

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Y7j8i6yFf6Y>

When Compassion Overpowered Valour

The first chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Arjuna Vishāda Yoga - The Yoga of Despondency or Dejection.**

Today's session began with auspicious songs from the Geeta Parivar, devotional bhajans, Hanuman Chālisā, lighting of the lamp, prayers to Śrī Bhagavān, and obeisance at the Guru's feet.

In the last session we discussed the conditions of that time, the warlike atmosphere and the state of mind in which Arjuna found himself.

In reality, Bhagavān's teaching begin in the second chapter, with the verse

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः॥2.11॥

Śrī Bhagavān said: While you speak words of wisdom, you are mourning for that which is not worthy of grief. The wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead.

However, before reaching that point, it is necessary to grasp the background and the frame of mind in which Arjuna stood. Why did Bhagavān have to instruct Arjuna? What transformation took place in Arjuna as a result of this teaching? To answer these questions, it becomes essential to first understand the situation in which Arjuna was placed.

Arjuna's mind was clouded with doubt and confusion. Therefore, HE Himself, with love and compassion, had to guide him and draw him out of that inner turmoil. That is why this opening chapter, which sets the stage, holds great significance.

The text begins with Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya seated in the royal court. Sanjaya, having been granted divine vision by his Guru Sage Vedavyasa ji, was able to see the events on the distant battlefield and also hear the conversations taking place there. His task was to narrate, in detail, everything that was happening on the battlefield to King Dhritarashtra.

The very first question Dhritarashtra asked Sanjaya was:

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥१॥

“My sons and the sons of Pandu, assembled on the field of Kurukshetra, what are they doing, O Sanjaya?”

This question itself, filled with the possessive expression “my sons”, marks the beginning of the Gītā. In fact, the root cause of the war lies in Dhritarashtra himself.

In reply, Sanjaya began to describe the armies on both sides; the description Duryodhana gave to his teacher Dronacharya about the Pandava formation and those fighting for himself, and how Bhīṣma pitāmaha, the grandsire, blew his mighty conch with a lion-like roar. Following his call, various war instruments began to sound, announcing the commencement of battle.

Now, just imagine within an army of hundreds of thousands, there would have been thousands of musicians playing these instruments, and thousands of such instruments echoing all at once. And these were no ordinary instruments. Conches, drums, kettledrums, and war-horns; when all of these resounded together in countless numbers, what a thunderous uproar it must have been! We were told to place ourselves on that battlefield with our mind’s eye, and feel that mighty roar echoing through the plains.

It is into this tumultuous and overwhelming atmosphere that the two central figures of the Mahabharata - **Śrī Krishna and Arjuna**, make their entrance.

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.

Sanjaya described to Dhritrashtra, that seated in a magnificent chariot yoked with white horses (**śvetairhayairyukte**), Śrī Krishna and Arjuna made their grand entry into the battlefield. This was no ordinary chariot. It was a celestial gift granted to Arjuna directly by Agni, the god of fire. Along with it, Arjuna also possessed the divine Gāṇḍīva bow, likewise bestowed upon him by Agni Dev. How could a chariot in which the Bhagavān Himself was seated ever be considered ordinary?

Here, it is worthy to state that to truly understand the Bhagavad Gītā, one must try to place oneself in Arjuna’s position. Arjuna was no common warrior. He had performed severe austerities, undergone rigorous discipline, and devoted day and night to mastering the science of weapons and warfare. Such a hero, having earned his prowess through relentless effort, could never have entered the battlefield in a mere common chariot. That is why the scripture describes the chariot as mighty and a resplendent chariot (**mahati syandane sthitau**).

Here, the word “*sthitau*” is significant. In Sanskrit, unlike other languages such as Marathi, Hindi, or English, which recognise singular and plural, there are three numbers - singular (*ekavachana*), dual (*dvivachana*), and plural (*bahuvachana*). Here, *sthitau* is a dual form, referring precisely to **two persons seated together** - Mādhava Himself, and the Pandava, Arjuna, the son of Pandu.

