

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

2/4 (Ślōka 10-27), Saturday, 22 March 2025

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA RUPAL SHUKLA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/xO3K8HFOvk8>

Arjuna's affection for his family members weakens his will power to fight

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

The second part of the Vivechan commenced with the customary lighting of the lamp and prayers to Pujya Guruji and Sri Paramātmā.

It is with the grace and blessings of Bhagavān, the Punya Karma of our past births and our present birth that we have got the opportunity to learn and to walk on the path shown by Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. Last week we covered the first 10 Shlokas of the first Chapter, where we saw that Duryodhana was very upset. He attempted to provoke Bhīṣma pitāmaha and Dronacharya to get ready to fight the war by mentioning the names of warriors such as Drishtadyumna, Virat, Drupada who were on the side of the pāṇḍavas and with whom Kauravas had a long-standing past enmity.

To boost his own self-confidence, Duryodhana boasted of the heroic and powerful fighters on his side some of whom were believed to be invincible. He also said that the strength of Kauravas army that was protected by his Grandfather, the great Bhīṣma pitāmaha, was immensurable when compared to that of the pāṇḍavas led by Bhima.

However, despite the apparently superior show of strength of the Kauravas commandeering 11 Divisions (Akshaunis) in their army compared to only 7 Divisions (Akshaunis) that the pāṇḍavas could muster, there is a lurking fear and a sense of insecurity that haunts Duryodhana. He knows that many in his army have a genuine love for the pāṇḍavas/ Arjuna. In the heart of his heart Duryodhana is apprehensive that he may lose the war even though his army is much bigger and there are great fighters on his side.

**aparyāptaṃ(n) tadasmākaṃ(m), balaṃ(m) bhīṣmābhirakṣitam,
paryāptaṃ(n) tvidameteṣāṃ(m), balaṃ(m) bhīmābhirakṣitam. 1.10**

This army of ours, fully protected by Bhīṣma, is unconquerable; while that army of theirs, guarded in everyway by Bhīma, is easy to conquer.

Duryodhan is fully confident that with the mighty and invincible Bhīṣma pitāmaha on his side, the pāṇḍavas led by Bhima are no match to him.

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.

However, there is also a hidden fear that despite the superior strength of his army all may not go expectedly. Expressing this concern, Duryodhana urges everyone, everywhere (**sarveshu**) stationed in the different Divisions (**bhāgamavasthitāḥ**) of the army (**ayaneshu**) to save/ protect (**abhirakṣantu**) Grandfather Bhīṣma pitāmaha.

In the previous Shloka, Duryodhana had clearly expressed great confidence that the Kauravas were perfectly protected by Bhīṣma pitāmaha, whereas in this Shloka he says that Bhīṣma pitāmaha himself needs protection. There is an inherent contradiction here. The direction of Duryodhana to his army to protect Bhīṣma pitāmaha brings forth his somewhat confused thinking and his nervousness and fear of losing the war since he was not on the side of Dharma. Even Bhīṣma pitāmaha was aware of this but as the grandsire of the Kuru dynasty he was indulgent towards his grandchild and wanted to make him happy as shown by his action in the next Shloka.

1.12

**tasya sañjanayanharṣaṃ(ñ), kuruvṛddhaḥ(ph) pitāmahaḥ,
siṃhanādaṃ(ṽ) vinadyoccaiḥ(ś), śaṅkhaṃ(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.

To make Duryodhana happy (**sañjanayanharṣaṃ**), Bhīṣma pitāmaha, the senior-most / oldest head of the Kuru clan (**kuruvṛddhaḥ**), took out the conch and blew on it loudly sounding like a roaring lion (**siṃhanādaṃ**). This made Duryodhana happy and gave him courage thus dispelling any fears of losing the war that he may have had being on morally weak ground.

Duryodhana may have secretly known that he was not on the side of Dharma. When Shri Krishna offered a peace treaty to Duryodhana to prevent the war he rejected it outright, not agreeing to cede any territory to his brothers, the Pandavas, not even land equal to the point of a pin!.

