

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

3/4 (Ślōka 26-36), Sunday, 27 October 2024

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

## Arjuna's misery is caused by his attachment for his kith and kin

The first chapter of Bhagavadgītā is **Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga - The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna**

The session began with the customary lighting of the lamp and prayers were offered.

Arjuna had asked Śrī Bhagavān to steer the chariot and place it between the two armies so as to take stock of both the armies. HE deliberately parked the chariot in front of Bhīṣma and Dronācārya, and asked Arjuna to see all the Kurus gathered in the battlefield with a desire to fight the war.

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।  
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरूनिति ॥

It was to remind Arjuna that both Kauravas and Pandavas were descendents of the great king Kuru.

1.26, 1.27, 1.28

tatrāpaśyatsthitānpārthaḥ(ph), pitṛnatha pitāmahān,  
ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛn, putrānpautrānsakhīmstathā. 1.26  
śvaśurānsuhṛdaścaiva, senayorubhayorapi,  
tānsamikṣya sa kaunteyaḥ(s), sarvānbandhūnavasthitān. 1.27  
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo, viṣṭidannidamabravīt,  
arjuna uvāca

drṣṭvemaṁ(m) svajanaṁ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, yuyutsum(m) samupasthitam. 1.28

Now Arjuna saw stationed there in both the armies his uncles, grand-uncles and teachers, even great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, brothers and cousins, sons and nephews, and grand-nephews, even so friends, fathers-in-law and well-wishers as well.

Seeing all the relations present there, Arjuna was overcome with deep compassion and spoke thus in sorrow.

Arjuna was overcome with deep compassion and spoke thus in sorrow. Kṛṣṇa, as I see these kinsmen arrayed for battle,

Arjuna saw the entire Kuru dynasty assembled there. Arjuna observed that all the members of the family, the Pitriṣvastrīyaḥ - Cousin Brothers, Grand uncles like Bhīṣma Pitāmaha and Somadatta, and the Gurus Dronacharya and Krupacharya, Maternal uncles - Purujith, Kunti bhoj, Shalya, Shakuni, brothers and Cousins like Duryodhana, Dushyasana, and his own sons Abhimnayu, Ghatotkacha, Lakshmana, and Grandsons, as also friends of Duryodhana, Ashwathama and others. Also present was king Drupada Arjuna's father-in-law and well-wishers like Krithavarma. Seeing all the near and dear ones positioned in the battle formations Arjuna was dejected and voiced his sentiments to Bhagavān.

Arjuna was appraising not just the opponents but also his own battle formations as those present on the battlefield were his own kith and kin irrespective of which side, they were on. Arjuna was waging the war at the behest of his mother Kunti for enraging Draupadi's modesty in the courtroom and for usurping the rightful claim of the Pāṇḍavas share of kingdom through deceit.

Arjuna known for his gallantry and indomitable spirit, the greatest Kṣatriya entered the battlefield with an aim to wage the war but on seeing who he was going to fight his confidence, determination and conviction turned into dejection overcome with sentimental grief at the sight of his relatives, friends and those he revered now are his opponents whom he had to war with. He was greatly disturbed at the thought of slaying many of his near and dear ones, and eventually his clan would be annihilated. This overpowering sentiment was driving him to give up the war.

One may recall when Bhagavān refers to Arjuna's weakness of heart in chapter 2 and Arjuna admitting it:

**कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः**

**पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।**

**यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे**

**शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥**

*I am confused about my duty and am besieged with anxiety and faintheartedness. I am Your disciple and am surrendered to You. Please instruct me for certain what is best for me.*

One should understand and perceive the state of mind of Arjuna to be temporary in the light of his stout heartedness an inherent nature of Arjuna an unconquered warrior each time. This momentary digression fades out on calming down after the initial setback for those whose basic nature remains resolute.

Arjuna overpowered by sentiments that took over his thinking capacity displays acute cowardice through his inability to slay his unrighteous adversaries like Duryodhana, Dushasana to name a few who committed many dastardly acts of sins against the Pāṇḍavas.

