

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/WnXqfGYB3OA>

## Conches Blown and Arjuna's Dilemma on the Battlefield

The first chapter of Śrīmad - Bhagavadgītā is **The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna**.

The session began with the customary lighting of the lamp and prayers were offered to The Gurus. One indeed is fortunate for being endowed with Gītā, as proclaimed by Bhagavān himself. Even the various saints have said that those who have been blessed to learn Gītā, are guaranteed the path towards mokṣa.

As we saw in our last session, the first chapter of the Gītā, sets the stage of the Kurukshetra War. The last session ended with the introduction of Arjuna and Bhagavān Sri Kṛṣṇa on the scene of the Battlefield. We were also introduced to the various characters featuring in this war. We shall continue to understand their backgrounds through various anecdotes to better acquaint ourselves with these characters and the context in which they fought.

The Greatness and importance of any text or story depends on 2 things,

- **śrōtā** - The audience/ listener
- **Vaktā** - Speaker/orator

One can imagine the greatness of Bhagavād-Gītā, wherein, Bhagavān Madhusūdana is the Vaktā and the Dharmātmā (follower of Dharma) Arjuna as the śrōtā.

### Arjuna

Arjuna was one of the greatest Warriors of all times. He had defeated the greats like Bhīṣma, Duryodhana, Karṇa, Aśvatthama, Droṇācārya along with various other Kings of Bharatvarsh and even Devatās (Demigods) in a team and single-handedly in various situations. He was righteous and had been undefeatable in the various wars he contested in. He was also called Dhanañjaya (the one who had won wealth). As a wielder of various divine weapons, he was also blessed with the chariot from Agni Dev and Bhagavān Hanumān resided in his flag as an emblem.

There is an interesting incident on how Arjuna obtained the chariot.

## **The incident of Khandav Forest**

When the Pāṇḍavas had gone to establish Indraprastha as capital in the region of Khandav region they encountered a dark forest which was also home to the Daitya (residents of the lower planes) named Takshak. Agni Dev (fire diety) had requested Arjuna and Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa to burn this forest so that he could regain his *tejas* (luminance/radiance).

It was well known that this task of burning the forest had been failed before by various warriors as Takshak being a friend of Indra (King of Devatās and also diety of rain and thunder) would request him extinguish the fire by rain. Arjuna readily accepted the task and along with Bhagavān set the forest on fire.

As expected Takshak ran to Indra and requested him to put out the fire. Indra acceded and showered rain on the burning forest. Showing splendid archery skills, the greatest archer Arjuna had shot numerous arrows crisscrossed in such a manner that not a drop of water escaped the mesh of arrows.

Indra in his ego became furious and set out to target Arjuna knowing that it was his son. Indra had already been taught a lesson by Bhagavān in the Govardhan mountain incident, hence he targeted Arjuna, perhaps he underestimated Arjuna as it was his own son. He came with a massive army and attacked Arjuna, and lost after a month of extensive fighting. This was prior to Arjuna getting the Divine weapons, so one could imagine his valour.

Such was his might that as Indra was hesitant to retreat, Bhagavān admonished him that if he still was reluctant to leave after such a defeat from Arjuna then he could imagine his condition if Bhagavān entered the battlefield. Indra left with his army defeated and Arjuna was able to fulfill Agni Dev's request. Delighted, Agni Dev presented Arjuna with a divine chariot and a weapon.

Thus we can only imagine the **greatness of SrimadBhagavād-Gītā as the Great Arjuna and Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa are the śrōtā and the Vaktā of it.**

All of us are desirous of various material objects to gain happiness, some would like wealth, some a beautiful wife, others something else. This is the nature of an ordinary individual.

Tulsidas ji explains this beautifully,

**सूत दारा अरु लक्ष्मी, पापी घर भी होए।  
संत समागम, हरि कथा तुलसी दुर्लभ दोये।।**

It means that even someone with evil karmas can be endowed with wealth and desired wife, however it is difficult to be in the company of pious and virtuous men or even someone who is able to hear or sing Hari Katha (Divine stories of Sri Hari).

In our shastras tremendous importance is given to being in the company of sadhus and hosting and feeding them. One who is able to do this is truly blessed.

Thus we are also blessed that we are able to learn HIS spoken elixir, Shrimad Bhagavād-Gītā, as we continue from our last session.

## **pāñcajanyaṃ(m) hr̥ṣīkeśo, devadattaṃ(n) dhanañjayaḥ, pauṇḍraṃ(n) dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṃ(m), bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ. 1.15**

Śrī Kṛṣṇa blew His conch named Pāñcajanya; Arjuna, Devadatta; while Bhīma of ferocious deeds blew his mighty conch Pauṇḍra.

Blowing of the conches was a tradition that signified the start of a war. The sounds emanating from them created a terror in the hearts of the enemies as the origin of the conches of Bhagavān and the Pāṇḍavaś were divine.

Let us take a look at the origin of these divine conches and how they were obtained by their owners.

