

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

BHAGAVAD GEETA – 1

Yoga of Arjuna's Despondency

"THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE"

**TEXT
28.01**

Reflections by
SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA



Sandeepany's Vedanta Course

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A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

– The Author, 21st March 2019, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Jayanti

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
28.01



अर्जुनविषादयोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA – 1

“Yoga of Arjuna’s Despondency”

Sri Veda Vyasaji

Reflections

by Swami Gurubhaktananda

on the 9 Lectures delivered by *Swami Advayanandaji*

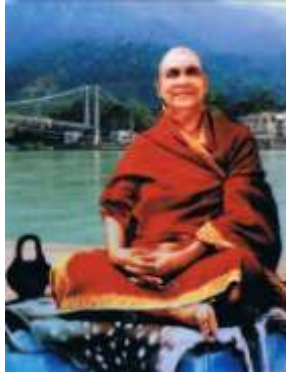
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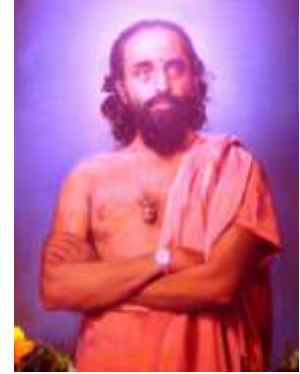
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Author:

Swami Gurubhaktananda (ex Krishna Chaitanya, born Bipin R. Kapitan in Durban, South Africa)

Email: gurubhakta.dls@gmail.com

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Personal Dedication

1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhaji Kapitan

who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;

2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj

the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;

3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)

for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;

4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji

my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.

BHAGAVAD GEETA - 1

“Yoga of Arjuna’s Despondency”

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः ।

अर्जुनविषादयोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 1 (47 Verses)

“Yoga of Arjuna’s DESPONDENCY”

THE GEETA FITTINGLY STARTS with the person who has the power at any moment to call off the war – King Dhritarashtra himself. He is *physically* blind; not only so, in his character he is *intellectually* blind, too, having a strong unreasonable bias for his sons. And above all, he shows himself to be *spiritually* blind. This widespread “blindness” is the first thing we note as we go into the opening Chapter. All these forms of blindness rule him out to be a fit King.

There is a ‘Dhritarashtra-element’ in each one of us.

He is that deluded being within who cannot see the Truth from the untruth; who beholds everything from his own, narrow perspective in life. If he is given the status of ‘King’ of our being, we at once invite conflict into our life – a conflict that is bound to result in turmoil within us that is symbolized in the **Mahabharata War**.

Text 23 of the Sandeepany series traces the run-up of events recorded in the *Mahabharata* that led to the Mahabharata War. This is essential reading prior to reading the Bhagavad Geeta. Included with Text 23 is the Geeta Dhyanam, composed by Sri Madhusudana Saraswati, which beautifully describes the meditative attitude we should have when approaching the study of this sacred book. Through a series of exquisite similes, the Dhyanam provides a picturesque view of the purpose of a book like the Geeta.

The first and foremost among the similes is that of the cow representing all the Upanishads; Krishna is the milker of the cows; the Geeta is the milk; and Arjuna (the seeker) is the calf who drinks its fill of milk from the caring hands of Krishna!



BHAGAVAD GEETA – 1
“Yoga of Arjuna’s Despondency”

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What are the moral issues? This is what the Introductory text is all about. In eighteen dramatic episodes are covered the full details of what exactly transpired that made War inevitable. The Pandavas had brought their claim down to just a piece of ground to lay their heads on. Even that was refused by the eldest son of Dhritarashtra, Duryodhana, leader of the Kauravas. The Kauravas had effectively concluded that their Pandava cousins had no right to be on this planet and had to be swiftly despatched from it by the only method they knew – **War**.

Some of the War Statistics

As a background it may help to know the following statistics of the two armies assembled on the battlefield:

The Pandavas were composed of 7 Akshavinis; the Kauravas of 11 Akshavinis. An Akshavini is a fighting unit made up of the following elements:

- | | | |
|------|---------|------------|
| i) | 21,870 | chariots; |
| ii) | 21,870 | elephants; |
| iii) | 65,610 | cavalry; |
| iv) | 109,350 | infantry. |

The ratio of these four is 1:1:3:5. All these make up 1 Akshavini. Dhritarashtra considers this comparison sufficient to conclude that the Kauravas are a *stronger* army. Quantity is all that matters. To a football fan, a team reduced to 10 men cannot win; to Dhritarashtra, war is only a game of numbers. He does not see quality or morality. Nor does he see that the Lord Krishna Himself is on the side of the Pandavas. Due to His promise not to take part in the actual fighting, He is perhaps considered insignificant in terms of strength by Dhritarashtra.

Verse 2: *Sanjaya – Reporter of the Visible & Invisible*

सञ्जय उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत्

॥ १-२॥

sañjaya uvāca |

dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānikam̐ vyūḍham̐ duryōdhanastadā |

ācāryamupasaṅgamyā rājā vacanamabravīt

|| 1-2||

0	<i>Sanjaya Uvaacha:</i>	<i>Sanjaya said:</i>
1	<i>Drishtvaa tu Paandavaaneekam</i>	<i>Having seen the army of the Pandavas</i>
2	<i>vyoodham duryodhanah tadaa;</i>	<i>in battle array, Prince Duryodhana then</i>
3	<i>aachaaryam upasangamyā</i>	<i>approached his teacher (Dronacharya);</i>
4	<i>raajaa vachanam abraveet.</i>	<i>the Prince spoke the following words:</i>

Q Sanjaya is our commentator who conveys the Geeta to mankind.

Sanjaya means “one who excels, is victorious”. Swami Sivananda qualifies this victory further by adding, “It is victory over one’s senses”. Like our modern TV viewers, Sanjaya was

blessed with the vision to see things far away. However, unlike the TV viewers, he could also see what was happening in people's *minds*. Thus, Sanjaya has a special role in the context of the Geeta. He represents the "voice of conscience" within King Dhritarashtra, which is all-knowing and from which the King cannot hide anything, for it knows all his thoughts.

1-3 Sanjaya delivers all the news in an unbiased manner, whether it is good or bad. He reports things as they are. He is the uncorruptible "voice of Truth" within that pricks the evil-minded Dhritarashtra at every moment. Sanjaya knows the King's inclinations in favour of his sons; he does not pander to them but chastises the King at every opportunity.

4 There is good reason why, on the warfront, it is Duryodhana whose words are quoted first. There could be two reasons for this:

i) ***The Kauravas are the Aggressors:*** It is the Kauravas who desired and instigated the war. They refused all the peace initiatives of the Pandavas. The aggressor gets the first chance to speak.

ii) ***Duryodhana's State of Mind:*** As Duryodhana's words come through to us, we see in them a portrayal of his character. We see his frame of mind quite clearly through the words he chooses. This will be revealed in the verses that follow.

Sanjaya has his own underlying message to deliver to the King. We will notice in his narration that he is hopeful that even now it is not too late for the King to withdraw the armies from the battlefield and make peace with the Pandavas.

All this, of course, has been master-minded by the great poet, Sri Veda Vyasa, the writer of the Mahabharata epic, within which, like a gem, lies the precious Bhagavad Geeta.



***The Kauravas and the Pandavas
never saw eye to eye!***

1.2 THE KAURAVAS DECLARE WAR

(Verses 3-13, 11 No.)

DURYODHANA IS ADDRESSING Dronacharya, his archery instructor or teacher. One's teacher deserves the highest respect. We may boast before the whole world but we cannot do so in front of our teacher. Let us see how Duryodhana fares in this matter.

THE PANDAVA FORCES

Verse 3: *“Thy Wise Disciple”*

दुर्योधन उवाच ।

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।

व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता

॥ १-३॥

paśyaitāṃ pāṇḍuputrāṇāmācārya mahatīm camūm |

vyūḍhāṃ drupadaputrēṇa tava śiṣyēṇa dhīmata

॥ 1-3॥

	<i>Duryodhana Uvaacha:</i>	<i>Duryodhana said:</i>
1	<i>Pashya etaam Paandu putraanaam</i>	<i>Belonging to the sons of Pandu, behold this</i>
2	<i>aachaarya mahateem chamoom;</i>	<i>mighty army, O Acharya,</i>
3	<i>vyoodhaam drupada putrena</i>	<i>that is arrayed by the son of Drupada,</i>
4	<i>tava shishyena dheemataa.</i>	<i>(i.e. Drishtadyumna) your “wise” disciple!</i>

1-2 Instead of asking his Guru for his blessings and perhaps a final word of advice at the threshold of the war, Duryodhana launches at once to point out to him whom he is to fight against – the army arrayed by the Pandavas. What a man fears most, lies uppermost in his mind. Duryodhana starts by pointing out the opposition to his own Army-General. Fear of the opposition takes precedence over confidence in his own ranks.

