

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

2/4 (Ślōka 11-25), Sunday, 20 October 2024

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YouTube Link: [https://youtu.be/TLj1vJMo\\_xU](https://youtu.be/TLj1vJMo_xU)

## The war field is all set to ignite Arjuna's sorrow

The first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is **Arjuna Visada Yoga - The Despondency of Arjuna**.

This session began with the recitation of Hanuman Chalisa, Aarti, and the lighting of the auspicious lamp. In the previous sessions, the complete stage set for the Kurukshetra was discussed. This session will cover the observations of Arjuna, and sense of withdrawal from the situation.

### 1.11

**ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu, yathābhāgamavasthitāḥ,  
bhīṣmamevābhirakṣantu, bhavantaḥ(s) sarva eva hi. 1.11**

Therefore, stationed in your respective positions on all fronts, do you all guard Bhīṣma in particular on all sides.

- **ayaneṣu**—at the strategic points
- **sarveṣu**—all
- **Yathā-bhāgam**—in respective position
- **avasthitāḥ**—situated
- **eva**—only
- **abhirakṣantu**—defend
- **bhavantaḥ**—you
- **sarve**—all
- **eva hi**—even as

Upon seeing the Pāṇḍavas army arranged in military formation, Duryodhana approached Guru Dronacharya. He seemed awestruck by the sight of the warriors fighting on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. As the Commander-in-chief of the Kauravas, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was the most powerful and invincible figure, and Duryodhana was fully aware of it. He knew that as long as Bhīṣma pitāmaha was in command, the

Kauravas were safe. Hence, he instructed all his commanders to protect Bhīṣma Pitāmaha from all sides while defending their own positions in the military formation. This was possibly to ensure that Shikhandi was kept at a distance. Additionally, it is worth noting that Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, despite being the grandfather of both the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, was reluctant to engage in the war due to his goodwill toward the Pāṇḍavas. Being aware of this, Duryodhana suspected Bhīṣma pitāmaha's intentions in the fight against the Pāṇḍavas. Lastly, as the commander-in-chief, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was the main target of the enemy, and thus his protection was of utmost importance.

## 1.12

### **tasya sañjanayanharṣam(ñ), kuruvṛddhaḥ(ph) pitāmahaḥ, siṃhanādam(ṽ) vinadyoccaiḥ(ś), śaṅkham(n) dadhmau pratāpavān.1.12**

The grand old man of the Kaurava race, their glorious grand-patriarch Bhīṣma, cheering up Duryodhana, roared terribly like a lion and blew his conch.

- **tasya**—his
- **sañjanayan**—causing
- **harṣam**—joy
- **kuru-vṛiddhaḥ**—the grand old man of the Kuru dynasty, Bhīṣma pitāmaha
- **pitāmahaḥ**—grandfather
- **sinha-nādam**—lion's roar
- **vinadya**—sounding
- **uchchaiḥ**—very loudly
- **śhaṅkham**—conch shell
- **dadhmau**—blew
- **pratāpa-vān**—the glorious

A nervous king can lose a battle before it even starts, like a battleship with a hole in the bottom. Realising Duryodhana's anxiety, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, blew his conch loudly simulating a lion's roar, to boost Duryodhana and his army's morale.

The blowing of the conch signified the beginning of the war. Duryodhana was inclined to war, and the first call for the start of the war came from his side. Blowing conch is a healthy tradition in Hinduism and is based on medical science. The strong vibrations produced by the sound of the conch enter the body, mind, and the whole environment, creating positive energies and a calm, stress-free environment. Deep inhalation followed by forceful exhalation through the conch is also a good exercise for the lungs.

## 1.13

### **tataḥ(ś) śaṅkhāśca bheryaśca, paṇavānakagomukhāḥ, sahasaivābhyahanyanta, sa śabdastumulo'bhavat. 1.13**

Then conches, kettledrums, tabors, drums and trumpets blared forth all at once and the noise was tumultuous.

- **tataḥ**—thereafter
- **śhaṅkhāḥ**—conches

- **bheryaḥ**—bugles
- **paṇava-ānaka**—drums and kettledrums
- **go-mukhāḥ**—trumpets
- **sahasā**—suddenly
- **eva**—indeed
- **abhyahanyanta**—blared forth
- **saḥ**—that
- **tumulaḥ**—overwhelming
- **abhavat**—was

The blowing of the conch by Bhīṣma Pitāmaha had a catalytic effect on the Kaurava army. They were roused into action and various instruments like conch, trumpet, bugle, drums, and kettle drums, were sounded in unison, acting as a war cry. This tumultuous sound instilled verve and vitality even in weak soldiers. We experience similar impulses when singing the national anthem and patriotic songs on various occasions. War during those days was ethical and fought from sunrise to sunset, and it was confined to warring soldiers without harming civilians, unlike present-day wars. After sunset, soothing music was played to calm tired and injured soldiers.

