

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

4/4 (Ślōka 31-47), Sunday, 03 November 2024

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA KAVITA VERMA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/qz9G5wjh4X4>

## Arjuna tells Bhagavān Śrī Krishna about his decision to not participate in the war

The 1st chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga - The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna**. It comprises of 47 Shlokas.

This was the fourth and final interpretation session of the 1st chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, specially adapted for the young Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar.

Following Geeta Pariwar's tradition, we started with prayers to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna followed by the lighting of the auspicious lamp to seek blessings from the Paramātmā, Bhagavān Shivji, Maharshi Veda Vyasji and our Guru, to guide us towards the path of Goodness, with the light of knowledge.

**Sadashiva Samarambham Vyasa Shankara Madhyamam**

**Asmad Acharya Paryantam Vande Guru Paramparam.**

*Originating with the all-pervasive śiva, to Veda Vyasji, to my own Guru, I bow with reverence to the entire Guru Parampara (tradition of teachers).*

The discourse started with wishing the best to every Sadhak on the auspicious occasion of Deepavali and Bhai Dooj.

As was decided in the earlier sessions, we began with a poll based very interesting quiz, covering topics from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Deepavali and of course the Bhagavadgītā.

So far, we have been introduced to the key warriors on the Pāṇḍava and the Kaurava sides through Duryodhana.

We saw that Duryodhana seems to be somewhat anxious about the war and Bhīṣma Pitāmaha realizing Duryodhana's weak mental state tries to calm him down and boost his confidence by blowing his conch loudly like the big roar of the lion. After this the Pāṇḍavas also start blowing their conches one by one.

The overwhelming sounds of the conches, drums, and battle cries, coupled with elephant trumpets and horses' neighs charged the battlefield in readiness for war that was about to start.

In the midst of this, we see how at the behest of a very confident Arjuna, Śrī Krishna places the chariot between the two armies so that Arjuna can inspect and determine those against whom he is expected to fight in the battle.

On seeing his kith and kin, his respected and loved ones on both sides from this vantage point, Arjuna is suddenly overcome with uncertainty at the prospect to having to kill them in the battle to secure victory. From a state of bravado, Arjuna's emotion moves to a state of total confusion and gloom where he starts shivering and his mouth turns dry.

Let us now proceed towards discussion of the next Shlokas.

### 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.

### 1.32

**na kāṅkṣe vijayaṃ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, na ca rājyaṃ(m) sukhāni ca,  
kiṃ(n) no rājyena govinda, kiṃ(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 in his state of attachment and love towards his kindred comes to such a point that he is willing to surrender the victory in the battle as well as the kingdom to the Kauravas by putting down his bow. He is unable to bring himself to kill and lose his family members and friends in order to get victory in the war.

### 1.33

**yeṣāmarthe kāṅkṣitaṃ(n) no, rājyaṃ bhogāḥ(s) sukhāni ca,  
ta ime'vasthitā yuddhe, prāṇāṃstyaktvā dhanāni ca. 1.33**

Those very persons for whose sake we covet the kingdom, luxuries and pleasures-

Arjuna questions Śrī Krishna as to what the benefit of is waging the war and winning it to secure the kingdom and the associated pleasure, if he has to kill the very persons for whose sake he desired to win. What is the use of such a victory if he doesn't have any loved ones to share the same with?

It is like Arjuna will have all the things to celebrate Diwali with like, sweets, crackers, lights and so forth, but there will not be family and friends to enjoy it with. His mind is filled with the question as to what is the use of such an occasion which he can't celebrate with loved ones.

### 1.34

**ācāryāḥ(ph) pitarāḥ(ph) putrāḥ(s), tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ,  
mātulāḥ(ś) śvaśurāḥ(ph) pautrāḥ(ś), śyālāḥ(s) sambandhinastathā. 1.34**

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-

Arjuna says, by risking their lives on the battlefield were gathered the Guru, the father, the son, the grandfather, the uncle, the father-in-law, the grandson, the brother-in-law, and so many other family members. He was unwilling to be part of a war where brothers kill each other!

### 1.35

**etānna hantumicchāmi, ghnato'pi madhusūdana,  
api trailokyarājyasya, 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's state of compassion is such that he says that he doesn't want to attack and kill his loved ones on the side of the Kauravas even if they do so. He is willing to get killed but not ready to kill.