3 The army formation of the Pandavas, arranged by the capable **Drishtadyumna**, is pointed out. An army formation is called a Vyudham. Drishtadyumna's was an offensive, attacking formation, shaped like a piercing needle. Each Vyudham had a different name. A difficult formation called Chakra-Vyudham was very hard to come out of. Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, could enter it but could not come out of it. This led to his death when several Kaurava generals clubbed together and savagely attacked him when he was defenceless.

4 The teacher knows his pupil's abilities. Drishtadyumna was Dronacharya's student. Here we find Duryodhana telling the teacher about his own disciple's strategy!

Instead of his words instilling bravery in the one addressed, Dronacharya considers them as being sarcastic and insensitive, tantamount to an insult. A lack of confidence is

inspired in the Commander-in-Chief by these words. There is a tone of indignity in Duryodhana's words.

Verse 4: The Pandava Army Generals – Nos. 2-6

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।

युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः

॥ १-४॥

atra śūrā mahēṣvāsā bhīmārjunasamā yudhi |

yuyudhānō virāṭaśca drupadaśca mahārathah |

॥ 1-4॥

1	<i>Atra shoora mahesh-vaasaa</i>	<i>Here are heroes, mighty archers,</i>
2	<i>Bheema Arjuna samaa yudhi;</i>	<i>equal in battle to Bhima and Arjuna;</i>
3	<i>Yuyudhaana Viraatah cha</i>	<i>Yuyudhana, Virata and</i>
4	<i>Drupadah cha mahaa-rathah.</i>	<i>Drupada, the great chariot-warrior.</i>

An indecisive, rash, discourteous, perhaps even troubled and afraid commander – that is how Duryodhana comes through to us with his opening words.

1 Had Duryodhana been addressing his grandson, his words would have been most thrilling and awe-inspiring! But here none other than Dronacharya is being addressed. Duryodhana is found to be full of himself and insensitive to the need of the hour, which is to inspire his frontline Army-Generals. Praising the opposition does little to boost the morale of his own Commander-in-Chief. Drishtadyumna has already been mentioned.

2 Having already erred by starting with the opposition General, Drishtadyumna, Duryodhana adds insult to injury by adding to the list his most feared opponents – **Bhima** and **Arjuna**, who are the Commanders-in-Chief of the Pandavas. Both are among Dronacharya's best students. Arjuna was regarded as being his favourite student.

3-4 Duryodhana's attention goes further into the ranks of the opposition leaders. Another three of them are named for Dronacharya to take special note of, bringing the total to **six**. Is this the way to instill confidence in a Commander?

Verse 5 The Pandava Army Generals – Nos. 7-12

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।

पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः

॥ १-५॥

dhṛṣṭakētuścēkitānaḥ kāśirājaśca vīryavān |

purujitkuntibhōjaśca śaibyaśca narapuṅgavaḥ |

॥ 1-5॥

1	<i>Drishtaketuh Chekitaanah</i>	<i>Drishtaketu, Chekitana,</i>
2	<i>Kaashi-raajah cha veeryavaan;</i>	<i>and the valiant king of Kashi,</i>
3	<i>Purujit Kuntibhojah cha</i>	<i>Purujit, Kuntibhoja and</i>
4	<i>Shaibyah cha nara pungavah.</i>	<i>Shaibya, the best of men.</i>

Verse 6: The Pandava Army Generals – Nos. 13-20

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।

सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः

॥ १-६॥

yudhāmanyuśca vikrānta uttamaujāśca vīryavān |

saubhadrō draupadēyāśca sarva ēva mahārathāḥ

॥ 1-6॥

1	<i>Yudhaamanyuh cha vikraanta</i>	<i>The strong Yudhamanyu</i>
2	<i>Uttamaujaah cha veeryavaan;</i>	<i>and the brave Uttamaujaa;</i>
3	<i>Saubhadrah Draupadeyaah cha</i>	<i>the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi;</i>
4	<i>sarva eva mahaa-rathaah.</i>	<i>all of them, indeed, great chariot warriors.</i>

Another **six** Pandava generals are named in v.5, and **eight** in v.6 – totalling **20**.

Abhimanyu is Arjuna’s son from Subhadra, Sri Krishna’s sister. The five sons of Draupadi were also Army-Generals in the Pandava camp. Each Pandava had a son from her; their names are given in the table below:

Pandava Brother

Yudhisthira

Bhima

Arjuna

Nakula

Sahadev

Name of Son from Draupadi

Pratibindya

Shrutasena

Shrutakirti

Shatanika

Shutakarma

All of these were **Maha-Rathas**, meaning “a general who controls an army consisting of greater than 10,000 warriors”. The table below gives the different abilities of generals, in order of the size of his army, beginning with the least powerful:

Rating of General

Artha-Ratha

Ratha

Ati-Ratha

Maha-Ratha

Size of Army Controlled

upto 500 men

upto 1000 men

upto 10,000 men

greater than 10,000 men

THE KAURAVA FORCES

Most of the Army-Generals on both sides were trained by **Dronacharya**, and some by **Kripacharya**. Both these Acharyas fought on the Kaurava side, as their allegiance was to King Dhritarashtra who provided them their livelihood. The same applied to **Bhishma**, the grandsire of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Of course, the moral issue at stake in the battle was known to them but that was not a deciding factor. For them livelihood took precedence over righteousness in determining which side they fought for.

Verse 7: The Kaurava Army

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।

नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते

॥ १-७॥

asmākam tu viśiṣṭā yē tānnibōdha dvijōttama |

nāyakā mama sainyasya sañjāartham tānbravīmi tē

॥ 1-7॥

1	<i>Asmaakam tu vishishtaah ye</i>	<i>Those who are the most distinguished amongst us,</i>
2	<i>taan nibodha dvijah uttama;</i>	<i>know their names also, O Best among Brahmanas;</i>
3	<i>naayakaa mama sainyasya</i>	<i>the leaders of my army,</i>
4	<i>samjnaartham taan braveemi te.</i>	<i>these I name to thee for thy information.</i>

Throughout these eleven verses of Duryodhana’s speech at the threshold of war, we observe that Dronacharya keeps totally silent. Perhaps he feels the pinch of the painful irony of having to take orders from his own pupil who has so clearly fallen far from righteousness. Indeed, the situation is very hard to bear. How could he give his loyalty so cheaply!

1 Duryodhana continues inflicting the pain. He turns to his own formidable army.

2 **Dvija**, “twice-born”, i.e. a Brahmana. Duryodhana commits another blunder. He addresses Dronacharya not as a Kshatriya warrior, but as a Brahmana. It sounds as if he is telling Dronacharya, “I wonder if you are the right person for this job of leading our army? We need a tough Kshatriya for this, not a soft Brahmana.”

2-4 Protocol dictates that Dronacharya should be introducing his army generals to Duryodhana, not the other way round. We see in Duryodhana an utter disregard for protocol by which he betrays his lack of trust in the intelligence and courage of his Commander-in-Chief. The absence of trust is becoming alarmingly obvious.

Verse 8: The Kaurava Commanders & Generals – Nos. 1-7

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।

अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च

॥ १-८॥

bhavañbhīṣmaśca karṇaśca kṛpaśca samitiñjayaḥ |

aśvatthāmā vikarṇaśca saumadattistathaiva ca

॥ 1-8॥

1	<i>Bhavaan Bheeshmah cha Karnah cha</i>	<i>Yourself, Bhisma and Karna;</i>
2	<i>Kripah cha samitinjaya;</i>	<i>and also Kripa, the victorious in war;</i>
3	<i>Ashvatthaamaa Vikarnah cha</i>	<i>Ashwatthama, Vikarna, and</i>
4	<i>Saumadattih tathaa eva cha.</i>	<i>so also the son of Somadatta (Bhurishrava).</i>

1 20 Pandava generals were mentioned above. Their counterparts are now being named by Duryodhana. **Drona** and **Bhisma** are in overall charge of the Kaurava armies. **Karna** is third in line in the Kaurava leadership.

1-4 From Kripacharya to Bhurishrava, another **four** Army Generals, are named, making up **seven**. And then he suddenly stops altogether – what about the others?

