

A SUMMARY OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA AS IT IS

The Bhagavad-gita opens with blind King Dhrtarastra requesting his secretary, Sanjaya, to narrate the battle between his sons, the Kauravas, and their cousins, the Pandavas. Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, out of affection for His devotee, the Pandava prince Arjuna, has agreed to drive his chariot. As Arjuna takes up his bow and prepares to fight, he sees the sons of Dhrtarastra drawn in military array and requests infallible Krsna to draw his chariot between the two fighting forces. There in the midst of both armies, Arjuna's mind reels as he foresees the imminent death of his teacher, relatives, and friends. He throws down his bow and arrows and decides not to fight.

In Chapter One and in the beginning of Chapter Two, Arjuna presents his arguments for refusing to fight. Basically, he fears the sinful reactions of killing. But after Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krsna and requests the Lord to instruct him, the Lord begins countering Arjuna's objections. First, Krsna analytically explains that fighting in His service is transcendental and will bring no sinful reaction. Krsna also explains the Vedas' purpose as to gradually elevate souls to Krsna consciousness. Krsna thus encourages Arjuna to remain fixed in His service - fight - and ignore his mind's desires.

As Krsna's explanations why Arjuna should fight were only a summary, and since Krsna glorifies both 'buddhi-yoga', intelligence used in spiritual advancement of knowledge (2.45, 2.49-50), and 'karma', work (2.47-48, 2.50), Arjuna becomes confused and wishes to use Krsna's instruction to perform 'buddhi-yoga' as an excuse to retire the battlefield for a life of contemplation. Arjuna therefore opens Chapter Three asking Krsna why He is encouraging fighting if intelligence is better than fruitive work.

Krsna then explains 'karma-yoga', reaction-free devotional work, and clears up Arjuna's mistaken idea that all work is fruitive and leads to bondage. Krsna explains that Arjuna should fight, for avoiding sinful reactions though devotional work is better than attempting to escape reactions though renouncing work. Krsna also instructs Arjuna to fight to set the proper example of duty. Krsna therefore tells Arjuna to fight, but with knowledge and detachment (3.29-30), without falling victim to his own attractions and aversions.

Then, in answer to Arjuna's question on the cause of a soul's being impelled to improper action or neglect of duty, Krsna names the enemy: lust. He then recommends Arjuna to regulate his senses, become fixed in his pure identity as a servant of Krsna, and thereby avoid lust's control. Then, with spiritual strength and deliberate intelligence, he should conquer that forceful enemy - lust.

Since in Chapter Three, Krsna has recommended that Arjuna fight in full knowledge of Him (3.30), the Lord, in Chapter Four, explain different aspects of transcendental knowledge. First Krsna explains attaining knowledge through the disciplic succession. Then after successively explaining His appearance and then His mission, the Lord explains His devotional service as the goal of Krsna had already referred to the importance of performing 'yajna', sacrifice, in 3.9 Krsna next explains the soul's relationship with Him as eternal His part and parcel, which one must approach a bonafide spiritual master to learn. Chapter Four ends with Krsna glorifying transcendental knowledge and requesting Arjuna to arm himself with this knowledge - which burns all sinful reactions to ashes - and fight!

After Arjuna has been impressed with the importance of both work (which requires activity) and seeking knowledge (which tends to be inactive), Arjuna is perplexed. His determination is confused, and he sees fighting and knowledge as contradictory. Therefore Arjuna opens Chapter Five by asking Krsna to definitively explain whether the renunciation of work (speculation, 'sankhya, jnana', inaction-in-knowledge) or work in devotion is superior. Krsna answers that one who is detached from his work's results is the one who is truly renounced. Such a person knows that while the body acts, he, the soul, actually does nothing. Arjuna should therefore, do his duty steadily and act for the satisfaction of Krsna. Impartially viewing the external world, he should reside in his body aloof from bodily activities. By fixing his consciousness on the Supreme and knowing that Krsna is the true enjoyer, the goal of sacrifice and austerity, and the Lord of all planets, he, the pure soul, will find true peace beyond this material world.

In the first five chapters, Krsna has explained 'buddhi-yoga', working with consciousness focused on Krsna without fruitive desires. The Lord has also explained 'sankhya', 'karma-yoga', and 'jnana-yoga' to obtain liberation and as steppingstones to Krsna consciousness. Now, at the end of the Fifth Chapter (5. 27-28) and continuing on to the Sixth Chapter (wherein Krsna explains practical points for a practitioner), Krsna explains 'dhyana- yoga' concluding that 'dhyana', or meditation upon Krsna, is meditation's final goal.

Krsna begins the Sixth Chapter by explaining that the neophyte yogi engages in fruitive sitting postures while the advanced yogi, the true 'sannyasi', works without attachment. Such a yogi liberates, not degrades, himself by his mind's activities. Carefully controlling his mind and engaging his body, and his self in Krsna's service, the yogi strictly practices 'dhyana- yoga' in a secluded place. Fixing his mind on the self and on Krsna, he attains transcendental happiness in the kingdom of God. Arjuna then points out the main difficulty in practicing yoga is controlling the mind. Krsna responds by saying that one can overcome the obstinate mind through constant practice and determination. In responding to Arjuna's question about the fate of an unsuccessful yogi, Krsna answers that one unsuccessful in his practice will still take birth in a family of wise transcendentalists and automatically become attracted to yogic principles. Krsna finally states in the last two verses of the chapter that the yogi is greater than the ascetic, the jnani and the karmi. And the greatest of all yogis is he who always thinks of Krsna and with great faith worships Him in loving service.

