

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

1/4 (Ślōka 1-1), Saturday, 27 May 2023

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA RUPAL SHUKLA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/y3sX9VUaKcl>

Birth of The Epic - Mahābhārata & The Glorious Bhagavadgītā

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

With the grace of Bhagavan, we the seekers are involved in reading the Gita, each time understanding the different dimensions of it, and applying its principles in our daily life. The impact of the Bhagavadgītā in our lives is so profound that we feel the change in our lives. Our introduction to the Gītā maybe due to one or many of the reasons like: the good karma of our present birth, the accumulated good karmas of all our previous births, the good karma and blessings of our ancestors, and/or the great saints whose blessings have ignited the spark in us, in our endeavour to the path as directed by the Gītā.

The session began with the auspicious lighting of lamps and prayers.

One usually learns Gītā from the beginning till the end, however, we studied many chapters of Gītā and finally reached the 1st chapter. In the study of our sacred scriptures, there is not much of a significance given in following the numerical order. The order followed is based on what is being communicated in each of the chapter, and what makes a better sense for the learner to assimilate learning. This is so in the study of the Gītā well as the Vedas.

We have started with the 12th chapter as we can connect to the path of Bhakti more than any other path. We may have heard about dhyana yoga in the Vivechan sessions. However, we have experience of engaging with bhakti, which we find it simple to practice as well. We continued learning 15, 16th and 17th chapters, and started developing a sense of understanding different characters, and hidden meanings of the verses in various chapters.

If we were to start from the 1st chapter where Arjuna is under total despair and had moved on to 2nd chapter, about the path of Knowledge, we would have found it very difficult to understand. This is the reason we in Geeta Parivar, have designed a flow based on the themes/ insights in various chapters

that make it simpler for learners to connect and maintain their interest. Therefore, after finishing level 1 and 2, in level 3 we have started learning about chapter 1 which in fact has very little to reflect upon in comparison to all the other chapters. But Chapter 1 gives a context to the entire Bhagavadgītā. For us, it is important to understand the background of not only Gītā but also of the Mahabharata.

Today let us pay greater attention to understand the background of Gītā and Mahabharata and about the creation of these great epics.

We may have wondered in our lives about what are these sacred scriptures. We may call Gītā a scripture, but we should understand what other books qualify to be scriptures.

Scriptures are those that give us an understanding of what to do and what not to do in our life. If we look at Indic knowledge systems, we see 4 Vedas, 8 vedangas, 14 types of sciences.

Let us look at a broader outline of these 14 type of sciences, and understand its 4 parts .

The literature of Sanatana dharma can be divided on the basis of 4 important categories -

1. **Shruti** : Comprises the Vedas which one learns by rote by listening. It has been taught by Gurus to their disciples through *guru shishya parampara*, over the ages.

2. **Smriti** : Which is learnt by the common man by reading various texts like *Manusmriti*, *Yajnavalkya and Parasara*. The other fifteen are those of Vishnu, Daksha, Samvarta, Vyasa, Harita, Satatapa, Vasishtha, Yama, Apastamba, Gautama, Devala, Sankha-Likhita, Usana, Atri and Saunaka.

3. **Itihaas** : Sanatan Dharma has 2 texts in this category - Valmiki **Ramayan** and **Mahabharata** by Ved Vyasa.

4. **Puranas** : There are 18 Puranas written by Ved Vyasa Ji, one of them being **Srimadbhagavatam**.

And these are our shastras.

People following Sanatana dharma should have the knowledge of all these scriptures above. Such knowledge is gained from Gurus with great reverence. This is our country's tradition. **Bhagavad Gītā is unique as this is the only scripture which satisfies all four categories.** Technically it falls in the Smriti category. It is also Shruti. How? **The essence of Vedas is Upanishad, and the pure essence of the Upanishad is the Gītā.** Gītā is a part of Mahabharata and hence it belongs to Itihaas also. Ved Vyasa ji wrote Shiv Purana and he also composed the Mahabharata, hence Gītā is inclusive in the Puranas category as well.