Verse 9: The Arrogance of Duryodhana

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।

नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः

॥ १-९॥

anyē ca bahavaḥ śūrā madarthē tyaktajīvitāḥ |

nānāśastrapraharaṇāḥ sarvē yuddhaviśāradaḥ

॥ 1-9॥

1	<i>Anye cha bahavaḥ shooraah</i>	<i>And many other heroes also who are</i>
2	<i>mad-arthe tyakta jeevitaah;</i>	<i>determined to give up their lives for my sake;</i>
3	<i>naanaa shastra praharanaah</i>	<i>armed with various weapons and missiles,</i>
4	<i>sarve yudha vishaaradaah.</i>	<i>all well-skilled in battle.</i>

1 The remaining generals are not even named! Could it be that Duryodhana was getting impatient with the silence of Drona, and wanted to move on and talk to Bhishma, as he does in the next verse? Or was he unable to remember the rest of his generals due to his agitated state of mind? Or was it just that he was too preoccupied with himself to bother about all the names of his generals? His words show increasing *signs of egoism*.

2 In “for my sake”, he sees himself more as the sole reason for waging such a fratricidal war. This is the ugly face of dictatorship in politics. The leader cares not for the lives of the people whom he leads, but only for his own lust for power. Dictatorships have ruined the lives of millions of people throughout history.

Pujya Gurudev says, “The incorrigible vanity of the dictatorial tyrant is amply clear when he arrogates to himself the stupendous honour that such a vast array of heroes had come ready to lay down their lives ‘for my sake’.”

3-4 It is certainly an anti-climax to taper off so suddenly when it comes to his own generals. Such scant praise for his own men! He is not in the present moment, not up to the occasion. His mind seems to be more perturbed about the *result* of the war.

Verse 10: The Mental Agitation of Duryodhana

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम्

॥ १-१०॥

aparyāptam tadasmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam |

paryāptam tvidamētēṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam

॥ 1-10॥

1	<i>Aparyaptam tad asmaakam</i>	<i>Insufficient (or unlimited) is this, our</i>
2	<i>balam Bheeshma abhirakshitam;</i>	<i>army, commanded by Bhishma;</i>
3	<i>paryaptam tu idam eteshaam</i>	<i>whereas sufficient (or limited) is that, their</i>
4	<i>balam Bheema abhirakshitam.</i>	<i>army, commanded by Bhima.</i>

This verse strikingly brings out the state of mental confusion reigning in Duryodhana. Gripped by cowardly fear of the Pandavas by realizing their superior moral strength despite numerical disadvantage, Duryodhana makes two errors that reveal his state:

Verse 12: Bhishma Fires the “First Bullet”

सञ्जय उवाच ।

तस्य सञ्जनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान्

॥ १-१२॥

tasya sañjanayanharṣam kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ |

simhanādam vinadyōccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān || 1-12||

	<i>Sanjaya Uvaacha:</i>	<i>Sanjaya continues:</i>
1	<i>Tasya sanjanayan harsham</i>	<i>In order to cheer (Duryodhana), his</i>
2	<i>kuru vriddhah pitaamahah;</i>	<i>grandsire (Bhishma), eldest of the Kurus,</i>
3	<i>simha-naadam vinadya ucchaih</i>	<i>now sounded aloud a lion’s roar</i>
4	<i>shankham dadhmau prataapavaan.</i>	<i>by blowing his mighty, glorious conch.</i>

1-2 Judging from Sanjaya’s words, the deduction may be made that Duryodhana was sending the wrong signals to the army and causing a lowering of morale among his own ranks. Bhishma, sensing this, tried to arrest this slide within his army.

3-4 The sounding of the conches was the traditional way of announcing the start of a battle. Bhishma’s conch was aimed to resurrect the flagging spirits of his own army, who were observing the confusion in the mind of Duryodhana by his restless behaviour.

However, it also signaled the start to the war. As Pujya Gurudev puts it, “It was tantamount to firing the first bullet.”

Verse 13: The Kauravas Become the Aggressors

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।

सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत्

॥ १-१३॥

tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bhēryaśca paṇavānakagōmukhāḥ |

sahasaivābhyahanyanta sa śabdastumulō:'bhavat

|| 1-13||

1	<i>Tatah shankhaah cha bheryah cha</i>	<i>Then conches and kettledrums (of the Kauravas),</i>
2	<i>panava-aanaka-gomukhaah;</i>	<i>tabors, military drums and cow-horns;</i>
3	<i>sahasaa eva abhya-hanyanta</i>	<i>blared forth quite suddenly,</i>
4	<i>sah shabdah tumulah abhavat.</i>	<i>and that sound was tumultuous.</i>

1-4 The rest of the Kaurava army took the lead from Bhishma and followed suit. By being the first side to blow their conches, the Kauravas accepted that they were the aggressors. This is in fact the truth. The Pandavas were now called upon to defend themselves against this unrighteous aggression from the Kauravas.

The “tumultuous” sound must have reached the ears of King Dhritarashtra. How did it sound to him? Was it pleasing, or was it a terrifying reminder to withdraw the troops!

The Composition & Loyalty of the Kaurava Army

The Kaurava army was a hotch-potch assemblage of dubious support gathered from far and wide of countries that did not feel committed to the war, but only supported it because of personal favours done to them or promised to them. They could split apart very easily if they sensed disunity among themselves.

Bhishma's call was intended to arrest this deterioration of morale among the Kaurava army units, which he knew resembled different factions rather than one united army. If he had not intervened in time, Duryodhana's mental state could have led to deterioration in the spirit of the Kaurava forces, and this could have ruptured their unity.



1.3 RESPONSE OF THE PANDAVAS

(Verses 14-25, 12 No.)

SANJAYA NOW TURNS his attention to the Pandavas. In the next 12 verses we see the response of the Pandavas to the war cry of the Kauravas.

Sri Veda Vyasaji raises the descriptive quality of these verses by a good few notches. His descriptions become more charged with poetic fervour and flare. There is no doubting which army Sri Veda Vyasa has his sympathies for.

Verse 14 & 15A: *Conches – Lord Krishna & Arjuna*

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १-१४॥

tataḥ śvetairhayairyuktē mahati syandanē sthitau |
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmaṭuḥ || 1-14||

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
pāñcājanyaṁ hṛṣīkēśō dēvadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ | ॥ १-१५.१॥
|| 1-15.1||

1	<i>Tatah shwetaih hayaih yukte</i>	<i>Then, yoked with white horses,</i>
2	<i>mahati syandane sthitau;</i>	<i>seated in their magnificent chariot,</i>
3	<i>Maadhava Paandava cha eva</i>	<i>Madhava and the son of Pandu also</i>
4	<i>divyau shankhau pra-dadhmaṭuḥ.</i>	<i>blew their <u>divine conches</u>.</i>
5	<i>Paanchajanyam hrisheekeshah</i>	<i>Hrisheekesha blew the <u>Panchajanya</u>;</i>
6	<i>Devadattam Dhananjayah;</i>	<i>Dhananjaya blew the <u>Devadatta</u>;</i>

The response from the Pandavas begins with the Lord Himself blowing His Divine conch, the Panchajanya. This is followed immediately by Arjuna blowing his Devadatta.

Verse 15B & 16: *Conches – the Other Pandavas*

पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १-१५.२॥
pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṁ bhīmakarmā vṛkōdaraḥ || 1-15.2||

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १-१६॥
anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntīputrō yudhiṣṭhiraḥ |
nakulaḥ sahadēvaśca sughōṣamaṇipuṣpakau || 1-16||

7	<i>Paundram dadhmau mahaashankham</i>	<i>The great conch, <u>Paundram</u>, was blown</i>
8	<i>Bheema-karmaa vrikodarah.</i>	<i>by Bhima, the “wolf-bellied”.</i>
9	<i>Ananta-vijayam raajaa</i>	<i>The <u>Anantavijaya</u> was blown by the King</i>
10	<i>Kunti-putrah Yudhishtirah;</i>	<i>Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti;</i>
11	<i>Nakulah Sahadevah cha</i>	<i>Nakula and Sahadeva (blew their conches),</i>
12	<i>Sughosha Manipushpakau.</i>	<i>named <u>Sughosha</u> and <u>Manipushpaka</u>.</i>

We notice that Veda Vyasa has taken the trouble to actually name all six of the conches blown so far. For the Kauravas there was no such naming ceremony.