Knowing Krsna's instruction at the end of Chapter Six, one should initiate his practice of yoga from the point of concentrating of the mind upon Krsna. Chapter Seven thus opens with Krsna explaining knowledge of Himself and His opulent energies. Thus Arjuna can fully worship Krsna, as described at the end of Chapter Six, and think of Him with devotion as he fights.

Krsna first explains that He is the Supreme Truth, everything in existence is a combination of His material and spiritual energies. He is the active principle within all and is all- pervasive through His diverse material and spiritual energies. Because the world's activities are conducted by the three modes of nature which emanate from Him, (Although Krsna is independent and above them) only those who surrender to Krsna can cross beyond these modes to know Him. Four kinds of impious souls never surrender to Krsna while four kinds of pious souls do surrender. Krsna also covers Himself from the impersonalists, who are less intelligent, and from those who surrender to the demigods. But those who are truly

pious, the undeluded, serve Krsna as the governor of the material manifestation, the demigods, and sacrifice, can know and understand Krsna - at the time of death.

Chapter Eight begins by Arjuna asking Krsna about Brahman, karma, the demigods, the material world, and knowing Krsna at the time of death. Krsna first briefly answers Arjuna's first five questions and then begins explaining in detail how to know Krsna at the time of death. Since one attains what one remembers at the time of death, if one remembers Krsna, one goes to Him. Krsna then explains how He can be constantly thought of as the transcendental person who knows everything, the oldest controller, the smallest, the maintainer. Thus by practicing yoga and remembering Krsna, Krsna explains, one will go to the eternal spiritual world and never again to return to this temporary, miserable material world. Then, after describing the different yogic ways in which one may leave this world, Krsna advises Arjuna not worry about other paths - either Vedic study, yoga, austere sacrifices, charity, jnana, or karma - for the results of these will all be obtained through performing devotional service. And in the end, such a yogi in devotion, reaches the supreme eternal abode.

After Krsna answered Arjuna's questions in Chapter Eight, He continues speaking, in Chapter Nine, the knowledge about Himself that He had begun explaining in Chapter Seven. Krsna thus prefaces Chapter Nine by stating that the knowledge He'll now reveal is most confidential, for it is about His actual position, which only the non-envious and faithful can understand. Krsna continues explaining that although independent and aloof, He pervades, creates and annihilates the entire cosmos through His material energy. Those mahatmas who know Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead take shelter of Him and serve Him as the only enjoyer and the supreme object of worship.

Krsna then explains the fortunate position of such devotees: If one worships Krsna, Krsna cares, compensates for his deficiencies, and preserves his strengths. And all Krsna asks for is an offering of a leaf, a flower, or some water - if it is offered with devotion. Thus His devotee comes to Him. Even if a devotee unintentionally commits a horrendous act, he will be rectified, for Krsna promises that His devotee will never perish.

In Chapters Seven and Nine, Krsna has explained knowledge of His energies. In Chapter Ten, Krsna explains His opulences more specifically and thereby reveals Himself the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all. Krsna also tells how His pure devotees know that He is the unborn Supreme Lord, the source of all sages, the source of the material and spiritual worlds, and the source of all qualities and attitudes. Thus pure and wise devotees worship Krsna, converse about Him, and with thoughts dwelling in Him, undeluded and free from sin, engage in His service. Out of compassion, Krsna within their hearts destroys any remaining ignorance.

After hearing of Krsna's opulences, Arjuna confirms Krsna as the Supreme Lord by quoting authorities and explains that only Krsna can truly know Himself. Krsna then tells of His divine manifestations within this world - as the Supersoul, the ocean, the Himalayas - which merely indicate His limitless opulences, for a single fragment of Krsna's energy pervades and supports this entire universe!

Arjuna, although acknowledging that Krsna in the two-armed form that he now sees before him is Supreme, still requests Krsna to reveal that all-pervading Universal Form that supports the Universe. Thus, in Chapter Eleven, Krsna proves Himself as the Supreme Lord and He establishes the criteria that anyone who claims to be God must also show a Universal Form. Krsna then reveals to Arjuna His wondrous effulgent, all-expansive form,

and Arjuna sees all soldiers on both sides dying within it. Krsna explains His form as time, the destroyer of all world, and requests that Arjuna, knowing in advance the inevitable death of all the warriors, become His instrument. In answer to Arjuna's fearful prayers, Krsna first shows His four-armed form before again returning to His original two-armed form. Krsna then states that his two-armed form can only be seen by pure devotees, and such pure devotees, working for Krsna, free from desiring fruitive activities, and who make Krsna the supreme goal of their lives, certainly come to Him.

In Chapter Twelve, Arjuna, after witnessing Krsna's awesome Universal Form, wishes to clarify his own position as a devotee, the highest worshiper of the Supreme. He thus asks whether worshipping Krsna through devotional service or worshipping the impersonal is superior. Krsna immediately responds saying that one engaged in His personal service is the topmost. One should therefore engage in Krsna's service and fix his mind solely upon Krsna, and, if that cannot be done, one should follow the rules and regulations of 'bhakti-yoga', which purify one so he is later able to do so. Krsna then describes other processes that eventually lead to His pure devotional service.

Then qualities that endear a devotee to Krsna, which Krsna next mentions, such as equality in both happiness and distress, independence from the ordinary course of activities, satisfaction, and the faithful following of the path of devotional service, are also part of the process of worshipping Krsna in devotional service.

