

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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## The Collapse of Dharma and the Rise of Inner Turmoil: Arjuna's Ethical Crisis and the Birth of Viṣāda Yoga

The first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is called **Arjuna ViṣhādaYoga - The Yoga of Arjuna's Despondency**.

The last session on this chapter commenced with the symbolic lighting of the lamp, followed by a prayer offered to *Bhagavān Śrī Krishna*, and salutations to the *Gurus and Gītā mata*.

**Gurur Brahmā Gurur Viṣṇu Gurur Devo Maheśhvaraḥ  
Guruḥ Sākṣhāt Parabrahma Tasmai Śhrī Gurave Namaḥ**

**Kṛṣṇāya Vāsudevāya Haraye Paramātmāne  
Praṇata Kleśa Nāśāya Govindāya Namō Namaḥ**

**Oṁ Pāy Pratibodhitam Bhagavatā Nārāyaṇa Svayaṁ  
Vyāsethitām Purāṇa Muni Nām Madhye Mahābhāratam  
Advaitāvarṇī Bhagavate Aṣṭādaśādhyāyanī Ambvā  
Manu Saṁdhāni Bhagavad Gītā Bhavat**

**Oṁ Śhrī Gurave Namaḥ  
Oṁ Śhrī Kṛṣṇāya Namaḥ  
Hari Om**

This is the first chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā*, which focuses on Arjuna's dilemma (*vishada*). It does not contain a single shloka spoken by *Bhagavān Sri Krishna*, yet is profound and filled with important concepts that will help us introspect ourselves. Arjuna was a great and courageous warrior, yet he lost all his confidence when he saw his kinsmen allayed against him. The root cause of his dilemma was not his cowardice or weakness, but his fear of committing sin by killing his family members. Unless and until we understand the depth of Arjuna's grief, we will not be able to study the *Gītā* completely.

We are blessed to be studying about Arjuna's dilemma on this auspicious day of Sri Ram navami, celebrating the journey of Bhagavān Sri Ram, the Maryada Pusushottama. Bhagavān Sri Ram is revered as '**Ramo vigrahavan dharmah**' - **the personification of Dharma**. According to Samarth Ramdas Swamiji, the best upasana of Bhagavān Sri Ram is to '**accept the good qualities of Sri Ram that is within oneself**'. In tune with these ideals, Geeta Pariwar teaches a beautiful song for the children, which goes as follows:

**चन्दन है इस देश की माटी, तपो भूमि हर ग्राम है।**

**हर बाला देवी की प्रतिमा, बच्चा-बच्चा राम है।**

All the qualities of Bhagavān Sri Ram (fulfil one's duties, respect for elders, taking care of family traditions, to name a few) should be instilled in our future generation for the benefit of our society.

Like Sri Ram ji, Arjuna too is an epitome of Dharma personification; he is Karma yoga personified. We have a lot to learn from Arjuna. What is it that transformed his vishada into a yoga, and found a prominent place in the Gītā? How is his grief different from our own grief/ sorrow? We need to contemplate on the same, and imbibe his characters to enhance our own lives.

To begin with, Arjuna was full of confidence and spirit to wage the war. He was eager to see the enemies standing on the other side of the battle field. However, when he saw his own elders and family members, he loses his mental stability.

***etānna hantumicchāmi, ghnato'pi madhusūdana,  
api trailokyārājyasya, hetoḥ(kh) kiṃ(n) nu mahīkr̥te.1.35***

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

***tasmānnārḥā vyaṃ(m) hantum(n), dhārtarāṣṭrānsrabāndhavān,  
svajanam(m) hi katham(m) hatvā, sukhinaḥ(s) syāma mādḥava.1.37***

He questions the purpose of waging a war with near and dear ones, and refuses to kill them even in exchange for the three worlds. He felt it was better to beg for a living rather than rule a kingdom that was obtained by killing his own people. This is one of the qualities we should try to imbibe from him. Irrespective of the situations/ injustice done to him and his brothers, his love and respect for his family did not wane. His goodness was not affected by the negative/ wrongdoings done by the kauravas. We on the other hand, hold on to negativities and forget the goodness of people.