### **Pāñcajanya**

The origin of Pāñcajanya goes back to the **Samudramanthan** (churning of the ocean). During the churning 14 types of divine items were acquired after **Halahal** (Lethal poison that was drunk by Bhagavān Shiva), namely,

- **Chandra**: the moon, since both chandra and Goddess Laxmi came from the ocean, chandra is also called mama(maternal uncle), in Indian folklore.
- **Parijata**: A beautiful and fragrant tree now planted in Indra's heaven
- **Airavata**: The four-tusked elephant , Indra's mount
- **Kamadhenu**: The cow of plenty
- **Madira**: The goddess of wine, who became Varuni, the wife of Varuna
- **Kalpavriksha**: The wish-fulfilling tree
- **The apsaras**: celestial dancers
- **Uccaiḥśravas**: The celestial horse
- The **goddess Lakshmi**: Bhagavān Vishnu's wife
- **Pāñcajanya**: Bhagavān's conch
- **Bhagavān** Vishnu's **mace** and magic **bow**
- Various gems like the **Kaustubhmani**
- **Dhanvantari**: The physician of the gods, who rose up out of the waters carrying in his hands the supreme treasure, the amrita.
- **Amrita**: Elixir of immortality

Having such Divine origins, the incident of how Pāñcajanya came into Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's possession is also interesting.

### **Śrī Kṛṣṇa's obtains Pāñcajanya**

The incident is set during the time Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was studying in ācārya Sandipani' s GuruKul (school). After his education the time came for Guru Dakshina (fees that the student gives: this could be in any form). The wife of Sandipani Muni knowing that this was Bhagavān, who was the giver, asked for something impossible; to give her dead son named Punnardatta back. Now, Bhagavān in all HIS compassion accepted the request.

Soon HE was able to determine Punnardatta's location in the Patala (one of the 7 lower planes). After much adventure Bhagavān was able to rescue Punnardatta, also came along with him the Pāñcajanya. Bhagavān gave both to HIS Guru and Sandipani Muni gave the Pāñcajanya as Prasada to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

### **Devadatta**

This was the conch of Arjuna which he gained from Varuna Dev and also called Varuna shankha.

### **Pauṇḍra**

Pauṇḍra was the conch of Bhīma. Pauṇḍra means the one which has pundra or marks or lines on it, like Urdhwa Pundra. It may also mean white lotus flower. Such was the power of this conch that it roared and caused terror in the hearts of his opponents. It was also extremely heavy and only Bhīma with his strength could use it.

There is an interesting tale as to how he gained its possession.

### **Bhīma visits Nagaloka**

Bhīma when very young fell unconscious after eating a poisoned pudding offered by Duryodhana and was thrown in the river. He drowned and as he fell deeper in the water he somehow landed in the Naga loka (plane of Serpents). Now, the Naga loka is filled with various snakes and they attacked Bhīma as he was a human. The poison present in the pudding was countered by the snake venom acting like an antidote, Bhīma became conscious. Soon the oppressed snakes took him to Vasuki, king of the Naga world.

At the Naga court, Bhima met a snake, Aryaka, who turned out to be the great-grandfather of Kunti. Intermixing of humans with asuras, nagas and apsaras was not uncommon during that time. The venerable old snake was pleased to recognize Kunti's son. He admired the boy's strength and recommended Vasuki that Bhima should be given Rasakunda (vessels with nectar) that would restore him from his recent ordeal. After swallowing ten vessels-full of the nectar, Bhima went off to sleep. 1 vessel provided strength of 1000 elephants, Bhīma drank 10 thus Bhīma obtained the strength of 10,000 elephants.

Bhīma was also known as Vrikodara, here Vrik is a type of agni similar to *jathar agni* (responsible for digestion). This caused Bhīma to be permanently hungry. Which was also responsible for his huge appetite.

### **1.16**

#### **anantavijayaṃ(m) rājā, kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ, nakulaḥ(s) sahadevaśca, sughoṣamaṇipuṣpakau. 1.16**

King Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kuntī, blew his conch Anantavijaya, while Nakula and Sahadeva blew theirs, known as Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka respectively.

Thus, hearing the declaration from Bhagavān, Yudhiṣṭhira also blew his conch named **Ananta-vijay** (eternal victory). Nakula blew **Sughoṣa** and Sahadeva **Maṇipuṣpaka** respectively.

An interesting add on here is that Sañjaya is glorifying Yudhiṣṭhira as an ever-victorious king in front of Dhṛitarāśhtra.

Also, the description here is of these sounds emanating from the Pāṇḍavas as causing terror in the hearts of the opponents. **This is not only due to the divine nature of these conchs but also because within his heart and mind Sañjaya is inclined towards the Pāṇḍavas who were fighting for Supreme Dharma.**

**kāśyaśca parameśvāsaḥ(ś), śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ,  
dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca, sātyakiścāparājitaḥ. 1.17**

And the excellent archer, the King of Kāśī, and Śikhaṇḍī the Mahārathī (the great chariot-warrior), Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa, and invincible Sātyaki,

We look into the other important characters of this war.

