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श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता  
अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः  
**Shreemad Bhagavad Geeta**  
**Chapter 1**

Dhritaraashtra said:

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।  
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥१॥

*O Sanjaya, congregated on the consecrated field of Kurukshetra, wherein originated and were cosseted the twin righteous convictions of 'renunciation' and 'acceptance', what did my sons and those of Paandu, ardent for battle, do?*  
(1)

Sanjaya, a minister in the cabinet of the sightless King Dhritaraashtra, was gifted with 'divya-drishiti' (divine vision) by Lord Vedvyaasa after Dhritaraashtra had declined Vedvyaasa's offer of being blessed with such vision that could make him capable of seeing the events of the battle. Dhritaraashtra, eager to know the situation on the battlefield, therefore, puts the aforesaid question to Sanjaya. In Mahabhaarata scripture, the significance of Kurukshetra has been mentioned in the 83<sup>rd</sup>. chapter of 'Vana-parva' and the 53<sup>rd</sup>. chapter of 'Shalya-parva'. Presently this place is situated between north of Delhi and south of Ambala, in the state of Haryana, and is still known by the same name. The Jaabaala Upanishad also describes the splendour of Kurukshetra as – 'Kurukshetra is the abode of gods and the place of liberation for beings'. The Shatapatha Braahmana also declares – 'Kurukshetra is indeed the place of sacrifices to the gods'.  
(1)

Sanjaya said:

संजय उवाच—

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।  
आचार्यमुपसंगम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥२॥

*But then, seeing the army of Paandavas in combat array, the startled King Duryodhana approached guru Dronaachaarya and thus spoke. (2)*

Here the word 'tu' (but) is used for negating any trepidation on the part of Paandavas. Duryodhana has been christened as 'King' because his directive was followed even though Dhritaraashtra occupied the throne. At the time when the army and its commanders were stationed at their respective posts, to avoid unsettling them, Duryodhana himself went to Drona instead of asking the Aachaarya to come to him. Moreover, Drona, being the master and teacher of the art of archery, merited esteem and reverence. (2)

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम्  
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥३॥

*O teacher, kindly inspect the colossal army of sons of Paandu, in combat configuration, arrayed by your astute disciple Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Drupada. (3)*

These expressions of Duryodhana are essentially to goad Dronaachaarya. O Aachaarya, Drupada had offended you earlier, in retribution of which you had captured him and taken half of his kingdom. To take vengeance of this abuse only, Drupada had raised Dhrishtadyumna by means of 'scriptural sacrifice' (yagya). Thus Dhrishtadyumna is the son of your adversary only; inspite of knowing this, you imparted the knowledge of archery to him. Therefore he is your beloved and astute disciple. He only has assorted the not so large army of Paandavas in a way that it appears gigantic now. (3)

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।  
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥४॥  
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।  
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुंगवः ॥५॥  
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।  
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥६॥

The combatants of this army of Paandavas, wielding great bows, are all extremely gallant like Bheema and Arjuna. Thus Yuyudhaana, Viraata, the great chariot warrior Drupada, Dhrishtketu, Chaekitaana, gutsy Kaashiraj, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, the pre-eminent amongst men – Shaaebya, valiant Yudhaamanyu, brawny Uttamaujah, Abhimanyu – the

son of Subhadra and the five sons of Paandavas born of Draupadi, all of these are great intrepid combatants, consequently cannot be ignored. (4 – 6)

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।  
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥

*We do not dread the imposing army of opponent, but O, the most exceptional of all dvijas<sup>1</sup> (twice born), be introduced to the audacious combatants of our side now. (7)*

You already are familiar with them, but still, just to enumerate, I would speak to you of them. The word ‘tu’ (but) is voiced by Duryodhana to conceal his apprehension on seeing the army of Paandavas. (7)

1. ‘Dvija’ refers to the classes of Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya, who are instructed by scriptures to undergo the ceremony of investiture with the ‘sacred thread’ (yagyopaveeta), at specified ages, which permits them to access the Vedas and perform the rites and duties as prescribed by them. It is considered to be the ‘second birth’ for the men of these classes.