Both of them then blew their **divine conch**. At this point, we must also keep in mind Arjuna’s state of mind. Sitting in the celestial chariot with the Bhagavān by his side, Arjuna entered the battlefield. Having heard Bhishma’s thunderous conch and the deafening blare of war instruments all around, Arjuna too raised his divine conch and blew it in reply.

This act of his was not casual. It signified that he was prepared, that his heart was set for battle. On the field of Kurukshetra, it was Mādhava who first blew HIS conch, and immediately after, Arjuna followed. Thus together, they declared their readiness for war.

1.15

pāñcajanyaṃ(m) hr̥ṣīkeśo, devadattaṃ(n) dhanañjayaḥ, pauṇḍraṃ(n) dadhmau mahāsaṅkhaṃ(m), bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ. 1.15

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

Sanjaya further told King Dhritarashtra the names of the conches blown by Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and Arjuna. He said that Bhagavān blew HIS conch named **Pāñchajanya**, while Arjuna blew his divine conch called **Devadattaṃ**.

Here, Krishna is addressed as **Hṛiṣhīkeśha**. The word is formed from *Hrishika* meaning “senses” and *Isha* meaning “lord or master.” Thus, Hṛiṣhīkeśha signifies “the Lord of the senses” - **the one who has complete mastery and control over all the senses**.

Similarly, Arjuna is addressed as Dhanañjaya. There is a story behind this name. During the *Rajasuya Yajna*, Arjuna had collected immense wealth and treasures from many kingdoms and brought them back for the sacrifice. Hence, he came to be known as **Dhanañjayaḥ - the conqueror and gatherer of great wealth**.

Along with Krishna and Arjuna, Bhima is also mentioned here. He is called **Bhīma-karmā**, meaning one who performs mighty and formidable deeds with ease. Another epithet used for him is **Vrikodara**. The word literally means “one whose stomach holds the fire called *Vrika*.” Bhima was famous for his tremendous physical strength, his rigorous exercise, and also his enormous appetite, hence the apt name Vrikodara. Bhima sounded his great conch called **Paundra**, worthy of his mighty stature.

Thus, when Bhagavān Krishna, Arjuna, and Bhima blew their conches, the other sons of Pandu and the entire Pandava army also joined in, sounding their own conches in unison.

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.

In this verse, in the very presence of Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya addressed Yudhishtira as **Rājā (King)**. Just as he had earlier used the title Rājā for Duryodhana, in the second shloka, in the same way, he now applied the same word to Yudhishtira.

In truth, the rightful claim to the throne belongs to Yudhishtira. Even if the kingdom was not physically in his hands at that moment, he was still the true king by right. That is why Sanjaya said that King Yudhishtira blew his conch named **Ananta-vijaya**.

Nakul then blew his conch named **Sughoṣha**, and Sahadeva blew his conch named **Maṇipuṣpaka**.

At this point, a natural question arises in our minds: What is the significance of knowing the names of all these conches? The answer lies in understanding the atmosphere of the battlefield. The Mahabharata is here describing the intense scene where all the warriors, on every side, are declaring their readiness for war. Each one sounds his conch as a mark of preparation and determination.

Arjuna has blown his conch. Yudhishtira, Nakul, and Sahadeva have blown theirs. In the same way, all the others too sounded their conches. The meaning is clear - **everyone has come to the battlefield fully prepared to fight.**

1.17, 1.18

**kāśyaśca parameṣhvāsaḥ(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.

Herein, Sanjaya called Dhritarashtra the “Ruler of the earth (**pṛthivī-pate**).” The real reason for this appellation was to remind him of his duties as the ruler of the country.

The word kāśhya refers to the **King of Kashi**. For him, a special epithet is used - **parameṣhvāsaḥ** - *Parama* meaning supreme or excellent and *Ishvas* meaning bow. Thus, parameṣhvāsaḥ means “the wielder of the supreme bow.” In other words, the King of Kashi, bearing his most excellent bow, stood ready for battle.

Alongside him was the great warrior (**mahā-rathaḥ**) **śhikhaṇḍī**, as well as **Drupada’s son Dhṛiṣṭadyumna**, the brother of Draupadi. Also present was **King Virāṭa**, in whose court the Pandavas had once sought refuge during their exile in disguise.

