

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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

Arjuna's Compassionate Doubt - Saṅkīrtana of Dharma and Adharma

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

The Vivechan session began with the customary lighting of the lamp and prayers offered to Paramātmā and the Gurus.

गुरु ब्रह्मा गुरु विष्णु, गुरु देवो महेश्वरा
गुरु साक्षात् परब्रह्म, तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः

The Guru is Brahma (the creator), the Guru is Vishnu (the preserver), the Guru is Maheshwara (Shiva, the destroyer), and the Guru is the embodiment of the Supreme Brahman."

ॐ कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ॥
प्रणतः क्लेशनाशाय गोविंदाय नमो नमः ॥

Salutations, again and again, to Krishna (the son of Vasudeva) who removes our sorrows and sufferings, and is the Supreme Soul.

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम् ।
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीम् अष्टादशाध्यायिनीम् ।
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥ १ ॥

"O Bhagavad Gītā, by which pārtha (Arjuna) was enlightened by Bhagavān Narayana Himself, and which was composed in the middle of the Mahabharata by the ancient sage Vyasa, O Divine Mother, the showerer of the nectar of Advaita, and consisting of eighteen discourses, I meditate on Thee, O Gītā, O affectionate Mother, the destroyer of rebirth!"

We have now arrived at the final part of Chapter 1, Arjuna Vishad Yoga. As the name suggests, this

chapter presents Arjuna's lamentation and his refusal to fight. The term Yoga signifies connection with Paramātmā, and even in his grief, Arjuna experiences glimpses of divinity. Through his sincere and passionate expression of sorrow, he connects to Sri Krishna, the Supreme Being, the ultimate doer of all actions, with unwavering faith that Krishna would guide him. He speaks his mind unequivocally, laying bare his inner turmoil.

Arjuna's grief arises from two main types of mental conflict:

- The thought of killing his kinsmen, his Guru, and his most beloved Pitamaha.
- The fear that, despite knowing righteousness, participating in the war would accrue colossal sin.

Despite being a proclaimed warrior and the bravest of his time, Arjuna is clouded by confusion and feels feeble. His inner conflict stems from two primary causes:

- **Emotional attachment:** He is deeply connected to all those standing on both sides of the battlefield, and the thought of their deaths breaks his heart.
- **Moral apprehension:** He fears that even while acting according to his knowledge of dharma, killing these people would lead to immense sin.

As turbulence overwhelms his mind, Arjuna turns to Sri Krishna, his friend, advisor, and guide, seeking solace. Having known Krishna over a long period, Arjuna is aware of His multifaceted nature and extraordinary deeds, and thus addresses Him by various names, highlighting Krishna's consistent alignment with Dharma and destruction of Adharma.

Some of the names Arjuna uses for Krishna in previous verses (1.35-37) are:

- **Madhusudana** - the slayer of the demon Madhu.
- **Janardana** - "Jana" meaning people, and "Ardana" meaning punisher; the one who protects people and destroys unrighteousness at the time of cosmic dissolution (Pralaya).
- **Mādhava** - the husband of Ma Lakshmi, the symbol of prosperity.

Through these names, Arjuna acknowledges that Krishna is both the creator and protector of mankind, the upholder of Dharma. Hence, Krishna is the rightful guide to show him the path of virtue. Yet, paradoxically, Krishna advises Arjuna to fight, which deepens his confusion.

Through these adjectives, Arjuna is doing two things simultaneously:

- He is reassuring himself of Krishna's supreme authority.
- He is invoking Krishna's guidance to prevent himself from performing sinful actions.

Now, what is the sin Arjuna refers to? What kinds of sins weigh so heavily on his conscience? He is deeply troubled because the people on the battlefield are blinded by greed, they cannot see the moral consequences of their actions. Arjuna calls them sinners, but he understands that killing them will also create paap (sin) for himself.

The specific sin he fears is the destruction of the **entire lineage, the kulakshaya**. "Shaya" means destruction, and "kula" refers to family or lineage. Arjuna sees that annihilating these warriors, regardless of their sins, will have disastrous consequences for the entire society. They are blinded by their own greed, but he is aware of the broader moral implications.

And here is the crucial point: Arjuna sees the difference between himself and the others. While they act in ignorance and are driven by desire, he understands the gravity of the situation. He perceives the long-term consequences, the destruction of dharma, and the moral responsibility he bears.