भवान्भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।  
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥८॥

Your revered self, Bheeshma, Karna, Kripaachaarya – the vanquisher of many encounters, Ashwathaama, Vikarna and also Bhuurishrava – the son of Somdutta. (8)

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।  
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥९॥

Beginning with you, every combatant in my army, ardent to be triumphant, relinquishing the desire to live, is well equipped with varied armaments and means, and is exceedingly dexterous in the knack of warfare. (9)

To flaunt his audacity, Duryodhana puts forward a further validation before Drona.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।  
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥१०॥

Protected from all sides by the well-known Bheeshma, of an extraordinary sharp and subtle intellect, our army is invincible; but cosseted by Bheema of low intellect, unrefined in the art of combat, the army of Paandavas can be effortlessly overwhelmed.

The indeclinable 'tu' (but) points out to the aforementioned assertion of Duryodhana. Thus we have no reason to fear - such is the implication of Duryodhana's utterance. (10)

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।  
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥११॥

*Since Bheeshma is the nucleus of entire army of Kauravas, it consequently becomes the obligation of each one of us to protect Bheeshma from all sides and by all means while staying put at one's position. (11)*

Duryodhana has only a solitary consternation, that of Shikhandi encountering Bheeshma; since if this occurs, then the latter will not use any armaments against Shikhandi, taking him to be a woman. In such circumstances others may endanger Bheeshma. Therefore, this encounter between the two is to be proscribed at all costs by each one of us. (11)

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।  
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥१२॥

Seeing Duryodhana to apprehensively converse with Drona, Bheeshma acted accordingly. The courageous and spirited elder of the Kauravas, Bheeshma, roared like a lion and then blew his conch, uplifting the morale and spirits of Duryodhana. (12)

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।  
सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥१३॥

Instantly following Bheeshma's act, others on the side of Kauravas also blew and played various conchs, drums, trumpets, tabors etc., the combined reverberation of which was boisterous. (13)

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

Considering the act of Kauravas, Lord Krishna along with Arjuna - the son of Paandu, settled on ostentatious and lurid chariot with four white horses yoked to it, also blew their divine conchs. (14)

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।  
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥१५॥

*'Hrishiksha' (Krishna) blew the conch named 'Paanchjanya', and 'Dhananjaya' (Arjuna) blew the one named 'Devadatta'. Bheema, the performer of abysmal actions, blew the daunting conch called 'Paaundra'. (15)*

Being the ruler and regulator of senses, the Lord is referred to as 'Hrishiksha'. He slayed the demon named 'Panchajana' who used to exist in the form of a conch and accepted his bone for His conch, leading to His conch being named as 'Paanchjanya'. During the event of his all-round incursion and conquest, Arjuna had amassed colossal wealth that lead to him being called as 'Dhananjaya'. His conch was gifted by the 'gods' (devataa), so was called as 'Devadatta'. The conch of Bheema was gargantuan, like his own appearance only, and so was called as 'Paaundra'. (15)

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।  
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥१६॥

*King Yudhishtara, the son of Kunti, blew the conch named 'Anantavijaya'. Nakula blew the one called 'Sughosha' and Sahadeva blew the one named 'Manipushpaka'. (16)*

Yudhishtara is aptly referred to as 'King' since his body bears the imperial symbols, he carries the support of masses even after losing the kingdom in the game of dice, and finally, he had successfully completed all the stipulations laid at the occasion of his dethronement for repossession of the kingdom. (16)

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।  
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥१७॥  
द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।  
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥१८॥

O ruler of Earth (Dhritaraashtra), Kaashiraja, Shikhandi, Dhristadyumna, Viraata, Saatyaki, Drupada and all five sons of Draupadi and also Abhimanyu – the son of Subhadra, all of them also blew conchs of varied arrayal. All these audacious fighters have aptly been referred to as the great archers, the great charioteers, invincible and the mighty armed. (17-18)

