

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

1/4 (Ślōka 1-9), Sunday, 13 October 2024

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA KAVITA VERMA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Hca8gCtQOnk>

The Brave Warriors in the Big Battle of Mahabharata

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

This was the first of the three-part interpretation session of the 1st chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, specially adapted for the young and eager Kid Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar.

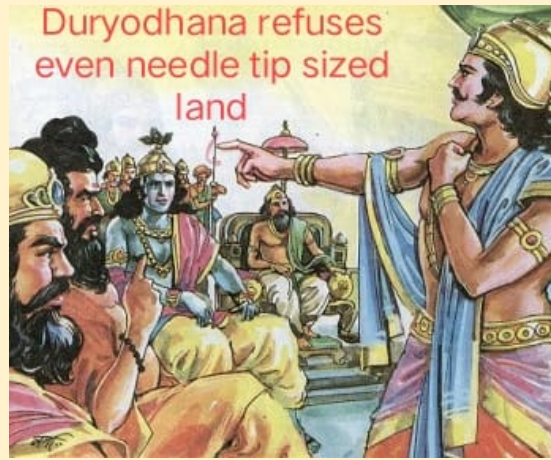
As is the tradition in Geeta Pariwar, we started with prayers to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna followed by the lighting of the auspicious lamp so that we are guided towards the path of Goodness, with the blessings of the Paramātmā, our Guru and the light of knowledge.

The session started with reminding the Sadhaks about their resolutions taken at the end of Level - 2 to give up one bad habit and imbibe one good habit.

We all know there were two groups namely the Pāṇḍavas comprising of 5 brothers and the Kauravas comprising of 100 brothers. The Kauravas were very jealous of the Pāṇḍavas as children because the Pāṇḍavas were very intelligent and powerful. When they became grownups, their hostility continued. The Kauravas declined to share the kingdom of Hastinapur with Pāṇḍavas, claiming it completely for themselves. Towards, this they gave immense trouble to the Pāṇḍavas, including insulting Draupadi very badly. Things came to such a head, that there was no other option left except to declare war.



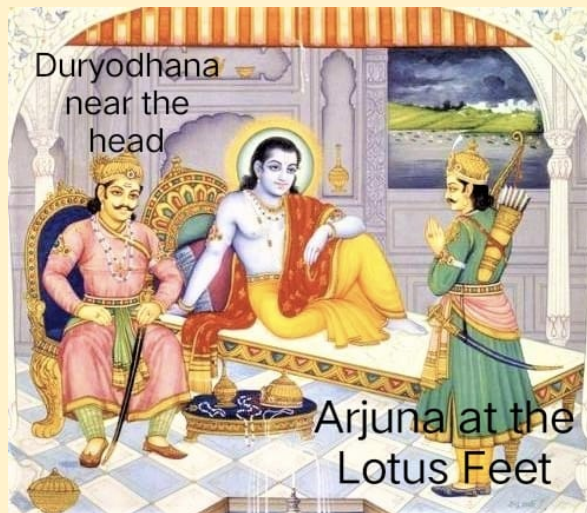
Śrī Krishna went to meet the Kauravas as a peace ambassador with the proposal to give only five villages to the Pāṇḍavas and thus avoid an expensive war which would definitely claim many lives. The Kauravas flatly denied this proposal with Duryodhana saying, “Forget five villages, I refuse to give land of the size of a needle tip too.” This led to the Battle of Mahabharata.



In preparation for the war, both Arjuna and Duryodhana reached Bhagavān Śrī Krishna to seek his support.

Śrī Krishna was resting at that time so they decided to wait for HIM to wake up. Duryodhana with his Asuri qualities of **dambho darpo 'bhimānaś cha krodhaḥ pārūṣhyam eva cha** went and sat near HIS head. Arjuna with his Daiva or Divine qualities of **abhayaṁ sattva-sanśhuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ** went and sat near the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

When Bhagavān Śrī Krishna opened his eyes, HE first saw Arjuna near his feet and then HE saw Duryodhana sitting near HIS head.



Śrī Krishna offered them, on one side, the huge, famous and powerful Akshouni army - the Narayani sena, specially trained for warfare by Bhagavān HIMSELF.

On the other side was the Bhagavān himself, unarmed and not even ready to be in active participation in the war.

Arjuna was given the chance to pick his choice first, since Bhagavān had seen him first on waking up.