Arjuna opens Chapter Thirteen by inquiring about the field of activities and the knower of that field. Krsna answers that the conditioned soul's body and that body's interactions within the material world are His limited field of activities. By understanding the difference between the body, the soul, and the Supersoul and by following the process of knowledge, the soul can transcend the good and the bad he meets, realize his eternal subordination to Krsna, and attain the supreme destination.

The Thirteenth Chapter clearly explained that by humbly developing knowledge one can become free from material entanglement. It is also explained that the living entity's entanglement within the material world due to his association with the modes of material nature (13. 20-22). Now, in Chapter Fourteen, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in detail, explains the three modes - goodness, passion and ignorance - those forces that bind and control all conditioned souls within this world. A soul can, however, transcend these modes through devotional service (All other processes are contaminated by the modes). Thus the limitations imposed by his field of activities can be overthrown and the soul can be elevated to the Brahman platform, the constitutional position of purity and happiness - a platform of which Krsna is the basis.

As one must be detached from the modes and their results in order to be attached to the service of the Lord, Krsna describes in Chapter Fifteen the process of freeing oneself from matter's grip. He begins by comparing the material world to a gigantic, upside-down banyan tree, invoking Arjuna to detach himself from it through surrender. Thus, the soul can end his transmigrations and return to Him in the spiritual world.

Although the foolish cannot understand that the soul transmigrates, quitting one body to obtain a new body based on his mind's desires, transcendentalists see this clearly. The foolish can learn to see properly by understanding that it is Krsna who is the splendor of the sun, moon, and fire, as the one keeping the planets in orbit and making vegetables succulent. They can see Krsna as the fire of digestion; as the Paramatma in everyone's heart;

as the giver of remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness; and as the goal of the Vedas and the compiler of Vedanta. Krsna then reveals that knowing Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and engaging in His service is the ultimate purpose of the Vedanta and the most confidential part of the Vedas.

In Chapter Fifteen, auspicious, elevating activities were described as part of the banyan tree. In Chapter Sixteen, after mentioning twenty-six godly qualities, Krsna explains the demonic nature which degrades the soul through arrogant, ignorant, and conceited pursuits of sense gratification and power.

Krsna explains the demonic mentality as follows: The world is unreal and is produced only of sex desire. Taking shelter of lust, they think of sense gratification as the goal of life and scheme to illegally increase their wealth. While plotting to kill their 'competitor' enemies, they think themselves powerful and happy, and they, surrounded by their relatives, use sacrifices and charity only to further increase their happiness. Perplexed by illusory anxieties, bewildered by self-complacency, impudency, and wealth; and envying the Supersoul within their own bodies and within the bodies of others, demons blaspheme real religion. These mischievous, lowest amongst men are repeatedly cast by Krsna into demonic species to gradually sink to the most abominable forms of existence.

Krsna ends the chapter by explaining that because lust, anger and greed are the beginnings of demonic life, all sane men should therefore give them up and understand their duty through faithfully following the scriptures.

Krsna has concluded Chapter Sixteen by declaring that the ultimate difference between the divine and the demonic is that the divine follow the scriptures while the demons do not. In the beginning of Chapter Seventeen, Arjuna inquires more about those who don't follow scriptures, but who worship according to their imaginations. Krsna answers by describing how the combination of the modes of material nature that control a particular person will dictate a person's faith, worship, eating, sacrifices, charity and austerity. The chapter ends with Krsna explaining the syllables 'om tat sat' and how these syllables indicate that any sacrifice, austerity, or charity dictated by the modes and performed without devotional service is useless in this life or the next. One should therefore directly take to Krsna's service in Krsna consciousness.

The entire Bhagavad-gita is concluded in seventeen chapters, and in the Eighteen Chapter, Krsna reviews the knowledge already presented. In this chapter Krsna concludes, as He has done throughout the Bhagavad-gita, that one should practice devotional service - Krsna consciousness.

Since Arjuna's basic desire to renounce his duty of fighting was fear of sinful reaction, Krsna explains true renunciation and how to transcend sinful reactions through (1) becoming renounced from the fruits of activities, (2) abiding by the order of the Supersoul, and (3) worshipping the Lord through one's fruits of work by acting either as 'brahmana', 'ksatriya', 'vaisya', or 'sudra' according to one's mode of nature. (Each leads Arjuna to fight) Thus, one can achieve the self-realized position of 'brahma-bhuta' and that position, detached from all material things, one can practice pure devotional service.

Krsna can only be known through surrendering to Him in devotional service, and by this direct process - free from karma or jnana, Arjuna should need not fear any sinful reactions. Under Krsna's protection, such a pure devotee will reach "Krsna-loka". Krsna instructs Arjuna that he should surrender to the Supreme Lord within his heart and thus attain peace

in His supreme, eternal abode. The most confidential knowledge is then explained by Krsna: "Become My devotee, always think of Me, act for Me, worship Me, and offer all homage unto Me. Surrender unto Me alone. Do not fear sinful reactions."

After hearing the instructions of Sri Krsna, Arjuna is fixed and ready to fight. Sanjaya, after narrating this conversation to Dhrtarastra, ecstatically thinks of the wondrous two-armed form of Krsna and predicts victory for Arjuna, the supreme archer, for he is surrendered to Krsna, the master of all mystics.

[INTRODUCTION TO THE BHAGAVAD-GITA OVERVIEW.

