



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Arjuna-Viṣāda-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Dq5CYwi5Wa8>

Arjuna's despair on seeing his loved ones at war

The first chapter of Srimad Bhagavadgītā is called 'Arjuna Vishada Yog - The Yoga of Arjuna's despair.'

गुरुर ब्रह्मा गुरुर विष्णु
गुरुर देवो महेश्वरा
गुरुर साक्षात् परम ब्रह्मा
तस्मै श्री गुरवे नम ।

The sloka praises the Guru's divine nature by comparing them to the Hindu trinity: the Guru is Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Maheshwara (Shiva, the destroyer of ignorance). The mantra concludes with a salutation to the Guru as Parabrahma.

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीम्- अष्टादशाध्यायिनीम् अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्- गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥ १॥

The Mahabharata, in the midst of the Puranas, was enlightened to Arjuna by Narayana and compiled by Vyasa himself. O mother, I offer my respectful obeisances unto YOU the Supreme Personality who showers the nectar of Advaita.

Salutations to Guru Govind Dev Ji Maharaj and pranams to all the students of the gītā!

Jai Sri Krishna!

Students we have been dealing with the interpretation of chapter 1 in parts, and hope would have understood the earlier vivechans. Hope all have revised the same.

Both the armies had gathered in Kurukshetra or in the field of dharma.

Question: Name the two armies.

Hiya Ji

Answer: Kaurav and Pandav.

Dritharashtra the king of the Kauravas asked his minister Sanjay who was blessed with the divine vision by Ved Vyas Ji, what were his sons and the Pandavas doing in the battlefield. Sanjay elaborated on the events like a live telecast as he was able to see everything in the battlefield because of the divine vision. He named all the ones present, what they spoke, what Dronacharya said, etc.

Duryodhana had ordered all Kauravas to take care of Bhishma Pitamah; who in turn blew his conch which was akin to a lion's roar, signalling the start of war. This was followed by the rest of the Kauravas blowing their conches and other instruments used in war. The sound was deafening. Sri Krishna who was the charioteer for Arjuna responded by blowing his conch.

Question: What was the name of the conch of Sri Krishna?

Vanshika Ji

Answer: Panchajanya.

Panchajanya was named after the sea demon Shankasur whom Sri Krishna killed and retrieved the conch.

In the earlier session, we had listed 18 people who were part of the Pandavas and blew their conches.

Question: Who were they?

Hiya Ji

Answer: Drupad.

Sri Bhujji

Answer: Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Arjuna, Bhima, Nakul, Sahadev, and Yudhishtira.

Question: What is the name of the conch of Yudhishtira?

Speaker: Yudhishtira - Anantavijaya

1. **Bhagavan Sri Krishna - Panchajanya**
2. **Arjuna - Devadutta**
3. **Yudhishtira - Anantavijaya**
4. **Bhima - Poundra**
5. **Nakula - Sughosha**
6. **Sahadeva - Manipushpak**
- Other Maharathis who were a part of the Pandava side**
7. **Kashiraj**
8. **Shikandi - Brother of Draupadi**
9. **Raja Virat**
10. **Satyaki**
11. **Drupad**
12. **Drishtadyumna - Brother of Draupadi**
13. **Five sons of Draupadi**
14. **Abhimanyu**

Thus, they were 18 in all who were a part of the Pandavas. All of them were Maharathis - great warriors and they all blew their respective conches.

The 19th verse mentioned that the sound emanating in the battlefield was so fierce that it seemed that the sky was pierced. This rattled the Kauravas and signified the start of war.

What is the meaning of war?

The great war meant a lot of lives would be lost.

How many Akshouni armies were there?

There were 18 in total; 11 from the Kauravas, and 7 from the Pandavas.

What did Arjuna say?

He wanted Sri Krishna to stop the chariot inbetween the two warring factions as he wanted to have a good look of all the people assembled.

1.24

sañjaya uvāca evamukto hṛṣīkeśo, 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 narrated to king Drithrashtra that Sri Krishna (referred to as Hrishiksha-Swami of the senses) halted the chariot inbetween the two armies as per the request of Arjuna (referred to as Gudakesha-Swami of sleep or one who has control over sleep).

What does it mean to control sleep? Do we sleep less or more?

Normally, we all sleep well, but sometimes when we have other work we sleep more.

When do children sleep more?

In the afternoon. Do they sleep in the afternoon on holidays? No. Sometimes children sleep more out of tiredness. It is mostly during studying time, they feel bored and tend to sleep.

What should we do?

We should also try to become 'Gudakesh' and learn to control sleep. Arjuna was a great '**tapasvi**' - ascetic. By constant effort he had won over all struggles. That was how he could control sleep. It does not mean he never slept. When he had work, he had the capacity to control his sleep. Without disappointment, he desired to complete the task well by controlling sleep.