**Sātyaki/Yuyudhāna**

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

**Śikhaṇḍī: The King of Kāśī**

Śikhaṇḍī was the King of Kāśī and also the doom of the mighty Bhīṣma. He was a great warrior, a Mahārathī whose sole purpose for existence was the death of Bhīṣma.

The origin of Śikhaṇḍī and his enmity with Bhīṣma is also an interesting tale.

**Amba: Śikhaṇḍī**

The Kuru dynasty had two princes from Shantanu and Satyawati- Chitrangad and Vichitravirya. After Bhīṣma abrogated his position these two were next in line. Chitrangad died early and the only one left was Vichitravirya.

It so happened that the king of Kāśī held a Swayamvara (Voluntary choosing of a groom by a bride) for his 3 excellent daughters. All the eligible candidates from royalty were invited except the Kurus. This was considered an insult by Bhīṣma as the Hastinapura Kingdom was the most powerful among the Kingdoms in Bharatvarsh, and the Kuru dynasty the most prominent of all.

Bhīṣma flew into a rage that his nation and clan were being ridiculed. He decided to win all the 3 virtuous Princess Amba, Ambika and Ambalika for his brother Vichitravirya. So he kidnapped all the three girls and took them with him. The other warriors fought but he defeated all of them. King of Salwa named Salva also fought because his bride was being abducted, but the mighty Bhīṣma defeated and humiliated him and took all three girls away.

As they proceeded towards the border of Hastinapura, Amba had been crying severely. Amba and Salva, the king of Salwa, were secretly in love and Amba had promised to place the varmala on his neck, thereby choosing him as her bridegroom. When Bhīṣma realised this he became apologetic and sent Amba back to Salva with full ceremony. Amba was happy meeting Salva; However Salva refused her as he had lost her in both the swayamvara and the battle with Bhīṣma. Having won her in the battle, Bhīṣma sending her to him was like charity. He refused her referring to her that as a kshatriya it was against his dharma to take charity. And she was just that, Charity.

Having being refused everywhere, Amba was in despair and anger. She had become an innocent victim of power play and her life was ruined. In such a state, she blamed Bhīṣma as the cause of her misfortune and vowed to take revenge on Bhīṣma.

She immolated herself by betting her entire good karmas to take rebirth as a male, so she could defeat Bhīṣma. As her next birth she was born as Śikhaṇḍī. Though he was a powerful warrior, he had feminine qualities and was impotent. When he stood in front of Arjuna in the battle with Bhīṣma, Bhīṣma recognised her from the past and lowered his weapons, which also caused his defeat from Arjuna.

## 1.18

### **drupado draupadeyāśca, sarvaśaḥ(ph) pṛthivīpate, saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ(ś), śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ(ph) pṛthakpṛthak. 1.18**

Drupada as well as the five sons of Draupadī, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadrā, all of them, O lord of the earth, severally blew their respective conches from all sides.

The sounds were also heard from **Prativindhya**, **Sutasoma**, **Shrutakarma**, **Shatanika** and **Shrutasena** the UpPāṇḍavas or Draupadi's sons from the Pāṇḍavas and Dhruvad.

Another important warrior mentioned here is the son of Subhadrā; Abhimanyu.

### **Abhimanyu**

Abhimanyu had been a prodigious child. A favourite of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he had learnt the formation of Chakravyuvha and knew how to enter it. Subhadrā

fell asleep

during half the conversation

when Arjuna was sharing this secret with her. Abhimanyu who then was in her womb had this knowledge incomplete and didn't know how to come out of the formation once he entered.

### **Death of Abhimanyu**

Abhimanyu's death is perhaps the most tragic in Mahabharata and the disregard of all rules by the so called warriors in killing him is what changed the direction of the war.

On the 13th day of the War as Abhimanyu all of 16 years had entered the chakravyuvh formation, he shattered the Kaurava army and defeated all the prominent warriors. Karṇa shot an arrow that broke the boy's bow and arrow on Droṇācārya's advice. Then he attacked him from behind. His charioteer was killed, his horses too. His chariot broke into pieces. The brave boy had only a sword in hand and used the broken chariot's wheel as a shield. That too was taken down by deceit.

Seeing he was unarmed, all these so called warriors jumped on him. Dusshasana stuck his head with a mace. He fell down injured. Unarmed, injured he was trampled to death by cowards like Duryodhana, Karṇa, Aśvatthama, Salva, Dusshasana. Such was the cruelty and disregard of Dharma that caused the death of Abhimanyu that Bhagavān vowed to fight the Kauravas by all means.

Niti (Code of conduct) was brutally violated by the Kauravas, such was their conduct heinous that it acted as trigger for the Pāṇḍavas to leave ethical code of war behind. Bhagavān explained that the righteous code cannot be used against the unrighteous if they do not follow the same code. Elimination of the enemy is essential. When dealing with an enemy who doesn't follow an ethical code

during a fight, they should be dealt in the same manner.