It is said that the Bhagavad-gita is a 'river of nectar' flowing. How could that be a 'river of nectar' on the battlefield? As we hear from Srimad-Bhagavatam, rather than a river of nectar, there was a river, or better, an 'ocean of blood'.

But this Bhagavad-gita is actually a 'river of nectar' on the battlefield. And the basic idea is that Arjuna did not wish to fight and he gave Krsna so many reasons why he shouldn't fight. And Krsna counted each of those reasons and He ultimately explained that Arjuna should fight just as an offering to Him (sarva dharman parityaja...).

Superficially Krsna is speaking the Bhagavad-gita to get Arjuna to fight but He is not speaking for this purpose to get Arjuna to fight. Although that in one level is true, He nevertheless speaks for another reason, many reasons. But the basic reason why Krsna is speaking the Bhagavad-gita is because the Lord is very compassionate. He arranged the entire Mahabharata, which is one of the most popular books in the world, and within it He placed a 'gem' - the Bhagavad-gita.

Krsna has arranged a great battle. A battle to resolve who will be the king of the world. Families fighting..., there is intrigue, there is conspiracy, there is plots, there is murder, there is brother against brother, there is exiles... It is very exciting! And then the culmination is 'that meeting' on the battlefield.

Naturally everyone wants to know who is going to win. And when we are up at this point of the Mahabharata, our ears prick up because everyone likes a good fight. And thousands of thousands of thousands of people are ready, just waiting to engage in warfare, and in the middle of that Arjuna and Krsna go in between the two armies amidst everyone. Why? What is going to happen? Again our interest is so much increased. Then Krsna, when our interest is so much increased, places the Bhagavad-gita in our consciousness.

Thousands of millions of people are killed, a great drama is enacted, but Krsna's purpose is "compassion" - simply that we hear the Bhagavad-gita. This is the prime reason even though there are many other reasons. Krsna wants us and He stages the all Mahabharata so that we hear this important message meant for all conditioned souls. This is the main reason why all this is going on...

SETTING THE SCENE

The two kings, Pandu and Dhrtarastra were the two descendents from King Bharata (where the name Mahabharata came from). Dhrtarastra was older than Pandu, his brother, but he was blind and therefore although he would have become king he didn't become because of his lack of eyesight. He was disturbed about that.

Pandu had five sons, all very famous: Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. And Dhrtarastra had one hundred sons whose chief was Duryodhana. Because Dhrtarastra could not be the king, his succession passed around to Pandu and when Pandu died (in young age), his son Yudhisthira was meant to become the king as he was the eldest. But, because the Pandavas were very young when their father died, they were placed under their uncle Dhrtarastra and Dhrtarastra's envious sons specially Duryodhana. Although the Pandavas were put under Dhrtarastra's care, there were many plots against them in order to kill them, immediately after Pandu's death. Duryodhana planned to give them poison, they almost died burnt in the house of lac... There were so many plots to kill the Pandavas. Finally Duryodhana arranged a gambling match with Yudhisthira and the result of it, Duryodhana with the help of his uncle Sakuni, cheated the Pandavas of their entire kingdom and sent them to exile for thirteen years. And after that they had to spend one more year incognito.

They came back after fourteen years and they asked Duryodhana and his father: "Please we want our kingdom back. We have done honestly as we have promised; we have gone into exile in the forest, for fourteen years, it was not easy..., now please return to us our kingdom." Duryodhana answered: "No!". "So please, at least give us half of the kingdom because we are ksatriyas, we need a kingdom". "No!" Again answered Duryodhana. "We are ksatriyas, we cannot be brahmanas, we cannot adopt profession of vaisyas, we cannot be sudras...at least give us five villages." "No! I cannot spare enough land even to drive a pin through!" Answered cruel Duryodhana. He was so envious of the Pandavas. So envious that by doing that it was immediately understood that it was going to be a war.

Krsna personally acted as a messenger from Yudhisthira. He is glorified because of taking this humble position on behalf of the Pandavas and the Pandavas are glorified for being so dear to Krsna that Krsna went out of His way to act as their messenger. Krsna preached to Duryodhana trying to convince him to avoid a calamity, a war. And what was Duryodhana's reaction? He tried to capture Krsna even though He was acting as a messenger. He wanted to give a lesson to the Pandavas for their proposal of a peaceful agreement. But Krsna laughed and laughed and expanded into an Universal Form..., but war was inevitable!

Yudhisthira and Duryodhana started to ask the different kings of the world to contribute to each of their side in the war.

The ksatriyas like to fight, they never refuse to combat in a war. All over the world, ksatriyas were rushing to take part in this great battle. Asking the different kings to side them, Duryodhana and Yudhisthira arrived at Krsna's door at the same time, to ask Krsna to be on their side. Krsna was resting and so each one placed himself in such a position to be seen by Krsna first so He would ask what he wanted. Duryodhana stood right by the face of Krsna just waiting for Him to open His eyes and ask Him to be on his side. Yudhisthira, being a devotee, stood by Krsna's lotus feet. And when Krsna woke up, He immediately sat right up and saw Yudhisthira, not Duryodhana. As Krsna being a relative of both of them, He didn't want to participate in the battle, but He agreed to act as an adviser personally to one party and give His own army to the other party. Yudhisthira chose to have Krsna on his side for the great satisfaction of Duryodhana who preferred to have His army.

Eventually Arjuna asked Krsna to be his chariot driver.