Then there was **Sātyaki**, who was described as **chāparājitaḥ - the one who is never defeated**. It is noteworthy that Sātyaki was in fact a disciple of Arjuna himself.

All of these warriors, mighty and renowned, blew their respective conches, filling the battlefield with their resounding calls. **King Drupada**, the father of Draupadi, along with her five sons, all sounded their conches. So too did **Abhimanyu**, the valiant son of Subhadra. Because of his great strength and prowess in battle, he is given the title **mahā-bāhuḥ, the one with mighty arms**.

In this way, all these noble warriors blew their conches, each distinct and powerful, declaring that the Pāṇḍavas were fully prepared for war.

Sanjaya goes on to describe to Dhritarashtra what the effect of that terrifying sound was.

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.

Sanjaya told Dhritarashtra that such was the terrifying sound of the war conches on the battlefield that it seemed as though both the heavens and the earth were completely filled with that echo. For the sound of these conches, a special expression is used: **tumulo abhyanunādayan** - a tumultuous, thunderous, and terrifying roar.

He further added that the sound was so overwhelming that the heavens and the earth themselves seemed to reverberate and tremble, filled entirely with its echo; and this very sound **pierced the hearts (hṛdayāni) of the sons of Dhritarashtra (dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām)**, shattering their courage (**vyadārayat**) and filling them with fear.

The very purpose of the war conch is to inspire courage and enthusiasm among warriors. For some, it awakens new energy. Those who stand on the side of truth feel their zeal for battle grow even stronger. But those who have come with false motives, with sinful thoughts, and who stand on the side of untruth, their minds remain restless and fearful.

Here Sanjaya appears as the very model of a true journalist. Even when reporting to his king, he does not mix truth with flattery in order to please him. He does not hesitate; he reports the facts exactly as they are. His words come from a pure and transparent heart.

By contrast, in ordinary times we often see many journalists shaping their reports according to what pleases the ruler or the government of the day. But a journalist must always remain impartial.

At the very end of the Bhagavad Gītā, Sanjaya himself declares the outcome of the war - who is destined to be victorious. He speaks this with a heart free of deceit, for Sanjaya is pure in spirit.

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,

The word **“atha”** is used to mark the beginning of something significant. Sanjaya narrated that upon seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra drawn up in battle array, kapi-dhwajaḥ, i.e., Arjuna picked up his bow in readiness to fight.

Before we see what Arjuna actually said to Bhagavān, let us pause for a moment to reflect on how he came to be known as **Kapidhwajah**, or he whose chariot bears the emblem of the mighty Vanara, Hanuman Ji, upon it.

Arjuna's chariot's banner bore the image of Hanuman Ji, seated gloriously upon it. Imagine, then, how divine that chariot must have been! For seated as the charioteer was **Sri Hari, Bhagavān Krishna Himself**, and upon the banner was **Hara, Bhagavān Rudra in the form of Hanuman Ji**. Hanuman Ji is regarded as an incarnation of Rudra. Thus, with Hari guiding the reins and Hara protecting from above, what could be more celestial than Arjuna's chariot?.

Now Arjuna lifted his great bow and spoke:

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.

Sanjaya continued, describing to Dhritarashtra what happened next. He said, Arjuna, having lifted his bow and arrows in readiness for battle, spoke to Bhagavān Krishna. He addressed HIM as **Mahī-pate - 'King of the Earth'**, and requested HIM to place his chariot in between the two armies (**senayor ubhayor madhye**).

This was Arjuna's request. In a battlefield, mighty warriors always take their stand at the very front. Those who are weak or fearful of death try to hide their chariots somewhere within the army's formation. Arjuna was a *maharathi*, a supreme warrior. That is why he asked **Achyuta** to drive his chariot right to the middle, facing both armies.

This marks the very beginning of Arjuna's dialogue in the Bhagavad Gītā. The Gītā is essentially a conversation between Arjuna and Bhagavān Krishna, and this is where the dialogue begins.

1.22

**yāvadetānnirikṣe'haṃ(ṅ), 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.

The word **yāvat** means **"as long as" or "until."** Arjuna was essentially telling Bhagavān to take the chariot amidst the two armies - until he carefully observed the enemy's army and determined with whom he must fight.