## 1.14

### **tataḥ(ś) śvetairhayairyukte, mahati syandane sthitau, mādhavaḥ(ph) pāṇḍavaś caiva, divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ. 1.14**

Then, seated in a glorious chariot drawn by white horses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well as Arjuna blew their celestial conches.

- **tataḥ**—then
- **śvetaiḥ**—white
- **hayaiḥ**—horses
- **yukte**—yoked
- **mahati**—glorious
- **syandane**—chariot
- **sthitau**—seated
- **mādhavaḥ**—Shree Krishna, the husband of the goddess of fortune, Lakshmi
- **pāṇḍavaḥ**—Arjun
- **eva**—also
- **divyau**—Divine
- **śhaṅkhau**—conch shells
- **pradadhmatuḥ**—blew

This verse holds great significance as it depicts the entry of Madhava, Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, as a charioteer with Arjuna standing at the rear. The magnificent chariot, gifted to Arjuna by Agni Deva, was drawn by four powerful white horses.

Bhagavad Gītā, the divine song of Śrī Bhagavān, was penned by Ved Vyasa Ji from memory. One can imagine Śrī Bhagavān adorned in yellow attire, wearing a bejeweled crown with a peacock feather, and seated with a radiant smile in a celestial chariot pulled by four milk-white horses. Śrī Krishna blew his divine conch, the sound resonating throughout the world. On the Kaurava side, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, the Commander-in-Chief, initiated the conch blowing. In response, from the Pāṇḍavas side, Śrī Krishna blew his

conch, signifying a divine call from Paramātmā to fight. Arjuna also blew his conch, igniting waves of enthusiasm in the Pāṇḍavas army.

### 1.15

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

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

**Hrishikeśa**, the master of the mind and senses, Shri Bhagavān, blew his conch **Panchajanyam**. The word **Pancha** signifies five elements - Earth, Air, Ether, Fire, and Water. These five elements are basic for creation. We have five senses and five organs of action, **Karmendriyas**.

The conch shell named **Devadutta** was blown by **Dhanañjaya**, winner of wealth, Arjuna. This name Devadutta is associated with virtuousness and divinity, Arjuna is the epitome of these attributes. This conch was given by Indra, king of **Devas**, to Arjuna during **Rajsuya Yajna**.

**Pauṇḍram**, the **mahā-śaṅkha**, mighty conch was blown by Bhima, known as **bhīma-karmā**—one who performs herculean tasks and **vṛika-udaraḥ**— the voracious eater. The purpose of blowing conch was to inform the readiness for war; this was accompanied by various other musical instruments to infuse courage in the warring soldiers.

### 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.

Kunti's son, King Yudhistira, blew **Anantavijay**. Nakul and Sahadev blew their respective conches, **Sughosh** and **Manipushpak**.

Yudhistira is addressed as Raja, the king, as he is the eldest son of Kunti, and heir apparent. In addition, probably Sanjaya foresaw the result of the war, with the Pāṇḍavas being victorious. Yudhistira is also called **Dharmaraja**, which literally means king of Dharma.

In the Bhagavad Gītā, Dharma implies knowing oneself and the Paramātmā. But here, **Dharmaraj** implies upholder of morality and social conduct. Yudhistira faltered when he gambled and lost his brothers and wife. However, a momentary lapse cannot describe his holistic character. He always respected his elders, obeyed them, and was cool and calm in every adversity.

The Kauravas bore animosity and treachery to harm and kill the Pāṇḍavas. Yudhistira never retaliated; he controlled the angry Bhīma many times, saying that their Dharma does not allow this. He believed that anger cannot be a tool for retaliation. These were the principles which he followed for which he was called as **dharmarāj**.