One may wonder how did these thoughts occur to him? The answer lies in Dhritarashtra's act of sending his minister Sanjaya to the pāṇḍava's camp as a messenger. He tried to evade them from waging the war, by highlighting the dharma towards one's family, etc. Infact he was successful, because Yudhistira, Arjuna and Nakul falling easy prey to the advice, agreed to opt out of the war. Bhima remained neutral, but Sahadeva was persistent of waging the war, even if he had to go solo. To the benefit of the Pāṇḍavas, Sri Krishna saw through Dhritarashtra's dirty tactics, and sent back a message to him through Sanjaya that these words of wisdom would have been gladly accepted if they had come from someone who followed the same principles of dharma that he was trying to preach to the Pāṇḍavas. Thanks to Sri Krishna's intervention, Pāṇḍavas decided to wage the war of dharma. However, the damage was done - Dhritarashtra's words had sunk into Arjuna's mind, and peeped out now when the war was about to begin. He was now trying to make the all-knowing Sri Krishna see the evil of waging the war, by reiterating Dhritarashtra's words.

**katham(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 opines that even if the kauravas blinded by ignorance and greed, fail to see the consequences of war, the Pāṇḍavas who are able to discriminate the right vs wrong, should not venture into this sin of destruction of family and friends. Although the Pāṇḍavas and kauravas are on the warfield, ultimately they are family, and have common friends who are now arrayed to fight each other. Duryodhana had the exceptional skill of making alliance, and had made many kings his allies during the 13 years of Pāṇḍavas vanavasa. Many of the kings were friends of the Pāṇḍavas, yet were now obliged to fight on Duryodhana's side.

Our sanskriti has a saying that goes as follows:

**kimakaryam duratmanam - what is not possible for a sinner (duratma)?**

Duryodhana being a sinner is capable of doing anything. But the Pāṇḍavas are not sinners, hence Arjuna is contemplating on the consequences. His choice of word '**prapaśyad**' and stresses that they can clearly see the negative outcome, and hence must restrain from committing the sin of family destruction. Besides, he also addresses Sri Krishna as Janardana, implying that HE being the Master of the Universe should also be able to see the consequences.

Infact, Dritarashtra also knew the evil nature of his sons, and the goodness of the Pāṇḍavas. He was well aware that the Pāṇḍavas would abide by the elders' advice, while his own sons wouldn't. That was the reason he sent Sanjaya to the Pāṇḍavas, in a bid to prevent the war and the consequential death of his sons.

**1.40**

**kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti, kuladharmāḥ(s) sanātānāḥ,  
dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ(n) 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 was afraid that they would be responsible for the death of their great Chandravamshi clan that has a long heritage. It would lead to the destruction of dharma, and birth of adharma. **Dharma is akin to the light that dispels darkness. Adharma is the darkness which allows all evil to awaken.** When the light of dharma diminishes, adharma takes over and spreads around. The society will be destroyed by the evil sins.

**1.41**

**adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa, praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ,  
striṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya, jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ.1.41**

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.

As Arjuna gazes upon the battlefield, overwhelmed by the impending devastation, he voices a profound concern—not merely for the loss of lives, but for the collapse of dharma itself. He reflects,

“**adharmābhibhavāt**”— when adharma begins to dominate, when righteousness is pushed aside by the surge of unrighteous actions, an irreparable imbalance spreads through society.

In such times, “**praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ**”— the women of noble households are left vulnerable. With the protectors—the young warriors—marching into war, many never to return, countless women are rendered widows. And in their sorrow and helplessness, they are often left unguarded, dishonoured, and exposed to atrocities.

He continues, “**strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya**”— when these women are harmed, when their dignity is desecrated, the sanctity of family life begins to wither. “**jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ**”— and from this desecration arises **varṇa-saṅkara**, the intermingling of social orders in a way that distorts harmony and dismantles the structure of society.