In fact, **Mahabharata is considered the 5th Veda.** Gita Press has released 6 parts of the Mahabharata comprising of 18 *parvas*. Bhīṣma **Parva starts from chapter 25, and the 42nd chapter is Bhagavadgītā.** There is no separate book as Bhagavadgītā as it is a part of the Mahabharata epic. Many saints have written commentaries on the Gītā starting from Adi Shankaracharya.

The ideal way of understanding about all our shastras is by understanding the Gītā.

We should understand why Mahabharata is called so. Its original name is Jaya Samhita.

Once few of the sages were discussing and arguing about which is a greater scripture, Vedas or Mahabharata? Ultimately, they decide to weigh them, it appeared that Mahabharata was heavier than the

Vedas. Hence they called Vedas as Bharat (as they were also heavy), and called Jaya Samhita as Mahabharata as it was heavier than the vedas.

To make sure that people do not consider Vedas as a lower level scripture in comparison to Mahabharata, they called Mahabharat as Pancham Veda.

Mahabharata is considered as a **Mahakavya** and contains one lakh shlokas. The original text contains 60 lakh shlokas. Ved Vyas Ji divided and gave 30 lakh shlokas to *Deva Loka*. These are recited by Narad Ji. 15 lakh shlokas were given to *Pitra loka*, propagated by Asith and Deval Rishis. 14 lakh shlokas belong to *Yaksha Loka*, and these are propagated by saint Sukhdev Ji. One lakh shlokas are for the *Manushya Loka* (mankind) which are narrated by Vaishampayana Maharaj Ji, who is the disciple of Ved Vyasa Ji. **Ved Vyasa Ji was a trikal darshi** - who could see the past, present, and future of the three worlds - heaven, hell, and earth and hence could predict.

The Great Epic Mahabharata is born

After writing 18 puranas Vedavyas Ji was not satisfied, he felt a deep sense of incompleteness. He approaches Lord Brahma and says that he is not satisfied even after writing 18 puranas, and still wants to write something more for the welfare of the human race. Brahma ji suggests that he writes Mahabharata. But Vedavyasa Ji knows that it is going to be an extremely long, time consuming and difficult task. So he asks Brahma ji to help him with a writer, so that Vedavyas ji can dictate the verses continuously in the same speed as they arise, without missing any parts.

Brahma ji suggests that Maharishi Vedavyasa meets Ganesh ji. Vedavyas ji goes and requests Ganesh ji to become his writer. Ganesh ji understands the complexity of the task and wanted to look for a reason to avoid. Hence comes up with a condition that he would write only if Vedavyas ji keeps narrating the story without any interruption or break, as Ganesh ji says he is a very fast writer and cannot stop writing once he starts. And once he stops he will not be able to resume writing.

Now Vedavyasa ji is a bit perplexed but agrees to the condition. However, he also comes up with another condition that Ganesh ji does not write without understanding each word. Ganesh ji agrees as he thinks understanding what is being narrated is not a challenge to him. Writing of Mahabharat starts in a cave near village Mana, in Badrinath Dham, by the side of river Saraswathi. During the narration of Mahabharata, whenever Vedavyas ji needed time to think a little more, he would say a very complex shloka, so that Ganesh ji takes time to understand it meanwhile Vedavyas ji would have time to think.

That is why in Mahabharata out of 8 lakh shlokas, there are 88,000 shlokas that are very complex. Writing Mahabharat started on the Akshaya (something that is eternal) Tithi day so that it becomes Akshaya Shastra. It took 3 to 3.5 years to write this great epic. It was initially called Jaya Samhita, as Vedavyas ji says that those who understand Mahabharata they will only find success in life in everything they do. The uniqueness of Mahabharata is that, in 60 lakh shlokas, there are 5,000 characters. These 5,000 characters are described in a manner that it educates people. It also gives a sense to people, who read it, that they identify with one of the 5,000 character.