### 1.17, 1.18

**kāśyaśca parameśvāsaḥ(ś), śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ,  
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca, sātyakiścāparājitaḥ. 1.17  
drupado draupadeyāśca, sarvaśaḥ(ph) pṛthivīpate,  
saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ(ś), śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ(ph) pṛthakpṛthak. 1.18**

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

Besides the Pāṇḍavas's side there were many other mighty warriors who took to blowing their conch shells:

- **King of Kashi** - an excellent archer
- **Shikandi** - a warrior who could single-handedly match the strength of ten thousand ordinary warriors. In a previous birth, Shikandi was Princess Amba of the kingdom of Kashi. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha abducted her at Swayamwara along with her sister for Vichitravirya, but Amba refused to marry him. She returned to King Salwa, who was secretly in love with Amba, but he refused to marry her as Bhīṣma Pitāmaha had won her. Amba did penance and died with a vow to kill Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. She was later reborn as the daughter of King Drupada but exchanged her sex to manhood with the help of a Yaksha. During the battle, Arjuna killed Bhīṣma Pitāmaha while hiding behind Shikhandi, who Bhīṣma Pitāmaha recognized as a woman, and lowered his arms before her.
- **Dhrishtadyumna**- son of Drupada,
- **Virat** - who had given shelter to the pāṇḍavas during their incognito period, and
- the invincible **Satyaki**
- **Drupada**
- the five sons of **Draupadi**.
- The mighty-armed **Abhimanyu**, the son of Subhadra and Arjuna

During the war, accepting the challenge of the Kaurava army, Abhimanyu killed numerous warriors by entering into the cakravyūha which was an array of soldiers in the form of circle formed by Drona Acharya. As the Kauravas thought he is unconquerable, by deceit, six great warriors from the Kauravas army surrounded him and by foul means attacked him with weapons. He was killed when dūśyasana's son hit him on the head behind his back with his mace. But for this deceit he was capable of almost destroying the Kauravas's army.

Sanjaya named all warriors on the side of the righteous pāṇḍavas, but mentioned only Bhīṣma pitāmaha on the Kaurava side. It appears that Sanjaya does not want to describe the unrighteous side of Kauravas's army in detail. But he had great regards for Bhagavān, Pāṇḍavas and the Pāṇḍavas's army. Pāṇḍavas side was righteous which may have made him to think of describing the Pāṇḍavas's army in more details and took delight in describing them.

**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.

- **saghoṣhaḥ**—sound / vibrations
- **dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām**— sons of Dhritarashtra
- **hṛidayāni**—hearts
- **vyadārayat**—shattered
- **nabhaḥ**—the sky
- **pṛithivīm**—the earth
- **eva**—certainly
- **tumulaḥ**—terrific sound
- **abhyānūnādayan**—thundering

The resounding sound of conches and other Pāṇḍavas instruments echoed across the earth and sky, striking fear into the hearts of the Kauravas and their armies. However, when the Kauravas and their army sounded their conches and instruments, there was no fear in the Pāṇḍavas camp. This could be attributed to two reasons - either the Pāṇḍavas army was significantly larger, or their morale was bolstered by a strong sense of righteousness and the support of Śrī Bhagavān in their cause.

The Pāṇḍavas army was actually smaller in number, with a ratio of 7:11 compared to the Kauravas. It is documented that the size of the Pāṇḍavas army in the Kurukshetra war was 7 Akshauhinis, while the Kauravas had 11 Akshauhinis. An Akshauhini is described in the Mahabharata as a battalion comprising 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 cavalry, and 109,350 infantry (Adi Parva 2.15-23). The ratio within each group was 1 chariot: 1 elephant: 3 cavalry: 5 infantry soldiers. Interestingly, the digits in each of these large number groups (65,610, etc.) add up to 18. This count is calculated as follows:

- One elephant (**Gaja**), one chariot (**Ratha**), three horses (**Ashwa**) and five-foot soldiers (**Padhata**) form a Patti
- Three **Pattis** form a **Sena-Mukha**
- Three **Sena-Mukhas** make a **Gulma**
- Three **Gulmas** a **Gana**
- Three **Ganas** a **Vahini**
- Three **Vahinis** a **Pṛthāna**
- Three **Pṛthānas** a **Chamu**
- Three **Chamus** an **Anikini**
- Ten **Anikinis** form an **Akshauhini**

Kauravas had a larger and bodily stronger army but their conscience was pricked by guilt for their crimes and misdeeds.