1.39

kathaṃ(n) na jñeyamasmābhiḥ(ph), pāpādashmānivartitum, kulakṣayakṛtaṃ(n) doṣaṃ(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, overwhelmed with sorrow and moral conflict, was desperate to convince Sri Krishna that engaging in this war was not the righteous course of action. His argument was rooted in his innate sense of dharma and compassion for all living beings, especially his own kinsmen. With unwavering earnestness, he reiterated his plea, emphasising that the Kauravas, blinded by their greed and unrighteousness, failed to recognise the enormity of the sin in killing their own relatives and friends.

Arjuna questioned why the Pandavas, who were virtuous and aware of dharma, should commit the same unrighteous acts. He asked, **“kathaṃ na jñeyam”**, how could it be justified for us to participate in such destructive acts when they themselves are unaware of their wrongdoing? He implored Krishna to consider the immense consequences of the war and proposed a course of action rooted in non-violence: **“nivartitum”**, let us turn away from this path of kula-kṣhaya, the annihilation of our own family.

Even after hearing these heartfelt arguments, Sri Krishna remained silent, observing the sincerity and depth of Arjuna's grief. Recognising the urgency and seriousness of the matter, Arjuna made a final, impassioned appeal. He elaborated on the profound consequences of kula-kṣhaya, not merely as the loss of individual lives, but as the destruction of an entire dynasty (vansha), the erosion of social and familial order, and the breakdown of righteousness itself. He painted a vivid picture of the suffering, chaos, and moral decay that would inevitably follow if such a war were undertaken.

In this moment, Arjuna's lamentation and argument were not just expressions of personal grief, they reflected the deep inner struggle of a dharmic warrior, torn between his duty as a Kṣatriya and his love for his family. Through this dialogue, we witness a profound lesson in moral discernment: that righteous action must always be guided by wisdom, compassion, and an awareness of consequences.

Arjuna, at this stage, is essentially repeating what he had already said earlier. This repetition is very telling, it reveals how deeply he has managed to convince himself of his own reasoning. Whenever a person keeps circling back to the same point, it shows that their conviction is firm, though sometimes born out of conditioning rather than clarity.

Why has this conviction taken such strong hold of Arjuna? As we had discussed in our first session, this is the result of all the training and subtle influence he has received over the years from Dhritarashtra. Recall that Dhritarashtra had once sent a messenger to Arjuna, saying: “My sons may not understand the gravity of things, but you—the Pandavas—you are the wise ones, you understand everything.” Over time, this repeated conditioning created a mindset in Arjuna: they (the Kauravas) do not understand dharma, but we are the better ones, the mature ones, the righteous ones, we understand.

1.40

kulakṣaye praṇāsyanti, kuladharmāḥ(s) sanātanāḥ, dharme naṣṭe kulam(ñ) 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 then explained the profound consequences of kula-kṣhaya, the destruction of a dynasty.

Over long periods, dynasties cultivate their own rituals, customs, and codes of conduct, all based on virtue. These traditions are carefully passed down through generations, and by practicing them, societies thrive. Such righteous practices generate Punya (merit), which strengthens social order and moral values.

When a dynasty is destroyed, however, these virtuous traditions are lost. The foundation of righteousness collapses, causing a downward spiral in virtue across society. Future generations inherit not the mantle of Punya and righteous karmas, but disorder, moral confusion, and the consequences of lost guidance. Arjuna emphasizes that people often underestimate the power of Dharma, yet it is this very Dharma that shapes healthy, balanced, and thriving future generations.

Conversely, Adharma, when allowed to dominate, destroys values painstakingly built over generations. Miscreants grow in number, good deeds are overtaken by misdeeds, and unrighteousness becomes entrenched in society.

This principle is not merely theoretical. History and recent events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrate the real consequences of societal disruption. People suffered immensely, families lost their livelihoods, homes, and even lives. The collapse of social structures led to widespread instability and hardship.

Moreover, historical evidence shows that in times of dynastic destruction, the most vulnerable are often women. They endure the greatest suffering, facing exploitation, hardship, and moral corruption, further destabilizing society.

Through this reasoning, Arjuna underlines that the destruction of a dynasty is not merely a loss of political power or territory, it represents the collapse of social, moral, and spiritual order, with consequences that ripple across generations.

1.41

adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa, praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ, strīṣu 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.

Arjuna further explained the societal consequences of widespread destruction and vice. He pointed out that when unrighteousness (**Adharma**) prevails, the women of the society are often forced into immorality. Such acts of coercion and desperation give rise to unwanted progeny (**Varna-saṅkaraḥ**), children whose lineage and caste may be mixed, and whose legitimacy becomes questionable.