Verse 17: Conches – the Pandava Army Generals

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
 धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १-१७॥
 kāśyaśca paramēṣvāsaḥ śikhāṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ |
 dhṛṣṭadyumnō virāṭaśca sātyakiścāparājitaḥ ॥ 1-17॥

1	<i>Kaashyah cha parama ishvaasah</i>	<i>The king of Kashi, an excellent archer;</i>
2	<i>Shikhandee cha mahaarathah;</i>	<i>Shikhandi, the mighty chariot-warrior;</i>
3	<i>Drishtadyumnah Viraatah cha</i>	<i>Drishtadyumna and Virata,</i>
4	<i>Saatyakh cha aparaajitah.</i>	<i>and Satyaki, the invincible . . .</i>

Shikhandi was born as a woman, but, as per her Karma, she became manly and played the role of a warrior. As advised by Bhishma himself, Arjuna positioned Shikhandi in front of him when he faced the former in battle. Bhishma, on principle of not fighting with a woman, refused to shoot his arrows at Arjuna. Arjuna then shot the fatal arrows at him.

Drishtadyumna was destined to kill Dronacharya in the battle. When the latter heard that his son Aswatthama was killed (actually an elephant named Aswatthama was killed), he dropped his bow. Being disarmed was the only condition when he could be killed. Drishtadyumna then cut off the head of Dronacharya.

Verse 18: Conches – the Sons of the Pandavas

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
 सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १-१८॥
 drupadō draupadēyāśca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivīpatē |
 saubhadraśca mahābāhuḥ śaṅkhāndadhmuḥ pṛthakpṛthak ॥ 1-18॥

1	<i>Drupadah Draupadeyaah cha</i>	<i>Drupada and the sons of Draupadi,</i>
2	<i>sarvashah prithivee-pate;</i>	<i>O Lord of the entire Earth,</i>
3	<i>Saubhadrah cha mahaabaahuh</i>	<i>and the son of Subhadra, the mighty-armed –</i>
4	<i>shankhaan dadhmuh prithak prithak.</i>	<i>all of them blew their respective conches.</i>

1	<i>Atha vyavasthitaan drishtvaa</i>	<i>Thereafter, seeing standing arrayed before him</i>
2	<i>Dhaartaraashtraan kapidhvajah;</i>	<i>Dhritarashtra's party, with the monkey <i>ensign</i></i>
3	<i>pravritte shastra sampate</i>	<i>with the discharge of weapons about to begin,</i>
4	<i>dhanuh udyamya Paandavah;</i>	<i>taking up his bow, that son of Pandu (Arjuna),</i>
5	<i>Hrisheekesham tadaa vaakyam</i>	<i>then directing his words to Hrishikesha (Krishna),</i>
6	<i>idam aaha mahee-pate:</i>	<i>said to the "Lord of the Earth" (Krishna):</i>

1 The word '**Atha**' meaning "thereafter" has great significance at this point. It specifies the moment when the battle begins. It means:

- i) After the sound of the conches died down;
- ii) After both sides announced that they were ready;
- iii) After Krishna said He will take the responsibility; and
- iv) After the hearts of the Kauravas were broken, and only their corpses stood on the battlefield!

5 Similarly, '**Tadaa**' meaning "then", just before Arjuna speaks, also carries enormous significance:

- i) When the war was thrust upon Arjuna;
- ii) When Duryodhana tried every trick to kill them;
- iii) When he tried to burn them alive in the 'wax palace';
- iv) When he refused to give them any land, not even the 'size of the tip of a needle';
- v) When the war was about to begin in earnest, not just being boasted about.

That decisive moment has arrived. The long string of events prior to this moment are all meant to be included in the words **Atha** and **Tadaa**. The destiny of the whole of India is at stake in the battle that is to ensue.

2 The reference to the Hanuman symbol refers to the flag on Arjuna's chariot which had this symbol painted on it. Here, just prior to launching the attack, it serves as an invocation to that supreme servant of the Lord, Sri Hanuman, who in an age prior to this one, served Lord Rama in His battle against the forces of the evil Ravana.

We are being reminded of Sri Rama's role as the Avatara, at the very moment when the Lord's Avatara as Krishna is about to fulfil the same purpose – to destroy the forces of unrighteousness and uphold Dharma. This is a master-stroke from the pen of Veda Vyasa.

3-4 These lines contain dramatic irony in them. What actually happens moments later is the very opposite. Between these words and the actual start of the battle, the entire message of the Geeta is delivered on the battlefield. To bring these two actions to reality, it needed the delivery of the whole Geeta! The significance of the Geeta is thus dramatized in these two lines.

6 Here is another one of those statements that brings out the contrast between the two sides in the war. While Duryodhana gets his authorization from Dhritarashtra, the "Lord of the Kuru Kingdom", Arjuna awaits his authorization from Sri Krishna, "The Lord of the Earth." One lord represents terrestrial power; the other Lord represents spiritual power.

This is indeed a battle between these two opposing forces. And Sri Vyasaji finds a most poignant way and the most poignant moment to bring out this contrast!

Verse 21B & 22: Arjuna Instructs Krishna

अर्जुन उवाच ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ १-२१.२॥
arjuna uvāca |
sēnayōrubhayōrṁmadhyē ratham sthāpaya mē:'cyuta ॥ 1-21.2॥
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ १-२२॥
yāvadētānnirīkṣē:'ham yōddhukāmānavasthitān |
kairmayā saha yōddhavyamasmin raṇasamudyamē ॥ 1-22॥

	<i>Arjuna Uvaacha:</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Senayoh ubhayoh madhye</i>	<i>In the midst of the two armies</i>
2	<i>ratham sthaapaya me Achyuta;</i>	<i>place my chariot, O Achyuta (the unfailing one);</i>
3	<i>yaavat etaan nireekshe aham</i>	<i>that I may behold those here</i>
4	<i>yoddhu-kaamaan avasthitaan;</i>	<i>who stand desirous of fighting;</i>
5	<i>kaih mayaa saha yoddavyam</i>	<i>(and get to know) with whom I am to fight</i>
6	<i>asmin rana-samudyame.</i>	<i>on this the eve of the battle.</i>

1 Symbolically, these words “in the midst of the two armies” could be interpreted variously, depending on which aspect of the occasion one is interested in.

i) If our subject is Arjuna as a heroic warrior, then we see the words signifying his enormous courage and daring. He wants to be face to face with those with whom he is to engage in battle. This is vintage Arjuna – the Arjuna whom we know as the “invincible hero of the Mahabharata”.

ii) If our subject is the battle itself, then this could represent neutral territory, as at that moment both sides have announced their intention to clash but have not yet done so. The neutral territory is safe ground from which the whole scene can be surveyed.

iii) If we are seeing this from hindsight, we could see these words as heralding the mental state of indecision which Arjuna is about to be overcome by. He is neither on this side nor on that side. Going into “neutral” territory means suddenly losing sight of the battle and seeing both sides as having one common factor – namely, that they are all *relatives* of each other. Seeing the situation from this neutral angle, a whole new mental state overcomes Arjuna, as we shall soon see.

2 Achyuta: Addressing Krishna with this word is significant: It means “one who never falls; never slips down”; such a person can be very helpful to one who is *about to fall* – as Arjuna is destined to in a short while. When that happens, Arjuna will need the support of Krishna, who “cannot fall”.

3-6 This part is where Providence makes room for the sacred **Delivery of the Geeta** to take place without interruption! The curtains close on the war for a while; it seems that Arjuna just wants to have some private space in the presence of Krishna for a little longer time. Time freezes, as it were. *Unknown to his conscious self, his soul surges forward for the crucial transformation that it is about to experience.*

Verse 23: The Kaurava Allies

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः

॥ १-२३॥

yōtsyamānānavēkṣē:'haṁ ya ētē:'tra samāgatāḥ |

dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddhēryuddhē priyacikīrṣavaḥ

|| 1-23||

1	<i>Yotsyamaanaan avekshe aham</i>	<i>With the object of engaging in battle, I wish to</i>
2	<i>yah ete atra samaagataah;</i>	<i>see those who are assembled here –</i>
3	<i>Dhaartaraashtrasya durbuddhe</i>	<i>those evil-minded ones of Dhritarashtra's son,</i>
4	<i>yuddhe priya-chikeershavah.</i>	<i>who wish merely to placate him in battle.</i>

1-2 These lines simply continue the trend of thought from the previous verse and could well have been attached to it.

3-4 Here we see Arjuna echoing what we have already commented on in verse 13. The Kaurava allies clearly have no moral grounds to fight this war. Evidently, they are there only because of rewards promised to them by Duryodhana should they win this war. Their incentive is mercenary.

On the other hand, Arjuna is motivated by love for Krishna. Krishna means everything to him, whether he succeeds or fails. It is this attitude of his that is presently going to be of the greatest help to him in the war.

Acharyaji was reminded of another verse in the Mahabharata where, speaking of those whom the Lord loved, it is said:

“Vyadha – what was his livelihood?

Dhruva – what was his age?

Gajendra – what was his knowledge?

Kudju – what was his beauty?

Sudama – what of his wealth?

Vidura – what of his lineage?