There is false information spread in society that Mahabharata must not be kept at home, as it will lead to conflicts in the house. Such false information is spread with an intention to keep people away from having the insights into our great epics. Though, we read stories we are not aware of original scriptures. We are unable to read Sanskrit, and hence are kept or have remained far from accessing the rich treasure of knowledge that our scriptures contain.

Mahabharata gives insights on every role the person plays in life, including that of a King (the one who governs) the praja, (citizens). Mahabharata contains such deep knowledge and insights that can make our

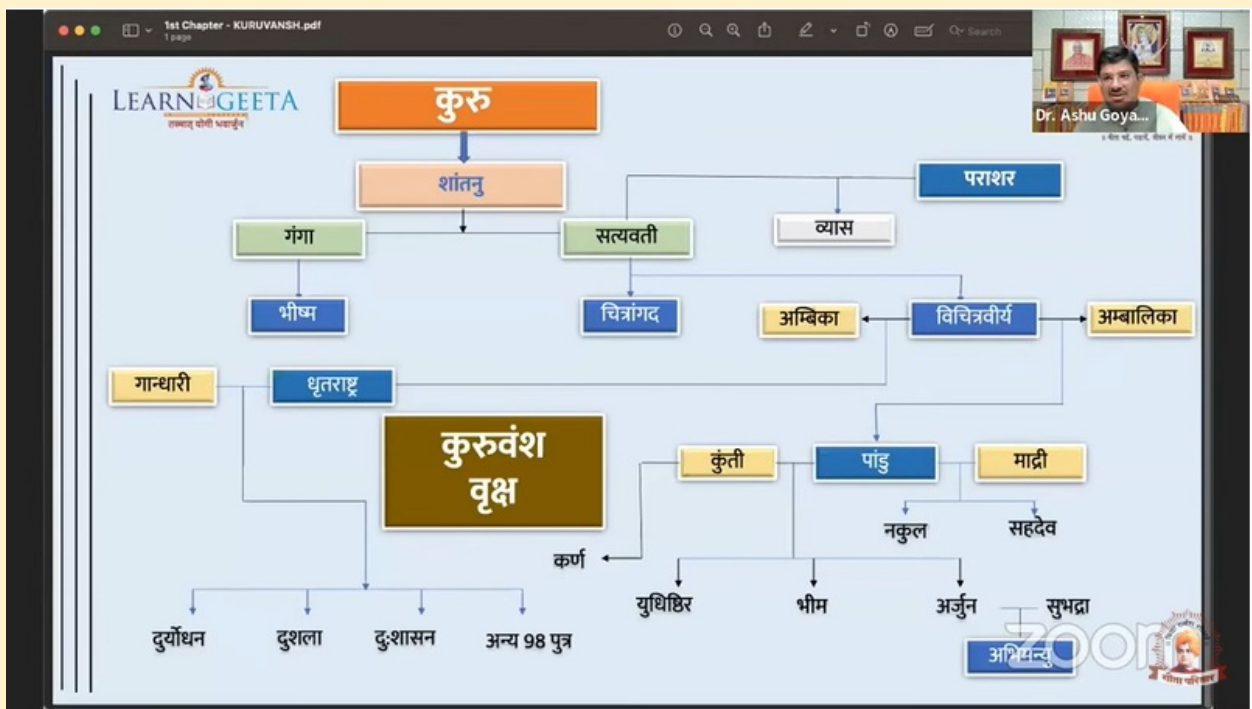
country a world leader. In fact if one has Mahabharata at home there will not be fights and it brings good luck and spreads a positive vibe in the family.

When we understand our scriptures we can talk about our ancient dharma and internalise it and spread the rich learning that it contains. When we are blind to our shastras or scriptures, we are unable to give its due and position it in the place it deserves.