This was a *dharmayuddha* - a righteous war. No one fought without cause, and the war was governed by rules. In battle, the expectation is that a warrior should face an equal - chariot-warrior against chariot-warrior, great warrior against great warrior. Strength must be matched with strength. That is the rightful way of war. It was not permitted for one sitting in a chariot to strike down anyone at random. Nevertheless, the Mahābhārata war saw many violations of these rules, such as the killing of Abhimanyu in the cakravyūha, where many warriors together fought against one lone youth, a blatant breach of the code.

Arjuna was determined to fight only in accordance with the rules. Hence, he said that he must carefully see who exactly stood against him in battle. There is also a deeper meaning here: Arjuna was the foremost of warriors, unmatched by any other. Yet even so, this great war was being waged. Therefore, he wished to see for himself who was to be his opponent and to be assured of the reality before him.

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."

Arjuna said that he wished to observe (**Nirikṣye aham - I desire to observe**) all those who, motivated by the desire for war, had assembled in the enemy's ranks to fight for the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and for Duryodhana's victory.

As we noted earlier, Duryodhana had a talent for winning people over to his side. By his diplomacy and alliances, he had drawn many rulers to strengthen his forces. Those driven by selfish motives gather quickly, and Duryodhana's camp became a haven for such alliances. Some great warriors, like Droṇācārya, had joined under compulsion (arthasya puruṣo dāsaḥ), bound by dependence on wealth and position. Others, like the grandsire Bhīṣma, had come to uphold their vows, for whom the principle "life may go, but a pledge must never be broken" was absolute.

Arjuna desired to observe all such warriors who had assembled for these reasons. Thus, he requested Bhagavān to place his chariot in the midst between the two armies.

1.24

sañjaya uvāca evamukto hr̥ṣīkeśo, 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

Guḍākeśa is an adjective for Arjuna. Guḍa means sleep, and īśa means master. Thus, **Guḍākeśa is "one who has mastered sleep or one who can sleep when he wishes and remain awake when he wishes.** Just as control over the senses is essential, mastery over sleep is also important.

Arjuna had attained this through rigorous discipline and tireless effort. He had spent many nights awake, practicing archery in the darkness, training himself with utmost perseverance.

Hṛṣīkeśa means "the master of the senses." **Interestingly here, the master of sleep (Arjuna) is addressing the master of the senses (Śrī Kṛṣṇa).**

Sanjaya told Dhritrashtra that in response, Hṛṣīkeśa positioned Arjuna's chariot in the midst of the two armies.

1.25

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

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

According to Arjuna's request, Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed his chariot in the middle of the two armies.

Here it is important to note the precise spot where Bhagavān stationed it. HE deliberately positioned Arjuna's chariot right before the great warriors of the Kaurava army - before Grandsire Bhīṣma, Ācārya Droṇa, and the many other mighty fighters (**mahī-kṣhitām**) who stood prepared for battle.

Then, turning to Arjuna, HE spoke a single word: "**Paśya - Behold.**"

In the first chapter of the Gītā, this is the only utterance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Yet in that one word, he accomplished all that was necessary. Now let us see who it was that appeared before Arjuna's eyes on the battlefield.

1.26

tatrāpaśyatsthitānpārthaḥ(ph), pitṛnatha pitāmahān, ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛn, putrānpautrānsakhīmstathā. 1.26

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.

Arjuna has several names, all of which depict some or other virtue. In this Shloka Śrī Bhagavān called Arjuna as **Pārtha**, meaning the son of Pṛthā, another name of Kunti, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas.

Arjuna looked upon his grandsires (**pitāmahān**), his teachers (**ācāryān**), his maternal uncles (**mātulān**), fathers (**pitṛin**) and sons (**putrān**), brothers (**bhrātṛin**), uncles, and grandsons (**pautrān**).

In other words, all those gathered on the battlefield, kinsmen, elders, teachers, and friends, were bound together by ties of family and affection. Yet here they stood, divided into opposing armies, prepared to fight one another unto death. What struck him most was that on both sides of the battlefield stood only his near and dear ones, all prepared to fight.

