

Bhagavad Gita - Chapter One

Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.1 ||

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca
dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre
samavetā yuyutsavaḥ |
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva
kim akurvata sañjaya

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya (**sañjaya**), what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do (**kim māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva akurvata**), having gathered (**samavetā**) with the desire to fight (**yuyutsavaḥ**) at Kurukṣetra, the place of dharma (**dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre**)?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

samavetā yuyutsavaḥ.....kim akurvata sañjaya??

- “What did my sons and the Pāṇḍavas do, gathered together at Kurukṣetra, desiring to fight?”
- “You have already said that they gathered to fight, so they will certainly fight. What is your intention is asking again what they did?”
- “This is happening at Kurukṣetra, a place of dharma.
- The śruti says:

yad anu kurukṣetraṁ devānām deva-yajanaṁ sarveṣām bhūtānām brahma-
sadanam:

Kurukṣetra is a place for sacrifice to the devatās by those who are like the devas. It is the abode of brahman for all living beings. (Jabala Upaniṣad 1)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

samavetā yuyutsavaḥ.....kim akurvata sañjaya??

- From this we understand that it has become famous as a place for increasing dharma.
- Under its influence, will my sons give up their animosity and give the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas?
- Or will perhaps the Pāṇḍavas, who are always following dharma, consider at this place of dharma that it is best to go the forest out of fear of committing adharmā in the form of destruction of the family traditions by fighting?
- O Sañjaya (destroyer), by the mercy of Vyāsa you have destroyed all attraction and repulsion within yourself. Therefore you should speak the truth to me.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre

- “In a field of grains, the weeds which look similar to the grain, but are obstacles to their growth, are eventually pulled out.
- Similarly, at the field of dharma, your sons, who are but imitations of dharma and opposers of dharma, will also be destroyed.”
- This is the unintentional, hidden meaning of the word dharma kṣetraḥ, (uttered by Dhṛtarāstra himself), by the grace of Sarasvatī (skillful in use of words).

māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva

- By not mentioning that the Pāṇḍavas were also his relatives and mentioning only his sons as his own (māmaka), he revealed his hatred for them.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre

- It is famous as a place which produces dharma.
- Due to association with this great place, the evil Duryodhana and company may give up their anger and take to the path of dharma.
- The Pāṇḍavas are naturally following dharma. Then both sides would have intelligence to see that they should not kill their own relatives and friends, and would negotiate peace.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre

- Externally, he desired to show Sañjaya that he would be relieved if this were so.
- Internally, however, he found it hard to restrain his depression, for if there were a conciliation, then it would be difficult for his sons to claim the kingdom.
- “As Bhīṣma, who is on our side cannot be defeated by Arjuna, it is better that we fight. Let that happen!”
- It was not suitable however to show such desires externally.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.2 ॥

sañjaya uvāca
dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṃ
vyūḍhaṃ duryodhanas tadā |
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā
rājā vacanam abravīt

Sañjaya said: Seeing the array (**dr̥ṣṭvā vyūḍhaṃ**) of the Pāṇḍavas' troops (**pāṇḍava anīkaṃ**), Duryodhana (**tadā rājā duryodhanah**) approached his teacher Droṇa (**ācāryam upasaṅgamyā**) and spoke these words (**vacanam abravīt**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

ācāryam upasaṅgamyā

- The pious Sañjaya could understand that Dhṛtarāṣṭra, blind from birth, but having the eye of wisdom, was now blind with illusion because of loss of wisdom concerning dharma.
- He was thus worried that his son would give the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas.
- Therefore, understanding this, Sañjaya, fixed in dharma, gave satisfaction to Dhṛtarāṣṭra by saying that his son would certainly not give the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Rājā??

- Duryodhana, expert in political affairs or raja niti (rājā), seeing the arrangement (vyūḍham) of the troops (anīkam) of the Pāṇḍavas, personally approached the teacher Droṇa, who had given instructions to him from Dhanur Veda, and spoke some words (vacanam).
- He spoke a few brief words with deep import, a special combination of words.
- He had inner fear caused by seeing the strength of the Pāṇḍavas' troops, which is shown by his personally approaching Droṇa.
- But he attempted to hide that fear by showing that he had come personally out of respect to guru.
- This act displayed his clever use of politics, rājā nīti, which has been indicated by addressing him as rājā.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.3 ॥

paśyaitām pāṇḍu-putrāṇām
ācārya mahatīm camūm |
vyūdhām drupada-putreṇa
tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā

“O teacher (**ācārya**), see this great army (**paśya etām mahatīm camūm**) of the sons of Pāṇḍu (**pāṇḍu-putrāṇām**), arranged for battle (**vyūdhām**) by your intelligent disciple (**tava dhīmatā śiṣyeṇa**), the son of Drupada (**drupada-putreṇa**).”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

paśya etāṁ mahatīm camūm

- This verse relates the words spoken by Duryodhana.
- Thinking that Droṇa would not fight against Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers because of great affection, in order to produce some anger in Droṇa towards them, he revealed the Pāṇḍavas' disrespect for Droṇa.
- “Their army has approached very close, with arrogance, not considering your exalted position as a warrior and teacher.
- Seeing that, you should recognize their disrespect.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā

- The army has been arranged (vyuḍhām) by the son of Drupada.
- Drupada, in order to kill you, had his son Dṛṣṭadumnya appear from the fire sacrifice.
- And then you, though knowing he was an enemy, taught that son the art of fighting. That was your foolishness.
- And he, the enemy, is very intelligent (dhīmatā), having learned from you how to kill you.
- What you have done has produced a problem for us now!”

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.4-6 ||

atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi |
yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ

dhr̥ṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ kāśirājaś ca vīryavān |
puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ

yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta uttamaujāś ca vīryavān |
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ

Here are brave men (**atra śūrā**), skillful with great bows (**mahā iṣvāsā**), equal to Bhīma and Arjuna in battle (**bhīma arjuna-samā yudhi**): Sātyaki, Virāta, and Drupada, a mahā-ratha (**yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ**).

Here are Dhr̥ṣṭaketu (**dhr̥ṣṭaketuh**), Cekitāna, the valorous king of Kāśī (**cekitānaḥ kāśirājaś ca vīryavān**), Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya (**puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca**), the best of men (**nara-puṅgavaḥ**).