Blowing of the conch in the battlefield signalled the official start of the war. In the following shlokas, Sanjaya describes to Dhritarashtra how other warriors followed the cue from Bhīṣma pitāmaha, and blew on their respective conches.

1.13

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

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

Taking cue from Bhīṣma pitāmaha's actions, all at once the Kauravas blew their respective conches and various other musical instruments. Since the Kaurava army was huge it resulted in a shattering sound which was dreadful.

The king of the Pandavas is Yudhistira and the commander in chief is Drishtadyumna. As per rules of war, when the most revered and powerful Bhishma blew the conch, it should have been reciprocated by the king or the commander in chief of the Pandava army. However, they looked up to Sri Bhagavan as they considered HIM as their leader and expected HIM to reciprocate Bhishma's signal of initiating the war.

Sri Bhagawan had refused to take part in the war but had promised to side with the Pandavas as a charioteer for Arjuna. Knowingly, the Pandavas instead of reciprocating by blowing the conch, look up to HIM. Such is the power of Bhagavan who has HIS own ways of making things happen. **Everyone knew the unsaid - that HE was there to guide and lead the Pandavas.**

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.

Then (**tataḥ**), on the other side, both Bhagavān Śrī Krishna (**Mādhava**) and Arjuna, seated on a magnificent chariot drawn by white horses (**śvetairhayairyukte**) also sounded their divine conches.

Story of the white horses:

Once Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were walking in the forest. *Agni Deva* and *Varun Deva* appeared and requested Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna to burn the *Khandava Vana*, as it was inhabited by ferocious animals which did not let humans to enter the forest. The *Devas* said that only Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna could carry on this task as *Takshak Naga*, King *Indra's* friend, also lived in that forest. They explained that if someone else tried to destroy the forest, *Indra Deva* would come with His army to protect the forest. However, He would not come if Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were His opponents.

Arjuna being a Kṣatriya agreed. Although he understood the complexity of the task but he was confident of winning as Bhagavān was with him. After about 3 months of ferocious war the *Devas* were defeated. The forest was also burnt to the ground along with all the ferocious animals. Only *Takshak Naga* escaped. *Agni Deva* and *Varun Deva* were pleased and they appeared and asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna to ask for a boon. **Kṛṣṇa asked for everlasting friendship with Arjuna, and Arjuna being a warrior asked for divine weapons and chariot.**

Agni Deva gifted this divine chariot to Arjuna. Mahabharata describes this divine chariot in detail. It was made of gold and embedded with numerous jewels. It had a never ending supply of divine

weapons and ran 2 inches above the ground. 4 immortal White horses drove the chariot.

Varun Deva also gifted a divine conch shell named Devadutta to Arjuna.

1.15

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

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

This Shloka mentions the different names of the conches that were blown by the Pandavas. Bhagavān blew on **Panchjanya** which was one of the 14 gems (*ratnas*) that emerged from the Samudra Manthan. (Goddess Lakshmi, the Moon, Airavat / the white elephant of Indra, Sudarshan Chakra were some of the other “gems” that emerged from the ocean when it was churned during Samudra Manthan).

Arjuna blew on his conch called **Devadattaṃ**, while Bhima blew his terrific conch called **Pauṇḍraṃ**. Bhima is described as a voracious eater (**vṛkodaraḥ**) and performer of herculean tasks (**bhīmakarmā**).

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.

The conch named **Ananta-vijaya** (eternal victory) was blown by Yudhistira while Nakula and Sahdeva blew their respective conches, **Sughoṣa** and **Maṇipuṣpaka**.

1.17

**kāśyaśca parameśvāsaḥ(ś), śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ,
dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaśca, sātyakiścāparājitaḥ. 1.17**

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

The great archer, the king of Kasi, the great fighter Shikhandi, Dhr̥ṣṭadyumma, Virata, and Satyaki also blew on their conchshells.

The importance of these warriors was also highlighted.

- **King of Kasi** was an excellent archer.
- **Shikandi** was a great warrior.
- **Dhrustadhumnya** was the commander of the Pāṇḍavas army.
- **Virat king** sheltered Pāṇḍavas during their one-year incognito period. His daughter Uttara was married to Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna.
- **Satyaki** was the commander of Śrī Krishna’s Narayani sena and had never ever faced defeat.