### 1.19

**sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām(m), hṛdayāni vyadārayat,  
nabhaśca pṛthivīm(ñ) caiva, tumulo vyanunādayan. 1.19**

And the terrible sound, echoing through heaven and earth, rent the hearts of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army.

The army of Pāṇḍavas is 7 aukshini whereas for the Kauravas it is 11 aukshini. Thus the size of the Pāṇḍava army is quite less in numbers.

Saṅjaya described the sounds coming from the Pāṇḍavas during his narration to Dhṛtarāṣṭra as the sounds of terror. Such was the effect of these sounds that they created a horror and terror in the minds of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's army. This was very different from when he described the kauravas before.

Here Saṅjaya described the phenomenon of such terror caused by the sound of conchs in Kauravas due to two reasons,

- Pāṇḍavas had divine conches, its power was therefore manifold.
- The Kauravas knew they had performed evil deeds and were unrighteous. The guilt caused fear.

Tulsidas ji described this phenomenon in Ramcharitramanas when describing Raavan. During **Aranya kand** when Raavan abducted Sita Ma.

सो दससीस स्वान की नाई। इत उत चितइ चला भड़िहाई॥  
इमि कुपंथ पग देत खगेसा। रह न तेज तन बुधि बल लेसा।।

Here Raavan was described as a cheat, like a dog who abducted Sita Ma in deceit and a coward, where he conducted the operation in hiding and his entire journey was concealed.

Thus, when Raavan faced Bhagavān Ram's Army, he was frightened; afraid of 2 young princes and vanaras (forest dwellers). Such was his fear that all he could think of was Bhagavān Ram. He kept thinking of him during all his waking hours and also at night while sleeping.

Similarly, the Kauravas and Duryodhana were struck with fear of the Pāṇḍavas as they were guilty.

### 1.20, 1.21

**atha vyavasthitāndṛṣṭvā, dhārtarāṣṭrāṇkapidhvajaḥ,  
pravṛtte śāstrasampāte, dhanurudyamya pāṇḍavaḥ. 1.20  
hṛṣīkeśam(n) tadā vākyam, idamāha mahipate,  
arjuna uvāca  
senayorubhayormadhye, ratham(m) sthāpaya me'cyuta. 1.21**

Now, O lord of the earth, seeing your sons arrayed against him and when missiles were ready to be hurled,

Arjuna, who had the figure of Hanumān on the flag of his chariot, took up his bow and then addressed the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; "Kṛṣṇa, place my chariot between the two armies.

In the beginning we looked at this chariot of Arjuna that was a gift from Agni Dev. One of the interesting phenomenon of this chariot was the KapiDhwaja (flag named Kapi) which had the insignia

of Bhagavān Hanumān.

The importance of this in the war and the background of obtaining the KapiDhwaja is another fascinating story.

### **Encounter of Bhīma and Hanumān**

Pāṇḍavas except Arjuna, along with Draupadi, traveled from one forest to another during the time of their exile.

As the Pandavas made their way from one holy teertha (pilgrimage places) to another, they finally came to Badrik ashrama in the Himalayan Mountains. It was a very scenic spot that could hardly be described in words. One day, as Draupadi was gazing at the beautiful scenery, a strong wind arose and blew a thousand-petaled lotus flower into her lap. The flower had a celestial effulgence, a captivating aroma, and its beauty was unearthly. She took the flower to Bhima and requested him to obtain this flower as that was the most beautiful celestial flower she had seen and it had gladdened her heart. She wanted to present this to Yudhiṣṭhira.

Bhīma was delighted to please Draupadi in some way, and he proceeded to follow the path the scented flower had left. He traced the perfumed air for some time, and suddenly realized he had covered a long distance. When he blew his conch shell, rousing the lions in the area, he suddenly heard a loud pounding that caused the earth to tremble. Feeling challenged, Bhīma approached that pounding sound and saw a huge monkey lying on a stone slab. The monkey was waving his tail in the air and dashing it against the ground, causing the tremendous noise that spread in all directions. Bhīma was completely amazed, for he had never seen a monkey like this before. The monkey was sitting there with half-opened eyes, calmly blocking the way.

Bhīma requested the monkey to give him a path by removing his tail, the monkey refused citing his old age. Bhīma now angry tried to remove it himself. After multiple attempts, his ego in tatters, Bhīma understood that this was no ordinary being. With humility he asked his identity and apologised for his behaviour. The monkey revealed himself to be Hanumān. Ecstatic, Bhīma requested Hanumān to accept his invitation as a guest to their dwelling in the forest and use their hospitality.

Bhagavān Hanumān refused him then but assured Bhīma that he would take part in the great war that would occur in their future and he would be part of Arjuna's chariot resting on his flag as an insignia. Whenever there would be cry for war indicated by the conches, he would awaken and roar along. Such fierce would be the cry that the opponent's army shall tremble in fear.