Here are mighty Yudhāmanyu (**yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta**), valiant Uttamaujā (**uttamaujāś ca vīryavān**), Abhimanyu, and the five sons of Draupadī (**saubhadro draupadeyāś ca**), all mahā-rathas (**sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “This small army arranged by Dṛṣṭadumnya will be easily conquered by us. Do not fear.”
- “But in that army, there are great warriors who have bows (iṣvāsā) which cannot be cut by the enemy. They are innumerable warriors who have skill in fighting.”
- He then lists the warriors on the opposing side.
- Yuyudhāna refers to Sātyaki. Sātyaki, Viṛata and Drupada were all mahārathas.
- Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitānaḥ and Kāśirāja were all couragous (vīryavān).
- Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya were all the best among men (nara pūṁgavaḥ).
- Yudhāmanyu was valiant (vikranta) and Uttamaujā was brave (vīryavān).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Saubhadra refers to Abhimanyu.
- Draupadeya refers to the five sons of Draupadī born from each of the Pāṇḍavas: Prativindhya, Śrutasena, Śrutakīrti, Śatānīka and Śrutakarma.
- The word ca indicates other sons such as Ghaṭotkaca.
- The five Pāṇḍavas were so famous that they are not even mentioned.
- The seventeen men mentioned, and others on their side not mentioned, were all mahārathas.
- The description of mahārathas also indicates the presence of other fighters such as atirathas.

eko daśa sahasrāṇi yodhayed yas tu dhanvinām
śastra-śāstra-pravīṇaś ca mahāratha iti smṛtaḥ
amitān yodhayed yas tu samprokto'tirathas tu saḥ
rathī caikena yo yudhyet tan-nyūno'rdha-rathaḥ smṛtaḥ

A mahāratha (**mahāratha iti smṛtaḥ**) is one man (**yas tu ekah**) who can fight alone with ten thousand archers (**daśa sahasrāṇi dhanvinām yodhayed**), who is expert in both weapons and scripture (**śastra-śāstra-pravīṇaś ca**). An atiratha is one who fights with unlimited troops (or sixty thousand archers according one source) (**amitān yodhayed yas tu atirathah samproktaḥ**). A ratha is one who fights with one opponent (**rathī ca ekena yo yudhyet**). One who does less than that (cannot deal with one opponent alone) is called ardha ratha (**tan-nyūno ardha-rathaḥ smṛtaḥ**).

- By the sequence, atiratha would seem to be less than mahāratha, however Arjuna was an atiratha, and in the commentary Bhīṣma is described as atiratha, so this would make the atiratha superior to the mahāratha.
- The drop from mahāratha to rathī, who fights with only one archer seems rather drastic.
- Ekena is taken by some as “fighting with one thousand archers.”

Surrender Unto Me

- Again Drupada was mentioned to incite Droṇa's anger.
- Duryodhana also mentioned Bhīma and Arjuna. Arjuna was a powerful foe. Not only had he studied under Droṇa, but he had gone to the heavenly planets, later fought with Lord Śiva and had been given many celestial weapons.
- Duryodhana, however, was especially afraid of Bhīma's fiery temperament and expertise in fighting. Therefore he mentions his name first.
- Bhīma was furious with Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons. Before the battle, he took three vows.
- First, he vowed to kill each of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's one hundred sons. (During the battle Arjuna and the other Pāṇḍavas had opportunities to kill some of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, but they refrained from doing so to allow Bhīma to fulfill his vow. During the battle Bhīma's anger was inflamed. He screamed, jumped up and down, and drank the blood of each son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra he killed. Even the warriors on the Pāṇḍavas' side feared his rage.)

Surrender Unto Me

- Second, he vowed to break Duryodhana's thigh. When Draupadī was being insulted, Duryodhana had uncovered his thigh and motioned to Draupadī, saying, "Come and sit on my lap! You are fit for my enjoyment." Bhīma burned with anger and hatred. For thirteen years, he had been burning as he waited to destroy the Kauravas.
- Third, Bhīma vowed to tear open Duḥsasana's chest, pry out his heart and drink his blood. Duḥsasana had touched and opened Draupadī's tied and sanctified hair. For that, Bhīma also vowed to rip off his arm. Draupadī had promised to keep her hair untied until she had washed it with Duḥsasana's blood. Bhīma later carried that blood upon his hands to Draupadī.
- Duryodhana named all these fighters to persuade Droṇācārya to free himself from whatever sentiments he felt for the Pāṇḍavas and to kill them in battle. He then continued to describe the Pāṇḍavas' strength.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.7 ॥

asmākaṃ tu viśiṣṭā ye
tān nibodha dvijottama |
nāyakā mama sainyaṣya
saṃjñārthaṃ tān bravīmi te

O best of the brāhmaṇas (**dvija uttama**), understand (**tān nibodha**) who is on our side (**asmākaṃ tu viśiṣṭā ye**), the commanders of my army (**mama sainyaṣya nāyakā**). I will list them (**tān bravīmi**) so you can completely understand (**te saṃjñārthaṃ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Thinking that Droṇa might perceive that he was fearful of the Pāṇḍavas' army, Duryodhana then spoke boldly to cover his inner fears.
- “Among our troops, understand those who are particularly outstanding (viśiṣṭā), the leaders (nāyakā) endowed with great intelligence and other qualities.
- I will speak so that you will completely understand about them (samjñānartham).
- If you will not fight out of affection for the Pāṇḍavas, then I will still gain victory through Bhīṣma and others.”
- He makes a hint of this in order to arouse the anger of Droṇa.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.8 ॥

**bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇaś ca
kṛpaś ca samitiṃ-jayaḥ |
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca
saumadattir tathaiva ca**

There are yourself, Bhīṣma, Karṇa (**bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇaś ca**), Kṛpa, winner of wars (**kṛpaś ca samitiṃ-jayaḥ**), Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa (**aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca**), and Bhūriśravā (**saumadattir tathaiva ca**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Bhavān refers to Droṇa.
- Vikarṇa was a younger brother of Duryodhana. Saumadatti refers to Bhūriśravā.
- The troops of Droṇa and others are described as victorious in war (samitimjayaḥ).
- “These are only the outstanding persons on my side. There are also other warriors whose numbers cannot be counted (anye ca).
- There are many (bahavaḥ) such as Jayadratha, Kṛtavarma and Śalya, who are determined to give up their lives for my sake if necessary (tyakta jīvitāḥ).
- “My victory will be accomplished because of their intense affection for me, their intense courage, and their knowledge of fighting.” This is his hint in speaking.

Surrender Unto Me

- Duryodhana was speaking to the two great warriors Bhīṣma and Droṇācārya. While the king addressed Droṇācārya, all his other fighters gathered to listen.
- Therefore, Duryodhana, as an expert diplomat, began to describe the Kauravas' strength with the words bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karnaś ca.
- Yet before he spoke he was caught in another difficult situation. Facing him were two great warriors: Bhīṣma was the commander-in-chief of the army, and Droṇa was his military guru. Whom, then, should he mention first?
- Duryodhana was clever. He knew that Bhīṣma was a kṣatriya and Droṇa a brāhmaṇa. If he mentioned Bhīṣma first, Droṇācārya would be insulted. As a kṣatriya, however, Bhīṣma would honor the etiquette of offering the brāhmaṇa more respect. Thus Duryodhana said, bhavān bhīṣmaś: “There are personalities like you, Droṇācārya, and Bhīṣma.”