Arjuna’s concern is not limited to mere lineage; he envisions the unraveling of an entire civilizational ethos. With **akṣauhiṇī** armies prepared on both sides, an ocean of young warriors are set to perish. It is not the elders who wage war, but the youth—the bearers of future generations. Their loss is not simply a loss of warriors, but a fracture in the spine of society.

The widowed women—countless in number—will carry not just their grief but the burden of broken homes, broken dreams, and broken traditions. And from these shattered fragments, **varṇa-saṅkara** will rise, distorting the delicate design of **varṇāśrama** dharma, shaking the very foundations upon which societal balance rests.

This is no abstract theory. Arjuna draws from the realities witnessed across ages and geographies. Even in the modern world, wars continue to bring the same sorrow. From Kargil to Kashmir, from conflicts in the West to turmoil in the Middle East—history bears testimony. Women are the first to suffer, their purity and peace disrupted in the cruelest of ways. The family system collapses. Traditions crumble.

And when traditions fall, **kula-kṣaya** begins—the destruction of entire familial lineages. No heir remains to carry forth the rituals, the sacred **samskāras**. No voice remains to sing the prayers of the ancestors. The living forget their duties; the dead remain unhonoured. Society, stripped of its moral compass, begins to lose its soul.

Thus, through these verses, Arjuna is not merely resisting war. He is foreseeing a spiritual catastrophe. For when the destruction of dharma is allowed to grow unchecked, when women are left unprotected, and when **varṇa-saṅkara** takes root, the consequence is not limited to the battlefield alone. The wound seeps into the womb of civilization itself, hollowing it from within.

## 1.42

**saṅkaro narakāyaiva, kulaghnānām(ñ) kulasya ca,  
patanti pitaro hyeṣām(ī), luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ.1.42**

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.

With a trembling heart and a vision far beyond the battlefield, Arjuna continues to express the unseen consequences of war. He speaks not only of the living, but also of those long departed—the **pitaraḥ**, the ancestors. When **varṇa-saṅkara** arises, he says, “**saṅkaro narakāyaiva**”— this social chaos leads not only to earthly ruin, but even to **naraka**, a hellish descent, for both the **kulaghnāḥ**—those

who destroy their lineages—and their entire **kula**.

Here, the concern stretches deep into the fabric of **sanātana dharma**. In this ancient tradition, ancestral reverence is not a mere ritual but a sacred bridge between generations. Through observances like **śrāddha**, **piṇḍa-dāna**, and the offering of **udaka**—pure water—families maintain a link with their forefathers, ensuring their spiritual well-being in other realms. Different regions may follow diverse customs, yet the essence remains the same: **mokṣa** for the ancestors through acts of remembrance and offering.

But when the foundation of family is shattered, when **kuladharmā** is lost due to war and the subsequent rise of **varṇa-saṅkara**, these sacred rites disappear. Arjuna laments, “**lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ**”—the offerings of **piṇḍa** (rice balls) and **udaka** (water libations) are forgotten. And in this forgetfulness, the **pitarāḥ** fall—they too suffer, deprived of the sustenance that only living descendants can provide through **dhārmic** observances.

This loss is not symbolic—it is real, sacred, and deeply painful. The grief of war does not end with the death of soldiers or the weeping of widows; it extends silently into realms unseen, where the ancestors await their rites, only to be left yearning. The karmic debt remains unpaid. And thus, not just individuals, but the entire lineage falls into disarray, bound to the cycle of sorrow.

Even in today’s world, the echoes of this truth resound. Wars may take on new forms, yet the consequences remain unchanged. The societal disintegration, the collapse of rituals, the vanishing of values—all reflect the same decay Arjuna feared. The loss is not just of loved ones—it is of the sacred order, of dharma itself.

And so, the lament continues—not as a cry of cowardice, but as a voice of conscience. When the fire of war consumes **kuladharmā**, it leaves behind not just ashes, but generations of spiritual starvation. This, Arjuna sees, is a loss far graver than any victory on the battlefield.