The scale of the Kurukshetra war was massive, involving 18 Akshauhini's of armies, most of whom were young men. If so many young male adults were killed in battle, society would be left with a disproportionately large number of widows. Arjuna sought to draw Sri Krishna's attention to the

horrific consequences of such a demographic imbalance. Women, without their free will, could be driven into immoral situations, and the children born out of such circumstances would carry the imprint of Adharma.

Arjuna also emphasized the importance of elders in a society. The elder members of a family or community embody age-old traditions, customs, ideals, and noble values. They pass this knowledge on to future generations, nurturing moral values and building religious and social propriety. If these elders are killed prematurely in war, their wisdom and guidance vanish, leaving the next generation without direction, making it vulnerable to straying from the virtuous path.

Arjuna stressed that these were not hypothetical scenarios. History and observation confirm the real consequences of war. Societies subjected to prolonged conflict often see their social structures devastated. For example, the 1971 war led to the division of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. The children born during and after such conflicts often lack proper guidance, moral training, and exposure to virtuous traditions. The progeny raised amid Adharma rarely grow into virtuous, dharmic individuals, perpetuating cycles of societal decay.

Through this reasoning, Arjuna sought to impress upon Sri Krishna the long-term societal devastation that would arise from the war, far beyond immediate battlefield deaths, highlighting the collapse of social, moral, and spiritual order across generations.

1.42

saṅkaro narakāyaiva, kulagnānām(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.

When we speak of future generations, Arjuna classifies them broadly into two categories:

- **Kula-dīpak** - The one who brings glory, honor, and good name to the family. Such a person preserves the family's virtues and actively works to enhance them, ensuring the continuity of righteous traditions.
- **Kula-ghnanam** - The one who destroys the accumulated virtues of the family, its wealth, power, name, and fame. This individual is considered an unworthy successor, who erodes the legacy of the ancestors.

Arjuna points out that, as a result of war, the birth of unwanted progeny (Varṇa-saṅkaraḥ) can lead to the rise of such Kula-ghnanam. These individuals, lacking proper guidance and virtue, gradually undermine family values, culture, and traditions.

An increase in such unrighteous progeny brings hellish consequences not only for the family but also for those responsible for its destruction. Even the ancestors suffer, deprived of the ritual offerings and homage that ensure their peace and blessings.

In our tradition, offerings are made to ancestors during Śrāddha or Piṭṛpakṣa. Children born in such corrupt circumstances are unaware of these sacred practices and fail to perform them correctly. As a result, both the present generation and the forefathers are deprived of these essential rites, leading to a breakdown of spiritual continuity.

Through this reasoning, Arjuna emphasizes that the consequences of war extend far beyond

immediate death, reaching into the moral, spiritual, and social fabric of generations yet to come.

When Arjuna speaks of kula-dharma, he is referring to the eternal family traditions and rituals that hold society together. These are not casual customs, but sacred practices established by ṛṣis and carried forward from generation to generation. They uplift, purify, and give stability to the family and society at large. They are meant to be followed with dedication, because they connect us to our roots, our culture, and ultimately to dharma itself.

But Arjuna now warns: “All of this will suffer. All of this will be destroyed.”

How? He explains that the destruction of kula (family/lineage) leads to the destruction of jati-dharma and kula-dharma. Normally, families carry forward the legacy of their culture, this śāśvata-dharma (eternal dharma), through marriages within similar families, maintaining traditions, and performing rituals exactly as handed down. This continuity ensures that not only are the rituals preserved, but over time, they grow richer and more refined.

However, when kula is destroyed, chaos takes over. Mixed unions (varṇa-saṅkara) begin to appear, and with them, confusion of duty. The carefully protected stream of kula-dharma begins to break down. And once kula-dharma is lost, the very foundation of society starts collapsing.

Arjuna paints a very grim picture here: “When kula-dharma is destroyed, society itself rushes toward downfall. This downfall is not small, it is terrible, it is catastrophic. It is not just the collapse of one family, but the collapse of an entire way of life.”

Why is this so dangerous? Because when dharma is followed, punya (merit) is accumulated, which uplifts us, takes us toward svarga-loka and higher states of existence. But when dharma is neglected, papa (sin) accumulates. Especially when rituals and sacred duties are abandoned, like navaratri, śrāddha-pākṣa, gaṇapati pūjā, and other family observances, then the entire family becomes tainted by papa. And what does accumulated papa lead to? It drags the soul down into naraka (hellish existence).