Surrender Unto Me

- He next mentioned Karṇa. Bhīṣma and Karṇa were enemies. Because Karṇa thought, “What’s the use? I will fight and kill everyone, and this aged general will get all the credit,” he had vowed not to fight until Bhīṣma was killed.
- Duryodhana next mentioned Kṛpācārya, a relative of Droṇa, then Aśvatthāmā, Droṇa’s son. In these ways, he hoped to inspire Droṇa.
- Surprisingly, Duryodhana next mentioned his own brother Vikarṇa. Vikarṇa was not of the same caliber as Bhīṣma or Droṇa, but because he was the only brother who objected to the Kauravas’ insult to Draupadī, Duryodhana assumed that he was sympathetic to the Pāṇḍavas and that he might defect from the Kaurava army. Therefore Duryodhana flattered Vikarṇa by including his name among the more powerful fighters he was relying on.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.9 ||

anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā
madarthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ |
nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ
sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ

There are also many other brave men (**anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā**) who have given up their lives for my sake (**madarthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ**), skillful at fighting (**sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ**), armed with various missiles and weapons of close combat (**nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “They are willing to give up their lives in order to help me (tyakta-jīvitāḥ).” This is the intended meaning of Duryodhana, though the literal meaning is “They have given up their lives.”
- Actually however, Kṛṣṇa will later say:

mayai vaite nihataḥ pūrvam eva nimitta-mātraṁ bhava saavyasācin

These warriors have already been killed by Me before the war has started. You be My instrument, O Arjuna. BG 11.33

- Thus, the literal meaning of Duryodhana’s words are thus completely true.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.10 ||

aparyāptam tad asmākaṁ
balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam |
paryāptam tv idam eteṣāṁ
balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam

Our army (**asmākaṁ balaṁ**) protected by Bhīṣma (**bhīṣma abhirakṣitam**) is immeasurable (**aparyāptam**), but their army (**idam tu eteṣāṁ balaṁ**), protected by Bhīma (**bhīma abhirakṣitam**) is limited (**paryāptam**).

- Rāmānuja takes the words aparyāptam to mean insufficient, and paryāptam to mean sufficient. Viśvanātha and Śrīdhara follow the same interpretation. Madhuśūdana Sarasvati takes the same meaning as Baladeva.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “But how can you achieve victory when the troops are equal on both sides?”
- “We have more troops. Our strength is immeasurable (aparyāptam) and is protected by Bhīṣma, who is most intelligent and an atiratha.
- The strength of the Pāṇḍavas’ army is limited (paryāptam), being protected Bhīma, who has very little intelligence and is only an ardha ratha.
- Thus I will attain victory.”

Surrender Unto Me

- Śrīla Prabhupāda has translated the first Sanskrit word in text 10, aparyāptam, as “immeasurable,” and his purport explains the verse accordingly.
- Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has also taken the meaning of aparyāptam in that way. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, however, has given aparyāptam an opposite meaning.
- Thus, depending upon which way the word is taken, the first line of the verse can mean either “Our strength is immeasurable” or “Our strength is insufficient”.
- When the first meaning is used (as it was by Śrīla Prabhupāda), then the sentence continues: “. . . and we are perfectly protected by Grandfather Bhīṣma.” Bhīṣma became encouraged when he heard this meaning.

Surrender Unto Me

- The second meaning, however, was intended to encourage Droṇācārya: “Our strength is insufficient because we are protected by Bhīṣma.”
- Bhīṣma was a formidable warrior, but because he favored the Pāṇḍavas, Duryodhana felt that he would not fight to his full capacity.
- Droṇācārya took the second meaning, and he understood Duryodhana’s message to be: “Our strength is insufficient because of Bhīṣma’s split loyalties. Therefore, Droṇa, you must fight even harder to make up for Bhīṣma’s weakness.”
- Thus the expert diplomat Duryodhana encouraged both Bhīṣma and Droṇa with this one word.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.11 ||

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu
yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ |
bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu
bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi

Situated in your positions for attack (**ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ**), you (**bhavantaḥ**) should protect Bhīṣma (**bhīṣmam eva abhirakṣantu**) on all sides (**sarva eva hi**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “If Droṇa understands the meaning of my words, he may become indifferent to fighting himself. This will damage my plans. Therefore I will give him personal responsibility in this war.”
- Thus he spoke.
- “You should protect Bhīṣma on all sides by staying in your positions which have been designated individually for entering into the ranks of the enemy troops (āyaneṣu).
- Act in this way so that he will not be attacked by others, since being absorbed in fighting, he will not be looking on the sides or behind. My victory will be accomplished while Bhīṣma, the general, is unaware of my arrangements.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- The intention is as follows.
- Bhīṣma is our grandfather. You are our teacher.
- You two I know to be my fervent well-wishers, for though you knew the injustice I did at the gambling match you did not speak a word when Draupadī asked for justice.”
- He thus made his request so that Droṇa would give up his trace of affection for the Pāṇḍavas that was still visible.

Surrender Unto Me

- Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this text in his purport:
- “Duryodhana, after praising the prowess of Bhīṣma, further considered that others might think that they had been considered less important, so in his usual diplomatic way, he tried to adjust the situation in the above words.
- He emphasized that Bhīṣmadeva was undoubtedly the greatest hero, but he was an old man, so everyone must especially think of his protection from all sides.”

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.12 ||

**tasya sañjanayan harṣam
kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ |
simha-nādam vinadyoccaiḥ
śaṅkham dadhmau pratāpavān**

Then the majestic elder among the Kurus (**pratāpavān kuru-vṛddhaḥ**), the grandfather (**pitāmahaḥ**), in order to bring joy to Duryodhana (**tasya harṣam sañjanayan**), making the sound of lion (**simha-nādam vinadya**), blew his conch loudly (**śaṅkham uccaiḥ dadhmau**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Then Bhīṣma in great joy, understanding that Duryodhana was praising him, blew his conch shell to drive away the inner fear of Duryodhana.
- Without saying a word, just by blowing his conch, Bhīṣma announced that he would give up his life according to kṣatriya dharma for Duryodhana, though victory or defeat was really dependent only on the Lord.
- The conchshell, being a symbol of Viṣṇu, indicated that Duryodhana had no chance of victory in the battle, because Kṛṣṇa, the origin of Viṣṇu, was present on the opposing side.
(Surrender Unto Me)

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.13 ||

tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca
paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ |
sahasāivābhyahanyanta
sa śabdāḥ tumulo 'bhavat

Then conches, kettle drums (**tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca**), small drums, and larger drums (**paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ**) were suddenly sounded (**sahasā eva abhyahanyanta**), making a tumultuous roar (**sah śabdāḥ tumulo abhavat**).

- Both sides became eager to fight.
- This is described in this verse.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.14 ||

tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte
mahati syandane sthitau |
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś caiva
divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ

Then Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna (**tataḥ mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś ca**), standing in a large chariot (**mahati syandane sthitau**) yoked with white horses (**śvetair hayair yukte**), blew their divine conches (**divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Though the others were also standing in their chariots, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are particularly mentioned in this regard to indicate the special nature of the chariot, which was given by Agni himself, which had great power and could conquer the three worlds.
- In contrast with the conchshell blown by Bhīṣmadeva, the conchshells in the hands of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are described as transcendental. The sounding of the transcendental conchshells indicated that there was no hope of victory for the other side because Kṛṣṇa was on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. (SP Purport)

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.15-16 ॥

pāñcajanyaṃ hr̥ṣīkeśo
devadattaṃ dhanañjayaḥ |
pauṇḍraṃ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṃ
bhīma-karmā vṛkodaraḥ

anantavijayaṃ rājā
kuntī-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ |
nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca
sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau

Kṛṣṇa blew Pāñcajanya (**pāñcajanyaṃ hr̥ṣīkeśo**), Arjuna blew Devadatta (**devadattaṃ dhanañjayaḥ**), and Bhīma (**vṛkodaraḥ**) of fearful deeds (**bhīma-karmā**) blew the great conch Pauṇḍra (**pauṇḍraṃ mahāśaṅkhaṃ dadhmau**). Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kuntī (**kuntī-putro rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ**), blew Anantavijaya (**anantavijayaṃ**), and Nakula and Sahadeva (**nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca**) blew their conches Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka (**sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- The word hr̥ṣikeśa (master of the senses) used in describing the Lord indicates that the Lord would help this army (He would help by directing their senses skilfully).
- Mentioning the names of the conches indicates that these persons had many conches of divine nature.
- The word rājā indicates that Yudhiṣṭhira had performed the rājāsūya sacrifice.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- The word dhanañjaya indicates that Arjuna had gathered unlimited treasures when he went out to conquer the directions.
- Thus the outstanding nature of the Pāṇḍava army is indicated. The opposing army, not having these descriptive names, was therefore inferior.
- The word bhīma karma (man of ferocious actions) indicates that Bhīma had killed many demons such as Hiḍimbā.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.17-18 ||

kāśyaś ca parameṣvāsaḥ
śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ |
dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca
sātyakiś cāparājitaḥ

drupado draupadeyāś ca
sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate |
saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ
śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak pṛthak

Then the king of Kāśī, the greatest archer (**kāśyaś ca parama iṣu-āsaḥ**), Śikhaṇḍī, a mahā-ratha (**śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ**), Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa (**dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca**) and Sātyaki, who could not be defeated (**sātyakiś ca aparājitaḥ**), Drupada, the sons of Draupadī (**drupado draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ**), and mighty-armed Abhimanyu (**saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ**) blew their conches one after the other (**śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak pṛthak**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “O Dhṛtarāṣṭra, lord of the earth (pṛthivī pate), your bad advice has brought about this calamity in the form of the destruction of the dynasty.”
- That is the suggestion of addressing the king as “lord of the earth.”
- Sañjaya informed King Dhṛtarāṣṭra very tactfully that his unwise policy of deceiving the sons of Pāṇḍu and endeavoring to enthrone his own sons on the seat of the kingdom was not very laudable.
- The signs already clearly indicated that the whole Kuru dynasty would be killed in that great battle. (SP Purport)

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.19 ||

sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām
hṛdayāni vyadārayat |
nabhaś ca pṛthivīm caiva
tumulo 'bhyanunādayan

That tumultuous sound (**sah tumulah ghoṣo**), filling the sky and earth (**nabhaś ca pṛthivīm caiva abhyanunādayan**), split the hearts of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons (**dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām hṛdayāni vyadārayat**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- When Bhīṣma and the others on the side of Duryodhana blew their respective conchshells, there was no heart-breaking on the part of the Pāṇḍavas.
- Such occurrences are not mentioned, but in this particular verse it is mentioned that the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were shattered by the sounds vibrated by the Pāṇḍavas' party.
- This is due to the Pāṇḍavas and their confidence in Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- One who takes shelter of the Supreme Lord has nothing to fear, even in the midst of the greatest calamity. (SP Purport)

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.2.20-23 ॥

atha vyavasthitān dr̥ṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ |
pravṛtte śāstra-sampāte dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ

hr̥ṣīkeśam tadā vākyam idam āha mahīpate |
senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta

yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'ham yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān |
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇa-samudyame

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'ham ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ |
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

O King (**mahīpate**), then (**atha**), as the armies prepared to fight (**pravṛtte śāstra-sampāte**), Arjuna with Hanumān's insignia on his flag (**pāṇḍavaḥ kapi-dhvajaḥ**), seeing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra standing there (**vyavasthitān dhārtarāṣṭrān dr̥ṣṭvā**), taking his bow in hand (**dhanur udyamya**), spoke to Hṛṣīkeśa (**tadā hr̥ṣīkeśam idam vākyam āha**): O Acyuta (**acyuta**) please station my chariot (**me ratham sthāpaya**) between the two armies (**senayor ubhayor madhye**), so I can view (**yāvad etān nirīkṣe aham**) at the commencement of the war (**asmin raṇa-samudyame**) those situated with a desire to fight (**yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān**), and those with whom I should fight (**kair mayā saha yoddhavyam**). I see that (**aham avekṣe**) those who have gathered here (**ya ete atra samāgatāḥ**), desiring to please the foolish sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (**durbuddheh dhārtarāṣṭrasya priya-cikīrṣavaḥ**), are intent on fighting (**yuddhe yotsyamānān**).

Surrender Unto Me

- The atmosphere was surcharged.
- The world's most powerful kṣatriyas had gathered to fight and were filled with the spirit of battle.
- This war differed from the situation Śrīla Prabhupāda criticized in the 1960s, when the United States drafted students, not kṣatriyas, and forced them into battle.
- These men were fighting men. Fighting was in their blood.
- Just as devotees come to Vṛndāvana or Māyāpur from all around the world, these kṣatriyas came from all over the world to fight.
- They had faith that dying on the battlefield would gain them entrance into the heavenly planets.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajah

- Arjuna had the flag of Hanuman.
- This indicates that he had received the mercy of the great warrior Hanuman who had previously performed great feats for Śrī Rāma.
- Therefore, Arjuna had no trace of fear.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajah – Story-1 - Baladeva

- When Arjuna went to Rameśvaram he inquired why Rāma had to use monkeys to build the bridge to Lanka. He could have used arrows.
- A small monkey said that the bridge would break.
- Arjuna said that he could make a bridge of arrows that no monkey could break. The monkey challenged him.
- If Arjuna won the challenge the monkey would become his servant. If the monkey won then Arjuna would commit suicide.
- Arjuna made a bridge of arrows several times, but each time the monkey broke it.
- When arjuna decided to commit suicide a brahmana boy appeared and said the contest should have an arbitrator.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajaḥ – Story-1 - Baladeva

- Therefore again the challenge was made.
- This time the monkey could not break it.
- He even expanded his form until it was huge, but still he could not break it.
- The monkey then realized that the brāhmaṇa was his master and exclaimed “Rāma!”
- Arjuna recognized him as Kṛṣṇa.
- Kṛṣṇa then advised them not to make contests like this, but reminded the monkey that he should fulfill his promise by placing himself on Arjuna’s flag.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajah – Story-2 – Surrender Unto Me

- Once, while Arjuna was seeking celestial weapons, the remaining Pāṇḍavas wandered to Badarikāśrama, high in the Himālayas.
- Suddenly, the Ālakananda River carried to Draupadī a beautiful and fragrant thousand-petaled lotus flower. Draupadī was captivated by its beauty and scent.
- “Bhīma, this lotus flower is so beautiful. I should offer it to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja. Could you get me a few more? We could take some back to our hermitage in Kāmyaka.”
- Bhīma grabbed his club and charged up the hill where no mortals were permitted.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajah – Story-2 – Surrender Unto Me

- As he ran, he bellowed and frightened elephants and lions. He uprooted trees as he pushed them aside. Not caring for the ferocious beasts of the jungle, he climbed a steep mountain until his progress was blocked by a huge monkey lying across the path.
- “Why are you making so much noise and scaring all the animals?” the monkey said. “Just sit down and eat some fruit.”
- “Move aside,” ordered Bhīma, for etiquette forbade him to step over the monkey. The monkey’s reply?
- “I am too old to move. Jump over me.”
- Bhīma, becoming angry, repeated his order, but the monkey, again pleading the weakness of old age, requested Bhīma to simply move his tail aside.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kapi-dhvajaḥ – Story-2 – Surrender Unto Me

- Unlimitedly powerful Bhīma grabbed the tail and tried, but failed.
- Amazed, he respectfully inquired as to the monkey's identity and was overjoyed to learn that he had met his brother Hanumān, for both Bhīma and Hanumān were sons of Vāyu.
- Hanumān first embraced Bhīma and showed him the huge form in which he had leaped to Laṅkā.
- He then offered Bhīma the following blessings.
- “I shall remain present on the flag of your brother Arjuna. When you roar like a lion on the battlefield, my voice will join with yours to strike terror into the hearts of your enemies. You will be victorious and regain your kingdom.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Hṛṣīkeśa

- As the battle was about to begin (pravṛtte), Arjuna spoke these words to Kṛṣṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa, one who sets the senses in motion.
- This indicates that there is no doubt about victory for the pure devotees, the Pāṇḍavas, for whom the Lord of all beings, Hari, had great attachment.