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।  
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥१९॥

The terrific sound arising from blowing of conchs by the intrepid fighters of the side of Paandavas, reverberated through the heavens and earth, devastating the heart of Kauravas. (19)

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान्कपिध्वजः ।  
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥२०॥  
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच—

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥२१॥

*O King, on seeing the warriors of Dhritaraashtra's camp still holding to their positions even after being beleaguered by the devastating sound of Paandava's conchs, Arjuna, with the icon of monkey god (Hanumaana) on his chariot flag, envisaging the time of weaponry assault, picked up his bow and uttered these words to Hrishiksha, Lord Krishna. O Achyuta, please position my chariot in the middle of both the armies. (20, 21)*

The word 'Atha' (thereafter) is used to portray the psychological state of Arjuna, in contrast to that of Duryodhana, who was startled on seeing the army of Paandavas in combat array. Arjuna addresses the Lord by the word 'Achyuta', designating the Lord to be obdurate, resolute and steadfast in His non-dual form, opulence and solemnity. Being the navigator of Arjuna's chariot and also exceedingly amorous to His devotees, the Lord will certainly follow Arjuna's directive. (20, 21)

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।  
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन्णसमुद्यमे ॥२२॥

Till such time I can consider and estimate the warriors of the rival encampment, zealous to fight, and also take a decision as to whom all I have to encounter; please hold the chariot stationed. (22)

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।  
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥२३॥

Those intrepid crowned heads coming from far off lands, decorated with ostentatious weaponry and desiring the triumph of Duryodhana - the son of ominous headed Dhritaraashtra; I want to see them all. (23)

Sanjaya said:

संजय उवाच—

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।  
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥२४॥  
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।  
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरुनिति ॥२५॥

O descendent of Bharata (Dhritaraashtra), on considering the aspiration of 'Gudaakesha' (Arjuna), the Lord, steering the majestic chariot, positioned it in the midst of both the armies, in front of Bheeshma, Drona and other Kings, and spoke to Arjuna. 'Gudaakesha', meaning the one who has subjugated sleep, is Arjuna's qualification. The Lord said, O Paartha (son of Prithaa i.e. Kunti), survey these assembled warriors of the Kaurava's camp whom you have to battle with. (24-25)

In this situation, Arjuna, assessing that bloodshed is immensely impious, irreverent and sinful, abruptly becomes repugnant to the battle, which he expresses ahead.

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्यार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।  
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन्युत्रान्यौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥२६॥  
श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।  
तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥२७॥  
कृपया परयाऽऽविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

अर्जुन उवाच—

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥२८॥  
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।  
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥२९॥

On the directive of Lord Krishna, Arjuna saw, congregated amongst both the armies, his grandfathers, uncles, teachers, brothers, sons, grandsons, maternal uncles,

fathers-in-law, companions and acquaintances. On seeing all his acquaintances assembled for the battle on either side, Arjuna lost his poise and equanimity, and beleaguered by intense empathy and bounded by cowardice, spoke to the Lord. At that moment, thinking about the ominous result of the clash involving all family members, Arjuna was overwhelmed by extreme compassion and kindness, which he will express ahead. The word 'kripa' literally means 'pity' or 'mercy'; but this 'pity' on one's relatives, born out of delusion, is better labelled as 'cowardice'. Arjuna says – O Krishna, on seeing these combatants, who are none other than my adored ones only, congregated here for the battle, my limbs have become slothful and indolent and my mouth is getting parched. My body is unsteady and tremulous and my hair stand on ends. Arjuna, though born of a divine fraction, is devoid of the knowledge of Self, and hence carries the conception of 'me' and 'mine' in his 'own' and in 'other's' bodies, and therefore, at the start of battle, is plagued by the prospect of bereavement and hence starts grieving. (26-29)

गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वक्त्रैव परिदह्यते ।  
न च शक्रोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥३०॥

My bow 'Gaandeeva'<sup>1</sup> is slithering out of my hands and my skin smoulders intensely. In the preceding 28<sup>th</sup> verse, Arjuna displayed the signs of 'sorrowfulness' and now in the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> verse he demonstrates the symbols of 'fright'. Besides this he has become 'impatient' also, as he says next - my mind is gyrating and I am not able to stand upright even. (30)

1. This bow was given to Arjuna by the Water-god (Varunadeva) on the request of Fire-god (Agni-deva) at the time of burning of the forest named Khaandava. (Mbh. Aadi. 225).

