

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

2/4 (Ślōka 3-10), Sunday, 28 January 2024

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

## Fear & Insecurity seen in Duryodhana's Boasting

The Chapter 1 of Srimad Bhagavadgītā is - **Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga -The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna.**

The session started with *Deepa Prajwalan*, the traditional lighting of the auspicious lamp, followed by prayers to the Supreme, and Guru Vandana.

Bhagavadgītā is a part of Bhīṣma Parva comprising of chapters 25 - 42 of Mahabharata. Bhagavadgītā contains 18 chapters and 700 Slokas. Of these 574 have been delivered by Śrī Krishna, 84 by Arjuna, 41 by Sanjaya and 1 Sloka by Dhritarashtra.

This session focused on chapter 1 of Bhagavad Gītā, that is taught in Level 3 of Geeta Pariwar classes. The teaching methodology adopted by Geeta Parivar does not follow the chronological pattern but, rather the contextual pattern.

Swamiji has developed a customised sequence which makes it easy for everyone to delve through the scripture easily. Following the pattern, Chapter 1, **Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga**, that describes the lamentation expressed by Arjuna to his friend, charioteer and his most beloved advisor Śrī Krishna, is taught in Level 3, after understanding the Tattwas in Levels 1 and 2.

The 1st Sloka of Chapter one was stated by Dhritarashtra and the second by Sanjaya. Sanjaya who was present in the Kurukshetra for the first 10 days returned to the palace of Hastinapur after Bhīṣma pitāmaha lay down on *Sarasajya*, the bed of arrows. Dhritarashtra wanted him to narrate all that had happened in the battlefield, starting from the day one.

In the first Sloka itself, Dhritarashtra made a clear distinction between his own sons Kauravas, and his brother Pandu's sons, Pāṇḍavas. In fact, if only Dhritarashtra could have treated both his own sons and sons of his younger brother Pandu with equal love and affection, then probably the massive war could have been avoided.

In the second Sloka, Sanjaya depicted a scenario which had taken place ten days earlier. So, he used the word "*Drstva*" which indicates he was seeing a scenario which had happened sometime earlier. Sanjaya said that after having seen the army of the Pandavas arrayed in the battlefield, Duryodhana approached his Guru Dronacharya. Sanjaya deliberately referred to Duryodhana as "King", with an intention of humiliating Dhritarashtra. Duryodhana was only the crown prince. The king was Dhritarashtra himself, but he failed to assert himself against the unrighteous actions done by Duryodhana. Hence knowingly Sanjaya was addressing Duryodhana as the king.

### 1.3

#### **paśyaitāṃ(m) pāṇḍuputrāṇām, ācārya mahatīm(ñ) camūm, vyūḍhām(n) drupadaputreṇa, tava śiṣyeṇa 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.

- paśyaitāṃ Behold/see
- pāṇḍuputrāṇām The sons of Pandu
- vyūḍhām Aligned/arrayed
- drupadaputreṇa Son of Drupada /Dristyadyumna
- tava Your
- śiṣyeṇa Disciples
- dhīmatā Very brave

In this Sloka Sanjaya depicted how Duryodhana taunted his teacher Dronacharya. There goes a story about Acharya Drona and his enmity with King Drupada.

Drona and Drupada were childhood friends, studying together in the same gurukula. Drupada was a Kṣatriya (warrior clan) whereas Drona was Brahmin by birth. They became close friends and Drupada, in his childish playfulness, promised to give Drona half his kingdom on ascending the throne of Panchala. In those days, the society was thriving on the CHATURVARNA SYSTEM. Brahmins dealt with worship and education, Kṣatriyas took care of defence of the kingdom, Vaisyas looked after trade and business, and Sudras took care of services. Drupada eventually became the king of Panchala.

Drona lived his life with austerity, penance and accumulated much more knowledge of weaponry. He also obtained the knowledge of Brahmāstra from Parasurama who had vowed to impart war skills only to Brahmins. Being a devout Brahmin, Drona did not sell his knowledge for earnings, and consequently led a very austere life, visiting Rishis and hermits.

Kripacharya was very impressed with his knowledge, purity and lifestyle, and gave his sister Kripa in marriage to him. Drona and his wife Kripa continued to live in abject poverty as he was unwilling to impart knowledge for money and hence had no source of income. Kripa used to complain, more so after the birth of their son, Ashwathama. As a mother she could not provide good food to him. In fact, unable to afford milk, she used to mix flour with water and gave it to her son to drink.

Aswathama's friends made fun of him that he did not even know the taste of milk. When he expressed his annoyance over their extreme poverty, to his mother, Kripa insisted that Drona meet his childhood friend Drupada, now a king and ask for help. In ancient times, cows were given to Brahmins as Dana / charity and therefore she urged her husband to go to his friend and ask for a cow.