Ramayana has 24,000 shlokas and Mahabharata has 18 parvas or titles. Amongst these parvas, one is Bhīṣma Parva. In the Bhīṣma parva, there is a specific section that is called Bhagavadgītā. IT is not an independent scripture. IT is a part of Bhīṣma Parva. In Bhīṣma parva, Bhagavadgītā is from the adhyay 25 to 42. Here we will find the verses that are original or foundational. Gītā has been thematically compiled, based on the subject being narrated in each of the adhyaya.

Only one lakh shlokas came to humans and was recited by vaishampayana (disciple of Vedavyasa) to janamejaya. Let us now understand who is Janamejaya and the entire family.

Before moving forward in learning the Gītā, it is important to understand kuruvamsha. In kuruvamsha , Shanthanu is the first king of Mahabharata.



The first king of Mahabharata is Shanthanu Maharaja of Kuru dynasty. Kuru was a king who was also an ascetic. The place where he performed austerity was called Kurukṣetra. Bharata and Shanthanu are also kings from the same royal clan.

A link for the Kuru Dynasty is given below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qndEEQOErPR1snyD0myl8cGLA92Nugep/view?usp=drive_link

However, Shantanu is the first King of Mahabharata, Sons of Shantanu are Bhīṣma Pitamaha, Chitrangada and vichitraveerya.

Vichitraveerya's children are Drithrashtra and Pandu.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra's children are the Kauravas and Pandu's children are pandavas.

Amongst the Pandavas, Arjuna's son is Abhimanyu

Abhimanyu's son is Parikshit

Parikshit's son is Janamejaya.

Janamejaya asks Vashampayana to tell him the story of his ancestors, about whose courage and fearlessness he had heard a lot about, which is the story of Mahabharata.

Then Vaishampayan ji started narrating the entire Mahabharata beginning with King Shantanu.

Once, king Shantanu while walking in the morning saw an extremely beautiful woman. He is attracted to her and approaches her and requests to marry him. The king is unaware that she is Ganga. Goddess Ganga introduces herself, and agrees to marry him on a condition, that whatever she does, she will never be questioned by the king. The King accepts the condition and both of them get married. After some time, Ganga ji gives birth to a male baby and takes the child and walks away before the king has a chance to even to look at the baby and comes back with bare hands. He is distressed but, was bound by the promise not to question her actions. This continues every time a child is born. But when the 8th child is born the king decides to follow her.

When Ganga ji tries to drown the 8th baby in river, the king stops her. And he asks her why she was doing such a heinous act. Ganga ji says, the marriage is over since he has broken his promise. However she answers his question. She says that there were 8 Vasus who were cursed by Sage Vasishtha to come in to this mrithyu loka (earth). Those 8 Vasus had requested Ganga ji to give birth to them and immediately drown them to be liberated from this mrityu loka. She says she drowned 7 children and the king did not question her, he could have just waited until the 8th one. Ganga ji says now that he saw this child, she will not drown him, and will take him with her and give him back, once he is grown up and is educated, well groomed and skilled in warfare. After that the child is named Devavrath and is tutored by the likes of Brihaspati and Parashurama, when devavrath grows to become a young boy, he is sent back on the earth by Ganga ji.

King Shantanu spots Devavrath, playing with his bow and arrow; he was trying to stop the flow of river Ganga. The king asks the boy what mischief he upto is trying to prevent the flow of the river Ganga? As he questions the boy, Ganga ji appears and says that Devavrath is his son, and as he is now grown up and equipped with required skills and education she is handing him over to the king.

After the disappearance of Ganga ji king Shantanu was very sad and lonely. One day he comes into contact with a woman, Sathyavati a matsyakanya. She was engaged in fishing and was doing related work, hence there was always a bad smell emanating from her body.