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।  
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥३१॥

O Keshava<sup>1</sup>, moreover, are perceptible the portentous signs like the flicker of left eyelid etc., and furthermore, by massacre of these adored ones in the battle, I don't see any favourable outcome. (31)

1. Keshava is the succinct name of Lord. The letter 'Ka' means Brahmaa, 'A' is Vishnu and 'E' is Shanker; One who has Brahmaa, Vishnu and Shanker as His body is called as Keshava, pointing to a single entity that is manifesting as these three forms. – Geeta. Asht. Prav. (1.31)

Thus reckoning that he has become disinterested in the battle, Arjuna says:

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।  
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥३२॥

*O Krishna, I don't yearn for any triumph, empire or pleasures from this encounter. O Govinda, what have we to gain from territory, as also from varied pleasures and even from living itself? (32)*

Arjuna has used the word 'kankshaya' (desire, yearn) in the 'aatmanepad' sense whereas grammatically it should have been a 'parsamaepad' usage. Hence it should be considered as a usage by the way of completing the metre or a pronouncement of a grieving soul. The one who is known from the pronouncements of the Vedas is called as the Govinda (by which name Arjuna has addressed the Lord in the latter half of the verse). (32)

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षतं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।  
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणास्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥३३॥

Since our most adored ones, for whom we desired to have the empire, happiness and pleasure; those only, abandoning all passion for possessions and existence, are assembled here for the battle. (33)

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।  
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥३४॥

Teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other kith and kin are standing in obverse. (34)

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।  
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥३५॥

O Madhusoodana<sup>1</sup>, I don't desire to kill them even if they assault me. What to talk of earthly empire, I will not slay them even for the kingdom of all three worlds. (35)

1. The Lord killed a demon named Madhu and hence is called as Madhusoodana.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रानः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।  
पापमेवाऽऽश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥३६॥

*O Janaardana<sup>1</sup>, what joyousness would we gain from killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra; instead, killing these scamps (aatatayees)<sup>2</sup> would entail sin only to ourselves. (36)*

The alternating construal of this verse could be – by killing our kith and kin like the teachers, brothers etc., we would be considered as scamps and will have to bear the fruit born out of this violent sinful action. Therefore it stands to our gain only to extricate ourselves from this battle. (36)

1. The One from whom everyone pleads for acquisitions is called as Janaardana.

2. Vasishtha Smriti has declared the following six to be ‘aatataye’ – the one who sets fire to other’s house, who steals wealth, who steals land, who kidnaps other’s women, who poisons others and who, with arms in his hands, is intending to kill others. (3.19)

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।  
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥३७॥

Thus no advantageous outcome of the battle is foreseeable, and the possibilities of a serious cataclysm are certainly there, therefore, it is reprehensible for us to slaughter our own kinfolds. O Maadhava<sup>1</sup>, how would killing our own kin ever content us? (37)

1. Spouse of the goddess Lakshmi.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।  
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥३८॥  
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।  
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥३९॥

Though these people (Kauravas), with their perspicacity besieged by ravenousness, are not able to appreciate the evil arising out of annihilation of their own dynasty as also the sin accrued out of massacre of one’s own friends, but O Janaardana, we, who realize these defects, must endeavour to circumvent the sin arising out of these acts. The transgression arising out of annihilation of one’s dynasty and friends must be understood first to avert it. (38-39)

In the subsequent three verses Arjuna expounds the evil arising out of the extinction of one’s dynasty.