1.18

**drupado draupadeyāśca, sarvaśaḥ(ph) pṛthivīpate,
saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ(ś), śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ(ph) pṛthakpṛthak. 1.18**

Drupada as well as the five sons of Draupadī, and the mighty-armed Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra, all of them, O lord of the earth, severally blew their respective conches from all sides.

Drupada, the great friend turned great enemy of Dronacharya, the five sons of Kunti, and others including the mighty-armed son of Subhadra (Abhimanyu) all blew their respective conches.

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.

The blowing of these different conches by the warriors in the Pandava army created a mighty sound, vibrating both in the sky and on the earth, shattering the hearts (**hṛdayāni vyadārayat**) of the sons of Dhritarashtra.

One can recollect from the earlier shloka how the Pāṇḍavas army responded to the call of war conch by Bhīṣma pitāmaha. There was no sign of fear in their camp. This was because of the guilt of wrong doings by the Kauravas and also the presence of the Divine (Śrī Krishna) and the divine conches in Pāṇḍavas camp which had manifold power.

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,

Arjuna, seated in the chariot bearing the flag of Hanuman (**kapidhvajaḥ**) took up his bow, preparing to shoot the arrows (**pravṛtte śāstrasampāte**).

Story of Hanuman and the Kapi Dhvaj

Once Bhima was searching for water in a forest when he came across an old monkey lying in his path and blocking it. Not wanting to show any disrespect to the monkey by crossing over him he politely asked him to shift a bit so that he could go to the other side. The monkey was sleeping and did not budge. Bhima asked him again but did not get any response. He then got angry and impatient. Seeing this the monkey requested him to shift him since he was too old to get up and move. Bhima then tried to pick him up to move him. He was very surprised when he could not move the monkey's tail even by an inch. He realised that this was no ordinary monkey! He then begged the old monkey to reveal his identity. The monkey revealed that he was none other than Pavan Putra or Hanuman himself.

Bhima was overwhelmed to hear this. Being Pavan Putra himself, he always entertained a secret desire to meet his elder brother, Hanuman. He fell at his feet and begged him to reveal his massive form (Viraat Roop) with which he had crossed the ocean in search of Sita mata. Hanuman gave Bhima the divine vision (Divya Drishti) so that he could perceive him in his viraat roop. So huge was

Hanuman that Bhima had difficulty even with divine vision to behold Hanuman ji. Bhima was truly overawed by what he saw. Having the foresight that a war would occur soon, Hanumanji assured that he would always be by Bhima's side, whenever he needed him, and in the war for righteousness against the unrighteous Kauravas, he would establish himself as the insignia on Arjuna's flag. Thus, Arjuna had both Sri Krishna and Hanuman ji by his side.

1.21

**hr̥ṣīkeśaṃ(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 place his chariot in between both the armies, so that he could see all those people who had assembled there desirous to fight, and with whom he had to fight the war.

1.22

**yāvadetānnirīkṣe'haṃ(ĳ), 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.

Arjuna expresses the desire to see (**nirīkṣe'haṃ**) those who desire to fight (**yoddhukāmān**) with him and with whom he will have to fight the war.

1.23

**yotsyamānānavekṣe'haṃ(ĳ), 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."

He wishes to see those who wished to please the evil minded Duryodhana by fighting for him. Sanjaya was taunting Dhritarashtra by calling his sons evil minded.

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

Sanjay says that thus addressed by the descendant of Bharat, Arjuna, Bhagavān (**hr̥ṣīkeśa**) drew up and placed the best of chariots (**rathottamam**) in the midst of both the armies (**senayorubhayormadhye**).

1.25

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

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

Bhagavān had the option to place the chariot in the middle of the two armies in front of warriors like Duryodhana, Dushasana and Karna. This would have driven Arjuna to anger and desire to kill them in the war. However, HE placed the chariot in front of Bhīṣma pitāmaha, Dronacharya and Kripacharya who loved Arjuna. Arjuna too had immense love for them.