### 1.43

**doṣairetaiḥ(kh) kulaghnānām(ṣ), varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ,  
utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ(kh), kuladharmāśca śāśvatāḥ.1.43**

Through these evils bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste traditions and family customs of the killers of kinsmen get extinct.

Arjuna, gazing at the precipice of destruction, continues to voice the far-reaching consequences of war—not just in terms of lives lost, but in the collapse of time-honoured values. He says, “**doṣairetaiḥ kulaghnānām**”—by the faults and actions of those who destroy families, those responsible for this internal collapse, a deeper disorder begins to unfold.

These **kulaghnāḥ**, the destroyers of familial sanctity, give rise to **varṇa-saṅkara**—a mingling that blurs the spiritual and cultural framework laid down through millennia. “**varṇa-saṅkara-kāraiḥ**”—those born from such confusion, though innocent themselves, become bearers of an unintended consequence: the erosion of **jāti-dharmāḥ** and **kula-dharmāḥ**.

Arjuna laments that “**utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ**”—the sacred duties and **dhārmic** practices specific to each **jāti**—like the spiritual disciplines of a **brāhmaṇa**, or the martial duties of a **kṣatriya**—are gradually wiped out. What once thrived through generations, as part of a divine order, becomes diluted and lost.

And not only **jāti-dharmāḥ**, but “**kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ**”— the eternal family traditions, passed down like sacred flame from ancestors to descendants, are also destroyed. These were not customs born of convenience; they were **śāśvata**—eternal, inviolable, born from the very breath of dharma. They were upheld not merely for identity, but for inner evolution and harmony within society.

The implication is profound. When such traditions collapse, when **kuladharma** and **jātidharma** are no longer practiced or preserved, the very spirit of **sanātana** dharma begins to wither. And this decay is not abstract—it manifests in real lives, in forgotten rites, in lost values, and in a society adrift without its spiritual compass.

This is not a lament bound to scripture alone. Its reflection is seen even in contemporary times. Once-thriving cultural landscapes like Kashmir, once steeped in the refined traditions of **Paṇḍitas**, now carry scars of fragmentation. The traditions that once defined those communities have either vanished or are fighting to survive. The sacred is slowly silenced.

Thus, Arjuna does not merely see a war of arrows and swords—he sees a war against **śāśvata** dharma itself.

#### 1.44

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

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

Arjuna, deeply shaken, continues to express the unseen consequences of war—consequences not of bloodshed alone, but of spiritual and cultural devastation. He says, “**utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām**”— when the eternal **kula-dharma**, the sacred duties and traditions of families, are destroyed, then those people—**manuṣyāṇām**—are no longer just losing their present; they are cut off from the blessings of both ancestors and future generations.

He speaks of the terrifying aftermath: “**narake'niyataṁ vāso**”— they are destined to dwell in **naraka**—a state of unending sorrow and darkness. And not merely for a fixed time. **Aniyataṁ**—for an indefinite, unknowable period. Their descent into such realms, he says, is not mere conjecture. “**bhavatīty anuśuśruma**”— he has heard this truth from the **Ācāryas**, from the wise sages and **Mahātmās**. This is not opinion, but a wisdom passed down through the sacred oral tradition of **śruti**—that those who abandon or disrupt their **kula-dharma** end up severed from the spiritual merit that safeguards both the individual and their lineage.

This insight holds profound relevance even today. In a time when festivals like **Rāma Navamī** are celebrated in honour of **Bhagavān Rāma**, or during the sacred days of **Navarātri**, these rituals are not empty gestures but deeply rooted **kula-paramparā**. When such family traditions are followed, they become acts of **punya-karman**—good deeds that accumulate spiritual merit, blessings, and peace across generations.

But when these sacred acts are neglected—when the offerings of **śrāddha**, **pinda-dāna**, and **tarpana** are forsaken—what remains to uplift the soul after death? What bridge remains between generations? Arjuna points to this tragic void: that even the ancestors (**pitṛs**), who await these rites for their own liberation, are deprived and become restless. The breakdown of these family dharmas leads not only to societal chaos but to metaphysical suffering, reaching beyond the seen world.