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।  
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥४०॥

With the annihilation of one's dynasty vanishes the performance of traditional righteous scriptural actions like 'fire sacrifice' etc., due to the scarcity of their performers. This leads to immense sin, accruing to the slayer of the dynasty, and a terrific increase in malevolence. (40)

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।  
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वाष्णोय जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥४१॥

O Krishna, with the rise of malice, the ladies of the dynasty, unable to control themselves, become deceitful and untrustworthy. O Lord of the dynasty of Vrishnis, then out of these devious ladies are born offsprings of unsanctified class. (41)

संकरो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।  
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥४२॥

The unsanctified progeny leads the dynasty and its slayer to hell. Not only this, the disappearance of obsequial (shraadh) oblation leads to the fall of ancestral spirits (forefathers) in their respective worlds. (42)

1. The oblation offered to the Manes (pitara).

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसंकरकारकैः ।  
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥४३॥

These are the imperfections, arising out of unsanctified progeny, which lead to the abolition of all dynastical traditions and scriptural sanctions of the slayer. Thus we, realizing all these defects, in our paramount interest, should separate ourselves from the battle. (43)

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।  
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥४४॥

O Janaardana, those whose dynastical traditions have perished are predestined to a life in hell; such have we heard from our forefathers and also from scriptures. (44)

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

Oh! It is astounding and remorseful that we, who are well aware of these blemishes and shortcomings, infatuated by the gluttony of the kingdom and regal pleasures, have approved to fight this battle, which entails killing of our own kith and kin. (45)

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

I am discarding all weaponry, and will not resist even if slaughtered by the armed sons of Dhritaraashtra, since that would still be favourable for me. (46)

Sanjaya says to Dhritaraashtra that:

संजय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।  
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥४७॥

Uttering thus, Arjuna, with his mind suffused in misery, discarded his bow and sat crestfallen in the rear portion of the chariot. (47)

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे  
अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥१॥

The catchphrase given by Vedvyaasa at the conclusion of the first chapter, indicative of its name and its location in the epic ‘Mahabhaarata’, is all-appropriate only, since this chapter, essentially, is a prelude to ‘Bhagavad Geeta’. What demands consideration is that why this chapter has been named as ‘Arjuna vishaad yoga’, meaning thereby the ‘Yoga of Arjuna’s despondency’. Yoga is the mechanism that facilitates the comprehension of Supreme Lord and attainment of eternal peace. The Yogas of action, devotion, knowledge, meditation etc. are indeed well known, but how can one’s ‘despondency’ take the form of ‘Yoga’ needs evaluation. The thought of bereavement of the dear ones gives rise to ‘sorrow’ initially, and when this emotion is not controlled by one’s astuteness, it takes the form of extreme dejection, gloom and pessimism, which is expressed here by the word ‘vishaada’, as had been experienced by Arjuna. This extreme dejection and gloom, afflicting Arjuna, made him relinquish the battle, thus forsaking his obligation. Thereafter, arose in his heart the extreme desire for eternal peace, appreciating which,

the Lord preached to him the crown of all Yogas – ‘the knowledge of Self’. On hearing the Lord’s sermons, Arjuna not only rose to honour his obligation but also achieved eternal peace. The same sermon of the Lord, flowering out of Arjuna’s despondency, is showing the way to countless seekers today also. Thus Arjuna’s ‘despondency’ was transformed into ‘Yoga’ due to the propinquity and grace of Lord Krishna. In the present times also, it is appreciated that if a downhearted one finds a sagacious and erudite companion, then, by the process of worldly dispassion, arises the desire for knowledge, and finally one attains eternal peace and clarity of vision through this Yoga of the knowledge of Self. Thus it is apposite only to name this chapter as ‘Yoga of Arjuna’s despondency’.

*Thus concludes the English translation by Dr. Narendra Tuli of the Lalita commentary by Aachaarya Mahaamandaleshwara Swaami Vidyaanand Giriji Maharaj on the first chapter of Bhagavad Geeta namely ‘Arjun Vishaad Yoga’.*

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