Drona, being a man of self-respect, was reluctant initially, but ultimately yielded to his wife's request.

He went to the palace and sought an appointment with him. Drupada, seated on his throne with his ministers around, felt offended when informed by the guards that a poor brahmin who happens to be his friend was seeking an appointment. He refused to hug Drona and told him that as there was no parity between a poor brahmin and a king, he could not acknowledge their friendship. Instead, he offered to give some Dana to him as he was a poor brahmin. Drona felt very humiliated by this act of his friend and vowed to take revenge.

The disturbed Drona did not return home but kept wandering. One day, he chanced upon a group of small boys struggling to retrieve their ball back from a well that was deep but dry. He retrieved it for them, with his archery skill. The boys overjoyed with happiness ran to the palace and described this magnificent art of archery to their great grandfather. These boys were none other than the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.

Arjuna with his muddy hands and legs ran straight into the lap of Bhīṣma pitāmaha. He was so very fond of Arjuna that he did not mind his sparkling white robes getting dirty and instead hugged Arjuna very affectionately. When Arjuna told him about the bow and arrow skills of the gentleman who could take their ball out of the well, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha knew it could be none other than Drona. He was in search of a Guru for the archery training of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas and requested Drona to take up the job. Drona agreed under two conditions. He would teach the boys without any remunerations and would rather ask for Guru Dakshina at the appropriate time. Secondly, he should be given a free hand in teaching the boys, without any interference from anybody in any manner. Both the conditions were accepted by Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, and Drona became Dronacharya, the Guru of Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas.

As the years passed by Dronacharya transformed the boys into ace archers. As Guru Dakshina, he asked the boys to capture King Drupada and bring him alive to him. Arjuna offered to do it without anyone's help. Arjuna was the most favored disciple of Guru Dronacharya, as he was very focused and attentive, with a high level of concentration. Dronacharya was very happy to see the sportiveness of Arjuna and was also confident that he would be able to do the job yet cautioned him about the great army of Panchala. Arjuna did not get discouraged. He reached Panchala and challenged King Drupada to fight against him. Drupada tried to dissuade him thinking that a 14-year-old naïve and tender boy could not sustain in front of his mighty army. But Arjuna would not budge. As a Kṣatriya Dharma one could not run away when challenged into a battle. This has been seen umpteen number of times in Mahabharata. Yudhistira could not retreat back when challenged to play the Chauras Dice Board. Arjuna had to go when called to fight to the other end of the battlefield, and hence could not rescue Abhimanyu from the Chakravyuha. Similarly, Drupada being a Kṣatriya had to accept the young lad Arjuna's call to fight. He was impressed by the valor of the young lad, and wished that if he had a daughter, he could have given her in marriage to Arjuna. Arjuna defeated Drupada in the battle and brought him to his Guru. Dronacharya told Drupada that as he was no more a king, they were equal. But Drupada contradicted that since he was defeated by Dronacharya's disciple on his instructions, he was now the king, and Drupada was his slave. Dronacharya had anticipated this reply and was hence prepared with a strategy. He offered to return half of the kingdom to Drupada, while the other half would be given to Ashwathama; thus, they would be equal. Drupada agreed to it and hugged Dronacharya as a mark of equality.

Inwardly, Drupada was full of anger and wished to take revenge. He requested his kula guru Yaja to perform a yajna to beget him a son who would kill Drona. Yaja refused to perform any such yajnya that was based on an immoral desire, and suggested that his younger brother Upayaja could perform the yajnya for him. The Yajnya was performed. Agnidev was very pleased and bestowed Drupada with a daughter and a son.

The daughter was named as Draupadi after her father's name. As she came out of the holy fire of Yajnya, she was also named as Yajnyaseni. She was also known as Panchali as she was the princess of Panchala kingdom. The son was named Drishtadyumna. Drupada wished to impart the best of archery knowledge to his son. As he knew that there could not be a better Guru than Dronacharya himself for training his son, he approached him with a request to train his son. Dronacharya accepted him, despite knowing pretty well that he was destined to be killed in the hands of Drishtadyumna. Thus, Drishtadyumna too, became Dronacharya's disciple, as pointed sarcastically by Duryodhana in the reference 'your student'.

#### 1.4

**atra śūrā maheṣvāsā, bhīmārjunasamā yudhi,  
yuyudhāno virāṭaśca, drupadaśca mahārathaḥ. 1.4**

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)

- atra - Here
- śhūrā - the great warriors
- maheṣhvāsā - archer
- bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi - equivalent to Bhima Arjuna
- mahā-rathaḥ - great warriors

Duryodhana started highlighting the warriors who were fighting on the Pandavas side.