This is exactly what Arjuna now states. He says in essence:

“By killing our kula, we will destroy kula-dharma. By destroying kula-dharma, we will cause varṇa-saṅkara. By varṇa-saṅkara, eternal dharma is lost. And when dharma is lost, society falls into adharma and hellish states. This will be the terrible consequence of this war.”

1.43

**doṣairetaiḥ(kh) kulaghnānām(ṅ), varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ,
utsādyante jātidharmāḥ(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 further explains that such a mixture of lineages gives rise to unwanted progeny (**Varṇa-saṅkara-kāraiḥ**), who undermine both family and societal welfare (jāti dharmāḥ). These individuals, born of incompatible backgrounds, lack the knowledge, training, and grounding necessary to uphold the values and traditions of their respective clans. Consequently, they are unable to preserve or pass down the legacy of culture, dharma, and family honour.

In our tradition, the Rishis established specific rules for marriage, ensuring that unions occur within

compatible clans and similar backgrounds. This system is not arbitrary; it is designed to safeguard the continuity of family values, cultural practices, and righteous traditions. When these principles are disregarded, the very foundation of Kula-Dharma is weakened.

The destruction of Kula-Dharma, Arjuna warns, is not limited to the family alone. It triggers a chain reaction across society, leading to the erosion of moral order, cultural identity, and social cohesion. In this way, the consequences of mismatched unions and the birth of unrighteous progeny extend far beyond the battlefield, threatening the long-term health, prosperity, and virtue of society itself.

1.44

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

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

Arjuna now shifts his argument to a new level. He continues to oppose the war, this time emphasizing the moral and spiritual consequences of destroying family traditions. He declares that when kula-dharma, the sacred values, customs, and religious practices of a family, is destroyed, the outcome is disastrous not just for one generation, but for society itself.

He explains that as long as these eternal rituals and practices are maintained, they uplift the family and strengthen society. But when they are broken, chaos enters, cultural dilution, loss of discipline, loss of values, and gradually, a complete downfall follows. Such a society, he says, does not progress towards higher lokas but instead sinks towards naraka.

Arjuna goes further and says: *"I have not invented this argument. This is not merely my opinion."* He uses the word *anuśhuśruma*, *"We have heard this from the wise and learned men, from our elders."* According to their teaching, those who destroy family values and neglect kula-dharma are destined to reside in hell (vaso narake) for an indefinite period (aniyatam). This could mean many lifetimes, because karma carries forward, and one keeps taking birth again in the same types of families and circumstances, only to accumulate more and more sin. The result: an endless, unimaginable journey through suffering.

Here, Arjuna cleverly strengthens his case. Until now, he was presenting arguments from his own heart, emotional, dharmic, compassionate. But Krishna was still silent. So Arjuna now appeals to authority, saying in effect: *"If you do not believe me, at least listen to the wisdom of the elders. This is what the śāstra and learned authorities declare."*

It is like a child negotiating with parents. The child says, *"I want a new pen."* The parent refuses: *"No, you already have one."* The child insists: *"But I really need it."* Still the parent does not agree. Then the child adds: *"The teacher has told me to bring a better pen."* Immediately the parent relents: *"Ah, in that case, we will get it."* By invoking the authority of someone respected, the child makes the request more persuasive.

Arjuna is doing the same. He has realised that his personal reasoning is not enough to convince Krishna, so he invokes the authority of tradition and elders. He declares: *"This is not merely my concern, this is the eternal truth handed down to us. If kula-dharma is destroyed, we fall into sin, and sin drags us into an eternal hell. How can I participate in such an unrighteous act?"*

Through this strategy, Arjuna shows both prudence and tact, combining his own heartfelt conviction with the weight of tradition to present what he believes is a compelling case against the war.

1.45

aho bata mahatpāpaṃ(ñ), kartuṃ(ṽ) vyavasitā vayam, yadrājyasukhalobhena, 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.

Captivated by his profound anguish and moral paralysis, Arjuna exclaimed, “*Aho, how strange it is that, even while fully aware of the horrifying consequences, we are preparing to commit this great sin (mahat-pāpañ).*” Driven by the desire for kingly pleasures (rājya-sukha-lobhena), he laments that they are poised to kill many of their own kinsmen (**hantuṃ sva-janam udyatāḥ**), betraying both moral and familial duty.