As the two armies were now facing each other, Arjuna requested Bhagavān to take his chariot in front of Duryodhana, as he wanted to observe his enemy.

### **1.22, 1.23**

**yāvadetānnirīkṣe'haṃ(m), yoddhukāmānavasthitān,  
kairmayā saha yoddhavyam, asminraṇasamudyame. 1.22  
yotsyamānānavēkṣe'haṃ(m), ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ,  
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddheḥ(r), yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ. 1.23**

"And keep it there till I have carefully observed these warriors drawn up for battle, and have seen with whom I have to engage in this fight.

"I shall have a look at the well-wishers of evilminded Duryodhana, in this war whoever have

assembled on his side and are ready for the fight."

Arjuna's self-confidence and bravado rose to fever pitch. His words indicated disgust for Duryodhana, and everyone associated with him, including Dhṛtarāṣṭra who was Arjuna's uncle and an elder.

He felt confident and probably also wanted his opponents to take a closer look at him, so that the sight of Arjuna at his peak prowess would further weaken their spirits.

## 1.24, 1.25

**sañjaya uvāca  
evamukto hṛṣīkeśo, guḍākeśena bhārata,  
senayorubhayormadhye, sthāpayitvā rathottamam. 1.24  
bhīṣmadroṇapramukhataḥ(s), sarveṣāṃ(ñ) ca mahīkṣitām,  
uvāca pāṛtha paśyaitān, śamavetānkurūṇi. 1.25**

Sañjaya said:

O king, thus addressed by Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies in front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the kings and said, "Arjuna, behold these Kauravas assembled here."

Sañjaya continued his narration as he saw Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa steering the chariot towards the middle of the army not in front of Duryodhana however but in front of Droṇācārya and Bhīṣma. This was an unexpected twist as though a leela of Bhagavān.

Bhagavān called Arjuna as **guḍākeśena**. It has 2 meanings,

- The one with curly hair
- One who has conquered sleep.

### Guḍākeśh

Guḍākeśh also means the one who conquered sleep. There have been 2 people who have been recorded to do so, Arjuna and Laksmana.

**Arjuna** wanted to obtain the divine weapons to perform his tapasya (Voluntary acceptance of austerity for the purpose of detaching oneself from the sense objects), mastery over sleep was important. He achieved this goal by performing tapasya on a branch of a tree hanging over a river. Whenever he fell asleep, he would fall in the river thus waking up eventually gaining control over his sleep.

**Laksmana** organised and arranged the structures for food and dwelling during their exile of 14 years. In the night he would still stay awake with his bow primed and he in position to attack at any small activity. Such was his devotion to Bhagavān Ram and his desire to safeguard HIM and Mata Sita.

## 1.26, 1.27

**tatrāpaśyatsthitānpārthaḥ(ph), pitṛnatha pitāmahān,  
ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛn, putrānpautrānsakhīmstathā. 1.26  
śvaśurānsuhrḍaścaiva, senayorubhayorapi,  
tānsamīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ(s), sarvānbandhūnavasthitān. 1.27**

Now Arjuna saw stationed there in both the armies his uncles, grand-uncles and teachers, even great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, brothers and cousins, sons and nephews, and grand-nephews, even so

friends, fathers-in-law and well-wishers as well. (26 & first half of 27)

Seeing all the relations present there, Arjuna was overcome with deep compassion and spoke thus in sorrow. (Second half of 27 and first half of 28)

As described previously Arjuna wanted to look and gauge at the opposing army as he was completely charged up for the attack. Bhagavān being in the know of this didn't steer the Chariot towards Duryodhana but guided it towards Bhīṣma and Droṇācārya.

Arjuna had been a favourite of both Bhīṣma and Droṇācārya. Bhīṣma would let a muddy Arjuna hug him, completely disregarding the fact that he always wore white garments, such was his love and adoration for him. During the graduation ceremony to showcase the talents of the Kauravas and Pandavas, all the brothers had proclaimed their different identities mentioning their lineage as prince's, sons etc. Arjuna was the exception when he identified himself as only the disciple of Droṇācārya, which surprised even Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

These elders and others in the opposing army were all beloved of Arjuna, the only reason they fought from the Kauravas was that they were bound due to their various oaths and other karmas. Seeing these loving elders and beloved people, Arjuna lost his will to fight.

**1.28, 1.29, 1.30**

**kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo, viṣṭidannidamabravīt,  
arjuna uvāca**

**dr̥ṣṭvemaṃ(m) svajanaṃ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, yuyutsum(m) samupasthitam. 1.28**

**sīdanti mama gātrāṇi, mukhaṃ(ñ) ca pariśuṣyati,**

**vepathuśca śarīre me, romaharṣaśca jāyate. 1.29**

**gāṇḍīvaṃ(m) sraṃsate hastāt, tVākcaiva paridahyate, na ca**

**śaknomyavasthātum(m), bhRāmatīva ca me manaḥ. 1.30**

Arjuna said:

Kṛṣṇa, as I see these kinsmen arrayed for battle,

my limbs give way, and my mouth is getting parched; nay, a shiver runs through my body and hair stands on end. (Second half of 28 and 29)

The bow, Gāṇḍīva, slips from my hand and my skin too burns all over; my mind is whirling, as it were, and I can no longer hold myself steady.