One day Sathyavathi was travelling in the same boat as sage Parashar. All of a sudden there were dark clouds, and fog all over. Sage Parashar calculates the time and speaks to Satyavathi, saying I don't know who you are, but it is extremely rare that so many things have come together today, and that if we unite today, a male child will be born who will be a blessing to the whole universe. Satyavathi suggests that he should talk to her father. But the sage says that there is not much time left and the auspicious moment will pass. Satyavathi gives her consent as she could not say no to a sage like him. Hence, Vedavyasa is born out of the union between satyavathi and Sage Parashar. Sage Parashar also blesses that Satyavathi is relieved of the bad odour that was emanating from her body. Vedavyasa born to satyavathi and sage Parasar had very dark complexion. As he wrote Vedas he is called Vedavyasa.

Satyavati bore two sons *Chitrangad* and *Vichitraveerya*. Chitrangad died early. Bhīṣma abducted the three princess Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika to enable their marriage to Vichitraveerya. Amba was already in love with King Salva, so refused the marriage with Vichitraveerya. As destiny would have it, later even king Salva refused her. Out of anger she cursed Bhīṣma that in her next birth she would be the cause of his death. She took rebirth as Shikandi to take her revenge.

Vichitraveerya was weak and sick, was unable to have children. Sathyavathi requests Vedvyasa, (her son) to help Ambika and Ambalika conceive. Vedavyasa ji with the power of his penance helps Ambika and Ambalika in conceiving. However, when Vedvyasa ji came in front of Ambika, seeing his dark complexion and not so gentle look she closes her eyes. This is the reason why her son Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born blind.

When Vedvyas ji came in front of Ambalika, she does not close her eyes, but she turns pale looking at his appearance. Hence Pandu was born with a yellow skin. Pandu is married to Kunti and Madri. He was also sick since childhood and was unable to have children. Kunti was blessed by Sage Durvasa with an ability to have children just by offering prayers to the devatas of her choice.

Kunti wanted to test sage Durvasa's blessing, before her marriage and offers paryers to Surya deva and as a result Karna is born. Kunti, fearing the society, abandons the child in the river. After her marriage to King Pandu, Kunti offers prayers to Yamaraj and gets Yudhishtir as son, prays to vayu deva and Bhim is born, Praying to indra deva, Arjun is born. Nakul Sahadev are born to Madri, by offering prayers to Ashwini devas.

Offering prayers to five devas results in the birth of five Pandavas.

Drithrashtra is married to Gandhari and we all are aware of how she delivers a mass of flesh which VedaVyas ji through his divine powers enables her to have 100 sons and a daughter Dushala.

The five Pandavas married Draupadi. Later Bhima married Hidamba and Arjuna married Subhadra (Sister of Shri Krishna) whose son was Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu's son was Parikshit whose son in turn was Janmejaya. **Vaishshampaya told the story of Mahabharata to Janmejaya.**

None of the kauravas survive the Mahabharata war.

1.1

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre, śamavetā 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 villian in the whole of Mahabharata is Dhritrashtra. He is the cause of the great war. He did not perform his kingly duties and is a sinner. He differentiated between his own sons and the sons of his late brother. This laid the foundation if the great war.

We constantly have tugs at our heart with respect to right and wrong. Gītā begins with the letter '**Dh**' of dharma and ends with '**ma**' - so the entire **Gītā deals with righteousness - dharma**. It is only out of desire for war does the distinction between Dhritrashtra's own sons and the sons of Pandu, his brother, arose. Yudhishtira was against playing the game of dice. He knew very well he would be cheated. It was Dhritrashtra who intervened and advised him to play much against the wishes of Yudhishtira's brothers and Draupadi. Yudhishtira believed in obeying elders and he considered Dhritrashtra as his father.

When Sañjaya started the narration of Kurukṣetra, Bhīṣma was already on the bed of arrows, on the 10th day of the War, as he fell from his chariot after being defeated by Arjuna; Dhṛtarāṣṭra wanted him to start the narration at the beginning of the war. Sañjaya obliged and began the narration.

The name Sañjaya, appears several times in Mahābhārata and even the Bhagavadgītā,

Who was this Sañjaya, who is also the narrator of Gītā?