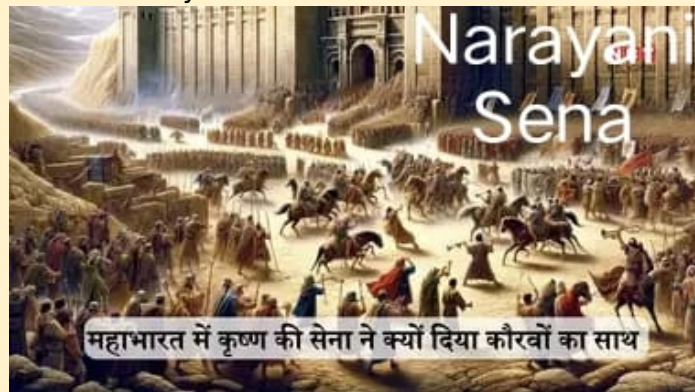
Arjuna was well aware of Bhagavān's infinite power,
yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ |

tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama || 18-78 ||

So, he, immediately and without any hesitation, chose Bhagavān, even though Śrī Krishna said that he would be unarmed and will not participate actively in the battle. Arjuna felt he could achieve anything with Bhagavān being present on his side. Thus, Śrī Krishna became the charioteer for Arjuna



and Duryodhana gladly took the Narayani Sena.



A difficult question was posed to the Sadhaks to name the Sarathi or charioteer of Karna in the Battle of Mahabharata. Ananya Ji correctly answered it as King Shalya.

Eighteen Akshouni army were participating in the battle; seven on the side of the Pāṇḍavas and eleven on the side of the Kauravas. As far as the eyes could see, there were only soldiers. In addition, there were strong horses, elephants and huge chariots with big wheels. The sky became overcast with the dust storm created by the footfall of so many men and animals!!

The stage was all set for the mightiest of all the battles.

Arjuna on seeing this vast and massive array was filled with uncertainty and fear. He was filled with doubt as how could he fight and kill Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, his grandfather who loved him so much and how could he kill Dronacharya who taught him all the skills of archery.

In the first chapter of Bhagavadgītā, Arjuna overcome by his attachment to his loved ones and filled with despair and hesitations tells Bhagavān that he does not wish to fight the battle. He gives all possible reasons in support of his decision.



1.1

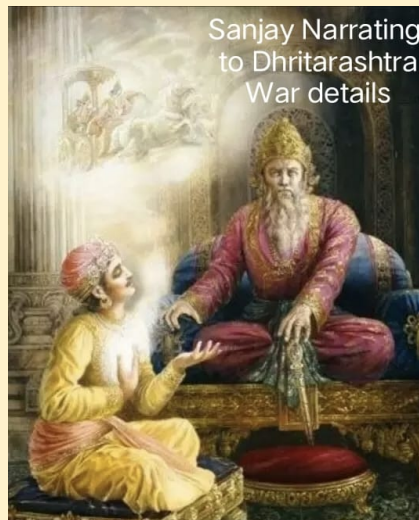
dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca
dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre, śamavetā yuyutsavaḥ,
māmakāḥ(ph) pāṇḍavāścaiva, kimakurvata sañjaya. 1.1

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

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

In the 700 Shlokas of Bhagavadgītā, only one Shloka is attributed to Dhritarashtra and it is the first Shloka of the book.

Let us imagine a big palace in which is sitting King Dhritarashtra, who is blind. Sitting beside him is Sanjaya, his trusted minister, who has the power of **Divya Dristi** or Divine Vision with which he can see and hear the happenings on at battleground without being physically present there.



Now let us look at some of the words that Dhritarashtra used as he asked Sanjaya to tell him on what

was going on at the battlefield.

Dharmakṣetre Kurukṣetre: Holy Land of Kurukshetra where the battle for Dharma or justice is being fought.

Samavetā Yuyutsavaḥ: assembled are those people who want to fight.

māmakāḥ(ph) pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya: Dhritarashtra is asking Sanjaya to tell him what are his children, the Kauravas, and children of his brother Pandu, the Pāṇḍavas, doing on the battlefield.

1.2

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

Sañjaya said:

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

Sanjaya's power of **Divya Dristi** was somewhat like today's CCTV camera. He could see and hear all the events in the battleground without being there. He was seeing and hearing all that was happening there and narrating it to Dhritarashtra.