After his mind was thrown off balance, Arjuna experienced a severe panic attack. In these verses, Arjuna described his maladies to Śrī Kṛṣṇa beginning first with his physical ones and in later verses, his mental and emotional ones.

Panicking, Arjuna described that he could see his kinsmen gathered to fight. His limbs were weakening, and mouth had completely dried up, the body was quivering and hair was standing on end. The Gāṇḍīva bow was slipping from his hands, his skin was burning, he was unable to stand and his thinking unclear.

Hearing these Bhagavān smiled, seeing his non reaction Arjuna started to find more reasons and logic to convince Bhagavān of the futility of war.

Bhagavān knew that Arjuna could have easily started the war if he steered him towards Duryodhana. However, in order to gain victory one has to fight all their opponents. Bhagavān knew Bhīṣma and Droṇācārya were that weak link and he had to face his fears. This is similar to us, **in order to gain**

**success we must confront our worst fears and resolve or win over them otherwise one might win a battle but lose the war.**

**1.31**

**nimittāni ca paśyāmi, viparītāni keśava,  
na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi, hatvā svajanamāhave. 1.31**

And, Keśava, I see omens of evil, nor do I see any good in killing my kinsmen in battle.

Seeing that Bhagavān had no reaction, Arjuna tried to focus on the evils of war. He tried to convince Keshav that killing one's kinsmen is bad. And if your family wasn't there, what was the use of the glory.

Arjuna being Kshtriya and having fought countless wars made a contradictory statement to all his previous actions. The reason for all this was attachment for one's own loved ones. Such was its power, that the always righteous and brave Arjuna was finding excuses to avoid a battle.

**A contemporary incident of our times reflects this situation.**

There once was a very reputable and respected Judge. He had made various successful judgments where he had given death penalty to the criminals for relevant crimes.

One day, he made a committee for judges in order to pass a draft for a resolution that Death penalty should be abolished. This recommendation was sent to the Law Ministry. When the Law minister found out, he tried to investigate and formally notified the intelligence agency to do the needful. He was perplexed as the Judge who sent him this recommendation was famous for giving harsh punishments to criminals.

The investigation report shocked him. Apparently, this Judge had a son who committed a crime deserving death penalty. As the Judge couldn't influence the judgement, he tried to remove the choice itself.

The Law minister sent a letter to the Judge stating that though abolishing Death penalty was a noble gesture, his timing and intention of such a recommendation was suspect. It was hypocritical of him to request this since he had sent 7 people to their deaths before.

**Thus, our mind is the primary cause of our suffering, a strong mind shall lead to a strong body and vice versa.**

**1.32**

**na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, na ca rājyaṁ(m) sukhāni ca,  
kiṁ(n) no rājyena govinda, kiṁ(m) bhogairjīvitena vā. 1.32**

Kṛṣṇa, I do not covet victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. Govinda, of what use will kingdom or luxuries or even life be to us!

Arjuna now quoted that he was not desirous of victory, nor pleasures, nor the kingdom and that it was insignificant. This was the same Arjuna who had practiced severe tribulations for gaining divine weapons. He had practiced archery and became a warrior for victory. Overcame huge hurdles and now wanted to explain the futile nature of victory and wealth.

All these were indicators of the deep despair, fear and confusion in the mind of Arjuna as he confronted his worst fear of killing his beloved grand uncle.

### 1.33, 1.34

**yeṣāmarthe kāñkṣitaṃ(n) no, rājyaṃ bhogāḥ(s) sukhāni ca,  
ta ime'vasthitā yuddhe, prāṇāṃstyaktvā dhanāni ca. 1.33  
ācāryāḥ(ph) pitaraḥ(ph) putrāḥ(s), tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ,  
mātulāḥ(ś) śvaśurāḥ(ph) pautrāḥ(ś), śyālāḥ(s) sambandhinastathā. 1.34**

Those very persons for whose sake we covet the kingdom, luxuries and pleasures- teachers, uncles, sons and nephews and even so, granduncles and great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grand-nephews, brothers-in-law and other relations-are here arrayed on the battlefield staking their lives and wealth.

Arjuna questioned the worthiness of the victory when no one was left to enjoy its fruits. An entire generation would be wiped out and both sides would suffer losses. When both were of the same family, then who would win after everyone died.

### 1.35

**etānna hantumicchāmi, ghnato'pi madhusūdana,  
api trailokyārājyasya, hetoḥ(kh) kiṃ(n) nu mahīkṛte.1.35**

O Slayer of Madhu, I do not want to kill them, though they may slay me, even for the sovereignty over the three worlds; how much the less for the kingdom here on earth!