#### 1.5, 1.6

**dhṛṣṭaketuścekitānaḥ(kh), kāśirājaśca vīryavān, purujitkuntibhojaśca,  
śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ. 1.5  
yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta, uttamaújāśca vīryavān,  
saubhadro draupadeyāśca, sarva eva mahārathāḥ. 1.6**

Drupada; Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna and the valiant King of Kāśī, and Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and Śaibya, the best of men,  
and mighty Yudhāmanyu, and valiant Uttamaújā, Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra, and the five sons of Draupadī- all of them Mahārathīs (warrior chiefs).

During the 14 years of Pāṇḍavas exile, Duryodhana was engaged in preparation of the war, which he knew was inevitable. Hence, he tactically forged relationships with as many kings as possible, by sending them either his army to help the kings in their battles, or gifts as good-will gesture. Many kings who received his unasked-for help were now forced to stand on his side.

To his surprise, the Pāṇḍavas side was also adorned with great warriors like Bhima, Arjuna, Yuyudhana, Virata, Drupada, Dhristaketu, Cekitana, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Saibya, Yudhamanyu, the valiant Uttamanuja, the son of Subhadra and the five sons of Draupadi.

#### 1.7

**asmākaṃ(n) tu viśiṣṭā ye, tānnibodha dvijottama,  
nāyakā mama sainyasya, saññārthaṃ(n) tānbravīmi te. 1.7**

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.

- asmākaṃ ours
- tu viśiṣṭā but special
- nibodha be informed
- dvijottama (Addressing Drona as) the best Brahmana
- nāyakā the leaders / the generals
- mama my
- sainyasya army
- saññārthaṃ for information
- tān them
- bravīmi te recount

Duryodhana, next moved on, to laud his own army. He sought to highlight his army to his Guru, who he addressed as *Dwijottama*, the best of the Brahmanas. *Dwija* meaning ‘twice born’ is used for Brahmanas, as it is believed that the education and knowledge, they received during their learning period imparted them with a new life. Brahmanas are generally gentle and hesitate to take harsh decisions. By addressing him as *Dwijottama*, he was once again taunting his own Guru to be a person of soft calibre. He was doubting the loyalty of his own preceptor.

**1.8**

**bhavānbhīṣmaśca karṇaśca, kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ,  
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaśca, saumadattistathaiva ca. 1.8**

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

- Bhavān - yourself
- samitiñjayaḥ - victorious in battle

He recollected his own warriors like Dronacharya, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha , his beloved friend Karna, Kripacharya, Ashwatthama, Vikarna and Saumadatta, all of whom were always victorious in battle.

**1.9**

**anye ca bahavaḥ(ś) śūrā, madarthe tyaktajīvītāḥ,  
nānāśastrapraharaṇāḥ(s), sarve yuddhaviśāradaḥ. 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.

- Anye - others
- bahavaḥ - many
- śūrā - warriors
- mat arthe - for my sake
- tyaktajīvītāḥ - prepared to lay down their lives

- nānā-śhastra-praharaṇāḥ - equipped with various kinds of weapons
- sarve - all
- yuddha-viśhārādāḥ - skilled in the art of warfare

Duryodhana continued his narrative that, in addition, there were several other skillful warriors who were well equipped in handling of various weapons and were prepared to lay down their lives for him. This implied that Duryodhana was aware that he was on the wrong side, and that anyone fighting for him was sure to be killed.

## 1.10

**aparyāptam(n) tadasmākam(m), balaṁ(m) bhīṣmābhirakṣitam,  
paryāptam(n) tvidameteṣām(m), balaṁ(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.

- Aparyāptam - unlimited
- Asmākam - ours
- Balam - strength
- abhirakṣitam - safely marshalled.
- paryāptam - limited

This Sloka can be interpreted in two different ways, as seen in the many texts and commentaries of the Gītā.

On one hand one can imbibe the meaning as Duryodhana was trying to take solace by saying that his army commanded by none other than Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was unlimited and full of valor, whereas the Pāṇḍavas army marshalled by Bhima was limited.

The second interpretation is that he considered his army marshalled by Bhīṣma Pitāmaha as insufficient! He was aware of the love Bhīṣma Pitāmaha and Dronacharya had for Pāṇḍavas and for Arjuna in particular. Hence, he had a lurking fear in his mind that Bhīṣma Pitāmaha might favour Pāṇḍavas. Although the Kauravas had 11 akshauhini senas and Pāṇḍavas only 8 akshauhini senas, yet he was not confident of winning because Śrī Krishna himself was Arjuna's charioteer.