Ugrasena – what was his value, in jail?

Yet, the Lord was pleased with them all for they had love in their hearts for Him.

The Lord did not look at their circumstances, but only if they loved Him.

The Lord is easily conquered by love!”

Verse 24: In “No-Man’s Land”

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम्

॥ १-२४॥

sañjaya uvāca |

ēvamuktō ḥṛṣīkēśō guḍākēśēna bhārata |

sēnayōrubhayōrmadhyē sthāpayitvā rathōttamam

|| 1-24||

	<i>Sanjaya Uvaacha:</i>	<i>Sanjaya said:</i>
1	<i>Evam uktah Hrisheekeshah</i>	<i>Thus was addressed Hrishikesha (i.e. Krishna)</i>
2	<i>Gudaakeshena Bhaarata;</i>	<i>by Gudakesha (Arjuna, “conqueror of sleep”), O Bharata (i.e. Dhritarashtra).</i>
3	<i>senayoh ubhayoh madhye</i>	<i>In the midst of both the armies</i>
4	<i>sthaapayitvaa ratha uttamam.</i>	<i>He stationed the best of chariots.</i>

1-2 Three key figures of this drama feature in these lines, and all three of them are addressed by their nick-names:

Bharata means “a citizen of Bharatavarsha”, the name for Mother India. This term is used to address Dhritarashtra. Sanjaya seems to be mentally suggesting, “O King, you are an Indian citizen. Yet, you are dividing your own countrymen by authorizing this war. Where is your patriotism? You are pitting your countrymen against each other. Even now it is not too late for you to put a stop to this civil war. Can’t you do that for your country?”

Gudakesha means “one who does not give way to Tamas.” There is unwitting irony in using this word here. That is the reputation Arjuna has. Yet, in a short while from now, Arjuna breaks down completely, languishing in Tamas in the midst of the battlefield!

‘Gudakesha’ also has a second meaning: “one with knotted hair”. This may have symbolic significance in a battle context. Just as loosely flying hair is hazardous to a soldier, so also, loosely flying thoughts in Arjuna’s mind are hazardous and need to be knotted.

Hrisheekeshah means “lord of the senses”. Lord Krishna is such a one. This quality tells us that He is completely in control of Himself, well *knotted up*. This quality marks Him out as the best charioteer one could have.

3-4 The charioteer symbolizes one’s intellect, the power to discriminate. Here the ‘intellect’-Krishna positions the chariot in the midst of the two armies.

Verse 25: “Behold these Kurus!”

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।

उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरूनिति

॥ १-२५॥

bhīṣmadrōṇapramukhataḥ sarvēṣāṃ ca mahīkṣitām |

uvāca pārtha paśyaitānsamavētānkurūniti

|| 1-25||

1	<i>Bheeshma Drona pramukhatah</i>	<i>In front of Bhishma and Drona</i>
2	<i>sarveshaam cha maheekshitaam;</i>	<i>and all the rulers of the Earth;</i>
3	<i>uvaacha Paartha pashya etaan</i>	<i>(the Lord) said: “O Partha, behold these</i>
4	<i>sama-vetaan Kuroon iti.</i>	<i>Kurus gathered here together!”</i>

There are two very significant facts in this verse:

1-2 The first is the position chosen by Sri Krishna. Some may find it a point worth noting that Sri Krishna chose to park the chariot right in front of Arjuna’s beloved elders and superiors – Bhishma and Dronacharya.

3-4 The second is the use of the word *Kurus* for the assembled warriors from both sides taken together. The Lord could have said, “Behold these warriors...”, but He chooses the clan name. What could have been the reason?

Both these facts had a deep effect on Arjuna. They were just the thing that triggered something within him that altered his entire outlook on the war at its most critical juncture.

Could this have been deliberate from Sri Krishna? Or was it just an act of Fate to stir up the feelings of attachment in him, break his resolve to act, and invite the destined moment of delusion and utter emotional breakdown? A professional psycho-analyst may relish analyzing this problem.

Whether these two seemingly harmless facts could have been the trigger or not, the following is what unfolded on the battlefield soon after . . .



1.4 ONSET OF ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY

(Verses 26-31A, 6 No.)

SUDDENLY ARJUNA LOST the context of the war: Where he should be seeing a righteous battle to look forward to, he saw reason only to retreat from it. Where he should be seeing only the enemy armies, he saw only kinsmen, teachers and friends. Some switch in his mind had clicked and his thoughts turned totally out of the war context. Something happened to Arjuna at the eleventh hour which sapped from him all intellectual courage, and plunged him into an emotional crisis.

Verse 26: What Does Arjuna See?

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन्पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ १-२६॥
tatrāpaśyatsthitānpārthaḥ pitṛnatha pitāmahān |
ācāryānmātulānbhrātṛṅputrānpautrānsakhīmstathā ॥ 1-26॥

1	<i>Tatra apashyat sthitaan Paartha</i>	<i>Then Partha saw stationed there</i>
2	<i>pitruun atha pitaamahaan;</i>	<i>fathers and also grandfathers;</i>
3	<i>aachaaryaan, maatulaan, bhraatruun</i>	<i>teachers, maternal uncles, brothers,</i>
4	<i>putraan, pautraan, sakheem tathaa.</i>	<i>sons, grandsons, and friends were there.</i>

Verse 27, 28 A: Kinsmen All Around!

श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।
तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ १-२७॥
śvaśuraansuhṛdaścaiva sēnayōrubhayōrapi |
tānsamīkṣya sa kauntēyaḥ sarvānbandhūnavasthitān ॥ 1-27॥
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् । ॥ १-२८.१॥
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭō viṣīdannidamabravit | ॥ 1-28.1॥

5	<i>Shvashuraan, suhridah cha eva</i>	<i>Even fathers-in-law and benefactors, too,</i>
6	<i>senayoh ubhayoh api;</i>	<i>were there on both sides of the armies.</i>
7	<i>taan sameekshya sah kaunteyah</i>	<i>When the son of Kunti saw these <u>kith and kin</u>,</i>
8	<i>sarvaan bandhoon avasthitaan;</i>	<i>his own relatives, standing arrayed before him,</i>
9	<i>kripayaa parayaa aavishtah</i>	<i>he was overcome by feelings of deep pity,</i>
10	<i>visheedan idam abraveet.</i>	<i>and sorrowfully he spoke these words:</i>

Verse 30: *Slipping Bow*

गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः
gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṁsatē hastāttvakcaiva paridahyatē |
na ca śaknōmyavasthātum bhramatīva ca mē manaḥ || 1-30||

7	<i>Gaandeevam samsrate hastaat</i>	v) the Gandiva bow <u>slips</u> from my hand, and
8	<i>tvak cha eva pari-dahyate;</i>	vi) my skin <u>burns</u> all over;
9	<i>na cha shaknomi avasthaatum</i>	vii) I am also unable to <u>stand</u> , and
10	<i>bhramati iva cha me manah.</i>	viii) my mind is <u>whirling</u> around, as it were.

Verse 31A: *Adverse Omens*

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni kēśava |
|| १-३१.१||
|| 1-31.1||

11	<i>Nimittaani cha pashyaami</i>	ix) and I see <u>omens</u> ,
12	<i>vipareetaani keshava.</i>	that are adverse, O Keshava.

1-12 The actual symptoms need not snatch our attention; it is enough that we understand that these symptoms cannot be suppressed. One may suppress a yawn but not the horripilation on the arms. These symptoms show how much power there is in emotions. One can easily be overcome by them, even physically. It shows that even the best of warriors can be overcome by emotions – it all depends on his sensitivity to the circumstances. Psychology textbooks would describe these as “anxiety state neurosis”.

The above symptoms show that Arjuna was not emotionally prepared for this war. He is all shaken up by the sudden feeling of misplaced compassion for his kinsmen.

The most embarrassing symptom is the ninth one, in verse 31A. Arjuna begins to get superstitious. It is a sign of a weak person to consult an astrologer or turn to superstition. It indicates that the person has lost all control over his situation and desperately accepts external causes to internal problems. This is how we can interpret the ‘adverse omens’.

These symptoms need not be taken as an individual weakness. Some may see them as the effect of the emotions of all the assembled warriors on the person of Arjuna. Arjuna was bearing the collective emotion of the vast concourse of people around him. This exonerates him to an extent, but does not explain how he has to deal with them.

An emotionally crushed person is no longer an effective soldier, let alone an effective Commander-in-Chief – that is certain. Something has to be done to arrest Arjuna’s emotional catastrophe. First Aid of the heart is called for!