Acyuta

- “O Acyuta, you do not deviate from your innate nature--from your affection for your devotee, or from your supreme power. Controlled by this quality, without fear, place my chariot according my words, the words of your devotee.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Acyuta – Srila Prabhupada

- Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, out of His causeless mercy He was engaged in the service of His friend.
- He never fails in His affection for His devotees, and thus He is addressed herein as infallible.
- As charioteer, He had to carry out the orders of Arjuna, and since He did not hesitate to do so, He is addressed as infallible.
- Although He had accepted the position of a charioteer for His devotee, His supreme position was not challenged.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “Place the chariot so that I can see who are situated firmly, not trembling in fear (avasthitān), who are desirous of fighting (yoddu kamān), with no desire for compromise.”
- “But you are fighter, not a spectator. What will be accomplished by viewing this?”
- “I wish to see at the beginning of the battle those friends and relatives in whose company I will fight, and those friends and relatives against whom I will fight. For that purpose, place my chariot between the two armies. ”
- “Out of friendship they will make peace.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “No, there will be no conciliation between the two sides.
- I believe (avekṣe) that they are intent on fighting (yotsyamānām).
- They are intent on fighting, desiring to please the son of Dhṛtarāstra who is unintelligent (durbuddheḥ), ignorant of means for his own survival (ignorant that he is going to die), even in face of this war, which does not sober his intelligence.
- Therefore my viewing the rival party in war has been justified.”

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.24-25 ॥

evam ukto hr̥ṣīkeśo
guḍākeśena bhārata |
senayor ubhayor madhye
sthāpayitvā rathottamam

bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ
sarveṣāṃ ca mahī-kṣitām |
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān
samavetān kurūn iti

When Arjuna spoke to him thus (**evam guḍākeśena uktah**), Hṛṣīkeśa (**hr̥ṣīkeśah**), stationing the best of chariots (**rathottamam sthāpayitvā**) between the two armies (**senayor ubhayor madhye**), in front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa (**bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ**) and all the princes (**sarveṣāṃ ca mahī-kṣitām**), spoke (**iti uvāca**): See these Kurus gathered here (**pārtha paśya etān samavetān kurūn**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Gudākeśa (SVCT)

- Here is the significance of the word Gudākeśa.
- Ākeśa means Viṣṇu (ā), Brahmā (ka) and Śiva (īśa).
- Gudākeśa means Arjuna who gives them (ākeśa) the experience of the sweetness of the Lord's affection just as sugar (guḍā) gives the experience of sweetness. [Note: Literally the word would mean “He who is the sugar for Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.”]
- Therefore, Gudākeśa refers to he who, by bringing Kṛṣṇa under his control, gave Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva the opportunity to experience Kṛṣṇa's sweetness.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Guḍākeśa (SVCT)

- Where the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crown jewel, source of all avatāras, being controlled by prema, followed the orders of His servant Arjuna, how could Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva, His mere expansions as guṇa avatāras, show off any of their powers?
- Instead, they felt they had reached the pinnacle of perfection by manifesting affectionate feelings for the Lord themselves (inspired by Arjuna).
- The lord of the spiritual sky (Mahāviṣṇu) said:

dvijātmamajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṇā

- I brought the brāhmaṇa's sons here because I wanted to see the two of you. SB 10.89.58

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Gudākeśa

- Gudākeśa means the lord (īśa) of sleep (guḍākā). Arjuna had conquered sleep by complete absorption in remembrance of the beauty and qualities of his close friend, bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (**Baladeva**)
- Thus a devotee of Kṛṣṇa can conquer both sleep and ignorance simply by thinking of Kṛṣṇa constantly. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or samādhi. (**Srila Prabhupada**)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Hṛṣīkeśa (Baladeva)

- Having been addressed by greatest devotee Arjuna, Hṛṣīkeśa (master of the senses), bhagavān, knowing the workings of Arjuna's mind (as He is master of the senses including mind), impelled by Arjuna, placed that most excellent chariot given by Agni (rathottamam) between the two armies, facing Droṇa and Bhīṣma and all the kings (mahī kṣitām).

Hṛṣīkeśa and Pārtha (Baladeva)

- The use of the words pārtha (son of Pṛthā) and hṛṣīkeśa (knower of Arjuna's mind) imply the following.
- “Because you are the son of my father's sister, the son of Pṛthā, I indeed will be with you on the chariot, but just now, you are going to give up your desire to fight (since I know everything as Hṛṣīkeśa). So what is the use of viewing the troops of the enemy.”
- He says this in a joking mood.

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

|| 1.26 ||

tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ
pitṛn atha pitāmahān |
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn
putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā ||
śvaśurān suhrdaś caiva
senayor ubhayor api

Arjuna saw standing there (**pārthaḥ tatra apaśyat sthitān**) fathers, grandfathers (**pitṛn atha pitāmahān**), teachers, maternal uncles, brothers (**ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn**), sons, grandsons, friends (**putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā**), fathers-in-law and well-wishers (**śvaśurān suhrdaś caiva**) on both sides (**senayor ubhayor api**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “On the battlefield Arjuna could see all kinds of relatives.
- He could see persons like Bhūriśravā, who were his father’s contemporaries, grandfathers Bhīṣma and Somadatta, teachers like Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya, maternal uncles like Śalya and Śakuni, brothers like Duryodhana, sons like Lakṣmaṇa, friends like Aśvatthāmā, well-wishers like Kṛtavarmā, etc. He could see also the armies which contained many of his friends.”
(Sriḷa Prabhupada)

Section-I – Introduction (1-27)

॥ 1.27 ॥

tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ
sarvān bandhūn avasthitān |
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo
viṣīdann idam abravīt

The son of Kuntī (**sah kaunteyaḥ**), seeing all his relatives situated there (**tān avasthitān sarvān bandhūn samīkṣya**), overcome with compassion (**kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo**) and depressed (**viṣīdann**), spoke as follows (**idam abravīt**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- The merciful Lord of all beings, desiring to deliver the universe through instructions to His dear associate, put Arjuna under illusion, making it appear that his duty to fight was against religious principles, through a distortion of the philosophy of non-violence mentioned in the śruti with mā himsyāt sarva-bhūtāni: do not commit violence against any living entity. (Baladeva)

Kaunteya (Baladeva)

- By addressing Arjuna as the son of Kuntī (kaunteya), as the son of his father's sister, thereby suggesting Arjuna's kṣatriya background, lamentation and bewilderment concerning his kṣatriya dharma are here suggested.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kṛpayā parayā āviṣṭo - Baladeva

- Because of his extremely compassionate nature (parayā kṛpayā), he showed remorse (viṣīdan).
- Because of the word kṛpayā in the instrumental case, there is a suggestion that this mercy is an inherent and perfect quality, emphasized by the word para, superior.