Sañjaya came from a lineage of charioteers; his father was also a charioteer named Gavalgana. Hence, was a Suta; He was wise and through his studies of the shastras, impressed Veda Vyāsa ji who accepted him as his disciple.. This is also a reflection of their times, though one could be born in any Varna, yet it was possible to change it through their actions. This incident is one of the several examples that shows this, where Vyāsa ji accepted Sañjaya ji as his disciple and declared him to be a Brāhmaṇa.

Through his efforts, Sañjaya became Ved Vyāsa ji's favorite disciple and was given the Divine Sight. He was taken to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and recommended to be his advisor and a minister. Thus, one could change their Varna through Karma even in ancient times.

However, **Dhṛtarāṣṭra** was only a good listener and hardly heeded any of his good advises. He was not only physically challenged by his blindness, but was also blinded with greed for power.

Ved Vyas Ji in order to help his son Dhritrashtra, advised him to take Sanjay into his fold as an advisor, dependable minister, charioteer, and good friend. So only two people had powers to scold king Dhritrashtra - Sanjay and Vidhur. That is why Sanjay took the liberty and told Dhritrashtra:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्धुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम॥18.78।

This is the truth. Wherever there is Yogeshwar Krishna along with Arjuna, there is victory.

Sanjay narrated the happenings on the battlefield to Dhritrashtra. Many people think that Sanjay told the Mahabharata to Dhritrashtra by divine vision. Sanjay was in the battlefield from day 1 to day 10 of the war. He returned to the kingdom to inform Dhritrashtra that Bhīṣma had fallen and was lying on a bed of arrows. It was at that time Dhritrashtra asked Sanjay to tell him all that transpired on the battlefield. That is when Sanjay narrated everything with his Divine vision. Ved Vyas Ji wrote the Mahabharata - its past, present, and future with Divine vision and he had given this vision to Sanjay too.

Vyasāciṣṭam jagat sarvaṁ;

what ever is said in the universe has already been said earlier in the Mahabharat. So great was the learning of Rishi Veda Vyasa, that even his voluminous writings represent only the periphery of his knowledge. Virtually every Hindu sampradaya (order) traces their lineage to him, and wherever knowledge is propagated and respected is called a Vyaspeeth – Vyasa's throne.

Bhagavad Gītā interests all and Gita press has published it in various sizes. It comprises of 18 chapters the longest is the 18th chapter and the shortest is the 12th chapter. Bhagavan himself has uttered 574 shlokas, Arjuna 84 shlokas, 41 by Sanjay, and one by Dhritrashtra. **Mahabharat was dictated by Ved Vyas Ji, written by Ganesh Ji, told by Vaishampayana to Janmejaya.**

A song sung for attainment of the Supreme is referred to as Bhagavadgītā. All Gurus to show their expertise of knowledge wrote commentaries on the BhagavadGītā. There are more than 18000 commentaries so far. Some of the commentaries are *Shankar Bhashya*, *Sri Bhashya* by *Ramajunacharya*, *Dnyāneshwari*, *Gītā Rahasya* and the likes. Each is a goldmine and shares the same divine knowledge. Thus **Gītā is the most popular and most read text so far.**

The Session herewith concluded with Sankeertana.

Question & Answer Session:

Anuradha ji

Question: When we are taught shlokas in the class, is it possible that the meaning of each shloka gets explained?

Answer: Then neither you will be able to understand the verse nor its meaning. It is the arrangement of the Geeta family that you concentrate on one task at a time. When learning the pronunciation of verses, then pay attention there and when listening to the interpretation, then pay attention there.

Monika ji

Question: After connecting with Geeta ji, other people tell about positivity coming inside us, how is this possible?

Answer: The closer you go to the light, the more you will shine. The more we connect with Geeta ji, the more joy, the more divine qualities will come automatically in us, we will not need to do anything.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write-up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

Thank you-For reading the summary

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta
|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||