Verse 34: “Kinsmen Alone Do I See Everywhere”

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ १-३४॥
ācāryāḥ pitarah putrāstathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ |
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinastathā ॥ 1-34॥

11	<i>Aachaaryaah pitarah putraah</i>	<i>Teachers, fathers, sons,</i>
12	<i>tathaa eva cha pitaa-mahaah;</i>	<i>and so also grandfathers;</i>
13	<i>maatulaah shvashuraah pautraah</i>	<i>maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,</i>
14	<i>shyaalaah sam-bandhinah tathaa;</i>	<i>brothers-in-law, as well as other relatives...</i>

Verse 35: “Dominion by Killing?”

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ १-३५॥
ētānna hantumicchāmi ghnatō:'pi madhusūdana |
api trailōkyarājyasya hētōḥ kiṁ nu mahīkṛtē ॥ 1-35॥

15	<i>Etaan na hantum icchaami</i>	<i>These I do not wish to kill</i>
16	<i>ghnatah api Madhusoodana;</i>	<i>even though killed by them, O Madhusudana,</i>
17	<i>api trai-lokya-raajyasya</i>	<i>even for the sake of dominion over the <u>three worlds</u>.</i>
18	<i>hetoh kim nu maheekrite.</i>	<i>How much less for the sake of this world!</i>

Verse 36: “Pleasure in Killing?”

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ १-३६॥
nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrānnaḥ kā prītiḥ syājjanārdana |
pāpamēvāśrayēdasmānhatvaitānātātāyinaḥ ॥ 1-36॥

19	<i>Nihitya Dhaartaraashtraan nah</i>	<i>Killing these sons of Dhritarashtra,</i>
20	<i>kaa preetih syaat Janaardana;</i>	<i>what pleasure can be ours, O Janardana?</i>
21	<i>Paapam eva aashrayet asmaan</i>	<i>Sin alone will be our gain</i>
22	<i>hatvaa etaan aatataayinah.</i>	<i>by killing these <u>wretched felons</u>.</i>

Verse 37: “Happiness by Killing?”

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ १-३७॥
tasmānnārhā vayaṁ hantum dhārtarāṣṭrānsvabāndhavān |
svajanaṁ hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādharma ॥ 1-37॥

23	<i>Tasmaat na arhaah vayam hantum</i>	<i>Therefore, we are not justified to kill</i>
24	<i>Dhartaraashtraan swa-baandhavaan</i>	<i>Dhritarashtra's sons, our own relatives;</i>
25	<i>swajanam hi katham hatvaa</i>	<i>for how, having killed our kinsmen,</i>
26	<i>sukhinah syaama Maadhava.</i>	<i>can we be happy, O Madhava?</i>

In the above verses, from 31b to 37, the *Drishta Phala*, the “fruit that can be seen”, i.e. the fruit that is available for enjoyment on earth itself, as well as the *Adrishta Phala*, the “fruit that cannot be seen”, i.e. heavenly pleasures – both are denied by Arjuna.

Arjuna declares in verse 32 that he does not desire three things:

- i) He does not desire **victory**.
- ii) He does not desire the **kingdom**.
- iii) He does not desire the **pleasures** resulting from kingship.

His explanation follows in the rest of the verses, 33-37. Those for whom he would want these will not be there. The whole clan will be destroyed in this war. He does not mind being killed by them but he has no desire to kill them to enjoy these three things.

There is a dilemma that faces Arjuna. Is it not his duty, he feels, to protect his race rather than destroy it? He is an integral part of the world, not independent of it. Every thought and deed of his affects the world, and everything that goes on in the world affects him. How can he act with violence just because he differs with the other?

This is the moral dilemma that has taken a grip over Arjuna’s mind. What he says makes a lot of sense. Out of the war context, it is difficult to fault the thinking of Arjuna.

Assessment of Arjuna’s Views Independent of the War

If the war is put aside for the time being, we see a side of Arjuna that is very sensitive about his social responsibilities. That becomes even more pronounced in later verses in this chapter. This sensitivity is a trait that aligns him to the Law of Dharma, the laws of Righteousness, by which society can function smoothly. To have this sensitivity is one of the basic conditions for a moral and upright citizen. Only such a citizen can contribute positively towards the growth of civilisation.

Adherence to Dharma is the difference between a person who lives only for himself and a person who lives for the welfare of the whole community. In terms of spiritual growth, this quality is a fundamental necessity. We are seeing in Arjuna this fundamental qualification upon which further spiritual development can take place. That is the spiritual assessment of Arjuna’s views given in the last few verses, and a few more to follow.

The fact that Lord Krishna’s sees it as Delusion is a separate issue altogether. It is from the perspective of Arjuna’s duty as a citizen to protect righteousness which is being threatened by the Kauravas. But we had precluded the circumstances of the war in our assessment of Arjuna’s views, and seen them from the standpoint of Dharma.

Therefore, as students of the Geeta, we should appreciate that Arjuna’s views reflect his basic eligibility to be on the spiritual path. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with his views. The majority of mankind today cannot match Arjuna’s sense of social commitment. For this reason, we should give him credit where it is due, before criticising him.

1.6 ARJUNA'S ARGUMENTS

(Verses 38-47, 10 No.)

ARJUNA COMES UP WITH convincing arguments why killing his kinsmen would cause great moral disturbances among the people that survive the war. Arjuna feels, "I am quite prepared to let the enemy have the victory for they do not know it is sinful. But we (i.e. Krishna and himself), who know the harm that is to befall the people – why should we stoop so low and participate in this destructive activity?" This is Arjuna's line of thinking.

Arjuna presents his case to the Lord, whom he considers as his dear friend. The following is from Arjuna, the friend of Krishna, not from Arjuna, the disciple of Krishna. This has to be noted carefully; otherwise we will be more confused than Arjuna!

The following arguments by Arjuna are answered by the Lord in the next Discourse.

Verse 38: i) "Why Should We Do What They Do?"

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ १-३८॥

yadyapyētē na paśyanti lōbhōpahatacētasaḥ |
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ dōṣaṁ mitradrōhē ca pātakam ॥ 1-38॥

1	<i>Yadi api ete na pashyanti</i>	Though <u>they do not see</u> ,
2	<i>lobha-upahata-chetasah;</i>	due to their intelligence being clouded by greed,
3	<i>kula-kshaya-kritam dosham</i>	the evil in the destruction of families ,
4	<i>mitra-drohe cha paatakam;</i>	nor any sin in <u>cruelty to friends</u> . . .

Verse 39: ii) "From the Destruction of Family Unit . . ."

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ १-३९॥

katham na jñeyamasmābhiḥ pāpādasmanñivartitum |
kulakṣayakṛtaṁ dōṣaṁ prapaśyadbhirjanārdana ॥ 1-39॥

1	<i>Katham na jneyam asmaabhih</i>	. . . why should not we learn
2	<i>paapaat asmaan nivartitum;</i>	to turn away from this <u>sin</u> –
3	<i>kula-kshaya-kritam dosham</i>	the evil in the destruction of families –
4	<i>prapashyadbhih janaardana.</i>	for <u>we clearly see it</u> , O Janardana?

Verse 40: iii) “Irreligiosity & Impiety Results;”

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मं नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत

॥ १-४०॥

kulakṣayē praṇaśyanti kuladharmāḥ sanātanaḥ |

dharmē naṣṭē kulam̐ kṛtsnamadharmō:'bhibhavatyuta || 1-40||

1	<i>Kula-kshaye pranashyanti</i>	Owing to the destruction of a <u>family</u> , will perish
2	<i>kula-dharmaah sanaatanaah;</i>	the immemorial religious rites of that family;
3	<i>dharma nashte kulam kritsnam</i>	From destruction of <u>religiosity</u> , the whole family
4	<i>adharmah abhi-bhavati uta.</i>	will be overcome by impiety .

Verse 41: iv) “Women Get Corrupt & Castes Confused.”

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः

॥ १-४१॥

adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ |

strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyatē varṇasaṅkaraḥ || 1-41||

1	<i>Adharma abhi-bhavaat, Krishna</i>	From the prevalence of <u>impiety</u> , O Krishna,
2	<i>pradushyanti kula-striyah;</i>	the women of the family become <u>corrupt</u> ;
3	<i>streeshu dushtaasu, Vaarshneya</i>	And with women becoming corrupt, O descendent of the Vrishni clan,
4	<i>jaayate varna-sankarah.</i>	there arises the “ intermingling of castes ”.

Verse 42: v) “Family Falls into Evil Ways.”