He could sleep while standing or sitting! He could work continuously when required. Hence the name 'Gudakesha.' The meaning of '**Bharata**' is one belonging to the lineage of Bharata' - referring to king Dritharashtra by Sanjay.

- **Uktō - Told**
- **Ubhayōr - In between**
- **Uttamam - The great**
- **sthāpayitvā - To stop**

1.25

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

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

Where was the chariot stationed by Sri Krishna?

Exactly in front of Bhisma Pitamah and Dronacharya! Arjuna was very close to both of them - one a grand sire of the dynasty and another Arjuna's guru who taught him all the skills required of a warrior.

- **mahīkṣitām - And other kings**
- **pārtha - Son of Pritha (Kunti) - Arjuna**
- **paśyaitānsamavētānkurūniti - See all the Kauravas standing**

Sanjay related that which Arjuna told Sri Krishna ie. to have a good look at the Kauravas whom he was to fight against. Sanjay described the scene at the battlefield to king Dritharashtra.

Who were there at war?

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.

All belong to the Kuru dynasty including the Pandavas, but Sri Krishna referred to the Kauravas in particular whom Arjuna had to fight against.

1. **Pitṛn - All uncles of the paternal family**
2. **Pitāmahān - Bhisma Pitamah**
3. **Acāryān - Dronacharya**
4. **Mātulān - Mother's brothers viz Purujit and Kuntibhoja**
5. **Bhrātṛn - Own brothers - the Kauravas**
6. **Putrān - Brothers sons**
7. **Pautrān - Grandsons**
8. **sakhīn - Friends**

1.27

**śvaśurānsuhṛdaścaiva, senayorubhayorapi,
tānsamikṣya sa kaunteyaḥ(s), sarvānbandhūnavasthitān. 1.27**

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

1. **śvaśurān - Father in law - King Drupad father of Draupadi**
2. **suhṛd - Those good friends who look out for one's welfare**

Seeing all of them, Arjuna's mind was in a turmoil. He was not as calm as earlier.

- **Kauntēyaḥ - Refers to Arjuna**

- **Samīkṣya - Having seen**

1.28

**kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo, viṣīdannidamabravīt,
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,

Arjuna on seeing all his relatives and friends was filled with great compassion.

- **Viṣīdannida - Filled with great sorrow**

The name of this chapter is 'Arjuna Vishada Yog' - the yoga of despair of Arjuna. It refers to the extreme sad state of Arjuna.

Why was Arjuna sorrowful?

He saw all his own people viz

1. Dronacharya
2. Bhishma Pitamah
3. Maternal uncles
4. Father in law
5. Brothers
6. Nephews
7. Grandsons
8. Good friends

Seeing all of them in the battlefield resulted in a change in Arjuna's stance. Earlier, he entered the battlefield as a brave warrior with his bow and arrow.

- **Abravīt - Spoke**
- **imam - these**
- **dṛṣṭvā - having seen**
- **svajanam - kinsmen**
- **yuyutsum - eager to fight**
- **samupasthitam - arrayed**

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.

- **mama - my**
- **gātrāṇi - limbs**
- **sīdanti - fail**
- **ca - and**

- mukham - mouth
- pariśuṣyati - is parching,
- śarīrē - in the body
- vēpathuḥ - shivering
- rōmaharṣaḥ - Goosebumps
- jāyatē - arises

Arjuna was trembling and his mouth was parched and he was in no condition to fight the war. Of course he knew he had to fight the Kauravas. **Why then did his body fail?** He was a brave warrior and had fought many wars. He also fought against Shiv Ji without any qualms! His mind failed to process on seeing his own people at war.

Had Arjuna faced his relatives and friends bravely and fought the war, there would be no gītā rendered by Sri Krishna! It is a ploy by Sri Krishna to render the Gītā to all of us through Arjuna as a medium. There was darkness and gloom in the battlefield. Dark clouds lead to rain. Similarly, on Arjuna's depression, Sri Krishna rendered the Gītā as the much awaited rain from the second chapter onwards!

Thus Bhagavān served us the nectar through explanations on karma yog, jnana yog, bhakti yog, etc. We are all fortunate to be a part of Gītā Pariwar and learning the verses of the gītā, knowing its meaning, reciting, and trying to bring its principles in our daily life. Self study is also important as mentioned in Daivasampad Vibhaga Yog. It is a part of the divine qualities.

You all must be reading books on Ramayan and Mahabharata as well stories of great saints.

Whose birthday is tomorrow?

Swami Vivekanand Ji

He is a part of the 'Pancha Sutri' whose study is incorporated by Gita Pariwar.