The Pāṇḍavas always were unjustifiably treated by the Kauravas. Yet Arjuna's heart was beating for them as he was contemplating on the resultant destruction of his clan at the end of the war.

One needs to realise that Arjuna on seeing his friends and relatives becomes sorrowful and feels intense mental agony and anguish. War was indeed the last option when all strides to make peace failed. Pāṇḍavas had legitimate reasons for war against the unrighteousness of the Kauravas and added to it was the humiliation meted out to Draupadi.

Arjuna is tortured by his own thoughts when he confides about his mental and physical condition surfacing on account of the stressful situation as described in the further shlokas.

## 1.29

### **sīdanti mama gātrāṇi, mukhaṃ(ñ) ca pariśuśyati, vepathuśca śarīre me, romaharṣaśca jāyate. 1.29**

my limbs give way, and my mouth is getting parched; nay, a shiver runs through my body and hair stands on end.

Arjuna's benevolence overrides his thinking capacity on seeing his clan on the battlefield.

- **sīdanti** - get lifeless,
- **gātrāṇi** - hands and limbs,
- **mukhaṃ** - face,
- **pariśuśyati** - drying up,
- **vepathuśca** - trembling,
- **śarīre** - body
- **romaharṣaśca jāyate** - the hair on the body is standing on their ends.

One can visualise the physical discomfort that Arjuna is going through when he says, he feels lifeless in the quivering body. His mouth is parched with hair standing on the ends in the trembling body and a feeling of listlessness creeping on him in entirety.

## 1.30

### **gāṇḍīvaṃ(m) sraṃsate hastāt, tvākcaiva paridahyate, na ca śaknomyavasthātum(m), bhRāmatīva ca me manaḥ. 1.30**

The bow, Gāṇḍīva, slips from my hand and my skin too burns all over; my mind is whirling, as it were, and I can no longer hold myself steady.

- **gāṇḍīva** - bow of Arjuna
- **sraṃsate** - slipping,
- **hastāt** - hands,
- **tvākcaiva** - skin
- **paridahyathe** - burning
- **na ca śaknomya** - not able to
- **vasthathum** - to stand
- **bhRāmatīva** - forgetful.

Arjuna is stating here as to how his gāṇḍīva is slipping from his hands, his skin was burning, and he is unable to stand any more. He added that his mind was shrouded, and he could focus no more and as a matter of fact was going blank.

Arjuna loves the name Krishna very much and addresses Śrī Krishna many times. Likewise Bhagavān calls Arjuna as Partha many times. Hence Sanjaya in the last shloka of 18th chapter says;

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।  
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

*Wherever there is Śrī Krishna, the Lord of all Yog, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be unending opulence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness. Of this, I am certain.*

One can note the difference between the emotions of Arjuna and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who is clearly differentiating between his sons and the Pāṇḍavas in the 1st shloka of this chapter:

***samavetā yuyutsavaḥ, māmakāḥ(ph) pāṇḍavāścaiva***

Arjuna uses the terms **svajana** - My people and does not differentiate which shows the purity of his heart as against the distorted thinking of dhṛtarāṣṭra who was more worried about the impending death of his sons and others with him while Arjuna was worried for all present on the battlefield.

Arjuna is worried about the consequences of war and is experiencing all the emotions of a man in fear and stress with the gāṇḍīva slipping from his hands and the other effects on his body and mind. Looking at his bow people who came to fight with him used to run away from the battle field, but here the same gāṇḍīva was slipping from his hands.

He was not even able to stand steadily on his feet and felt as if he will fall unconscious. This was the physical and mental condition of Arjuna. This is the beginning of Arjuna vishada. He was about to war against the same people with whom he had grown up, learnt and lived with.