kṛpayā parayā āviṣṭo – Srila Prabhupada

- Any man who has genuine devotion to the Lord has all the good qualities which are found in godly persons or in the demigods, whereas the nondevotee, however advanced he may be in material qualifications by education and culture, lacks in godly qualities.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

kr̥payā parayā āviṣṭo – Srila Prabhupada

- As such, Arjuna, just after seeing his kinsmen, friends and relatives on the battlefield, was at once overwhelmed by compassion for them who had so decided to fight amongst themselves.
- As far as his soldiers were concerned, he was sympathetic from the beginning, but he felt compassion even for the soldiers of the opposite party, foreseeing their imminent death.
- Although it is not mentioned here, still one can easily imagine that not only were Arjuna's bodily limbs quivering and his mouth drying up, but he was also crying out of compassion.
- Such symptoms in Arjuna were not due to weakness but due to his softheartedness, a characteristic of a pure devotee of the Lord. (**yasyāsti bhaktir**)

Surrender Unto Me

- Beginning with verse 28, Arjuna will describe his reasons for desiring not to fight, and Kṛṣṇa will reject them all.
- I have analyzed Arjuna's reasons and placed them in five categories:
 - 1) Compassion.
 - 2) Enjoyment.
 - 3) Destruction of family.
 - 4) Fear of sinful reactions.
 - 5) Indecision.

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s First Reason to not Fight – Compassion (28-30)

|| 1.28-29 ||

dr̥ṣṭvemān svajanān kṛṣṇa
yuyutsum samupasthitam |
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi
mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati

vepathuś ca śarīre me
roma-harṣaś ca jāyate |
gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt
tvak caiva paridahyate

O Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇa**), seeing all my relatives and friends (**dr̥ṣṭvā imān svajanān**) gathered to fight (**yuyutsum samupasthitam**), my limbs are weakening (**sīdanti mama gātrāṇi**), my mouth is drying up (**mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati**), my body is trembling (**vepathuś ca śarīre me**) and my hairs are standing on end (**roma-harṣaś ca jāyate**). My bow is falling from my hand (**gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt**) and my skin is burning (**tvak ca eva paridahyate**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- There are two kinds of trembling of the body, and two kinds of standings of the hair on end.
- Such phenomena occur either in great spiritual ecstasy or out of great fear under material conditions.
- There is no fear in transcendental realization.
- Arjuna's symptoms in this situation are out of material fear—namely, loss of life. (Srla Prabhupada)

Section-II – Arjuna's Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna's First Reason to not Fight – Compassion (28-30)

॥ 1.30 ॥

na ca śaknomy avasthātum
bhramatīva ca me manaḥ |
nimittāni ca paśyāmi
viparītāni keśava

I cannot stay fixed (**na ca avasthātum śaknomy**) and my mind seems to whirl about (**bhramatīva ca me manaḥ**). I see contrary results in this battle (**viparītāni nimittāni ca paśyāmi**), O Keśava (**keśava**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

viparītāni nimittāni ca paśyāmi

- Nimitta is used in the sense of “end result”, just as the goal of money is a good residence.
- I will not get happiness by attaining the kingdom if I win the war, but rather will suffer sorrow, the opposite result. (SVCT)

na ca śaknomy avasthātum

- Due to his impatience, Arjuna was unable to stay on the battlefield, and he was forgetting himself on account of this weakness of his mind.
- Excessive attachment for material things puts a man in such a bewildering condition of existence.
- Bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syāt (SB 11.2.37): such fearfulness and loss of mental equilibrium take place in persons who are too affected by material conditions. (Sriḷa Prabhupada)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Arjuna is showing ignorance of his real self-interest by Kṛṣṇa's will.
- One's real self-interest lies in Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa.
- The conditioned soul forgets this, and therefore suffers material pains.
- Arjuna thought that his victory in the battle would only be a cause of lamentation for him. (**Srila Prabhupada**)

Surrender Unto Me

- We may view Arjuna's lamentation but predict that he will be victorious, as Kṛṣṇa is His chariot driver.
- Arjuna will not go to the heavenly planets, as will those he kills, but at least he will win the kingdom.
- Arjuna, however, does not consider a kingdom worth the sinful reaction he will acquire by fighting and killing in the battle.
- He is considering only how the battle will affect him, and he sees only results opposite to his desires.
- In this way he loses all will to fight.

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Second Reason to not Fight – Enjoyment (31-35)

|| 1.31 ||

na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi
hatvā svajanam āhave |
na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa
na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca

I do not see any good result (**na ca śreyah anupaśyāmi**), after killing my own people in war (**hatvā svajanam āhave**). I do not desire victory (**na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ**), kingdom or happiness (**na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca**), O Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇa**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Having expressed his lamentation which was unfavorable for knowledge of truth (tattva-jñāna), he now expresses his contrary intelligence which was unfavorable to knowledge of the truth.
- “Having killed my relatives in this war (āhave), I do not see any benefit at all.
- The sannyāsī engaged in yoga and the warrior who dies facing the enemy attain the sun planet. Parāśara Smṛti 3.30
- We see from the scriptures that being killed is beneficial. But killing my relatives is not at all beneficial for me.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- If the sandhi is analyzed to form the word asvajanam, then the meaning is, “ Since killing non-relatives has no benefit, how much more sinful will it be to kill relatives?”
- “But you will gain fame, kingdom and wealth. These are the visible results of fighting.”
- “I do not desire these things. Because of giving up desire for kingdom and wealth, I have no interest in attaining victory to attain it.
- Just as a person who has lost interest in food has no interest in cooking.
- Therefore living in the forest would be a more commendable means of maintaining my life.”

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Second Reason to not Fight – Enjoyment (31-35)

॥ 1.32-35 ॥

kiṁ no rājyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā |
yeṣāṁ arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca

ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca |
ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrās tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ

mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā |
etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana

api trailokyā-rājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahīkr̥te |
nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana

What is the use of kingdom (**kiṁ no rājyena**), enjoyment or even living (**kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā**)? Those for whom we desire (**yeṣāṁ arthe naḥ kāṅkṣitaṁ**) kingdom, enjoyment and happiness (**rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca**)--teachers, fathers, sons and grandfathers (**ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrās tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ**), maternaluncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and relatives (**mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā**)-- are standing on the battlefiled (**te ime avasthitā yuddhe**), risking their lives and wealth (**prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca**). I do not desire to kill them (**etān na hantum icchāmi**), even if I were to be killed by them (**ghnato api**), O Madhusūdana (**madhusūdana**), even for sovereignty over the three worlds (**trailokyā-rājyasya hetoḥ api**), what to speak of this earth (**kiṁ nu mahīkr̥te**). O Janārdana (**janārdana**), what happiness will we achieve (**naḥ kā prītiḥ syāt**), having killed the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (**dhārtarāṣṭrān nihatya**)?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Govinda