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः

॥ १-४२॥

saṅkarō narakāyaiva kulaghñānām kulasya ca |

patanti pitarō hyēṣām̐ luptapiṇḍōdakakriyāḥ || 1-42||

1	<i>Sankarah narakaaya eva</i>	The “ <u>confusion of castes</u> ” means hell
2	<i>kula-ghnaanaam kulasya cha;</i>	for the slayers of the family; and
3	<i>patanti pitarah hi eshaam</i>	from their fall into evil , the family forefathers
4	<i>lupta-pinda-udaka-kriyaah.</i>	are deprived of the offering of <u>riceball and water</u> .

Verse 43: vi) “Then Religious Rites are Destroyed.”

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ १-४३॥

dōṣairētaiḥ kulaghnānām varṇasaṅkarakāraikaiḥ |
utsādyantē jātidharmāḥ kuladharmāśca śāśvatāḥ ॥ 1-43॥

1	<i>Doshaiḥ etaiḥ kula-ghnaanaam</i>	By the <u>evil arising</u> from destroying the family unit,
2	<i>varna-sankara-kaarakaiḥ;</i>	and by the admixture of castes, arise
3	<i>utsaadyante jaati-dharmaah</i>	the destruction of the <u>caste religious rites</u> ,
4	<i>kula-dharmaah cha shaashvataah.</i>	as well as the age-old <u>family religious rites</u> .

Verse 44: vii) “People are Condemned to Hell.”

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ १-४४॥

utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana |
narakē niyataṁ vāsō bhavatītyanuśuśruma ॥ 1-44॥

1	<i>Utsanna-kula-dharmaanaam</i>	Those whose family <u>religious rites</u> are destroyed,
2	<i>manushyaanaam, Janaardana;</i>	for such human beings, O Janardana,
3	<i>narake aniyatam vaasah</i>	dwelling in Hell for an unknown period
4	<i>bhavati iti anu-shushruma.</i>	is inevitable – so have we heard.

Verse 45: viii) “. . . All Because of Greed!”

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ १-४५॥

ahō bata mahatpāpam kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam |
yadrājyasukhalōbhēna hantuṁ svajanamudyatāḥ ॥ 1-45॥

1	<i>Aho bata! mahat paapam</i>	Alas! A great sin, indeed,
2	<i>kartum vyavasitaah vayam;</i>	have we resolved to do;
3	<i>yat raajya- sukha- lobhena</i>	Out of Greed for the pleasures of a kingdom,
4	<i>hantum swajanam udyataah.</i>	we are prepared to kill our kinsmen!

Verse 46: “Death by Enemy is Preferable!”

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ १-४६॥

yadi māmāpratīkāramaśāstram śāstrapāṇayah |
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇē hanyustanmē kṣēmātaram bhavēt || 1-46||

1	<i>Yadi maam aprateekaaram</i>	<i>If I remain <u>unresisting</u></i>
2	<i>ashastram shastra-paanayah;</i>	<i>and <u>unarmed</u>, then, with weapons in hand</i>
3	<i>Dhaartaraashtraah rane hanyuh</i>	<i>let Dhritarashtra's sons slay me in battle.</i>
4	<i>tat me kshemataram bhavet.</i>	<i>Indeed, that would be <u>preferable</u> for me.</i>

Verse 47: Arjuna Disarms

सञ्जय उवाच ।
एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः || १-४७||

sañjaya uvāca |
ēvamuktvārjunaḥ saṅkhyē rathōpastha upāviśat |
visṛjya saśaram cāpam śōkasamvignamānasaḥ || 1-47||

	<i>Sanjaya uvaacha:</i>	<i>Sanjaya said:</i>
1	<i>Evam ukvaa Arjunah samkhye</i>	<i>Having thus spoken in the midst of the battlefield,</i>
2	<i>rathopasthah upaavishat;</i>	<i>Arjuna <u>sat down</u> on the seat of the chariot;</i>
3	<i>visrihya sasharam chaapam</i>	<i>he cast away his bow along with the arrows,</i>
4	<i>shoka-samvigna-maanasah.</i>	<i>with his mind overwhelmed by <u>sorrow</u>.</i>

The Logic in Arjuna's Argumants

It would be a good revision to recap the logic of Arjuna's thinking:

- i) v.38 & 39: "Why should we copy what they do and destroy the **Family Unit**?"
- ii) v.40: "That will only lead to **Irreligiosity** and **Impiety**;
- iii) v.41: "These will lead to **Corruption of Women**, and **Caste-mixing**;
- iv) v.42: "The family will then pursue **Evil ways**;
- v) v.43: "The caste and family **Religious Rites** will be destroyed;
- vi) v.44: "We shall all spend an unknown, unlimited period in **Hell**!"
- vii) v.45: "And all this only because of **Greed**!"
- viii) v.46: "God forbid, I would rather prefer to **Be Killed** by the enemy."
- ix) v.47: And with that, Arjuna flings down his bow and collapses in the chariot, refusing to fight, with his mind thus totally confused and deluded, and filled with **Sorrow**.

We cannot fault Arjuna's moral stand, his moral fibre and his social consciousness. Minus the War, Arjuna is perfectly correct in all that he has said. Yet, why is the Lord not happy with Arjuna's outburst? It is solely because it does not take his **Duty** into account.

The Yoga of Arjuna's Sorrow:

The chapter is called the “*Yoga of Arjuna's Despondency*”. There are two reasons:

i) Yoga is ‘union’. Arjuna is presently united to Sorrow.

ii) This sorrow itself becomes the means by which Arjuna is to attain union with God.

Sorrow has brought many people towards God. Sorrow is about to make Arjuna turn to Krishna for a lasting solution Krishna. Sorrow can become a Sadhana, a Yoga, to take one Godward. [See Essay 2 below)

Pain can make one BETTER; or it can make one BITTER.

Pain made Arjuna change his attitude towards Krishna from a friend to a disciple.

Fortunately for Arjuna, he remained humble and surrendered himself to Krishna. If he had not done that, his pain would have made him stubbornly attached to his delusion, and then no one could have helped him, not even the Lord beside him.

We learn from this chapter that when we are in difficulty we should turn humbly to God for guidance.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे
अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

ॐ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṁ yōgāśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē
arjunaviṣādayōgō nāma prathamō:'dhyāyaḥ || 1 ||

Om Tat Sat!

END OF DISCOURSE 1

“YOGA OF ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY”



1.7 ADMIXTURE OF CASTE

(An Essay)

Introduction

ADMIXTURE OF PEOPLE is here defined primarily as the mixing of people with different *aspirations in life*. In a secondary sense, this implies the mixing of people with different capacities, vision of life, temperaments, educational upbringing, financial backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, religious affiliations, nationalities, and so on. In a tertiary sense, this implies the mixing of people of different “Caste” where the word caste is to be used in its proper, original, intended sense, free from any stigma attached to it.

Aspiration is a primary quality; the others listed above are secondary; and crystallizing these differences into social groupings is tertiary. This is the context in which Arjuna speaks of “intermingling of castes” as a social threat. Social segregation based on the other, secondary factors could be adjusted to, tolerated, accommodated – lived with. But if the *aspirations* of two people are different, the intermingling would be unbearable.

In society, if segregation based on the secondary qualities is practised or even legalized it is considered to be unjust discrimination, for example Apartheid in South Africa, where segregation was based on one’s race. In virtually all countries an unlegalised form of segregation exists on the basis of wealth. Marriages, too, across secondary factors may be regarded by some people as undesirable. Such opinions are not the subject matter of this essay on Admixture of Caste in the Geeta context.

This has to be clarified at the outset, otherwise many complications could arise in the interpretation of this essay.

Aspirations are the Basis of Caste

Certain primary qualities based on the proportions of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, differentiate people on earth. The Sattwic content determines one’s purity and clarity of mind; the Rajasic content determines one’s mental and physical activities; and the Tamasic content determines one’s level of inertia. There are, of course, an infinite variety of combinations of these qualities, making each person unique in nature.

However, the genius of India of the past has been, firstly, to conceive of four general groupings based on major differences in these three qualities. Essentially, the groupings are dependent upon the aspirations in a person. The four divisions are Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. These divisions respectively are Sattwa dominant, Rajas dominant with a leaning towards Sattwa, Rajas dominant with a leaning towards Tamas, and Tamas dominant. That is the primary defining principle.

This grouping, in ideal, results in classifying people along the following four lines respectively: i) Educationalists, religious leaders, philosophers; ii) Rulers, administrators, politicians, leaders of armies; iii) Leaders of production of goods for society, businessmen, controllers of distribution of produce within society; and iv) the servants of the previous three functions, labourers, ‘workers’ (in the sense used when we say ‘the working class’).

In the context of the Geeta, and especially the opinions put forward by Arjuna in this chapter, Arjuna is making a crucial case to stop the “intermingling of castes” on this primary basis. This makes perfect sense and his opinion ties in with the pure basis of the Caste groupings given here. Arjuna’s opinion represents the ideal form of the “Caste” system of Indian society.