In the daily life we all fight our war of a different kind; this world or environment and surroundings itself is our Kurukshetra although we cannot call it dharmakshetra. We live in our own dilemmas and we worry about speaking the truth as we are not sure how the other person will take it. Whether it is at home or office or anywhere when our own people oppose us and think that each one is right and in such circumstances speaking the truth also gives rise to conflict. This happens with own family members too.

From a different point of view, dhṛtarāṣṭra was not totally on the wrong side. Despite being the eldest, he was deprived of the kingdom because he was blind, and Pandu was made the king. Duryodhana always felt that it was not his father's mistake that he was born blind and being his son he had a right to the throne. In his point of view he was correct. In those days the eldest, in this case dhṛtarāṣṭra being eldest was like a father figure but had to abide by the decision of mighty Bhishma who was the decision maker.

However, after Pandu died, dhṛtarāṣṭra was made the king. Duryodhana's question was if his father could rule the kingdom after Pandu's death, he could have done the same when Pandu was alive too. This was the main grieve of Duryodhana who felt his father was insulted by not being made the king.

Many sympathise with Pāṇḍavas, but if we look at the other point of view, we should think of dhṛtarāṣṭra as the person who was wronged. However, his extreme arrogance and aggressively ambitious attitude and towering ego misguided him towards downfall. He was not ready for conciliation and did not accept the path of peaceful resolution and went to war.

At times it is difficult to decide who is absolutely right and who is absolutely wrong as there are always two ways of looking at things. The point here is that there is nothing absolutely right or wrong and there is always justifications from both sides.

**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.

- **nimittāni** - symptoms causes
- **viparītāni** - opposite

- **paśyāmi** - seen
- **keśava** - killer of demon Kesi
- **śreya** - good
- **anupaśyāmi** - do I foresee
- **hatvā** - kill
- **svajana** - my own peoples.
- **āhave** - fight

A warrior should come with lot of courage and a mind ready to fight, but here Arjuna says the opposite is how he is feeling and experiencing. Instead of being charged with courage to fight, he is having all negative indications.

### 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!

- **na kāṅkṣe** - no desire
- **vijayaṃ** - win
- **rājyena** - kingdom
- **sukhāni** - happiness
- **kiṃ** - what is the use
- **bhogair** - to enjoy
- **jīvitena** - living.

Arjuna here expresses that he has no desire for victory, nor does he have desire for kingdom nor for happiness which comes out of this war when he is victorious. When everyone will get killed what will be remaining to enjoy and feel happy?

### 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-

- **yeṣāmarthe** - all of them
- **ta ime** - all of this
- **avasthitā** - those who are standing in front of me
- **yuddhe** - battle field
- **prāṇāṃ** - life
- **tyaktvā** - relinquish
- **dhanāni** - riches
- **yeṣāṃ** - these
- **arthe** - desire

Arjuna continues his lament that all those who want this kingdom and the happiness of victory are all standing in front of him, ready to kill or get killed. They had become desirous of relinquishing all they had earned and are also ready to give up their life.

### 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-

- **ācāryāḥ** - teachers
- **pitarāḥ** - father like figures
- **putrāḥ** - sons
- **tathaiva** - as well as
- **pitāmahāḥ** - grand fathers
- **mātulāḥ** - maternal uncle
- **śvaśurāḥ** - fathers in law
- **pautrāḥ** - grandsons
- **śyālāḥ** - brothers in law,

### 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!

- **etānna** - all these
- **hantum** - to kill
- **icchāmi** - I wish
- **ghnato'pi** - to be killed
- **trailokya** - all 3 world
- **hetoḥ** - in exchange of
- **mahīkṛte** - for the earth

Arjuna is clear in his decision that even when all these people were to attack him, he was not willing to kill them. Even if he was to get all the 3 worlds - **Swarga** (heaven), **Prithvi** (Earth) and **Patala** (the netherworld), he did not wish to kill them. Just for a piece of earth called kingdom why should he kill them was his feeling and thoughts at that point of time.

