṃ(ñ), kuruvṛddhaḥ(ph) pitāmahaḥ, siṃhanādaṃ(ṽ) vinadyoccaiḥ(ś), śaṅkhaṃ(n) dadhmau pratāpavān.1.12**

The grand old man of the Kaurava race, their glorious grand-patriarch Bhīṣma, cheering up Duryodhana, roared terribly like a lion and blew his conch.

Understanding Duryodhana's fears **Bhīṣma**, the Patriarch of Kurus roared like a lion and blew his conch. Here, Bhīṣma was described as **kuruvṛddhaḥ** (Patriarch of the Kurus).

The statesman like figure of Bhīṣma has always been glorified. It is estimated that he was 150 years old at the time of this war (Bhagavān Krishna and Arjuna were estimated to be 75 to 80 years old). His immense dedication and sacrifice for the Kuru Clan, his wisdom and grace provided the gravitas to his image making him 'the power centre' of the entire lineage...

One needs to understand that Droṇācārya being a teacher to both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavaś, understood the sarcastic remarks of Duryodhana; while, Bhīṣma being his Granduncle, only noticed his fears and to console him announced the beginning of war; symbolised by his war cry and the blowing of his conch.

Hence, one could see the contrasting behaviours of the 2 major power centers of the Kaurava side towards Duryodhana. It is also a good reminder that these events had happened in a different bygone era, in the age of *Dwapara*; 5000 years and more have gone by; yet, these events, the characters, are all still relevant; for, the questions posed by them and their dilemmas are still relevant. Hence, the Gītā is considered to be the most excellent manual of psychotherapy, having an answer to all our moral dilemmas.

Therefore, the proclamation of Duryodhana was followed by the mighty roar of Bhīṣma, as he wanted to please Duryodhana. Before the start of the attack in any war; the generals, chief raise the morale of their cadre. Just like the valorous Marathas of Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj thundered with the war cries of, "Har! Har! Mahadev!!" Creating terror in the hearts of their enemies; Similarly, when

someone of the calibre of the mighty Bhīṣma roared, his entire army would have been charged up for the attack. After this Roar, Bhīṣma blew the conch spontaneously.

In any war, the initiator of the declaration of War is known as the aggressor. Bhīṣma knew that Yudhiṣṭhira will never blow the conch first. Initiation of the Battle from him would also assure Duryodhana of his fealty to him.

As the conches blew and the roars intermingled, the drums rolled; the thunderous instrumental unison in their cadence brought about a cheer in the army of the Kauravas.

### 1.13

## **tataḥ(ś) śaṅkhāśca bheryāśca, paṇavānakagomukhāḥ, sahasaivābhyahanyanta, sa śabdastumulo'bhavat. 1.13**

Then conches, kettledrums, tabors, drums and trumpets blared forth all at once and the noise was tumultuous.

In this electrifying atmosphere, one could hear the instruments like conches, *Dhol* and *Mridangums* (types of drums), kettledrums, trumpets and blowing horns. Such was the vibrations of the sounds produced, that they mimicked a thunderclap, reverberating across the Kurukṣetra. It is said, that sometimes we produce noise, to quell or hide the chaos of our minds. These frightening sounds of the Kurukṣetra represented the tremble and the chaos of their hearts, as the war was about to begin!

This was also an epoch event, for it foreshadowed the entry of our central characters; The *Nar* and *Narayana*, symbolising the eternal relationship between the human and the Divine; who in the age of *Dwapara* manifested in the form of Bhagavān Shri Krishna and Arjuna..

Thus, as the fog of ignorance grew thick; amidst this din from the side of the Kauravas, came into sight, Arjuna's chariot driven by the Majestic four white horses led by Sri Bhagavān...

In the next session we shall take a detailed look at the magnificent chariot that contained Parameśvara and HIS dear Arjuna; what caused this brave warrior to feel despondent? What made him surrender to Bhagavān as a disciple? All these are questions that shall get resolved in the course of this chapter..

We conclude this beautiful discourse by recalling the Gurus and Jñāneshvara mauli..

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Let us now take a look at the Q and A Session..

### **Ramchandra ji**

**Question:** When did Sañjaya narrate the events of the battle-field?

**Answer:** It is said that Sañjaya narrated the events after the 10th day of war, after Bhīṣma was defeated by Arjuna; when Sañjaya came back to report to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, he asked for what happened on the battle-field? This began his narration..

**Sumit ji**

**Question:** How to understand Varna Sankar in today's age?

**Answer:** One shouldn't confuse Varna with caste; when Arjuna talks of sankar of Varna, he meant the Guṇas becoming diluted in the progeny due to the difference in the parent qualities.

In today's context, one can understand it as say people in similar professional qualities like a doctor or a musician having high chances of these qualities being dominant in their children. People have different qualities might not produce such a dominant trait in their children. For warriors courage was a desired quality. He feared this quality being diluted in the progeny of parents with dissimilar qualities. Example: People with high IQs having highly intelligent kids. Or In today's context, If both parents have a lineage of soldiers and have an army background; there is a high chance that their children having this as a dominant trait; These qualities of valour; but if one of the parent is from a highly artistic field they might have a child of a sensitive deportment, which would be different for a military family.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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