Bhagavān Krishna was aware that Arjuna would lose his mental stability on seeing his beloved elders standing there, ready to wage the war. HE wanted to spread the wisdom of Gītā facilitated by Arjuna to the mankind.

HE placed the chariot in front of the people whom Arjuna loved dearly and asked him to see for himself the entire Kuru dynasty that was there in front of him. As was expected, Arjuna becomes sentimental, and reminiscences their love and respect on seeing his grandsire, uncles, cousins, friends', kith and kin across.

Bhīṣma pitāmaha was his adorable grandfather. Dronacharya taught him the art of mastering Brahmāstra, an art that he did not teach even to his own son Ashwathama. Now, he was supposed to be fighting against them! Arjuna's dilemma leading to depression started setting in thereby clouding his wisdom.

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.

There standing in front of him Arjuna could see elders/ fathers (**pitṛn**), his grandfather (**pitāmahān**) Bhīṣma pitāmaha, and also teachers/ Gurus (**ācāryān**) like Dronacharya, maternal Uncles (**mātulān**) like Salya, brothers (**bhrātṛn**), sons (**putrān**), grandsons (**pautrān**), and friends too (**sakhīmstathā**).

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 addition there were fathers-in-law (**śvaśurān**) and well-wishers (**suhṛdah**) all standing arrayed (**avasthitān**) in the two armies ready to fight with each other. Seeing all his loved ones on the battlefield, the son of Kunti (**Kaunteya**) Arjuna was overwhelmed by compassion. He had already lifted his bow, the *Gāṇḍīva*, ready to fight. But now suddenly he was overtaken by distress

and grief.

The session ended with Hari sankirtan.

Questions and Answers:

Rekha Gulati ji

Q: How do I know that there are changes in my life after associating myself with Gītā ? I do not feel that there is any change in me.

A: The only thing constant in life is change! Have patience. You may experience change later. Give yourself more time to experience the change. There may be barriers to experiencing change. When you get rid of these barriers you will experience change. Change may not come with change of Bungalow or car. Change may be more internal. You may start feeling happier from within. You may start seeing Parmatma in everyone. You may start treating everyone well. You may get less angry in difficult situations. You may feel more balanced and less upset about losses. Just pray to Shri Krishna.

Dr. Sambhu Ratan Trivedi ji

Q: We are told that all Shlokas in the Gītā are Mantras. Does this include what is spoken by Dhritrashtra or Sanjay or Arjun or does it only include what is spoken by Bhagavan?

A: The entire Gītā consisting of 700 Shlokas is a Divine Conversation and therefore sacred. Whatever is spoken in the Gītā, irrespective of who speaks it, is a Mantra. Unless there is a question how can there be an answer? There are Rishis and Sages who have been reciting the Gītā making the entire text holy.

Krishna Rao Ji

Q: Is there any sequence in which the Chapters should be read? (We start the Gītā classes with Chapter 12 and not Chapter 1)

A: There is a Patya krama where one begins with Chapter 1 and goes upto Chapter 18 sequentially. But there is also a Tatparya Krama or how we need to understand the Chapters with meaning. Each Chapter of the Gītā has individual meaning. We can start anywhere.

Ashish Kumar ji

Q: What is the meaning of the first Chapter's name Arjuna Vishada Yoga?

A: *Vishada* denotes depression. When we are mentally troubled our grief penetrates deep within us, and connects us with God. Arjuna's vishada connects him with Sri Krishna Paramātmā. Hence, it is called Arjuna Vishada Yoga.

Manda Hedao ji

Q: I do paat, chanting, puja, yet why do negative thoughts still come to mind?

A: The puja, the paat and the chanting may be a recent activity whereas the origin of negative thoughts may be the result of past actions performed over several lifetimes. Hence it may not be easy to get rid of negative thoughts in the short run but continued practice may reduce the intensity of negative thoughts. As the Punya (good actions) increases the cumulative effect of Paap Karma gets reduced and so will the negative thoughts.



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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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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