Arjuna's good moral values are exposed in this Shloka. He was prepared to die, rather than kill his kith and kin; his loved ones, even if it meant the loss of the kingdom. Even the rewarding offer of all the empires in the three lokas could not lure him to wage the war. Then, how can a small piece of land called Hastinapur make him fight?

### 1.36

**nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrānnaḥ(kh), kā prītiḥ(s) syājjanārdana,  
pāpamevāśrayedasmān, hatvaitānātātāyinaḥ.1.36**

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

Similar to the previous Shlokas, Arjuna continues to justify his unwillingness to kill his relatives. He asks Bhagavān, how can one be happy by killing one's own people? Therefore, he argues that they were not justified to kill the Kauravas who are his uncle Dhritarashtra's sons and his own relatives.

### 1.37

**tasmānnārhaḥ vayam(m) hantum(n), dhārtarāṣṭrānsvabāndhavān,  
svajanaṃ(m) hi katham(m) hatvā, sukhinaḥ(s) syāma mādharma.1.37**

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 asks Śrī Krishna that how can one be happy by killing one's own people? Therefore, he argues that they were not justified to kill the Kauravas, who were their own relatives. His level of attachment is so strong that he starts to defend the Kauravas and argue why they should not be killed.

**1.38**

**yadyapyete na paśyanti, lobhopahatacetasah,  
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ(n) doṣaṁ(m), mitradrohe ca pātakam.1.38**

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,

Arjuna puts forth to Bhagavān that the thoughts of the Kauravas are overpowered by greed and hence they are unable to see any wrong in destroying their relatives or friends. He then questions Krishna, why should they the Pāṇḍavas, who can clearly see the sin in killing their kindred, not turn away from this wrongdoing?

**1.39**

**kathaṁ(n) na jñeyamasmābhiḥ(ph), pāpādashmānnivartitum,  
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ(n) doṣaṁ(m), prapaśyadbhirjanārdana.1.39**

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's level of attachment is so strong that he started defending the Kauravas, and justifying as to why they should not be killed.

Clearly, despite being a proclaimed warrior, Arjuna's righteous nature coupled with his extreme attachment to his family and friends has led him to losing his practicality and sense of judgement.

Arjuna while putting forth his argument seems to have forgotten that it was Śrī Krishna who had gone to the Kauravas as a peace ambassador before the war and requested for just five villages in order to avoid the war. Duryodhana had refused to give even that thus leading to the battle. In fact, the **Adharma** or unrighteousness of Duryodhana and the Kauravas was on the constant rise.

Bhagavān in the famous seventh Shloka of Chapter – 4 of Bhagavadgītā had said to Arjuna,

**yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata**

**abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyaham**

HE said that HE reveals HIMSELF whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness.

Thus, in order to bring back **Dharma** or righteousness to the world, Bhagavān had no other option but to cause the war to destroy the **Adharma** being caused by the Kauravas.

**1.40**

**kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti, kuladharmāḥ(s) sanātanāḥ,  
dharma naṣṭe kulam(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.

Arjuna continues to defend his decision talks about another negative impact of such a big war. He says, every family has a set of rules known as Kula dharma which the members had to follow to keep the family tradition alive. These set of rules governed the ways of living, thinking, and acting as a united and well-integrated family. The kula dharma was our traditional right and duty by following which, we learnt to live as better citizens. These traditions helped nurture positive values in families and help build a virtuous society.

We know that in the times of Mahabharata, there were four caste groups (Brahmāns,

Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras) which were based on the type of work each did. Each were associated with their set of Kula dharma.

However, if a family is destroyed in a calamity like a big war, the Kula dharma will ultimately get destroyed.

Arjuna says such war, where families completely lose the men would lead to gender inequality and women would be married to men of other caste groups thus destroying the social structure. He says, that when such an event occurs, **adharmā** or evil takes over society.

**1.41, 1.42, 1.43**

**adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa, praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ,  
striṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya, jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ.1.41  
saṅkaro narakāyaiva, kulaghnānām(ñ) kulasya ca,  
patanti pitaro hyeṣām(i), luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ.1.42  
doṣairetaiḥ(kh) kulaghnānām(ṣ), varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ,  
utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ(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.