It is well-known that both Duryadhana and Arjuna had approached Śrī Krishna at the same time seeking his support in the war. Śrī Krishna gave them the option to choose between HIM (unarmed) and his akshauhini sena. Duryodhana preferred to take the senas while Arjuna preferred Śrī Krishna over the senas. Initially Duryodhana was very happy with his decision and thought Arjuna to be a great fool for choosing Śrī Krishna over the battalion of a strong akshauhini sena. He was confident that he could easily defeat Pāṇḍavas now with eleven akshauhini senas. But fear gripped him on seeing Śrī Krishna as the Sarathi of Arjuna. Although he was trying to put up a bold face on account of his egoistic nature, he was not able to trust his own Maharathis like Bhīṣma Pitāmaha and Dronacharya. His thoughts were clouded. He had no equanimity. A man with more of Sattva Guna can think clearly. He takes refuge in Bhagavān with his abundance of trust and devotion.

In chapter 9 sloka no. 22; Bhagavān had said:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।  
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्

There are those who always think of Me and engage in exclusive devotion to Me. To them, whose minds are always absorbed in Me and completely surrendered to ME, I will take care of them and fulfil their wants and preserve what they already possess. Arjuna had completely surrendered to Śrī Krishna and sought his favour.

This concept is beautifully explained in the prayer:

**इतना तो करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले**

**गोविन्द नाम लेकर, तब प्राण तन से निकले**

When a person totally surrenders to the Paramātmā at the time of his death, he is definite to reach Paramātmā's abode, as explained in chapter 8 sloka no. 5.

**अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।**

**यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः॥**

There is no doubt that they will get ME if they remember ME at the time of death.

It is possible to think of HIM at death, only if one has always absorbed himself in spiritual thoughts at every moment of his life. Doing punya karma occasionally is not sufficient to purify oneself totally from all the paapa karmas accumulated. The punya karmas should be so constant and so intense to erase the previous debts of paapa karma, and only then can a person reach HIS abode. Yudhishtira told one lie in his entire life, when he said that 'Ashwathama the elephant is dead'. Although it was not a lie, he molded the truth that Ashwathama the son of Dhronacharya was alive. By molding the truth, he accumulated one paapa karma, and as a result, it was necessary for him to have a glimpse of the naraka before reaching HIS abode.

Duryodhana knew very well that he was in the wrong, and he was bound to get defeated. But he preferred to put the blame on everyone around him and lamented that their partiality towards the Pāṇḍavas was bound to see his defeat. On the other hand, Arjuna knew that he was on the right path, but he started to lament that he had to kill his own dear people. His lament becomes the Vishada Yoga, since his vishada or sadness is equal to Yoga connection to the Supreme. More about this would be covered in the next session.

The session ended with sankeertan, remembering the Paramātmā.

## **Question and Answer**

**Dilip Ji**

**Question:** Why is the war between the pāṇḍavas and Kauravas called Mahabharat?

**Answer:** In reality, the name of the Granth is called Jai Puran which was later called as Mahabharat. There was a debate amongst the learned scholars that Jai Puran imparted more knowledge than the four Vedas. Hence, it was also named as Pancham Ved. The war is not termed as Mahabharat, it is the scripture which has been named as Mahabharat.

**Rita Ji**

**Question:** What are the names of Draupadi's five sons?

**Answer:** Prativindhya (from Yudhishtira), Sutasoma (from Bheema), Shrutakarma (from Arjuna), Satanika (from Nakula) and Shrutasena (from Sahadeva). They were killed by Ashwathama while they were asleep and hence Draupadi cursed Ashwathama.

**Radha Krishna Ji**



**Question:** Why does the Gītā contain the conversation between Sanjaya and Dhritarashtra?

**Answer:** On the 10th day of the war, when Sanjaya updates about the incidents on the battlefield, Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya to narrate all the activities from the warfield from the first day. Sanjaya then uses his Divya Drishti or the divine vision which was bestowed by his Guru Ved Vyaas and narrates all the events of the war from the first day. This is when the divine conversation of the Gītā is also narrated by Sanjaya.

**Rajeev Ji**

**Question:** In Chapter 6, shloka 14, it has been mentioned to give up on sankalpa. However, we often engage in taking new Sankalpa. Please clarify.

**Answer:** Chapter 6, shloka 14 advice to give up on Sankalpa for the one with elevated consciousness. This is applicable for the one who is on the final steps of Sādhana to attain the almighty and is not recommended for a common man. One who is in this elevated fulfils only the prescribed duties and does not initiate any new Karmas or actions.

**Chandini Ji**

**Question:** There are two interpretation of shloka 10 of this chapter. Please clarify.

**Answer:** Multiple interpretations can be derived from the sanskrit text and hence every learned scholar has his/her interpretation. Bhīṣma pitāmaha took the side of the Kauravas as his loyalty was towards the kingdom and hence the Kauravas have the upper hand; The other interpretation is that both sides are of equal strength.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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