(Note: The number 18 fits very strongly in the all story of Mahabharata and the Vedic literature.

There are 18 chapters in the Bhagavad-gita.

There are 18 Puranas.

The battle took a total of 18 days.

18 auksauinis were present in the battlefield on both sides.)

The 18 chapters of the Bhagavad-gita are divided clearly and neatly in three different parts:

(1) The first six chapters which discuss "niskama karma" or fighting, or doing one's duty without any desires. Jnana-yoga and Astanga-yoga are also discussed.

The first six chapters are the basis and are a little complicated.

(2) The second six chapters (7-12) don't discuss karma-yoga, jnana-yoga or astanga-yoga. They discuss "bhakti-yoga". The middle six chapters are considered the 'essence' of the Bhagavad-gita.

(3) The third or last six chapters discuss jnana-yoga and they further analyse in more detail the first six chapters.

The Eighteenth Chapter is not included in the first six. It is a summary of the entire Bhagavad-gita.

Why are the "Bhakti" chapters put in the middle?

There are four reasons given by the commentators:

(1) Because bhakti is 'rahasya' it is a 'secret'. Bhakti is the purpose, the essence of all scriptures.

(2) Bhakti is one of the topics discussed in karma-yoga and jnana-yoga. And karma-yoga and jnana-yoga without bhakti they are dead. Bhakti gives life to karma and jnana. Without bhakti the others two yogas are practically useless, they will not bring any results either.

(3) Out of respect something is kept hidden. We don't want immediately take our most valuable secret truths and tell them before a stranger. When a person is a little intimate we can tell him a little secret.

(4) Because bhakti is most important, it is kept in the middle. Just like when a king is travelling with his great entourage, he has thousands of people in front of him and thousands of people behind him, all playing drums, trumpets, etc, riding in horses, elephants, etc. But the king, the most important person, is hidden in the middle.

DIVISION ONE: Chapters 1-6

A . In the first six chapters of Bhagavad-gita the knower of the body, the living entity, and the position by which he can understand the Supreme Lord are described. (13.2 Purport)

B . In the first six chapters, stress was given to devotional service: "yoginam api sarvesam..." "Of all yogis or transcendentalists, one who always thinks of Me within himself is best." (18.1 Purport)

CHAPTER ONE - "Observing the Armies on the Battlefield"

The very beginning of the Bhagavad-gita, the First Chapter, is more or less an introduction to the rest of the book. (9.1 Purport)

[A. PREPARATIONS FOR WAR (1.1-27)

(The first 27 verses of this chapter are just describing the preparations for war. After that, Arjuna's dilemma is described: why he doesn't want to fight. But these first 27 verses, although very basic, they include a lot of very interesting points made from the commentaries of Viswanath C. Thakura and Baladeva Vidyabhusana.

The first verse sets the scene...)

1 . Sanjaya informs King Dhrtarastra of Duryodhana's appraisal of the relative fighting strengths of the Pandava and Kuru Armies. Bhisma and the Kuru Army then loudly blow their conchshells giving Duryodhana joy. (1-13]

TEXT 1

dhrtarastra uvaca
dharma-ksetre kuru-ksetre
samaveta yuyutsavah
mamakah pandavas caiva
kim akurvata sanjaya

dhrtarastrah uvaca--King Dhrtarastra said; dharma-ksetre--in the place of pilgrimage; kuru-ksetre--in the place named Kuruksetra; samaveta--assembled; yuyutsavah--desiring to fight; mamakah--my party (sons); pandavah--the sons of Pandu; ca--and; eva--certainly; kim--what; akurvata--did they do; sanjaya--O Sanjaya.

TRANSLATION

Dhrtarastra said: O Sanjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pandu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kuruksetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?

(cn) Sanjaya was Dhrtarastra's secretary. After the battle had been going on for quite a few days, after Bhisma had fallen from the battlefield, Sanjaya, who was fighting in the battle, journeyed to Hastinapura to tell this news to Dhrtarastra and he start by relating what happened up to this point in the battle, and this wonderful dialogue between Krsna and Arjuna.

Srila Prabhupada explains in his Purport: "The word dharma- ksetra (a place where religious rituals are performed) is significant because, on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present on the side of Arjuna. Dhrtarastra, the father of the Kurus, was highly doubtful about the possibility of his sons' ultimate victory. In his doubt, he inquired from his secretary Sanjaya, "What did they do?" He was confident that both his sons and the sons of his younger brother Pandu were assembled in that Field of Kuruksetra for a determined engagement of the war. Still, his inquiry is significant. He did not want a compromise between the cousins and brothers, and he wanted to be sure of the

fate of his sons on the battlefield. Because the battle was arranged to be fought at Kuruksetra, which is mentioned elsewhere in the Vedas as a place of worship--even for the denizens of heaven--Dhrtarastra became very fearful about the influence of the holy place on the outcome of the battle. He knew very well that this would influence Arjuna and the sons of Pandu favorably, because by nature they were all virtuous. Sanjaya was a student of V and therefore, by the mercy of Vyasa, Sanjaya was able to envision the Battlefield of Kuruksetra even while he was in the room of Dhrtarastra. And so, Dhrtarastra asked him about the situation on the battlefield."

Because he was bad, Dhrtarastra did not want the 'good' place to put its favorable influence because that would diminish the power of his sons. Possibly his sons and the Pandavas would compromise and he didn't want that due to the influence of Dharmaksetre or Kuruksetra. And possibly the Pandavas would become stronger or possibly the Pandavas would leave the battlefield. He didn't want any of that. He wanted a battle, he wanted a war and he wanted the Pandavas annihilated. Even though he is asking in a neutral way, his consciousness is not at all neutral.