We have to read the life stories of great people like Shivaji Maharaj. It will inspire our lives and inspire patriotism and spirituality.

What was Sri Krishna's reaction to all that Arjuna said?

HE never interrupted but silently listened to Arjuna's rantings.

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.

- gāṇḍīvaṃ - The big bow of Arjuna
- sraṃsatē - slips
- hastāt - from (my) hand
- tvak - (my) skin
- ca - and
- ēva - also
- paridahyatē - burns all over
- na - not

- śaknōmi - (I) am unable
- avasthātum - to stand
- bhramati iva - seems whirling
- mē - my
- manaḥ - mind

Arjuna clearly told Sri Krishna that his bow was slipping from his hand and he had a burning sensation all over. His mind was in a whirl and that he was unable to stand. Then how could he fight? We all know that soldiers at the border guard our nation. India was at war against Pakistan and China in recent times. What if our soldiers say that they are unable to stand and face the enemy? We would be easily attacked!

A warrior can never say that he is afraid to fight. He is given the necessary training and it becomes his bounding duty to fight the war. Similarly, Arjuna was a Kshatriya by birth. Hence his duty was to fight.

What is the duty of a student?

To read, write, exercise, and help.

Every person is bound by duties viz

- Mother
- Father
- Doctor
- Scientist
- Professors, and
- Other professionals

Similarly, Arjuna's duty is to fight wars. He refused to wage war citing physical inability. Sri Krishna did not utter a word.

During exams, we go fully prepared to get the maximum marks. Unfortunately, when we are unable to answer a question we become sad as we will lose marks.

When we read the gītā, we get solution to our problems. So what is the solution for us? We know that:

- We should be well prepared for the exam.
- Despite that, if we are unable to answer a question, then we have to surrender to Bhagavān and seek refuge in HIM.

We should definitely prepare well and not just merely surrender to Bhagavān. Arjuna was fully prepared. On seeing his own men, there was a shift in his attitude.

When we are sick we go to the doctor. The doctor first listens to the patient and hears his problems. Similarly, Sri Krishna listened to all that Arjuna had to say.

1.31

nimittāni ca paśyāmi, viparītāni keśava,

na ca śreyo'nupaśyāmi, hatvā svajanamāhave. 1.31

And, Keśava, I see omens of evil, nor do I see any good in killing my kinsmen in battle.

- **nimittāni - omens**
- **ca - and**
- **paśyāmi - I see**
- **viparītāni - adverse**
- **na - not**
- **śrēyaḥ - good**
- **anupaśyāmi - (I) see**
- **hatvā - killing**
- **svajanam - our people**
- **āhavē - in battle**

Arjuna addressed Sri Krishna as '**Keshava**- the one with luxurious hair!'

"The omens are adverse; what good can come from the slaughter of my people on this battlefield?"

If Arjuna wins the war, it means he has to kill all great warriors including Bhishma Pitamah, Dronacharya, and many others. He did not see any good outcome out of it. He felt no use of such a kingdom when he has no one to share the joy with.

Let us take an example of an elocution competition. If there are ten participants in all, and we prepare well and win, all others will happily cheer for us. If there is only one participant, there is no joy in winning, is it not?

Why did Sri Krishna ask Arjuna to wage war?

It is to put an end to '**adharmā**' - unrighteousness.

The Kauravas were against righteousness. Hence, their death would lead to justice and righteousness. This will result in the good of the society at large. Unfortunately, Arjuna viewed Kauravas from a relation perspective ie as his brothers.

There are two aspects:

- **Shreya - That which is good**
- **Preya - That which one likes**

Arjuna reasoned from his Preyas perspective and not Shreyas! When unrighteousness is destroyed it will result in good for all.

1.32

**na kāṅkṣe vijayaṃ(ñ) kṛṣṇa, na ca rājyaṃ(m) sukhāni ca,
kiṃ(n) no rājyena govinda, kiṃ(m) bhogairjīvitena vā. 1.32**

Kṛṣṇa, I do not covet victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. Govinda, of what use will kingdom or luxuries or even life be to us!

Arjuna said that he did not desire victory and the pleasures associated with it viz. happiness, wealth, and kingdom. He did not see any happiness on attaining a kingdom after killing his near and dears! He felt that his own life would have no meaning on winning the war.

- **kāñkṣē - (I) desire**
- **na - not**
- **vijayam - victory**
- **rājyam - kingdom**
- **sukhāni - pleasures**
- **bhōgaiḥ - by pleasures**

1.33

**yeṣāmarthe kāñkṣitam(n) no, rājyaṃ bhogāḥ(s) sukhāni ca,
ta ime'vasthitā yuddhe, prāṇāṃstyaktvā dhanāni ca. 1.33**

Those very persons for whose sake we covet the kingdom, luxuries and pleasures-

Arjuna felt that it was pointless to fight, as the happiness and wealth he desired for his loved ones are at war putting their life at stake. So for whom should he acquire the kingdom and its associated comforts? Also, it was not a given that only Kauravas will die and nothing will affect the Pandavas. War means death in both the armies.