Until this point, Arjuna's state of mind had been very different. When Bhīṣma blew his conch, Arjuna had confidently answered with his own. Sitting proudly in his divine chariot, he had appeared on the battlefield in full readiness. As the war drums sounded, Arjuna had taken up his celestial bow and arrows, prepared for combat. Indeed, so eager was he that he even asked the Bhagavān to place his chariot between the two armies, so that he might see who were fit to fight against him, who stood as his equals in strength.

But at that very moment, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa placed the chariot in the midst of the two armies, directly before Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya, and the other revered elders, something shifted within him. A profound change came over his heart, and he sank into deep despondency. What was it that so altered Arjuna's spirit that he fell into *viśāda*—grief and dejection?

1.27

śvaśurānsuhṛdaścaiva, senayorubhayorapi, tānsamīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ(s), sarvānbandhūnavasthitān. 1.27

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

sorrow.

In both armies, some were fathers-in-law (**śhvaśhurān**), others sons-in-law, some were well-wishers (**suhṛida**) and some friends (**sakhīm**).

Beholding his own relatives and dear ones ready to fight against him, Arjuna was overcome with sorrow (**paryākṛpayā āviṣṭaḥ**). A deep sense of compassion arose in his heart toward all the warriors assembled, and because of that compassion he sank into grief. As this feeling of sorrow welled up, the spirit of valour within him slipped away, leaving him faint and powerless.

He then said to Bhagavān that on seeing his own kinsmen and companions, eager for battle, his strength diminished, and he felt weak.

1.28

**kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo, viṣḍannidamabravīt,
arjuna uvāca
dṛṣṭvemaṃ(m) svajanaṃ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, yuyutsum(m) samupasthitam. 1.28**

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

At this moment, a clear change is seen in Arjuna's mental state. His heart, filled with deep compassion, became overwhelmed with grief. The word **viṣāda** refers precisely to such a condition of sorrow and dejection.

When we hear of the death of an acquaintance, we feel sadness. If the deceased is a close relative, the sorrow is even greater. But when the loss is of someone deeply beloved, the news of their death plunges a person into such grief that he may even forget his duties, losing all awareness of himself. This state of profound despondency is called viṣāda. That is why this chapter is named Arjuna-viṣāda-yoga - The Yoga of Arjuna's Despondency.

Arjuna, stricken with grief, was shaken and sorrowful. Yet it is often in moments of deepest pain that the remembrance of the Bhagavān arises. The word yoga means "union" or "connection." Thus, through his despondency, Arjuna was in fact drawn nearer to HIM. His sorrow itself became a form of yoga, the very cause that brought him to receive the profound teachings from Śrī Bhagavān.

Sañjaya said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that Arjuna, overcome with grief, spoke the following words.

1.29

**sīdanti mama gātrāṇi, mukhaṃ(ñ) ca pariśuṣyati,
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 said that on seeing his own kinsmen (**imam svajanam dṛṣṭvā**) assembled in the battlefield, eager to fight (**yuyutsum samupasthitam**), his condition had changed. He described his state by saying that his limbs fail him (**sīdanti mama gātrāṇi**); his mouth has become dry (**mukhaṃ pariśuṣhyati**); his

throat is parched; his body trembles (**vepathuh**); and, horripilation (**śharīre roma-harṣhaśh**) - (the hair standing on end) had seized him. Overcome with fear and grief, his body had grown stiff.

What a strange state this is for such a warrior! Arjuna, who had come fully prepared for battle, who had never been defeated, how could he suddenly fall into such weakness? Saint Dnyāneshwar recalls how even Bhagavān śiva tested Arjuna once by engaging him in battle. There too, Arjuna emerged victorious. And that very Arjuna now found himself completely overcome. He explained how he could have reached that state of despair with a beautiful analogy.

तेथ मनीं गजबज जाहली । आणि आवैसी कृपा आली ।तेणें अपमानें निघाली । वीरवृत्ति ॥ 185 ॥
जिया उत्तम कुळींचिया होती । आणि गुणलावण्य आथी ।तिया आणिकींते न साहति । सुतेजपणें ॥ 186 ॥

Imagine a man who has a noble wife, refined and virtuous. If that man brings another woman into the house, the wife cannot endure it. She feels deeply dishonoured, and in that very moment her dignity deserts her.