TEXT 2

sanjaya uvaca
drstva tu pandavani kam
vyudham duryodhanas tada
acaryam upasangamya
raja vacanam abravat

sanjaya uvaca--Sanjaya said; drstva--after seeing; tu--but; pandava-anikam--the soldiers of the Pandavas; vyudham--arranged in a military phalanx; duryodhanah--King Duryodhana; tada--at that time; acaryam--the teacher; upasangamya--approaching; raja--the king; vacanam--words; abravat--spoke.

TRANSLATION

Sanjaya said: O King, after looking over the army arranged in military formation by the sons of Pandu, King Duryodhana went to his teacher and spoke the following words.

(cn) Sanjaya begins to describe what Dhrtarastra's son, Duryodhana, immediately starts doing in preparations for the battle.

Duryodhana was an expert politician. Because he was worried about the battle, he began to speak to his teacher who was Dronacarya. The words in sanskrit used, are 'raja vacanam abravat'. That means he spoke 'vacana' (words). 'Abravit' means "words". And the commentators say that 'he spoke some words', he just said 'something' to get his purpose met. He wasn't speaking anything of great significance. He just spoke some words.

TEXT 3

pasyaitam pandu-putranam
acarya mahatim camum
vyudham drupada-putrena
tava sisyaena dhimata

pasya--behold; etam--this; pandu-putranam--of the sons of Pandu; acarya--O teacher; mahatim--great; camum--military force; vyudham--arranged; drupada-putrena--by the son of Drupada; tava--your; sisyaena--disciple; dhi-mata--very intelligent.

TRANSLATION

O my teacher , behold the great army of the sons of Pandu, so expertly arranged by your intelligent disciple the son of Drupada.

(cn) Duryodhana was an expert in politics and immediately says to Dronacarya that the opposing general is Dhrstadyumna, but he doesn't call by his name, rather he calls him 'drupada-putrena', the son of Drupada. Why did he call like that?

Because Dronacarya's great enemy was Drupada, and Drupada was given the benediction that his son, Dhrstadyumna, would have the ability to kill Dronacarya.

Duryodhana is saying that just to get Dronacarya fired-up.

TEXT 4

atra sura mahesv-asa
bhimarjuna-sama yudhi
yuyudhano viratas ca
drupadas ca maha-rathah

atra--here; surah--heroes; maha-isu-asah--mighty bowmen; bhima- arjuna--to Bhima and Arjuna; samah--equal; yudhi--in the fight; yuyudhanah--Yuyudhana; viratah--Virata; ca--also; drupadah--Drupada; ca--also; maha-rathah--great fighter.

TRANSLATION

Here in this army are many heroic bowmen equal in fighting to Bhima and Arjuna: great fighters like Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada.

(cn) Duryodhana mentions first Bhima because he was dangerous. Bhima was angry, he had been waiting for 15 years to kill all the Kauravas and he had taken three vows when Draupadi was insulted in the gambling match:

- (1) he said that he would kill all the 100 sons of Dhrtarastra
- (2) he said that he would break Duryodhana's thighs,
- (3) he said that he would wash Draupadi's hair with Dushashana's blood.

TEXT 5

dhrstaketuḥ ca cekitanah
kasirajas ca viryavan
purujit kuntibhojas ca
saibyas ca nara-pungavah

dhrstaketuh--Dhrstaketu; cekitanah--Cekitana; kasirajah--Kasiraja; ca--also; virya-van--very powerful; purujit--Purujit; kuntibhojah--Kuntibhoja; ca--and; saibyah--Saibya; ca--and; nara-pungavah--hero in human society.

TRANSLATION

There are also great, heroic, powerful fighters like Dhrstaketu, Cekitana, Kasiraja, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Saibya.

TEXT 6

yudhamanyus ca vikranta
uttamaujas ca viryavan
saubhadro draupadeyas ca
sarva eva maharathah

yudhamanyuh--Yudhamanyu; ca--and; vikrantah--mighty; uttamaujah--Uttamauja; ca--and; virya-van--very powerful; saubhadrah--the son of Subhadra; draupadeyah--the sons of Draupadi; ca--and; sarve--all; eva--certainly; maharathah--great chariot fighters.

TRANSLATION

There are the mighty Yudhamanyu, the very powerful Uttamauja, the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi. All these warriors are great chariot fighters

(cn) After describing the awesome might of the Pandavas, Duryodhana, being an expert politician, did not want to make Dronacharya afraid, so he started to describe his military force.

TEXT 7

asmakam tu visista ye
tan nibodha dvijottama
nayaka mama sainyasya
samjnartham tan bravimi te

asmakam--our; tu--but; visistah--especially powerful; ye--who; tan--them; nibodha--just take note of, be informed; dvija-uttama--O best of the brahmanas; nayakah--captains;

mama--my; sainyasya--of the soldiers; samjna-artham--for information; tan--them; bravimi--I am speaking; te--to you.

TRANSLATION

But for your information, O best of the brahmanas, let me tell you about the captains who are especially qualified to lead my military force.

(cn) Duryodhana is in a little bit of a difficult situation here, because he has three very heavy personalities on his side: Dronacarya, Bhishma and Karna.

Karna did not get along with Bhishma and Drona.