Sanjaya starts his reporting to Dhritarashtra by saying that Duryodhana was frightened on seeing the army of the Pāṇḍava grouped for the war. Though the Kauravas had more soldiers on their side, the Pāṇḍavas had some stalwart warriors like Bhima and Arjuna who were almost undefeatable. To assess the situation, Duryodhana goes and speaks to Dronacharya who had taught warfare to all Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.



1.3

paśyaitāṃ(m) pāṇḍuputrāṇām, ācārya mahatīm(ñ) camūm,
vyūḍhāṃ(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.

Duryodhana asks his Guru Dronacharya to view the huge military formation of the Pāṇḍavas that was led by his own gifted disciple, Dhristadyumna, brother of Draupadi and son of his arch enemy King Drupada. Here, Duryodhana is cunningly trying to provoke the emotions of Dronacharya by pointing out that his opponent was none other than his disciple Dhristadyumna, whom he had taught the art of warfare with so much care. Instead of standing by his Guru, Dhristadyumna was fighting on the side of the Pāṇḍavas, their enemy in this battle.

Dronacharya and Drupada used to study at the same Gurukul under the same Guru.

The two young boys soon became such close friends, that Drupada promised Drona to share his wealth and kingdom when he becomes the king. Their friendship was as deep as that of Sri Krishna and Sudama. In due course of time Drupada inherited the kingdom of and became the king. Drona, adopting the Brahmin profession, became a sage and teacher. He did not seek material wealth and hence, led a poor life. His wife had to feed their only child, Aśvatthāmā, with flour mixed in water, instead of milk. One day Aśvatthāmā drank the real milk at a friend's house and realized his mother had been giving him something else in the name of milk. The upset child came to his mother crying. She urged Drona to visit his friend Drupada and ask for financial help.



Guru Drona reluctantly approached Drupada, who however insulted the poor sage for daring to seek friendship with a mighty king. Drona felt very insulted by his friend's attitude. He then walked away with a personal vow to one day take half of King Drupada's kingdom. With this event, two close friends became enemies.

In course of time, he became the Archery teacher of the Pāṇḍava and Kaurava princes. Arjuna proved to be the most worthy and skilled, and soon became his most favored disciple.



When it was time for the Guru Dakshina (Compensation for a teacher), he asked the princes to fight against King Drupada and get half of his kingdom. Arjuna single handedly defeated Drupada's army, and claimed half of his kingdom on behalf of his Guru.



Dhristadyumna, Drupada's son avenged this insult of his father in the Battle of Mahabharata by killing Dronacharya.



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) Drupada;

Duryodhana continues to name and describe the other powerful warriors (**śhūrā**) and great bowmen (**mahā-iṣhu-āsāḥ**) on the Pāṇḍavas side .

There were many ranks in the army like it is there today. The most powerful warriors were **Maharathis** with similar caliber as Bhima and Arjuna. Next came the **Rathis** and below them were the **Yodhas** or the soldiers.

Some of the **Maharathis** on the Pāṇḍavas side were Yuyudhan, King Virata and King Drupada with their immense military prowess.

1.5

dhṛṣṭaketuścekitānaḥ(kh), kāśirājaśca vīryavān, purujitkuntibhojaśca, śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ. 1.5

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

Duryodhana further goes on to add the names of other valiant kings like Drishtaketu, Chekitan, Kashiraj, the gallant king of Kashi, Kuntibhoj and Shaibya.

1.6

yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta, uttamaujāśca vīryavān, saubhadro draupadeyāśca, sarva eva mahārathāḥ. 1.6

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

Duryodhana continues to add that in the battlefield, are **Maharathis** from the Panchal-Desh represented by the gallant Yudhamanyu and the courageous Uttamauja, sons of King Draupada. Abhimanyu the very brave son of Subhadra, already an **Maharathis** at the age of 16 years and the five sons of Draupadi from the five Pāṇḍavas were also arrayed on the battlefield.

1.7

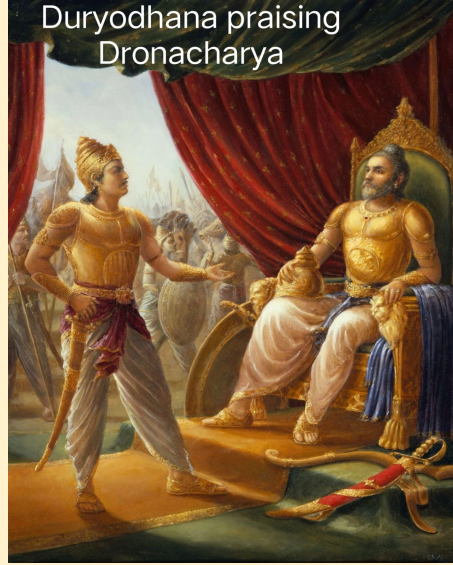
asmākaṃ(n) tu viśiṣṭā ye, tānnibodha dvijottama, nāyakā mama sainyasya, sañjñārthaṃ(n) tānbravīmi te. 1.7

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.