In the same way, Arjuna's innate nature was one of heroic valour.

He grew up embodying the essence of a warrior. But as soon as compassion entered his heart, valour refused to remain. Heroism cannot dwell alongside compassion. It feels dishonoured and departed.

Arjuna had not deliberately invited compassion; it surged naturally upon seeing his own kith and kin before him. Heroism does not dwell alongside such compassion; thus, when compassion filled him, his heroic spirit departed. Under the weight of this compassion, Arjuna's limbs weakened, and his whole being seemed to collapse.

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.

Arjuna further added, his bow, the Gāṇḍīva, is slipping from his hands (**gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṃsate hastā**); he is unable even to hold it. His skin burnt all over (**tvak paridahyate**), and he found it difficult to stand steady any longer (**śhaknomy avasthātum**), as his mind was in a quandary and whirling in confusion (**bhramatīva manaḥ**).

Imagine such a supreme archer, the one who never let the Gāṇḍīva leave his grip, now said, he could not even hold his bow. Seeing his own kinsmen standing before him, Arjuna's state changes in an instant. His heart was overwhelmed with compassion, and his mind was in confusion.

Such situations sometimes arise in our own lives as well, when the mind becomes clouded and we feel utterly weak and helpless.

Dnyāneshwar Maharaj gives a wonderful description of Arjuna, reminding us of his stupendous valour -

ज्याने संग्रामि हर जिंकला । निवास कवट्यांचा संहार केला ।
तोही अर्जुन मोहे ग्रासला । क्षणामध्ये ।।

"The one who defeated even Bhagavān śiva in battle, who destroyed mighty demons - that very Arjuna, within a single moment, was overcome by delusion."

Such was Arjuna's greatness. And yet here, he was overcome by attachment to his own people, his near and dear ones. In this delusion, Arjuna even forgot his true nature, his heroic spirit.

To explain this, Dnyāneshwar Maharaj offered an exquisite image:

जैसा भ्रमर भेदि कोडे। हवे ते काष्ट कोरडे।
परी तोही सापडे। कोवळ्या कलिकेत।।

A bumblebee is so powerful that it can bore holes into dry wood. But when it is drawn to the sweet nectar of a lotus flower, it becomes completely enchanted. At sunset, when the lotus closes its petals, that powerful bee gets trapped inside. Though it has the strength to pierce hardwood, it will not cut through the delicate lotus petals because it is intoxicated by the fragrance and sweetness.

तेथे प्राणा सहित मुकेल पण चिरणार नाहीं ते कमल दल।

So strong is its infatuation that it would rather die inside than break free.

This is the nature of delusion. And this is exactly what happened to Arjuna. The mighty warrior, the unrivalled archer, became bound by attachment. As soon as compassion entered his heart, his heroic spirit abandoned him. He forgot his true nature. His body trembled, his bow slipped, his strength failed.

Now, in the next session, we shall see what further words Arjuna speaks to the Bhagavān. For now, let us pause and reflect upon the transformation that has come over Arjuna! From what he was when he arrived on the battlefield to what he has now become.

Thus, with this, today's discourse concluded by offering it to Gurudev's feet.

Questions & Answers

Aggarwal Ji

Question: In the first chapter, the dialogue is between Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya.

How is it that Sanjaya also narrates Arjuna's dialogue?

Answer: Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya are seated in the royal palace. By his divine vision, Sanjaya can see the events on the battlefield and also hear the conversations. So, when Arjuna tells Bhagavān to place the chariot in front of the great warriors, or when he expresses his helplessness, and when HE positioned the chariot between both armies and asked Arjuna to Behold, Sanjaya narrates it to Dhritarashtra as "Arjuna said this" or "Bhagavān said that to Arjuna." In this way, a coherent sequence of the story is maintained. Sanjaya acts as the link that connects the chain of narration.

Question: Is the Bhagavad Gītā written in the past tense or the present tense?