Thus far, Arjuna has listed nearly nine cascading consequences of war and moral degradation:

- 1. Rise of adharma
- 2. Destruction of the family unit
- 3. Collapse of Vedic religious practices
- 4. Impurity among women (**striṣu duṣṭāsu**)
- 5. Birth of **varṇa-saṅkara**—social disorder
- 6. Decline in future generations
- 7. Disruption of ancestral offerings (**śrāddha, pinda-dāna**)
- 8. Suffering of ancestors
- 9. And ultimately, as this shloka emphasizes, fall into **naraka**—an indefinite spiritual downfall

These are not minor concerns. Arjuna warns that these are “**mahān pāpaḥ**”— great transgressions with irreversible consequences. They shake the very foundation of the **varṇāśrama** system, which was not built on hierarchy but on harmony and responsibility.

To lose **kula-dharma** is not just to lose custom—it is to lose identity, lineage, and divine connection. It is to orphan the soul from its roots. In his trembling voice, Arjuna does not merely resist war; he pleads for the preservation of dharma, for the continuity of the sacred, for the soul of society itself.

## 1.45

**aho bata mahatpāpaṃ(ñ), kartuṃ(ṽ) vyavasitā vayam,  
yadrājasukhalobhena, hantuṃ(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.

What a grievous sin we are poised to commit! Driven by the mere lure of royal pleasures, we stand prepared to slay our own kin.

There is a deep note of sorrow, shock, and introspection in Arjuna’s words. The term “**aho bata**” carries with it a profound emotional surge—a cry of anguish and disbelief. “**Aho**” expresses sheer shock; “**bata**” adds a heavy grief-laden tone. This isn’t just a moment of hesitation—it is the soul crying out in despair, wondering: Where are we heading? What path have we chosen, O Krishna?

Arjuna sees before him not a battle for victory, but a descent into darkness. **Mahat pāpam**—a colossal sin—looms before him. And what for? **Yad rājasukha lobhena**—for the fleeting pleasures of kingship. That greed has driven them to the edge of annihilating their own people—**svajanam**—their very own. And not merely contemplating it, but **udyatāḥ**—ready, armed, prepared.

The grief he expresses here is not ordinary sorrow—it is **viṣāda**, a deep spiritual melancholy. But why does this **viṣāda** become **Viṣādayoga**? Because this sorrow, this turmoil, leads to a profound internal churning in the presence of Bhagavān. It is not weakness; it is awakening.

Everyone, at some point, experiences **viṣāda**. It is a human condition. But Arjuna’s grief is different—it is rooted in concern for **dharma**, for the downfall of society, for the collapse of values. His fear is not personal loss. His weeping is not for power, wealth, or his own life. His tears are for the preservation of righteousness, for the sustenance of the societal framework. If he proceeds with war, **dharma** will perish not only from his family but across society. This is why his sorrow transforms into **Viṣādayoga**—a sorrow that becomes a gateway to the highest wisdom.

Bhagavān is beside him. Through that divine presence, his grief is examined, evaluated. The root of his sorrow is unveiled—it is the fear of **adharmā** rising, of society losing its moral compass. His concern is not for himself but for the world.

One may wonder—why is Arjuna so **pāpavīra**, so sensitive to sin? Because he recognizes a vital truth: whatever one receives in life is due to **puṇya**—past merits. The very chance to listen to the **Bhagavad Gītā**, to reflect on its essence, to sit in the company of wise souls—these are not coincidences. These are fruits of **puṇya**. Even the opportunity to be near a realized being, to receive their guidance, is the result of merit earned in previous births.

Arjuna is aware: had it not been for his **puṇya**, how could he have Bhagavān as his charioteer? That divine proximity is no ordinary event. And now, if he stains his soul with **pāpa**, he fears he might lose this divine association, this **bhagavat-sānidhya**. What he has received due to merit could vanish if sin increases in his account. That is his deepest fear—not hell, not rebirth, not dishonour—but separation from Bhagavān.