In the previous Slokas Duryodhana described the military preparedness of the Pāṇḍavas and praised their brave and strong warriors in order to provoke the fighter instinct of Dronacharya and the other warriors on the Kauravas side who were listening on to the conversation.

In this Sloka, Duryodhana tries to boost the morale of the warriors of his side. He uses the words **Asmakam** meaning **Ours** and **Vishistah** meaning **Special**. What Duryodhana meant to say was that the Kaurava side too had very a special and gallant army.

While addressing Dronacharya, Duryodhana says **Tanni-bodha Dwijottamai** referring to Brahmins. As Dronacharya was a Brahmin by birth, he is addressed as **Dwijottama**. Duryodhana refers to Dronacharya as the Best of Brahmins.



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);

Duryodhana details the list of valiant warriors on the side of the Kauravas. He tries to please Dronacharya by saying first and foremost is **bhavan** that is Dronacharya himself.

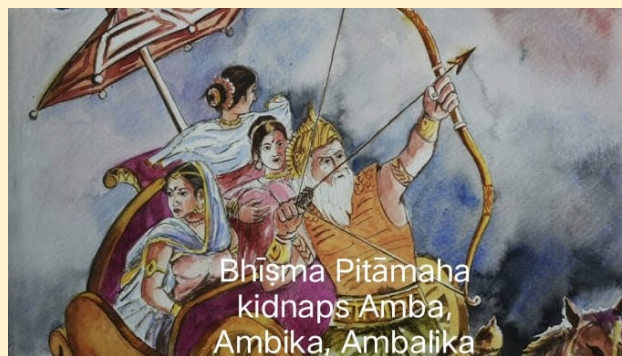
Next, he mentions, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, Karna, Kripacharya and Aśvatthāmā who are born fighters and victorious in many wars.

There is a very interesting story on why Bhīṣma Pitā always wore white clothes. His father had two wives. Bhīṣma Pitā was the son of the first wife Ganga Ji and hence he is often known as *Gangaputra*. When his father decided to marry again, the father of the second bride, in order to protect his daughter's interests, put a condition before giving his consent for the marriage. The condition was that only the sons of his daughter would become the future rulers of Hastinapur kingdom. Bhīṣma Pitā then took the vow to not marry and remain a Brahmācharya all his life so that he would never have a son who could become the King of Hastinapur. Having taken this vow, Bhīṣma Pitā came to be considered as a **Tapaswi** or saintly person and hence always wore white clothes.

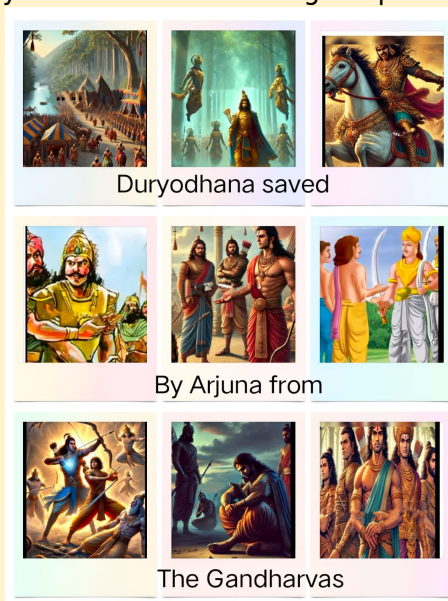


We all know how difficult it is to keep a vow. Like we take a resolution to speak with respect to our parents and soon, we break it, or we vow to study hard but get distracted. This never happened to Bhishma Pitā and he never, ever broke his vow. We should all try to be like Bhishma Pitā when being determined to follow our vows.

Another story on Bhishma Pitā is how he had kidnapped the princesses of Kashi (Ambika and Ambalika) to become brides of his step-brother.



In this Shloka Duryodhana takes the name of his best friend Karna along with other valiant warriors. However, Karna was neither a very valiant warrior nor a good person.