## 1.20

**atha vyavasthitāndṛṣṭvā, dhārtarāṣṭrāṅkapidhvajaḥ,  
pravṛtte śāstrasampāte, dhanurudyamya pāṇḍavaḥ. 1.20**

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

- **atha**—thereupon
- **yavasthitān**—arrayed

- **dr̥iṣṭvā**—seeing
- **dhārtarāshṭrān**—Dhritarashtra's sons
- **kapi-dwajah**—the monkey bannered
- **pravṛitte**—about to commence
- **śhastra-sampāte**—to use the weapons
- **dhanuḥ**—bow
- **udyamya**—taking up
- **pāṇḍavaḥ**—Arjun, the son of Pandu

Seeing the Kaurava army lined up for battle, Arjuna took up his bow, preparing to fight. Arjuna's chariot is referred to as Kapi-dhwajah, because it had a flag with an insignia of Hanuman Ji. Śrī Hanuman Ji played a pivotal role in the Ramayana in the service of Shri Bhagavān Ram in Treta Yuga. He helped Sri Ram extensively, be it assembling the army or tracing the whereabouts of Sita ji and much more. He was always found to be in service to Sri Ram. When Bhagavān Krishna, who is an reincarnation of Sri Ram in the Dwapar Yuga, was facing a war like situation, then how is it possible that Hanuman ji will keep himself away from it?

### **Story of Hanuman ji's role in Kuruksetra war:**

Once Draupadi asked Bhima to fetch flowers from the mountaintop. Bhima sees an old monkey lying with his tail on the path. Bhima orders the monkey to move out of the way. The monkey tells Bhima to help him to lift the tail. Bhima applies full strength but fails to budge it. Bhima realises it is not an ordinary monkey and bows down before it. Śrī Hanuman Ji appears in his true form and blesses him as an elder brother as both are **Vayu Putra**. Hanumanji advised Bhima to use his intellect and not just his physical power while fighting the war as he would soon be in a war situation in the near future. He further advised not to make the error of judgement and should use his intellect.

At a time when all the supporters, friends and relatives of Pāṇḍavas came together, how could Hanuman ji remain away? He also joined the Pāṇḍavas by establishing himself as an insignia on the flag. Hanuman ji did not manifest himself in physical form as he did not belong to the era in which the war was being fought even though he is immortal. In order to assist his brother and His Master (Bhagavān Krishna), he manifested himself as a symbol on the flag which remained displayed on Arjuna's chariot. It may appear to be only a symbol but in reality, even when so many weapons were fired at the chariot it did not damage the chariot.

### **1.21**

**hṛṣīkeśaṃ(n) tadā vākyam, idamāha mahīpate,  
arjuna uvāca  
senayorubhayormadhye, rathaṃ(m) sthāpaya me'cyuta. 1.21**

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.

Arjuna requested Śrī Krishna to position the chariot between the two armies so that he could behold those who were there to fight and know with whom he had to fight.

### **1.22**

**yāvadetānnirīkṣe'haṃ(ṽ), yoddhukāmānavasthitān,  
kairmayā saha yoddhavyam, asminraṇasamudyame.1.22**

"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.

- **yāvat**—as many as
- **etān**—these
- **nirīkṣhe**—look
- **aham**—I
- **yoddhu-kāmān**—for the battle
- **avasthitān**—arrayed
- **kaiḥ**—with whom
- **mayā**—by me
- **saha**—together
- **yoddhavyam**—must fight
- **asmin**—in this
- **raṇa-samudyame**—great combat

Arjuna desires to assess the strength of all the warriors gathered for the war to determine if they are stronger, equal, or weaker than him. He is keen to identify those who are fighting for the Kauravas. Evaluating the strength and positions of the enemy's warriors is a wise strategy for any skilled warrior.

**1.23**

**yotsyamānānavekṣe'haṃ(ṽ), ya ete'tra samāgatāḥ,  
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddheḥ(r), yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ.1.23**

"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."

- **yotsyamānān**—those who have come to fight
- **avekṣhe aham**—I desire to see
- **ye**—who
- **ete**—those
- **atra**—here
- **samāgatāḥ**—assembled
- **dhārtarāṣṭrasya**—of Dhritarashtra's son
- **durbuddheḥ**—evil-minded
- **yuddhe**—in the fight
- **priya-chikīrṣavaḥ**—wishing to please

Arjuna wishes to see the supporters of Duryodhana. He refers to Duryodhana as evil-minded who left no measures to try and harm the Pāṇḍavas and deprive them of their rightful entitlement. Despite this, the Pāṇḍavas did not hold any hatred towards them. A person who has lost the power of discrimination will perish. This war could have been avoided if Duryodhana had acted with good sense, or if his friends had influenced him to do what was right.