It is a secondary consideration that Arjuna’s opinions are being expressed on the battlefield at a moment inappropriate for such matters to be discussed. That is a separate issue concerning his deluded mind, but it does not take away anything from the correctness of how he views the caste system in practice and the utility of this system to maintain proper governance of the society of his times. This is a key consideration in evaluating Arjuna’s words in this Chapter.

Acharyaji’s Points on the Above Matter

Speaking on this particular matter, Acharyaji gave us some deep insights on how social tensions can arise when we depart from the concept described above to govern society.

The most general remarks of his may be summed up as: **Right thinking** will always bring harmony, cheerfulness, a ready acceptance among people, and a prosperous society. Wrong thinking will bring the opposite effects. This can be taken as a broad overview in assessing any problems arising in the “Caste Debate”.

Love and hate is what makes people easily lose focus of key considerations that pertain to a particular function in society. For example, it was Arjuna’s overwhelming compassion for his kith and kin that made him deviate from his function as a warrior. It was misplaced compassion – compassion at the wrong time and place. At any time in society when people lose focus of their functions due to likes and dislikes, errors in their judgement are bound to occur.

Acharyaji gave us the following example of inappropriate application of the feeling of compassion. During World War II, France and U.K. initially adopted a **policy of appeasing** Hitler, by turning a blind eye to his aggression in Czechoslovakia. This led to further aggression by Germany in Poland and Austria, and then eventually in France. That led directly to the declaration of the War.

In the context of the World War example, Acharyaji said,

“A destructive peace is worse than a constructive war.”

Acharyaji carefully explained that it is not the Geeta’s intention to advocate war *per se*. The Geeta advocates **doing one’s duty**. Krishna was essentially asking Arjuna to do his duty. That duty in Arjuna’s case happened to be to fight. Thus this charge against the Geeta that it advocates war does not hold. The Geeta is an instrument for man’s enlightenment, not enslavement to war.

The British invasion on India was also another example given to illustrate how if a people (the Indians) lose sight of their own political security, they can be easily overrun by a foreign power. Even Aurangzeb’s ruthless policies were allowed to go too far before he was finally curbed. **Protection against dictators** is a key lesson learnt from World War II.

These examples and discussions were to weigh the words of Arjuna in the Mahabharata war context. Arjuna argued quite logically. No one can fault his arguments, except that they were totally misplaced for the occasion. A doctor cannot start thinking of the merits or demerits of a procedure when he is already in the operating theatre! That is what Arjuna was doing: *When it was time to get into action, he began philosophising.*

On the matter of Admixture of Caste, Acharyaji then spoke brilliantly of how a marriage can break apart if the incompatibility is fundamental as we have defined above. Secondary differences also do break up many marriages, but those can be avoided. When primary caste differences are not respected in marriages, they can cause huge problems, individually as well as socially.

When war occurs, men are the main casualties. Their number decreases. The imbalance makes it difficult for women to get the right partners. This leads to many social evils. When women are left alone in large numbers in their homes, they become targets for unscrupulous men. Degeneration in the morality of the community takes place. That, too, has far-reaching repercussions.



***This mother gave little Krishna her fruits out of love.
As she gave them, her basket became filled with jewels!***

1.8 EXPLAINING ARJUNA'S DELUSION

(A Comment)

ACHARYAJI CONCEDED THAT Arjuna was a very likeable and soft-hearted person. If Yudhisthira represented the 'head' of the Pandavas, then Arjuna represented their 'heart', and Bhima their 'arms' and 'legs'. Arjuna had a lot of feeling for people, which was very different from Bhima. If Bhima had seen Arjuna's condition on the battlefield, what he would have done to him is not hard to imagine! But Krishna handled the matter very well. He saw Arjuna's problem as delusion, and delusion can be removed only by Knowledge. So that was how Krishna approached it.

People under delusion are vulnerable to the manipulation of others. Someone other than Sri Krishna could have easily exploited Arjuna. There is a big difference between being manipulated and being enlightened. It was Arjuna's good fortune that Sri Krishna was present in his time of need. Arjuna would have otherwise become the laughing stock of the whole army of the Pandavas. But that did not happen, and Krishna was able to handle the whole matter with delicate, yet enlightening precision.

Arjuna's State of Mind

Arjuna represents the typical person who has some stirring and admirable qualities, but who has yet to learn the rudiments of the spiritual path. He represents the man who is at the crossroads in life, having encountered an emotional hurdle and being unable to handle it due to lack of knowledge of the Truth. Even in his state of despondency, Arjuna draws our utmost respect for his honesty and humility to seek the Lord's guidance.

The struggle that Arjuna encounters with his mind is the beginning of spiritual life. It is not something we should be criticizing him for, but something we should recognize that every seeker of Truth has to face and come to terms with. Seeking security and solace in one's friends and relatives is a natural urge in man, and cannot be simply brushed aside as delusion. It has to be understood at a deep level, and one has to be educated out of it with great care. This is how Sri Krishna approaches the whole matter.

In one sense, the Kauravas represent the objects of the world and Arjuna is the subject trying to relate to them. Inasmuch as he is a part of that outer world, he is both subject and object at the same time. He cannot simply renounce the world which he is very much a part of, unless he grows into a spiritual understanding of his true relationship to the world. From this angle, our sympathies lie with Arjuna.

Without knowledge of the Truth, an honest person is bound to experience the dilemma that Arjuna is faced with. Whatever is there in the world, is also present in the individual. There is definitely a duty one has to society which requires to be fulfilled, not evaded by escaping from it. Duty is that which harmonises us with our environment. It has to be discovered by each one in accordance with his own nature, and then it has to be performed as our contribution to the society in which we live.

Arjuna is at the point where he cannot reconcile the war situation with his duty to his people. It is a perfectly natural encounter which, from the standpoint of the Truth,

acquires the belittling name of “Delusion”. Arjuna cannot help being deluded, for he has not yet obtained divine knowledge. Practically all of humanity are nothing but Arjunas.

Thus, if we go into the skin of Arjuna, we do not find him short of intelligence, social responsibility and commitment to sound values. Like most of us, he only lacks the right knowledge, and through that the right attitude towards the world around him.



***“The Divine Mother rode on a lion and
ripped through the army of the Demons.”
– Devi Mahatmya.***

1.9 THE NAMES USED FOR KRISHNA

(A Comment)

THE NAMES USED FOR Krishna in this Chapter have significance with regard to the context in which they are used. The following is a list as they appear:

i) **Krishna**: (1.28) “He who draws or pulls away sorrow.” Arjuna has just been overcome by deep sorrow.

ii) **Keshava**: (1.31) *Ke* = Brahma, *Sha* = Shiva, and *Va* = to go. Hence the meaning is “one (namely, Vishnu) who goes to the assistance of Brahma and Shiva.” The anecdote is when a demon was granted a boon that he would be invincible, even Brahma and Shiva could not be saved from him; they ran to Vishnu for protection. Even so, Arjuna is seeking Krishna’s protection, as He is the incarnation of Vishnu.

iii) **Govinda**: (1.32) It means ‘Gaam Vindati’, i.e. “knower of all the Vedas”. When faced with the dilemma of killing his own kith and kin, Arjuna uses this term as though he were saying to Krishna, “You are the knower of all Dharma. Will you not help me out of my dilemma on this issue of Dharma?”

‘Ga’ also stands for Prithivi or the earth. The war was for some land which was refused to them. Arjuna is thus implying, “Krishna, to you who are the Lord of the whole earth, is this little piece of land worth fighting for?”

iv) **Madhusudana**: (1.35) Madhu was a demon who was slain by Krishna, and that brought great fame for Krishna. In contrast, this killing of kinsmen which Arjuna has to do, is going to bring him infamy! Hence, Arjuna uses this term.

v) **Janardana**: (1.36, 39, 44) It means “one to whom people approach for happiness.” Yet, in the case of Arjuna, this whole war is going to bring him so much sorrow.

vi) **Madhava**: (1.37) This is another name for “Husband of Lakshmi”. The meaning here is that in the context of this war, whole families are going to be destroyed. Since Krishna, too, is a family man, surely He can understand how painful it must be for families to be destroyed!

vii) **Hrisheeksha**: (1.15, 21, 24) This means “the lord of one’s senses”. It refers to one who has perfectly controlled his senses from running out towards their objects. Lord Krishna is one such who is perfectly self-controlled. Hence, He can be the best charioteer.

In this way, there is always significance in the Name used for Krishna in different contexts within the Geeta. We shall see more of this later on.