When the Pāṇḍavas were in exile and living in the forest, they used to wear simple clothes and have frugal meals. Duryodhana was a big Show-off, so one day he decided to visit the Pāṇḍavas and irritate them with a show of pomp and wealth with jewelry, good food and drinks and so forth. Karna, his best friend also accompanied him. When they were in the forest, there was an attack by Yakshas who are nature spirits and sometimes very deadly. At this time, Karna instead of fighting the Yakshas, ran away in fear of his life, showing what a coward he was! It was ultimately, Arjuna and the Pāṇḍavas who saved everyone that time, despite the Kauravas having treated them very badly.

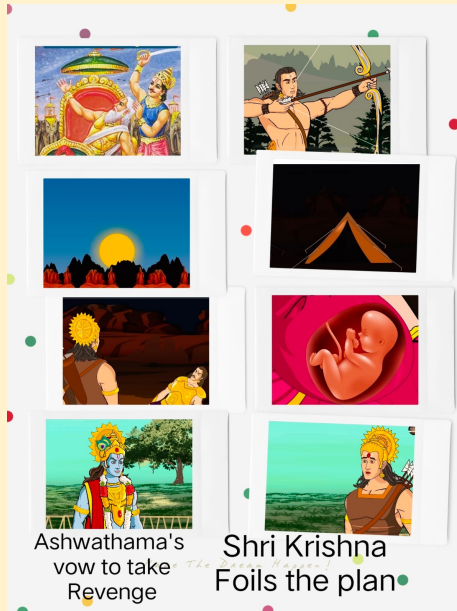


It was also Karna's idea to insult Draupadi by disrobing her in the royal court proving that, not only was he a coward, but he was also a vile person. He definitely comes in the list of villains in Mahabharata and not Heroes like Arjuna!

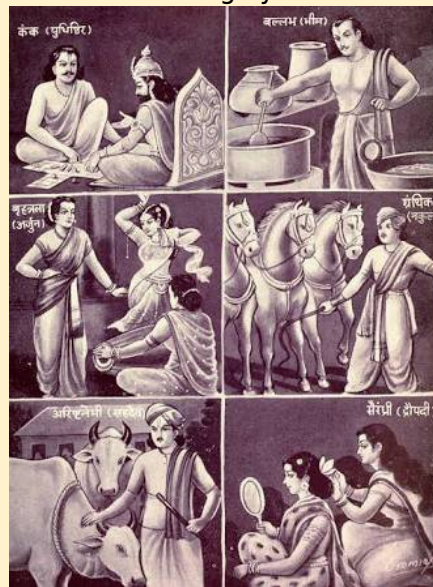
The next names Duryodhana takes are Kripacharya and Aśvatthāmā, who was two of the twelve warriors who were alive at the end of the Battle of Mahabharata.



Aśvatthāmā is another interesting character in Mahabharata. He was the son of Dronacharya. He was born a divine gemstone embedded on his forehead. On the death of Dronacharya, he was very engaged with the deceptive way in which his father was killed by the Pāṇḍavas. He promised to take revenge on Pāṇḍavas for this devious act.



The battle custom in those days was to fight from sunrise to sunset. Warriors were not allowed to attack each other at night. Áśvatthāmā however, went against this rule and sneaked into the Pāṇḍava camp at night to kill them. Śrī Krishna, being Bhagavān, became aware of the plan and changed the sleeping quarters of the Pāṇḍavas with the five sons of Draupadi. Áśvatthāmā couldn't figure out this change in the dark night and went ahead and savagely killed all five of Draupadi's sons.



When the Pāṇḍavas were in exile, they had to live undercover and in disguise in the last year. During that time, Arjuna disguised himself as a woman and became the dance teacher of Uttara, the princess of that kingdom. At the end of the year when the Pāṇḍavas revealed their true identity, the king wanted Arjuna to marry his daughter Uttara. Arjuna declined to do so, since he had accepted Uttara as his pupil and hence could not marry her. He however, arranged for the marriage of his son Abhimanyu with Uttara.