Arjuna became more and more convinced of his own arguments and declared that even if Bhagavān (here he called him Madhusūdana ~the slayer of daitya Madhu) made him the Lord of the 3 worlds, he would refuse to fight.

### 1.36, 1.37

**nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrānnaḥ(kh), kā prītiḥ(s) syājjanārdana,  
pāpamevāśrayedasmān, hatvaitānātātāyinaḥ.1.36  
tasmānnārṇhā vayaṃ(m) hantuṃ(n), dhārtarāṣṭrānsrabādhavān,  
svajanaṃ(m) hi kathaṃ(m) hatvā, sukhinaḥ(s) syāma mādḥava.1.37**

Kṛṣṇa, how can we hope to be happy slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; by killing even these desperadoes, sin will surely accrue to us.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa, it does not behove us to kill our relations, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. For, how can we be happy after killing our own kinsmen?

Arjuna proclaimed that though these Dhṛtarāṣṭra's children were evil and ātatāyi(felons) it still wasn't justified to kill them as that would incur *paap* (negative karma).

Arjuna called them ātatāyi (felons), which was a person who caused an act that could cause harm. According to Vashitha Muni (ascetic), **there are 6 types of ātatāyah (felonies)** which if committed by a person, would be called an **ātatāyi**. They were,

- **By committing arson.**
- **Poison.**

- Weapons.
- Defrauding land.
- Defraud of wealth.
- Kidnapping women against consent.

Arjuna then used the logic of accruing *paap* and also the unhappiness caused due to this act.

Seeing Bhagavān not responding, he continued with more excuses to avoid war.

### 1.38, 1.39

**yadyapyete na paśyanti, lobhopahatacetasah,  
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ(n) doṣaṁ(m), mitradrohe ca pātakam.1.38  
kathaṁ(n) na jñeyamasmābhiḥ(ph), pāpādasmanñivartitum,  
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ(n) doṣaṁ(m), prapaśyadbhirjanārdana.1.39**

Even though these people, with their mind blinded by greed, perceive no evil in destroying their own race and no sin in treason to friends,  
why should not we, O Kṛṣṇa, who see clearly the sin accruing from the destruction of one's family,  
think of desisting from committing this sin.

Arjuna went on further, stating that there was no use fighting as though the Kauravas knew they were evil, they wouldn't change their behaviour even if they lost. But the Pāṇḍavas side was wise, so what was the use of confronting foolish people who were ignorant and evil.

### 1.40

**kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti, kuladharmāḥ(s) sanātanāḥ,  
dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ(ñ) kṛtsnam, adharmo'bhibhavatyuta.1.40**

Age-long family traditions disappear with the destruction of a family; and virtue having been lost, vice takes hold of the entire race.

This would only result in the destruction of the kula(family lineage) which would lead to destroying Dharma itself.

### 1.41, 1.42, 1.43

**adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa, praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ,  
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya, jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ.1.41  
saṅkaro narakāyaiva, kulaghnānāṁ(ñ) kulasya ca,  
patanti pitaro hyeṣāṁ(m), luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ.1.42  
doṣairetaiḥ(kh) kulaghnānāṁ(m), varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ,  
utsādyante jātidadharmāḥ(kh), kuladharmāśca śāśvatāḥ.1.43**

With the preponderance of vice, Kṛṣṇa, the women of the family become corrupt; and with the corruption of women, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, there ensues an intermixture of castes.

Progeny owing to promiscuity damns the destroyers of the race as well as the race itself. Deprived of the offerings of rice and water (Śrāddha, Tarpaṇa etc.,) the manes of their race also fall.

Through these evils bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste traditions and family customs of the killers of kinsmen get extinct.

Arjuna tried to convince Keshava, from the angle of the war widows. Again Arjuna never showed any concern for this eventuality during the various wars that he had participated in previously. These were not a small number. This sudden sympathy was to serve his selfish intention of not facing his fears.

He lamented that the war widows would be taken away by various other varnas, which would result in saṅkar (loosely translates to contamination). There are various types of saṅkar that could occur namely, *Varna*, *Dharma*, *Vesh* (clothing), *Bhasha* (language), *jaati* (Classification), *aahar* (food), *Deh* (Body), *Desh* (Nation). Out of these the Varna saṅkar was considered the most undesirable.

Contamination of character pushes the annihilators of society and society itself into *Naraka* (one of the lower planes of existence); their ancestors fell from grace, having been deprived of their offerings of *Pinda* (cooked rice balls offered in remembrance to the departed soul) and water.

Timeless societal and humanitarian values and traditions are destroyed by the contamination of character created by these annihilators of society.

In Indian culture, one's ancestors and family lineage are given great importance. In these verses, Arjuna expressed his worry that the deterioration of post-war society would result in loss of respect for the ancestors who created the laws and values of that society. Again Bhagavān remained smiling without giving any response to these sudden lamentations of Arjuna.