### 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.

- **nihatya** - by killing
- **kā prītiḥ** - what pleasure ( by killing the sons of Dhritarashtra)
- **pāpa** - sinful act

- **āśraye** - to get refuge
- **asmān** - to kill
- **hatvaitānā** - terrorists or aggressors

Arjuna had come to wage a war with the Kauravas. But now, he is reluctant to kill them, even if they were aggressors. According to our scriptures, killing one's own people is considered a sinful act, and he saw no reason to commit sin.

Arjuna continued to explicate his unwillingness to kill his relatives. His state is a clear example of fear psychosis. Fear and anger affect not just the mind but also the body. They first affect the mind which stops to work and a repulse runs through the body. Biologically speaking, in such conditions, the pituitary glands secrete a harmful chemical in the brain which is not just harmful and toxic to the body, but hampers the blood circulation, heart beat and pulse rate.

The principle natural element constituting fear is the Earth. It leads to inertia in the body causing lethargy. Fear leads to imbalance in sympathetic and para sympathetic nervous system. It affects the nervous system and the entire body gets stressed out. There is a build up of muscular tension in the body, which results in heightened inertness in the body. **Fear arises in mind but effects the whole body.**

Anger affects by raising the body temperature whereas fear decreases body temperature. Fear decreases blood circulation whereas anger increases blood circulation and increases heart beat and pulse rate. Hence anger and fear are both bad for health and destroy health slowly. Extreme anger and fear are both slow killers of the body.

**We think these issues are relevant to Arjuna only, but in reality it is true for each one of us. Gītā is not a story of conversations between some characters. But it is very much relatable to our lives as well.**

**Are we free from anger and fear?**

**Are we free from attachment to family members?**

**Are we free from fear of losses that we may incur?**

**Arjuna experienced these emotions and so do we in our day to day lives. The demons of fear and anger affect us also.**

**Hence the teachings and learnings from Bhagavadgita are relevant to this day in every one's lives. It is not something to be sidelined as an ancient mythology that happened long ago. Every word uttered herein is of use even today in the contemporary world.**

The short comings that we saw in Arjuna is something that all of us have. He accepted his shortcomings and spoke about them on his own, but in real world one refuses to accept, let alone express.

Arjuna saw only misery and tragedy in war by killing his own kith and kin who were driven by aversion, ambition and ego and were impatient for war. He could not see any good outcome of war. Hence he was no longer desirous of victory and let go of his desire of his own kingdom, because he knew kingdom acquired by killing would be stained with the blood of his own relations. He also understood that whatever he wanted to achieve was all perishable - inert kingdom, inert position, and inert wealth and further the body through which one can enjoy the trappings of luxury is also inert. He expressed himself to Madhusudana and said that seeing all his own people he was overwhelmed by intense pain that for a mere kingdom and wealth, people are ready to take the life of near and dear ones.

Many of us are driven by the fire of ambition and ego. Nothing good will come out of it. Is it a sensible decision to be in pursuit of worthless material pleasures? We must learn from the teachings of the Bhagawad Gītā.

In the contemporary world also, there are instances when we have had an altercation verbally with relatives or, sneering, deriding, mocking, humiliating others is common to happen in lives. People fight about property, inheritance, and jewellery. Husband and wife fight, father and son fight, brothers and sisters fight with each other. **Money is mostly the cause of disparity!**

Instead of finding a beautiful way to live, people go behind money, wealth and such material objects. One should find happiness in watching the sun rise, the first rain drop, or the breeze of wind and the nature around us. Simple things like the laughter of a child, watching the colourful butterfly, or vibrant nature give immense happiness. **One must get out of the habit of getting attached to the material objects of money and property.**

Bhagavān did not speak a single word and had given a free hand to Arjuna to express himself. When one goes to a doctor, he first listens to the patient and then diagnoses with the appropriate medicine. It is only from the 11th Shloka in 2nd chapter that Bhagavān starts responding.

**We need to learn what Bhagavān has said in Bhagavadgītā and adapt in our life to come out of the negativity of life and tread the rightful path.**

The session ended with prayers.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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