These days cobblers are not available which has forced people to discard if the footwear gets damaged and buy a new one. Had the traditional work carried on by the clan the situation would not have been as is prevalent now. In the western countries its quite common to see the cell phones if they have even a small glitch that can be rectified are discarded and replaced with new ones. Same is the case with clothes, footwear and many other things used in daily life however expensive they might be. Shopping for the latest and possessing more and more is fun for them. The latest trend has turned out to be a culture of consumption that too for personal gratification. The practicing of donating to the needy is minimal.

On the contrary, in our Hindu culture, in the Varna system, they get the sanskars (values) of their clan

and pick up their duty quite naturally from birth. They learn to work very soon. They start earning in their teen age itself.

The basis of our life is, **Simple living, high thinking.**

This refrains one from becoming a spendthrift.. The social system works well. Nature is not exploited. The environment is also protected. The Indian Cultural thought process is very deep.

**1.44**

**utsannakuladharmāṇām(m), manuṣyāṇām(ñ) janārdana,  
narake'niyataṁ(ṽ) vāso, bhavatītyanuśúśrúma.1.44**

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

Arjuna uses the knowledge he obtained from his elders, as a source of argument to justify his reluctance to wage the war. He says, those who are responsible for destroying the family traditions will have to stay in hell for a long period of time.

**1.45**

**aho bata mahatpāpaṁ(ñ), kartuṁ(ṽ) vyavasitā vayam,  
yadrājasukhalobhena, hantuṁ(m) svajanamudyatāḥ.1.45**

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.

Arjuna uses the exclamation of '**aho**' (alas) to dramatically express his emotions and disappointment of being involved in a great sin. He shows his astonishment at being prepared to kill their own people, just for the possession of a kingdom.

**1.46**

**yadi māmāpratīkāram, aśastraṁ(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.

Finally, Arjuna decides that it would be better for him to face the Kauravas bare handed, not yielding any weapon, and get killed by them in the battlefield. At the current state of emotion, Arjuna was ready to keep aside his weapon and even be killed unarmed and unresisting by the Kauravas on the battlefield.

**1.47**

**sañjaya uvāca**  
**evamuktvārjunaḥ(s) sañkhye, rathopastha upāviśat,**  
**visrjya 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.

Sanjaya concludes the chapter by narrating that having thus spoken, Arjuna overwhelmed with dejection, sat down on his chariot casting aside his bow and arrow.

In Chapter – 1, there is no Shloka attributed to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna as he is a silent listener and observer here. HE starts his sermon of Bhagavadgītā to Arjuna from the next chapter.

All Sadhaks were once again wished a very blessed Deepavali. The session concluded with prayer to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and rendition of the Hanuman Chalisa.

**Questions from the Quiz**

Sadhaks are encouraged to attempt to answer the questions so that they can score themselves against the answers that will be provided with next week's summary.

1. When which Indian tithi (day) is Deepavali celebrated?
2. Which Indian epic talks about the festival of Deepavali?
3. In the 5 days of festival, on which day does Deepavali come?
4. What are the other festivals held on each day of the 5 days of festival during Deepavali?
5. What is the most common thing we do on the night of Deepavali?
6. Why is Lakshmi Ji and Ganesh Ji worshipped on Deepavali?
7. Who is the author of Ramayana?
8. Name the bird who tried to save Sita Ji in Ramayana?
9. Why is Naraka-Chaturdasi celebrated?
10. What is the name of Arjuna's bow?
11. Why were conches being blown at the start of the Battle of Mahabharata?
12. What was the name of Karna's parents?
13. What does Śrī Krishna refer to the knowledge in Chapter – 9 of Bhagavadgītā?
14. What are the three guṇas mentioned in Chapter – 14 (Guṇa Traya Vibhāg Yoga) of Bhagavadgītā?
15. Name two **Daivi Sampada** or divine qualities enumerated in Chapter – 14 (Guṇa Traya Vibhāg Yoga) of Bhagavadgītā?
16. What are the three types of Shraddha or faith described in Chapter – 17 (Śhraddhā Traya Vibhāg Yoga) of Bhagavadgītā?
17. With what is Tamasik Shraddha associated with?
18. Who is the son of King Parikshit?
19. What is the name of Ashwattma's mother?

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām(ŷ)**  
**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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**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.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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