- **yēṣām of whose**
- **arthē sake,**
- **kāñkṣitam - (is) desired**
- **naḥ - by us**
- **rājyam- kingdom**
- **bhogāḥ - enjoyment**
- **sukhāni - pleasures**
- **ca - and**
- **tē - they**
- **imē - these**
- **avasthitāḥ - stand**
- **yuddhē - in battle**
- **prāṇān - life**
- **tyaktvā - having abandoned**
- **dhanāni - wealth**

1.34

**ācāryāḥ(ph) pitarāḥ(ph) putrāḥ(s), tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ,
mātulāḥ(ś) śvaśurāḥ(ph) pautrāḥ(ś), śyālāḥ(s) sambandhinastathā. 1.34**

teachers, uncles, sons and nephews and even so, granduncles and great grand-uncles, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grand-nephews, brothers-in-law and other relations-

- **ācāryāḥ - teachers**

- **pitarah** - fathers
- **putrah** - sons
- **tathā** - thus
- **ēva** - also
- **ca** - and
- **pitāmahāḥ** - grandfathers
- **mātulāḥ** - maternal uncles
- **śvaśurāḥ** - fathers-in-law
- **pautrah** - grandsons
- **śyālāḥ** - brothers-in-law
- **sambandhinaḥ** - relatives
- **tathā** - as well as

All of the above were in the battlefield risking their lives and wealth. So Arjuna felt it was not worth the battle to accomplish victory resulting in the death of all of them.

1.35

**etāna hantumicchāmi, ghnato'pi madhusūdana,
api trailokyarājyasya, hetoḥ(kh) kiṃ(n) nu mahīkṛte.1.35**

O Slayer of Madhu, I do not want to kill them, though they may slay me, even for the sovereignty over the three worlds; how much the less for the kingdom here on earth!

Arjuna addressed Sri Krishna as '**Madhusudana**' - the slayer of the demon Madhusudan.

Arjuna was decisive and felt he would not kill his own men even if he was offered the three worlds - heaven, earth, and hell. Instead, he was ready to be killed in the war!

- **hantum** - to kill
- **icchāmi** - (I) wish
- **ghnataḥapi** - even if they kill me
- **trailōkyarājyasya** - dominion over the three worlds
- **mahīkṛtē** - for the sake of the earth

Sri Krishna did not utter a word and Arjuna felt that the war was not worthy of a fight resulting in the death of all his loved ones.

1.36

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

Kṛṣṇa, how can we hope to be happy slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; by killing even these desperadoes, sin will surely accrue to us.

Arjuna addressed Sri Krishna as **Janardhana** and asked what he would get on killing the sons of king Dritharashtra? **What happiness would he derive?**

- **ātātāyinaḥ** - terrorists

Arjuna felt he would only incur sin by killing such felons.

The word '**ātatāyi**' is used when one:

1. Burns down another's house/place of dwelling
2. Kills by poison
3. Ursups the kingdom unlawfully
4. Kidnap a woman or cause her disgrace
5. Loot and plunder of wealth and land
6. Kill by unfair means by use of weapons

Kauravas did all of the above. They burnt the lac palace where the Pandavas resided. Duryodhana disliked Bhima from childhood. He tried to kill Bhim by poisoning him. Duryodhana refused to give the rightful kingdom to the Pandavas. Duryodhana put Draupadi to shame in the court. The Kauravas cheated by looting wealth and use of weapons to kill the innocent.

1.37

**tasmānārḥā vyaṃ(m) hantuṃ(n), dhārtarāṣṭrānsvabāndhavān,
svajānaṃ(m) hi kathaṃ(m) hatvā, sukhinaḥ(s) syāma mādḥava.1.37**

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa, it does not behove us to kill our relations, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. For, how can we be happy after killing our own kinsmen?

Arjuna called Sri Krishna - Madhava and said, 'we are worthy of a nobler feat than to slaughter our relatives - the sons of Dhritarashtra; for, how can we be happy if we kill our kinsmen?'

There are many other reasons put forth by Arjuna in the following verses. **Why suddenly Arjuna was reminded of various instances?** This will be dealt with in the next session.

Students are advised to read through and listen to the vivechan to understand better. Further, this will enable one to memorize the verses easily and the speaker also followed the same method.

The session was thus offered to the Lotus feet of Bhagavān.

Om Sri Krishnarpanamastu! Jai Sri Krishna!



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Thank you-For reading the summary

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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