This sorrow is not like ordinary sorrow. When most people cry, it is for personal loss: *“My wealth, my health, my relationships, my business...”* But Arjuna weeps for society. He weeps for the decline of **dharma**. He weeps for **bhagavat-prāpti**—for the fear of losing that divine nearness. This is what transforms **viśāda** into **Viśādayoga**.

**If one must cry, then let it be like Arjuna's cry. If sorrow must come, let it come for the right reasons—for the nation, for righteousness, for the loss of values.**

Centuries later, a young boy named **Narayan**, who would become known as **Swāmī Rāmdās**, expressed a similar anguish. At the tender age of ten, he stood on a terrace and wept uncontrollably. The country was plagued by Mughal atrocities—**gauvadhā** was rampant, innocent people were slain, and women subjected to untold suffering. That child cried not for toys or sweets but for **dharma**. His mother, **Mā Rāṇūjī**, asked, *“Narayan, why do you cry?”* And he replied, *“I worry for this world, mother. Where is our society heading? What is the state of women? What is the state of values? Dharma is vanishing.”*

**“Chintā karato viśvāchī”**—he said, *“I am worried for the whole world.”* At an age when most children cry for play, he cried for the pain of society. Such is the power of a **viśāda** rooted in compassion and **dharma**.

Let the children of today be taught this—the depth of Arjuna's sorrow, the spiritual intensity of **Viśādayoga**. Not merely the worldly meanings of words and verses, but the soul behind them. Let them learn to feel for the collective, for **rāṣṭra**, for **dharma**, for values.

This is why Arjuna's sorrow stands apart—it is not selfish. It is a cry born from fear of **adharmā**, a deep, trembling grief that something sacred will be lost forever. It is this sincerity, this spiritual clarity, that transforms his **viśāda** into a path of awakening, into **Viśādayoga**.

As the discourse progresses, this very sorrow becomes the cradle from which the wisdom of the **Bhagavad Gītā** is born.

**yadi māmāpratīkāram, aśāstraṃ(m) śāstrapāṇayaḥ,  
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuḥ(s), tanme kṣemataraṃ(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.

If, unresisting and unarmed, I am slain on the battlefield by the weapon-bearing sons of **Dhṛtarāṣṭra**—then, even that would be far more auspicious for me.

Such is the state of inner despair and moral clarity that has dawned. The heart has reached a point where even death appears more peaceful than participation in what feels like **adharma**. Here, the use of **kṣemataraṃ** is crucial—it does not mean “just better,” but “far more peaceful,” “deeply preferable,” “most beneficial for the soul.”

A point comes when the external war becomes meaningless compared to the internal storm. And in that moment, he reflects: What is the point of raising weapons against my own kin? If I were to offer no resistance, if I stood bare-handed on this battlefield, and they—armed with weapons—struck me down, even that outcome would bring me more peace than engaging in this fratricidal war.

This is not cowardice. This is dharma speaking through helplessness. This is the voice of someone who values righteousness over life, who sees death as preferable to the killing of kin, who fears **adharma** far more than death itself.

He isn’t concerned about honour, glory, or victory. What weighs heavily on his heart is **adharma**—the moral collapse that war could bring. He is willing to become a sacrifice, a silent martyr, if that means he does not contribute to the downfall of values. He is prepared to die, but not to kill. "Let them strike me down," he thinks, "if that is their path. But I shall not raise my hand, not even to defend myself."

There is a spiritual intensity here. A complete surrender. This is not the cry of defeat—it is the culmination of a soul that sees no path forward without compromise. The very soul recoils from violence, even when justified. He sees no victory in victory. If dharma is to be upheld through non-resistance, then so be it.

And after saying this, what does he do?

This very thought becomes the turning point.

The shloka reveals the height of disillusionment—but also the depth of introspection. It shows a person ready to walk away from the world, if that is what it takes to remain true to their inner moral compass.

This is where **viśāda** reaches its climax, preparing the stage for divine wisdom.