Arjuna acknowledges that the seed of these troubling thoughts was sown by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the true antagonist of the Mahābhārata. Blinded by fatherly love for his sons and gripped by the fear of losing them in war, Dhṛtarāṣṭra had earlier dispatched Sanjaya as his messenger to counsel the Pāṇḍavas. While Sanjaya appeared to be offering guidance, his core intent was to instill doubt and fear in their minds. By highlighting the futility of war, Sanjaya argued that even if the Pāṇḍavas achieved victory, it would be hollow and tainted, coming at the cost of the lives of their own kinsmen, Gurus, and elders. The victory would thus be stained with the blood of their own family.

Hearing Sanjaya’s counsel, all the Pāṇḍava brothers, except Sahadeva, were almost convinced that war would be a horrifying and futile endeavour. Arjuna recognises that Dhṛtarāṣṭra, while camouflaging himself as a well-wisher, had cunningly planted the seeds of despondency in his mind. This realisation deepens Arjuna’s inner conflict, leaving him torn between his duty as a warrior and the ethical horror of killing his own family.

Through this, the Mahābhārata illustrates how even righteous individuals can be subtly influenced by fear, attachment, and manipulative counsel, heightening the moral complexity of duty and action.

1.46

yadi māmpratīkāram, aśastraṃ(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.

Arjuna’s argument now reaches its climax. Until now, he was speaking of compassion, dharma, kuladharmā, and the fear of sin. But here he raises the stakes, declaring that what lies before them is not a small sin, it is mahān pāpam, a very great sin, greater than anything he could have imagined. And, he says, this is not a mistake being committed in ignorance. No, it is a deliberate, organized act. They have prepared themselves to kill their own kinsmen, not for righteousness, but for the greed of a kingdom and its fleeting pleasures.

This, for Arjuna, is intolerable. He recalls his earlier conviction: “It is better to beg for food than to kill our own people for a kingdom.” In his grief, he forgets for a moment all the atrocities committed by Duryodhana and his brothers, the humiliation of Draupadī, the deceit in the dice game, the endless

injustice. Instead, the brainwashing of Dhṛtarāṣṭra echoes in his mind. Long before the war, Dhṛtarāṣṭra had sent messages to the Pāṇḍavas, planting seeds of doubt: *“If you fight, you will only be killing your own kinsmen. What greater sin can there be? Better to live in poverty than to destroy your dynasty for power.”* Those words now resurface in Arjuna’s consciousness, clouding his judgment.

And so, in utter despair, Arjuna declares: *“If the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra should kill me, **unarmed (aśhastram) and unresisting (apratikāram)**, that would be better (**kṣhemataram bhavet**) than my raising weapons against them.”*

The gravity of these words cannot be overstated. A warrior of Arjuna’s calibre, who had never once turned away from battle, now says that it is better to die defenseless than to commit the sin of killing his kinsmen while armed (śhastra-pāṇayaḥ). The phrase itself carries weight, for śhastra-pāṇi is a title often reserved for Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the wielder of the Sudarśana Chakra, the upholder of dharma. In using the same word, Arjuna reveals the depth of his conflict, he knows that righteous warfare is a divine principle, yet his heart recoils from the thought of fratricide.

At this point, Arjuna has reached the breaking point of his mind and spirit. The mighty warrior who upheld dharma through karma now crumbles, overwhelmed by grief and attachment. Victory, kingdom, and even his own life appear worthless compared to the fear of sin and moral downfall. His emotional exhaustion culminates in total paralysis, he is ready to drop his weapons and accept death.

The wisdom of Vidura Nīti resonates here: *“Success gained without ethics is short-lived, but success rooted in dharma endures.”* Arjuna fears that success in war, if gained by slaughtering his family, would be hollow and sinful, cutting him off not only from society but from the grace of the Divine. His deepest fear is spiritual, that by committing mass violence, he would fall from the favour of Sri Krishna, whom he adored as friend, master, and the Supreme. To him, death seemed preferable if it meant preserving righteousness and divine love.

This reveals a profound principle of dharmic action:

- Some perform righteous deeds out of love for Paramātmā.
- Others act only to appear righteous before society.

The former is rooted in true bhakti, selfless and pure. The latter, like Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s outward show of affection for the Pāṇḍavas while inwardly clinging to his son’s wickedness, is hollow and doomed. True love for Paramātmā is always reciprocated by the Divine. As Jñāneśvar Maharaj expressed, he felt Krishna’s living presence within himself and saw the Gītā itself as a vibhūti of Prabhu, an eternal expression of His guidance for those who have accumulated merit across lifetimes.

Arjuna, too, had immense puṇya, which made him so dear to Sri Krishna that the Lord Himself chose to be his charioteer, guiding him at this critical moment. His reluctance, then, is not cowardice but the struggle of a heart unwilling to lose its righteousness and divine connection.