#### 1.44, 1.45

**utsannakuladharmāṇām(m), manuṣyāṇām(ñ) janārdana,  
narake'niyataṁ(m) vāso, bhavatītyanuśuśuma.1.44  
aho bata mahatpāpaṁ(ñ), kartuṁ(m) vyavasitā vayam,  
yadrājasukhalobhena, hantuṁ(m) svajanamudyatāḥ.1.45**

Kṛṣṇa, we hear that men who have lost their family traditions, dwell in hell for an indefinite period of time.

Oh what a pity! Though possessed of intelligence we have set our mind on the commission of a great sin; that due to lust for throne and enjoyment we are intent on killing our own kinsmen.

Here, Arjuna concluded an argument that he had begun a few verses prior. Though the Kaurava army was committing evil of destroying the Kuru clan, since he saw that it was bad, he would not join them in this act, and therefore not fight.

His argument was that the rise in lawlessness began a chain reaction which would cause the entire civilization, not just the warmongers, to end up residing in *narka* (lower planes of existence) indefinitely.

#### 1.46

**yadi māmāpratīkāram, aśāstraṁ(m) śāstrapāṇayaḥ,  
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuḥ(s), tanme kṣemataraṁ(m) bhavet.1.46**

It would be better for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, armed with weapons, kill me in battle, while I am unarmed and unresisting.

Such was his anguish that he said that he wouldn't fight knowing that the opposing side would kill him even if he refused to fight the war.

*Moha* (desire/attachment) was at work. Duryodhana had *moha* for the Kauravas, whereas Arjuna had *moha* for the entire Kuru dynasty. Even though Arjuna was more large-hearted than Duryodhana in his *moha* clouded his judgement the same way it clouded Duryodhana's judgement.

Swami Tulsidas Goswami ji elaborated this by a beautiful couplet,

मोह सकल व्याधि कर मूला। तीन ही पूनी उपजाई बहू सूला ॥

काम बात कफ लोभ अपारा। क्रोध पित्त नित छट्टी जारा ॥

The root cause of all diseases whether they are of any type are a result of *Moha* (attachment/desire) which is caused due to ignorance.

1.47

**sañjaya uvāca**  
**evamuktvārjunaḥ(s) sañkhye, rathopastha upāviśat,**  
**visṛjya saśaraṁ(ñ) cāpaṁ(m), śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ.1.47**

Sañjaya said:

Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by grief on the battlefield, having spoken thus, and having cast aside his bow and arrows, sank into the hinder part of his chariot.

Sañjaya continued his narration mentioning that Arjuna was anguished. His body language reflected his state of mind as he threw away his weapons and sat down in his chariot, in the midst of the battlefield, possibly giving a glimmer of hope to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was hoping that this action of Arjuna could end the war even before it began.

We would also look into the beautiful Bhajan of Bhīṣma as we first get introduced to him. *Pranaam* to the great warrior and *atman*.

प्रबल प्रेम के पाले पड़ के, प्रभु का नियम बदलते देखा ।  
अपना मान भले टल जाए, भक्त का मान न टलते देखा ॥

जिनकी केवल कृपा दृष्टी से, सकल विश्व को पलते देखा ।  
उसको गोकुल के माखन पर, सौ-सौ बार मचलते देखा ॥

जिनका ध्यान बिरंची शम्भू, सनकादिक न सँभालते देखा ।  
उसको बाल सखा मंडल में, लेकर गेंद उछालते देखा ॥

जिनके चरण कमल कमला के, करतल से ना निकलते देखा ।  
उसको गोकुल की गलियों में, कंटक पथ पर चलते देखा ॥

जिनकी वक्र भृकुटी के भय से, सागर सप्त उबलते देखा ।  
उसको माँ यशोदा के भय से, अश्रु बिंदु दृग ढलते देखा ॥

प्रबल प्रेम के पाले पड़ के, प्रभु का नियम बदलते देखा ।  
अपना मान भले टल जाए, भक्त का मान न टलते देखा ॥

This Bhajan describes the incident where Bhīṣma made an oath that he would make Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa,

to break HIS oath of not participating in the war. This gave an example that for a Bhakta, Bhagavān can even go against his own oath. On the 10th day of Mahabharata war. Bhagavān was pestering Arjuna to such an extent that he was completely lost. Then getting angry, Bhagavān picked up the broken wheel of a chariot and threatened to kill Bhīṣma if Arjuna resisted anymore. Bhīṣma left his chariot immediately, happy and proclaimed that he would be the most fortunate if his death was in the hands of Bhagavān.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fT5tD4N8WmSQ6275CA\\_qZJ8dfvAIF69G/view?usp=drivesdk](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fT5tD4N8WmSQ6275CA_qZJ8dfvAIF69G/view?usp=drivesdk)

The great session and the Adhyaya that set tone for the battle of righteousness concluded with the Hari Keertan.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyām(m)yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde arjunavishadayogo  
nāma prathamo'dhyāyaḥ**

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the first chapter entitled "The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna."



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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