Bhishma was the most powerful of the warriors but he was a ksatriya, and Dronacarya was a brahmana. If Duryodhana would mention Bhishma first, Dronacarya would become very insulted and would not use all his strength in the fighting. If he mention Dronacarya first then Bhishma might feel insulted too. But since Dronacarya was a brahmana then Bhishma would accept his being mentioned first. But that would not happen if he had mentioned Karna first. Karna would be happy but the other two would be furious. So, very expertly, Duryodhana said: 'bhavan bhismas...'

TEXT 8

bhavan bhismas ca karnas ca
krpas ca samitim-jayah
asvatthama vikarnas ca
saumadattis tathai va ca

bhavan--your good self; bhismah--Grandfather Bhishma; ca--also; karnah--Karna; ca--and; krpah--Krupa; ca--and; samitim-jayah--always victorious in battle; asvatthama--Asvatthama; vikarnah--Vikarna; ca--as well as; saumadattih--the son of Somadatta; tatha--as well as; eva--certainly; ca--also.

TRANSLATION

There are personalities like you, Bhishma, Karna, Krpa, Asvatthama, Vikarna and the son of Somadatta called Bhurisava, who are always victorious in battle.

(cn) To encourage Dronacarya further, Duryodhana, mentions Krpa who is Dronacarya's brother-in-law (Drona is married with Krpi). And then Asvatthama, who is Drona's son.

Duryodhana is very, very expert in presenting things in such a way to have his ends met.

Vikarna is not in anyway as powerfull as the others, but he is the son of Dhrtarastra and he was the only one who protest against the offense to Draupadi in the assembly. Duryodhana is afraid that he may go over to the other side, so he mentions him amidst the great personalities.

TEXT 9

anye ca bahavah sura
mad-arthe tyakta-jivitaḥ
nana-sastra-praharaṇāḥ
sarve yuddha-visoḍḍāḥ

anye--others; ca--also; bahavah--in great numbers; surah--heroes; mat-arthe--for my sake; tyakta-jivitaḥ--prepared to risk life; nana--many; sastra--weapons; praharaṇāḥ--equipped with; sarve--all of them; yuddha-visoḍḍāḥ--experienced in military science.

TRANSLATION

There are many other heroes who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake. All of them are well equipped with different kinds of weapons, and all are experienced in military science.

TEXT 10

aparyaptam tad asmakam
balaṁ bhisma-abhirakṣitam
paryaptam tu idaṁ eśam
balaṁ bhima-abhirakṣitam

aparyaptam--immeasurable; tat--that; asmakam--of ours; balaṁ--strength; bhisma--by Grandfather Bhishma; abhirakṣitam--perfectly protected; paryaptam--limited; tu--but; idaṁ--all this; eśam--of the Pandavas; balaṁ--strength; bhima--by Bhima; abhirakṣitam--carefully protected.

TRANSLATION

Our strength is immeasurable, and we are perfectly protected by Grandfather Bhishma, whereas the strength of the Pandavas, carefully protected by Bhima, is limited.

(cn) Duryodhana has to make Bhishma feel very important. Bhishma's favorite students are the Pandavas.

In this verse the word 'aparyaptam' has two different meanings. According to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana, it means 'immeasurable'. Because they are

protected by Bhishma, their strength is immeasurable. When Bhishma hears that he becomes encouraged to fight stronger.

But Viswanatha C. Thakura translates the word as 'insufficient', meaning that because Bhishma had great affection for the Pandavas, his being the protector of the Kauravas army, would be insufficient. That made Dronacarya feel important and very much needed to secure the victory for Duryodhana.

Thus, by using this subtle word, Dronacarya could fire-up, both great personalities.

On the other side, Srila Madvacarya, didn't like the statement that the protection given by Bhima is limited. He was an incarnation of Vayu as Bhima.

TEXT 11

ayanesu ca sarvesu
yatha-bhagam avasthitah
bhismam evabhiraksantu
bhavantah sarva eva hi

ayanesu--in the strategic points; ca--also; sarvesu--everywhere; yatha-bhagam--as differently arranged; avasthitah--situated; bhismam--unto Grandfather Bhishma; eva--certainly; abhiraksantu--should give support; bhavantah--you; sarve--all respectively; eva hi--certainly.

TRANSLATION

All of you must now give full support to Grandfather Bhishma, as you stand at your respective strategic points of entrance into the phalanx of the army.

(cn) Duryodhana here indicates very clearly that the victory depends very much on the presence of Bhishma. And also as an expert diplomat he is showing that the support of the all army is very, very important.

TEXT 12

tasya sanjanayan harsam
kuru-vrddhah pitamahah
simha-nadam vinadyoccai h
sankham dadhmau pratapavan

tasya--his; sanjanayan--increasing; harsam--cheerfulness; kuru- vrddhah--the grandsire of the Kuru dynasty (Bhishma); pitamahah--the grandfather; simha-nadam--roaring sound, like that of a lion; vinadya--vibrating; uccai h--very loudly; sankham--conchshell; dadhmau--blew; pratapa-van--the valiant.

TRANSLATION

Then Bhisma, the great valiant grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, the grandfather of the fighters, blew his conchshell very loudly, making a sound like the roar of a lion, giving Duryodhana joy.

(cn) Duryodhana shows his expertise in firing-up Bhisma, and Bhisma is responding by blowing the conchshell and get ready for the fight.