**1.47**

**sañjaya uvāca  
evamuktvārjunaḥ(s) sañkhye, rathopastha upāviśat,  
visṛjya saśaraṃ(ñ) cāpaṃ(m), śokasaṃvignamānasaḥ.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.

Saṅjaya said: Thus, having spoken on the battlefield, Arjuna sat down on the seat of his chariot, abandoning his bow and arrows, his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.

In the heart of **Kurukṣetra**, amidst the echo of conches and the rumble of war drums, silence descends. For the one meant to lead the charge—mighty Arjuna—no longer stands with bow in hand. He has withdrawn. **Vissṛjya saśaram cāpam**—he casts away both his bow and arrows, symbols not only of warfare but of duty, legacy, and righteous action. They fall—not from his hands alone, but from his will.

**Śokasaṃvigna-mānasaḥ**—his heart is burdened, flooded with sorrow, torn by grief and inner conflict. And so, in that fragile state, he sinks into the chariot itself, retreating not just from the battle ahead, but from within.

This is where the **Arjuna Viṣāda Yoga**—the first chapter—draws to a close. It leaves the listener in a space of heavy stillness, face to face with the reality of human despair. For even the greatest warrior, one raised on the ideals of courage and dharma, collapses when the mind falters.

And here lies a profound truth: the mightiest strength a human possesses is not physical, but **mānasika śakti**—mental strength. When the mind loses clarity, when **mano-bal** wavers, every other strength—be it skill, power, or valor—crumbles. Arjuna, though armed and trained, is rendered powerless because his inner resolve is lost.

Let this stand as a mirror to the human condition. The battle may be external, but the collapse begins within.

And at such a moment, what might one expect from Bhagavān seated beside him? To offer comfort, perhaps, a kind word, a cup of water? But Bhagavān does not begin with consolation. He begins with truth. What follows in the **second adhyāya, Sāṅkhyā Yoga**, is not gentle solace, but a piercing call to awaken. A direct, unwavering nudge toward wisdom.

This second chapter shall unfold not merely as an answer to Arjuna's sorrow, but as the very essence of the Bhagavad Gītā—a spiritual map, compact yet complete, holding within it the essence of **karma**, **jñāna**, and bhakti.

And thus, the first chapter—**Arjuna Viṣāda Yoga**—comes to a close, not with victory or defeat, but with an inner surrender that sets the stage for divine discourse. A chapter that reminds all seekers:

**The greatest strength of a human being is the strength of the mind.**

**The path of dharma demands not just action, but clarity. Not just weapons, but wisdom.**

## Questions and Answers

**Ashish Ji**

**Q:** When I heard Arjuna's arguments in the Vishāda Yoga chapter – the consequences of war such as the destruction of family traditions (kula-dharma), rise of varṇa-saṅkara, suffering of women, disruption in ancestral rites – all of it seemed valid and real. There wasn't any flaw in what he said. He

was right. So how was it resolved later? Should I wait until the 18th chapter for that?

**A:** It's a very valid observation. Arjuna's concerns weren't wrong – they were deeply emotional and based on what he had been taught about Dharma. But what we must notice is this: when a person is emotionally overwhelmed, even Dharma is seen through a distorted lens. To explain this, let me share a simple analogy.

If a judge is in court and an underaged child commits a crime, the judge may give a lenient sentence. But if the judge's own child stands in that courtroom as a criminal the next day, suddenly the mind is flooded with compassion, hesitation, and thoughts of second chances. The point is – our judgement changes based on who is standing in front of us.

That's what happened to Arjuna. His intellect was clouded not by logic, but by attachment. Suddenly, all the understanding of Dharma and Adharma he had was overridden by emotion, because his own loved ones stood on the battlefield.

**Q:** So, is everything resolved only in Chapter 18?

**A:** Not quite. The answers are scattered all across the Bhagavad Gītā, chapter by chapter. If we do a deep study, every one of Arjuna's concerns is addressed thoroughly by Bhagavān.