Answer: The very first verse of the first chapter begins with "Dhritarashtra said," which is in the past tense. But Sanjaya's narration of events is in the present tense. Although the events took place in the past, the narration is in the present tense.

Even in our own lives, when we ask about something, we may ask in the past tense ("what happened?"), But the person narrating generally replies in the present tense. So, both tenses are used in the narrative.

Sohan Ji

Question: Why can't we say "the one who wins is the real conqueror" (*jo jeeta wahi Sikandar*) in the case of the Mahabharata war?

Answer: The Mahabharata war was a *Dharma Yuddha* - a righteous war. Even though the commander of the Pāṇḍavas' army was Dhrishtadyumna, the kingship after victory was to be given to Yudhishtira, since he was the eldest and rightful heir. The Allied armies had joined the war to support this very cause.

Question: How did Sanjaya dare to call Duryodhana *durbuddhe* (evil-minded) in front of Dhritarashtra?

Answer: Sanjaya was a man of integrity. With the gift of divine vision, he had been appointed to report truthfully whatever was happening on the battlefield. He discharged this duty faithfully. In plain and fearless words, he narrated every event, every detail of the atmosphere, exactly as it was. The word *durbuddhe* was used by Arjuna while speaking of the unrighteous actions against Duryodhana. Sanjaya just repeated Arjuna's words before Dhritarashtra, without alteration. A true reporter must be as fearless and unbiased as Sanjaya. In fact, journalists, often referred to as the "fifth pillar" of democracy, have a significant role in society. Unfortunately, many today have compromised integrity. If they follow the example of Sanjaya, the country will progress much further.

Vidyasagar Ji

Question: Is it right or wrong to recite hymns like *Kanakadhara Stotra* for fulfilling material desires?

Answer: Reciting hymns even with material desires (*sākām bhakti*) is not wrong. Especially for householders, such worship is quite natural. For example, chanting the *Kanakadhara Stotra* for financial prosperity is acceptable. When these hymns are recited with correct pronunciation, they bring benefit. If a householder chants the Lakshmi Stotra for the continuous blessings of Goddess Lakshmi, it is surely beneficial. There is nothing wrong with worshipping Mata Lakshmi or Mata Saraswati while fulfilling household duties.

However, if one tries to gain wealth through unrighteous means or by misuse of power, then such worship becomes meaningless. *Dharma* also means duty. Worship done with the foundation of dharma bears fruit, while superficial worship does not. The worship of the Bhagavad Gita is especially fruitful, since it aims at *moksha* (liberation)—the highest goal beyond *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama*.

Question: From whom did Arjuna receive divine weapons?

Answer: Through rigorous penance, effort, and constant practice, Arjuna received divine weapons from many deities—Indra, Agni, and Bhagavān Shiva, among others. His example shows that students, too, should learn the value of hard work. In fact, *tapasya* (penance) here means dedicated study. For students, study itself is the greatest tapasya.

Priyanka Ji

Question: Is it necessary to always take the side of truth?

Answer: Yes, one must always side with the truth. *Sanatana Dharma* teaches: *Satyam bruyat, priyam bruyat* - speak the truth, but do it pleasantly. Do not speak falsehood to appease someone.

In history, Shivaji Maharaj sometimes had to resort to words that were not literally true, but were from the presence of mind. For example, before meeting Afzal Khan, Shivaji Maharaj praised him and said, "We are afraid of you." In reality, this was not true, but it was necessary for the situation. Such discretion comes from awakened intelligence (*viveka*). Similarly, Krishna awakened Arjuna's *viveka buddhi* through the teachings of the Gītā.

Prakash Ji

Question: Why was the Bhagavad Gītā told only to Arjuna? Why not to Yudhishtira, who was known for his righteousness?

Answer: The bond between Krishna and Arjuna was very unique. They were related, but more than that, they were close friends. HE would often call Arjuna **Anagha** (sinless one). Among all the Pandavas, Bhagavān had special affection for Arjuna. Just as we share our deepest thoughts only with those closest to us, HE chose Arjuna to impart the Gita. In truth, if we purify our hearts, the Gita can become our guide too.

The session concluded after the closing prayer.



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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