- Arjuna addressing the Lord as Govinda means “You know (vindati) the functions of all my senses (go). Therefore, please understand what I am thinking.” He tells his reasons for not wanting a kingdom. (**Baladeva**)
- Arjuna has addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as Govinda because Kṛṣṇa is the object of all pleasures for cows and the senses.
- By using this significant word, Arjuna indicates that Kṛṣṇa should understand what will satisfy Arjuna's senses.
- But Govinda is not meant for satisfying our senses. If we try to satisfy the senses of Govinda, however, then automatically our own senses are satisfied. (**Srila Prabhupada**)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “Having given up the desire for life (prāṇān) and wealth (dhanāni), they are standing ready to fight.”
- “If you being very mericful will not kill them, they will certainly kill you and obtain your kingdom without opposition.”
- “I have no desire to kill them, even if they attack me, even if I attain a kingdom of the three worlds, what to speak of attaining just this earth.”
- “At least the Kauravas should be killed, because it is possible to be happy, having killed those that give so much trouble.”
- “Having killed Duryodhana and others, what peace would we Pāṇḍavas who remain have? None at all.
- It is not proper to kill brothers for a temporary semblance of happiness, but which would lead to long term suffering in hell.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Janardana (Baladeva)

- O Janārdana (destroyer of people), if they are to be killed, then you, who come to relieve the earth of its burden, should kill them. It is not possible for you, the Supreme Lord, to suffer the effects of sin at all in killing them.

yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ (Srila Prabhupada)

- Arjuna's deep affection for community and family members is exhibited here partly due to his natural compassion for them. He is therefore not prepared to fight.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ (Srila Prabhupada)

- Everyone wants to show his opulence to friends and relatives, but Arjuna fears that all his relatives and friends will be killed on the battlefield and he will be unable to share his opulence after victory.
- This is a typical calculation of material life.
- The transcendental life, however, is different.
- Since a devotee wants to satisfy the desires of the Lord, he can, Lord willing, accept all kinds of opulence for the service of the Lord, and if the Lord is not willing, he should not accept a farthing.

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Third Reason to not Fight – Fear of Sin (36)

|| 1.36 ||

pāpam evāśrayed asmān
hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ |
tasmān nārḥā vyaṁ hantum
dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān |
svajānaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā
sukhinaḥ syāma mādhava

In killing these aggressors (**etān ātatāyinaḥ hatvā**) we will only incur sin (**asmān pāpam eva āśrayed**). Therefore we should not kill (**tasmād nārḥā vyaṁ hantum**) the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with their relatives (**dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān**). O Mādhava (**mādhava**), how can we live happily (**kathaṁ sukhinaḥ syāma**), having killed our own relatives (**svajānaṁ hatvā**)?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- “Without consideration, one should kill the aggressors, as there is no fault in killing them.” (Manu Smṛti 8.350)
- “Therefore by scriptural injunction, it is justified to kill these six types of aggressors.”
- “Having killed them, the sin caused by killing relatives will come to us who remain.”
- This means that the statements of artha śāstra as mentioned above are weaker than the statements of dharma śāstra such as mā himsyāt sarva-bhūtāni: do not afflict any living entity, for the smṛti also says artha-śāstrāt tu balavad dharma-śāstram iti sthitiḥ: the rules of dharma śāstra are stronger than those of artha śāstra. (Yajñavalkya Smṛti 2.21)
- Therefore killing Bhīṣma and others worthy of worship on the strength of the weaker artha śāstra is certainly a cause of sin.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- He was saintly by character, and therefore he wanted to deal with them in saintliness.
- This kind of saintliness, however, is not for a kṣatriya.
- Although a responsible man in the administration of a state is required to be saintly, he should not be cowardly.
- For example, Lord Rāma was so saintly that people even now are anxious to live in the kingdom of Lord Rāma (rāma-rājya), but Lord Rāma never showed any cowardice.
- Rāvaṇa was an aggressor against Rāma because Rāvaṇa kidnapped Rāma's wife, Sītā, but Lord Rāma gave him sufficient lessons, unparalleled in the history of the world.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- In Arjuna's case, however, one should consider the special type of aggressors, namely his own grandfather, own teacher, friends, sons, grandsons, etc.
- Because of them, Arjuna thought that he should not take the severe steps necessary against ordinary aggressors.
- Besides that, saintly persons are advised to forgive.
- Such injunctions for saintly persons are more important than any political emergency.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Madhava - Srila Prabhupada

- Arjuna's addressing of Kṛṣṇa as "Mādhava," or the husband of the goddess of fortune, is also significant in this connection.
- He wanted to point out to Kṛṣṇa that, as husband of the goddess of fortune, He should not induce Arjuna to take up a matter which would ultimately bring about misfortune.
- Kṛṣṇa, however, never brings misfortune to anyone, to say nothing of His devotees.

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

॥ 1.37-38 ॥

yady apy ete na paśyanti
lobhopahata-cetasah |
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ
mitra-drohe ca pātakam

kathaṁ na jñeyam asmābhiḥ
pāpād asmān nivartitum |
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ
prapaśyadbhir janārdana

Even if they (**yady apy ete**), overcome by greed (**lobha upahata-cetasah**), do not see (**na paśyanti**) the fault of destroying the family (**kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ**) and the sin in killing friends (**mitra-drohe ca pātakam**), should not we (**kathaṁ na asmābhiḥ**), who see the fault in destroying the family (**kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ prapaśyadbhir**), know how to withdraw from this sin (**asmād pāpād nivartitum jñeyam**), O Janārdana (**janārdana**)?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- “But it is justified to take part in this war since they have invoked it.”
- The scriptures say that it is understood for the kṣatriya that he should not reject either a game of dice or a fight if challenged: **āhūto na nivarteta dyūtād api raṇād api.**” (Mahābhārata, 3.56.8)
- Arjuna answers this argument in two verses.
- “Being motivated by greed, they are inclined to sinful acts. We, without having greed, do not have the inclination to commit sin.
- Consciouness of attaining an agreeable result alone should be the motivation.”

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

|| 1.39 ||

kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti
kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ |
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam
adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta

With the destruction of the family (**kula-kṣaye**), the eternal proper conduct of the family (**sanātanāḥ kula-dharmāḥ**) is destroyed (**praṇaśyanti**). When that dharma is destroyed (**dharme naṣṭe**), the family (**kulam**) is completely filled with adharma (**kṛtsnam adharmo abhibhavaty uta**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- In the system of the varṇāśrama institution there are many principles of religious traditions to help members of the family grow properly and attain spiritual values.
- The elder members are responsible for such purifying processes in the family, beginning from birth to death.
- But on the death of the elder members, such family traditions of purification may stop, and the remaining younger family members may develop irreligious habits and thereby lose their chance for spiritual salvation.
- Therefore, for no purpose should the elder members of the family be slain. (Sriḷa Prabhupada)

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

|| 1.40 ||

adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa
praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ |
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya
jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ

From prevalence of adharma (**adharmābhibhavāt**), the women of the family become contaminated (**praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ**). O Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇa**), when the women are spoiled (**strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya**), mixed varṇas arise (**jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

- Just as we, having been made to trespass dharma by our brothers, and bring about sin in the form of destruction of the family (adharmābhibhavāt), so the women, afflicted with ignorance, thinking that they may engage in sin, being made to defy vows of chastity by us, will become corrupted. (Baladeva)

Srila Prabhupada

- Good population in human society is the basic principle for peace, prosperity and spiritual progress in life.
- Such population depends on the chastity and faithfulness of its womanhood.
- As children are very prone to be misled, women are similarly very prone to degradation.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore, both children and women require protection by the elder members of the family.
- By being engaged in various religious practices, women will not be misled into adultery.
- Kṛṣṇa called Arjuna “Pārtha” to remind him of his kṣatriya heritage. In this verse, Arjuna calls Kṛṣṇa “Vārṣṇeya,” descendant of Vṛṣṇi, because he wants Kṛṣṇa to think how He would feel if the Vṛṣṇi dynasty were on the verge of destruction. (**Surrender Unto Me**)