The real beauty of the Gītā lies in how Śrī Kṛṣṇa doesn't just give counter-arguments. He removes the very root of ignorance – the cause of Arjuna's confusion – and kindles the divine light of wisdom from within. That's why Arjuna's despair (Vishāda) doesn't just vanish instantly. It is gradually dissolved as each layer of ignorance is peeled away through the teachings.

### **Subodh Ji**

**Q:** Did Dhṛtarāṣṭra hear the entire Bhagavad Gītā? And if so, what was his reaction?

**A:** A very important question. Yes, Dhṛtarāṣṭra did hear it – Sanjaya narrated the whole dialogue to him. But whether he truly listened or understood it is a different matter.

You see, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was not only physically blind but also intellectually blind. Let me share an incident: Once he sent Sanjaya to the Pāṇḍavas to persuade them and attempt some psychological manipulation. When Sanjaya returned, Dhṛtarāṣṭra told him, "I'm too tired. Just tell me the main thing tomorrow in the court."

Even when Sanjaya began the narration later, all Dhṛtarāṣṭra wanted to know was: "Was Śrī Kṛṣṇa present? Was Arjuna there?" And the moment he heard Kṛṣṇa was there, he became extremely restless. Why? Because he knew – his plans to brainwash the Pāṇḍavas wouldn't work on Kṛṣṇa. That night, he couldn't sleep.

When he told Vidura about his sleeplessness, Vidura wisely said, "Sleep evades the mind that has sinned." That's when Vidura began sharing the timeless Vidura Nīti – a treasure trove of wisdom. This became one of the five jewels of the Mahābhārata. But despite listening to such wisdom, Dhṛtarāṣṭra remained unchanged. Even after hearing the entire Gītā, he still asked, "Did Arjuna get up and fight or not?"

This is why Sanjaya, at the very end, confidently declares:

"Wherever there is Yogeshwara Kṛṣṇa, and Dhanurdhara Arjuna, there will surely be victory, prosperity, and righteousness."

That was Sanjaya's faith. But Dhṛtarāṣṭra – despite being in the presence of such wisdom and saints –

remained unmoved. Why? Because transformation doesn't come merely from hearing. One must be receptive.

The Pañcha Ratna (Five Jewels) of the Mahābhārata. They are:

- 1. **Yākṣa Praśna** – the riddle-filled wisdom exchange between Yudhiṣṭhira and the Yakṣa.
- 2. **Vidura Nīti** – the insightful moral teachings of Vidura.
- 3. **Sanat Sujātīyam** – a philosophical discourse that touches on immortality and Brahma-jñāna.
- 4. **Bhagavad Gītā** – the divine song of wisdom spoken by Bhagavān to Arjuna.
- 5. **Viṣṇu Sahasranāma** – the 1,000 names of Viṣṇu revealed by Bhīṣma Pitāmaha .

Each of these is a profound spiritual gem and offers deep guidance. As Swami-ji says – these must be taught to children as part of their foundational wisdom.

### Sambhu Ji

**Q:** You mentioned that out of the five Pāṇḍavas, three were initially willing to avoid war. Bhīma was neutral, Yudhiṣṭhira said he would fight if needed, but Sahadeva was determined to fight no matter what. Why was he so adamant? Was there any reason?

**A:** No specific reason is mentioned. Sahadeva wasn't affected at all by Sanjaya's brainwashing. That's the only explanation. While the others were also sāt̥tvic by nature, Sahadeva had an extremely strong and steady intellect. He was unmoved by manipulation or sentiment.

Some people are like that – very clear-headed. They don't dwell too much on the past or allow emotional turbulence to shake their convictions. Sahadeva's inner clarity kept him aligned with Dharma, and he remained determined to fight for it.

**Q:** What does striyāḥ dṛṣṭiḥ mean?

**A:** Strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya... refers to the suffering of women after wars. Wars leave many widows behind, and those women face numerous atrocities. Often, societal values degrade, and their chastity and dignity are compromised. That's what the term implies – it's about the decline of moral fabric and safety for women in a war-torn society.

The session concludes with prayer and chanting Hanuman Chalisa.

**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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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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