## 1.24

### sañjaya uvāca evamukto hṛṣīkeśo, guḍākeśena bhārata, senayorubhayormadhye, sthāpayitvā rathottamam. 1.24

Sañjaya said:

O king, thus addressed by Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies

- **evam**—thus
- **uktaḥ**—addressed
- **hṛṣīkeśaḥ**—Shree Krishna, the Lord of the senses
- **guḍākeśena**—by Arjun, the conqueror of sleep
- **bhārata**—descendant of Bharat
- **senayoḥ**—armies
- **ubhayoḥ**—the two
- **madhye**—between
- **sthāpayitvā**—having drawn
- **ratha-uttamam**—magnificent chariot

As per Arjuna's instructions, Śrī Krishna positions the magnificent chariot in the middle of both armies. The epithet "**Gudakesha**" is used for Arjuna, signifying a person who has conquered sleep, and tamas, and remains always wakeful and alert. Another interpretation of "**Gudakesha**" is "curly hair." The epithet "**Hrishikesh**" is used for Śrī Krishna, which means a person who has mastered his mind and the senses.

## 1.25

### bhīṣmadroṇapramukhataḥ(s), sarveṣāṃ(ñ) ca mahīkṣitām, uvāca pārtha paśyaitān, śamavetānkurūniti. 1.25

in front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the kings and said, "Arjuna, behold these Kauravas assembled here."

Śrī Bhagavān positioned the chariot at a spot so that Arjuna, son of Pṛthā, could see Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, and Guru Dronacharya, along with other relatives. Had there been Duryodhana or Karna, irate Arjuna would have started war. HE asked Arjuna to behold the descendants of Kuru gathered there.' Śrī Krishna intends to indicate that the war is between the Kurus. By doing so, Śrī Krishna is planting the seeds of despair in Arjuna's mind, leading him into spiritual discussions and ultimately delivering the divine song, Bhagavad Gītā, for the guidance of future generations.

### Questions and Answers:

**Kamala Ji:**

**Q:** How can we know about the Karmas of the past that shape our present to avoid repeating bad karmas?

**A:** We cannot know which karma gives what fruits. The concept of Karma can be understood in three stages. First, there's **Kriyamana karma**, which refers to the actions we perform in our present life. These actions contribute to **Sanchita Karma**, which is the accumulation of our deeds and their impact on our future. After death, our ability to perform actions, known as Kriya Shakti, is lost. But our accumulated

Karmas are carried forward to the next birth as **Prarabhd Karma**, shaping our **Samskar**. The interplay of Saṃskāra and the three gunas of Prakṛti influence our actions in our present life. These karmas keep us entangled in the cycle of birth and rebirth. The Bhagavad Gītā provides guidance on how to transcend these karmic entanglements and attain Paramātmā.

**Murali Das Ji:**

**Q:** Karna was given up by Kunti at his birth for no fault of his, did Kunti suffer for this action of giving up a newborn infant?

**A:** Kunti received a boon from the sage Durvasa that allowed her to summon any god to bear a child. To test the boon, Kunti called upon the god Surya and gave birth to Karna. Unmarried at the time, Kunti feared social censure and abandoned Karna by setting him adrift in a basket on the Ganges. Karna was often ridiculed by the pāṇḍavas as "Sootaputra" and never received the love and respect he deserved. Duryodhana, however, embraced him as a friend and made him a king. Karna's destiny was shaped by his past karmas. Kunti also suffered a lot throughout her life. In essence, all actions in this world are guided by Sanchit Karma and the three modes of nature. Paramātmā has no direct involvement in this, but true knowledge of self and Paramātmā can help navigate through life's challenges.

**Jyoti Ji:**

**Q:** How can we call Arjuna's Visada as Yoga?

**A:** There is a term 'constructive frustration' in psychology. Out of adversity and despair, one inclines towards spirituality. Yoga implies a connection with Paramātmā. This Visada of Arjuna resulted in diving deep into spirituality and connection with Paramātmā.

**Geeta Ji:**

**Q:** Can you please suggest three Slokas from Gītā that can be recited for our daily Pooja?

**A:** Ideally, we should recite the entire Gītā as the questions by Arjuna and answers by Sri Krishna are interrelated. If there is a restriction for the number of slokas, then those slokas spoken by Shri Bhagavān are preferred, as they are loaded with knowledge.



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