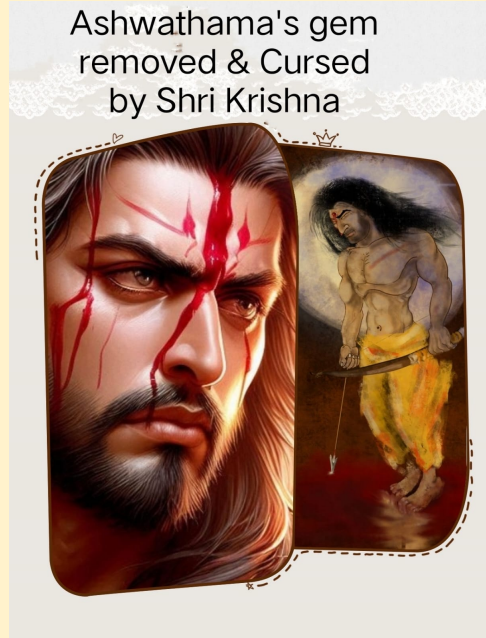
During the time of the Battle of Mahabharata, Uttara was carrying Parikshit the son of Abhimanyu in her womb.

Áśvatthāmā's thirst for revenge was so strong that he did not stop it this. He next targeted Abhimanyu's unborn son, who would be Arjuna's grandson.

Áśvatthāmā, blind with rage, and determined to totally destroy the Pāṇḍavas. now attacked Uttara's womb

with the very powerful Brahmāstra to kill Parikshit. All the Gods including Brahmā Ji and Bhagavān Śrī Krishna intervened to stop this rampage as the Brahmāstra could destroy the whole world if not stopped. Bhagavān Śrī Krishna also revived the dead Parikshit who went on to become the king of Hastinapur in future.

Bhagavān was furious with Aśvatthāmā and in his anger pulled out the divine gem from his forehead. Furthermore, he cursed Aśvatthāmā to live on earth for a very long time, with the unhealed painful wound on his forehead.



So, if we see, the Battle of Mahabharata was not just about the conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas but there were many other hostilities that were playing in the war.

Duryodhana continues the roll call of great warriors on their side and mentions the name of Vikarna who was a very pious person and the only person on the side of the Kauravas who stood against the disrobing of Daupadi in court, and Bhūriśravā, the son of Somadatta to be on their side.

1.9

**anye ca bahavaḥ(ś) śūrā, madarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ,
nānāśāstrapraharaṇāḥ(s), sarve yuddhaviśārādāḥ. 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.

After praising and recognizing all the brave warriors of his side, Duryodhana goes on to add that there are many other warriors equipped with many weapons on the side of the Kauravas. They are all **Yuddha-Visharadah**, highly skilled in the art of warfare. He acknowledges that they are all fighting on the Kauravas side and are ready to give up their life for his sake.

In this manner, Duryodhana in addition to boosting the morale of his army was also trying to boost his self-confidence.

In the next session, we will know more about the war and interesting stories from the Mahabharata. The Sadhaks were requested to find out the names and details of some of the important characters in

Mahabharata and come prepared in the next session.

The Vivechan session was followed by a Questions and Answers session and concluded with the prayer to the Bhagavān and with rendition of the Hanuman Chalisa.

Questions and Answers

Amaira Wadhera Ji

Q: Do we have classes on Saturday?

A: No, we don't have classes on Saturday.

Madhushree Surawar Ji

Q: If Vikarna was of Sattvik nature, why was he fighting on behalf of the Kauravas?

A: Vikarna was one of the 100 Kaurava brothers. It was not possible for him to go against his father Dhritarashtra and 99 other brothers who wanted him to take part in the war for the Kauravas. Likewise there were others like Bhīṣma Pitā, who through was against the war was fighting for the Kauravas because they were part of the kingdom.

Kritika Modi Ji

Q: If it was not allowed to fight at night, then why did Aśvatthāmā, go and try to kill the Pāṇḍavas at night? And was he punished for his act?

A: Aśvatthāmā, knew he neither had the strength nor the skill to kill the Pāṇḍavas in daylight. Hence, he resorted to do so slyly by sneaking into the Pāṇḍava camp at night when all would be asleep. His misdeed was found out and he was punished by his divine gem being taken away and he having to live a long and painful life on this earth.

Vidushi Ji

Q: How many princes were kidnapped by Bhīṣma Pitā in Kashi?

A: There were two Ambika and Ambalika. Amba was also there but that is a different story.

Mayika Devi Ji

Q: Why did Karna not fight on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas though he as their eldest brother?

A: Though Karna was the eldest brother of the Pāṇḍavas, Kunti had given him up and he did not live with the Pāṇḍavas. He was also very jealous of Arjuna and hence decided to fight on behalf of Kauravas.



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

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|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||