Thus, Arjuna’s lament reaches its final stage. He has explored every possible justification for laying down his arms, compassion, fear of social chaos, concern for kula-dharma, dread of sin, and now, the preference for death over dishonour. This sloka marks his complete mental breakdown, his utter refusal to fight, and the depth of his moral, emotional, and spiritual turmoil.

1.47

sañjaya uvāca
evamuktvārjunaḥ(s) sañkhye, rathopastha upāviśat,
visrjya 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.

This verse is narrated by Sanjaya, who witnessed the events through his divine sight. He describes how Arjuna, completely distressed and overwhelmed with grief, cast aside his bow and arrows and sank into the seat of his chariot.

This behaviour was entirely unexpected from someone considered the epitome of devotion and self-surrender to God. Earlier, when both sides were mobilising their armies, given a choice between the entire armed Yadu army and the unarmed Bhagavan Krishna, Arjuna chose the Lord, demonstrating his complete faith and devotion.

The greatest warrior, who had never lost a battle, having fought and defeated Devas, Asuras, and Gandharvas, now faced utter despondency. The only battle he had “lost” was with Mahadeva, but in that defeat, he gained the divine blessings of Shiva. Even a warrior capable of fighting with the greatest of divinities sat devastated on the battlefield.

This state of visāda (despondency) is interpreted as Yoga, because Arjuna’s lament arises from the paramount importance he places on dharma. He fears losing his righteousness and dharma, and in that fear, his grief connects all devotees to Paramātmā. His arguments, reasoning, and lamenting guide us closer to the Supreme Being. In this way, Arjuna’s lament becomes a blessed scripture for all humanity.

The lesson for the public is that one should not grieve over trivial matters. True lament arises when one’s dharma is at stake, or when society at large suffers. Developing such a temperament ensures that our lamenting itself becomes Yoga.

History provides examples of such Mahatmas. One instance is Samarth Ramdas Swamy, born during the Mughal era. Witnessing the looting and oppression of society, he, as a child, wept not for personal loss but for the distress of the world and society. This exemplifies lamenting with no personal interest, driven purely by concern for dharma and society.

Thus, this chapter, Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga, focuses on Arjuna’s lament, but it is an extraordinary lament, grounded in higher values. His grief demonstrates that dharma is supreme, and any deviation from it has disastrous consequences. Being the greatest warrior and epitome of righteousness, Arjuna’s lament carries immense spiritual significance. The entire discourse of this chapter is offered at the lotus feet of Paramātmā.

Questions and Answers

Sai Prasad Ji

Q: Arjuna expressed fear for the consequences of Kula-kṣhaya, which leads to the destruction of the dynasty. Despite this, the war happened. Are these consequences imaginary, or relevant only to Dvāpara Yuga?

A: These consequences are real, not imaginary. They occur regardless of time. The devastation

caused by war is always horrendous. Sri Krishna tried His best to prevent the war, negotiating a middle path and even acting as the ambassador of peace. Ved Vyasa also warned Dhṛtarāṣṭra about the extinction of the Kuru dynasty. Despite these efforts, Dhṛtarāṣṭra ignored the advice, making war inevitable. Sri Krishna, as Paramātmā, would never desire premature destruction of His creation.

Q: Is Kula-kṣhaya applicable to natural calamities as well?

A: Destruction during natural disasters differs from war. In natural calamities, there is no Adharma, and all are affected equally. Kula-kṣhaya, however, results from Adharma and deliberate actions, making its consequences distinct. In-depth knowledge of dharma, adharma, and karma is given in subsequent chapters by Sri Krishna.

Poonam Ji

Q: What is the meaning of pāpa-vīru?

A: Pāpa-vīru refers to someone who is afraid of committing sin.

Q: Arjuna had fought many wars before the Mahābhārata but never felt concern about dharma or sin. Why?

A: Earlier wars did not involve killing one's own kinsmen. For example, in the war with Gandharva Chitrādat, Arjuna defeated him but did not take his kingdom; instead, he formed a friendship, showing he was never motivated by revenge. Other wars, like those with the son of Virāta, were fought to defend dharma, not to acquire a kingdom or eradicate Adharma. The Mahābhārata war was unique, being both decisive and morally complex.

The discourse concluded with a **prārthanā (prayer) offered at the padakamala (lotus feet) of Śrī Hari**, followed by the recitation of the **Hanumān Chalisa**.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṃ(ṁ)
yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde 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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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