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

|| 1.41 ||

saṅkaro narakāyaiva
kula-ghnānām kulasya ca |
patanti pitaro hy eṣām
lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ

Mixed caste in the family (**kulasya saṅkarah**) brings hell for those who have destroyed their family members (**kula-ghnānām narakāya eva**). The forefathers fall (**patanti pitaro hy eṣām**), being deprived of piṇḍa and water offerings (**lupta-piṇḍa udaka-kriyāḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Surrender Unto Me

- We can further support Arjuna’s argument by saying, “Even Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu traveled to Gāyā to offer the śrāddha ceremony for His departed father.
- Are such sacrifices unimportant?
- Ancestors depend on those ceremonies to attain freedom from suffering. If the offerings to the forefathers are stopped, generations of family members will remain in hell.”
- Again, Arjuna was primarily considering his own sinful reaction by becoming a party to stopping those offerings.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his purport, answers Arjuna’s doubt:
devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

|| 1.42 ||

doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām
varṇa-saṅkara-kāraḱaiḥ |
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ
kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ

Both caste and family rules (**jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ**) are destroyed (**utsādyante**) by this fault of mixed varṇas (**etaiḥ doṣaiḥ**) caused by the killers of family members (**varṇa-saṅkara-kāraḱaiḥ kula-ghnānām**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- Community projects for the four orders of human society, combined with family welfare activities, as they are set forth by the institution of sanātana-dharma, or varṇāśrama-dharma, are designed to enable the human being to attain his ultimate salvation.
- Therefore, the breaking of the sanātana-dharma tradition by irresponsible leaders of society brings about chaos in that society, and consequently people forget the aim of life-Viṣṇu.
- Such leaders are called blind, and persons who follow such leaders are sure to be led into chaos

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Fourth Reason to not Fight – Destruction of family (37-43)

|| 1.43 ||

**utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām
manuṣyāṇām janārdana |
narake niyataṁ vāso
bhavatīty anuśuśrūma**

O Janārdana (**janārdana**), we have heard (**ity anuśuśrūma**) that those men whose family rules are destroyed (**utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām**) live in hell permanently (**narake niyataṁ vāsaḥ bhavati**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- Arjuna bases his argument not on his own personal experience, but on what he has heard from the authorities. That is the way of receiving real knowledge.
- One cannot reach the real point of factual knowledge without being helped by the right person who is already established in that knowledge.
- There is a system in the varṇāśrama institution by which before death one has to undergo the process of atonement for his sinful activities.
- One who is always engaged in sinful activities must utilize the process of atonement called the prāyaścitta.
- Without doing so, one surely will be transferred to hellish planets to undergo miserable lives as the result of sinful activities.

Section-II – Arjuna’s Doubts (28-46)

Arjuna’s Third Reason to not Fight – Fear of Sin (44)

|| 1.44 ||

**aho bata mahat pāpam
kartum vyavasitā vayam |
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena
hantum sva-janam udyatāḥ**

We are intent on committing great sin (**aho bata mahat pāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam**), since we are ready to kill our own people (**yad sva-janam hantum udyatāḥ**) for gain of happiness of a kingdom (**rājya-sukha-lobhena**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- Driven by selfish motives, one may be inclined to such sinful acts as the killing of one's own brother, father or mother.
- There are many such instances in the history of the world.
- But Arjuna, being a saintly devotee of the Lord, is always conscious of moral principles and therefore takes care to avoid such activities.

Section-II – Arjuna's Doubts (28-46)

|| 1.45 ||

yadi mām apratīkāram
aśastram śastra-pāṇayah |
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus
tan me kṣemataram bhavet

It would be better for me (**tad me kṣemataram bhavet**) if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (**yadi dhārtarāṣṭrā**), weapons in hand (**śastra-pāṇayah**), were to kill me (**mām raṇe hanyuh**) without weapons (**aśastram**) and without opposition (**apratīkāram**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- “Even if you are disinclined to fight, Bhīṣma and others are inclined to fight and will kill you. So what is to be done?”
- “Not opposing them will be my prāyaścitta for the sin of thinking of killing relatives.
- This is most beneficial (kṣemataram), removing sin just by this prāyaścitta at the end of life (when they kill me.)
- And Bhīṣma and others will also not incur sin by killing me in this manner.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Surrender Unto Me

- If Arjuna does not fight, he will become bereft of his occupation and left to beg for his sustenance.
- Begging, however, is unthinkable for a kṣatriya.
- The following incident illustrates this element of the kṣatriya spirit.
- After Bhīma met Hanumān, he continued seeking fragrant thousand-petal lotuses to present to Daupadī.
- Finally, he arrived at a lake filled with those lotuses and entered the water.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Surrender Unto Me

- This was Kuvera's lake, and Bhīma did not have permission to enter.
- Hundreds of Yakṣas and Rakṣasas appeared and challenged Bhīma, saying, "What are you doing here! You are forbidden to enter this lake.
- Go and ask Kuvera for his permission.
- If he allows you, you may pick as many flowers as you like.
- If you try to pick flowers without his permission, you will be destroyed by Kuvera's army."

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Surrender Unto Me

- Bhīma jumped from the water, yelling, “I am a kṣatriya! Kṣatriyas don’t beg favors from anyone!”
- The Yakṣas and Rākṣasas then attacked Bhīma, and Bhīma destroyed them all.
- For a kṣatriya, begging is unthinkable. Neither his culture nor his psychology allows it.
- Therefore Arjuna says that it is better for him to be killed unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield than to incur unlimited sins by fighting or to be forced to live a beggar’s life.

Section-II – Arjuna's Doubts (28-46)

|| 1.46 ||

sañjaya uvāca

evam uktvārjunah sañkhye
rathopastha upāviśat |
visṛjya saśaram cāpaṁ
śoka-saṁvigna-mānasah

Speaking in this manner (**evam uktvā**), Arjuna (**arjunah**), giving up his bow and arrows (**visṛjya saśaram cāpaṁ**), mind disturbed with lamentation (**śoka-saṁvigna-mānasah**), sat down on his chariot (**ratha upastha upāviśat**) amidst the warriors assembled for battle (**sañkhye**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- From the first chapter it is understood that inquiry about ātmā takes place in a person who is compassionate in nature and non-violent, and not in one who is cruel and violent.

Srila Prabhupada

- While observing the situation of his enemy, Arjuna stood up on the chariot, but he was so afflicted with lamentation that he sat down again, setting aside his bow and arrows.
- Such a kind and soft-hearted person, in the devotional service of the Lord, is fit to receive self-knowledge.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Surrender Unto Me

- Arjuna had vowed to kill anyone who even suggested that he put down his bow.
- An incident later tested that vow. (Yudhisthira Maharaja injured by Karna)
- Arjuna had not lightly made his “Gāṇḍīva vow.”
- Therefore it is significant that Arjuna—the great son of Pāṇḍu and Indra—himself cast aside his bow and sat down on the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with grief.
- We can only imagine how disturbed Arjuna must have been about the disaster awaiting him and the entire world.