Here is shown one of the various symbolisms that indicate the side of the victorious - the conchshell blown by Bhisma. It indicates indirectly that the sons of Dhrtarastra have no chance of victory, because the conchshell is the symbol of Visnu or Krsna. Bhisma would do his best but the victory was not guaranteed at all.

TEXT 13

tatah sankhas ca bheryas ca
panavanaka-gomukhah
sahasai vabhyahanyanta
sa sabdas tumulo 'bhavat

tatah--thereafter; sankhah--conchshells; ca--also; bheryah--large drums; ca--and; panava-anaka--small drums and kettledrums; gomukhah--horns; sahasa--all of a su eva--certainly; abhyahanyanta--were simultaneously sou sah--that; sabdah--combined sound; tumulah--tumultuous; abhavat--became.

TRANSLATION

After that, the conchshells, drums, bugles, trumpets and horns were all suddenly sounded, and the combined sound wastumultuous.

[2 . On the other side, the blowing of Krsna and Arjuna's transcendental conchshells, as well as the blowing of the conchshells of the other members of the Pandava Army, shatters the heart of Duryodhana. (14-19)]

TEXT 14

tatah svetair hayair yukte
mahati syandane sthitau
madhavah pandavas caiva
divyau sankhau pradadhmatuh

tatah--thereafter; svetaih--with white; hayaih--horses; yukte--being yoked; mahati--in a great; syandane--chariot; sthitau--situated; madhavah--Krsna (the husband of the goddess of fortune); pandavah--Arjuna (the son of Pandu); ca--also; eva--certainly; divyau--transcendental; sankhau--conchshells; pradadhmatuh--sounded.

TRANSLATION

On the other side, both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, stationed on a great chariot drawn by white horses, sounded their transcendental conchshells.

(cn) Here are a few more symbols indicating the Pandavas' victory:

Kṛṣṇa is on their side.

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna's conchshells are called 'divyau', transcendental.

Where Kṛṣṇa is present there is also Lakṣmīdevī, the goddess of fortune.

TEXT 15

pancajanyaṃ hrīṣīkeśo
devadattam dhananjayah
paundram dadhmau maha-sankham
bhīma-karma vrkodarah

pancajanyaṃ--the conchshell named Pancajanya; hrīṣīka-īśah--Hrīṣīkeśa (Kṛṣṇa, the Lord who directs the senses of the devotees); devadattam--the conchshell named Devadatta; dhanam-jayah--Dhananjaya (Arjuna, the winner of wealth); paundram--the conch named Paundra; dadhmau--blew; maha-sankham--the terrific conchshell; bhīma-karma--one who performs herculean tasks; vrka-udarah--the voracious eater (Bhīma).

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa blew His conchshell, called Pancajanya; Arjuna blew his, the Devadatta; and Bhīma, the voracious eater and performer of herculean tasks, blew his terrific conchshell, called Paundra.

(cn/DS) Here the name used for Kṛṣṇa is 'Hrīṣīkeśa' which means 'the Lord directs the senses of the living entities'. This is a very significant name for Kṛṣṇa, which also indicates His victory because one only succeeds in anything by the use of the senses.

Kṛṣṇa was sitting there as the 'controller of the senses'. And when the devotee surrenders to Kṛṣṇa, He personally directs his senses. Arjuna was not there on his own prowess.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says in his Purport: "Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Hrīṣīkeśa in this verse because He is the owner of all senses. The living entities are part and parcel of Him, and therefore the senses of the living entities are also part and parcel of His senses. The impersonalists cannot account for the senses of the living entities, and therefore they are always anxious to describe all living entities as sense-less, or impersonal. The Lord, situated in the hearts of all living entities, directs their senses. But He directs in terms of the surrender of the living entity, and in the case of a pure devotee He directly controls the senses. Here on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra the Lord directly controls the transcendental senses of Arjuna, and thus His particular name of Hrīṣīkeśa. The Lord has different names according to His different activities. For example, His name is Madhusudana because He killed the demon of the name Madhu; His name is Govinda because He gives pleasure to the cows and to the senses; His name is Vasudeva because He appeared as the son of Vasudeva; His name is Devakī-nandana because He accepted Devakī as His mother; His name is Yaśoda-nandana because He awarded His childhood pastimes to Yaśoda at Vṛndāvana; His

name is Partha-sarathi because He worked as charioteer of His friend Arjuna. Similarly, His name is Hrsikesa because He gave direction to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra.

Arjuna is referred to as Dhananjaya in this verse because he helped his elder brother in fetching wealth when it was required by the king to make expenditures for different sacrifices. Similarly, Bhima is known as Vrkodara because he could eat as voraciously as he could perform herculean tasks, such as killing the demon Hidimba. So the particular types of conchshell blown by the different personalities on the side of the Pandavas, beginning with the Lord's, were all encouraging to the fighting soldiers. On the other side there were no such credits, nor the presence of Lord Krsna, the supreme director, nor that of the goddess of fortune. So they were predestined to lose the battle--and that was the message announced by the sounds of the conchshells."

The sound of the conchshells announced the defeat of Dhrtarastra's sons since so many signs of victory were on the side of the Pandavas.

TEXT 16-18

anantavijayam raja
kunti-putro yudhisthirah
nakulah sahadevas ca
sughosa-manipuspakau

kasyas ca paramesv-asah
sikhandi ca maha-rathah
dhrstadyumno viratas ca
satyakis caparajitah

drupado draupadeyas ca
sarvasah prthivi-pate
saubhadras ca maha-bahuh
sankhan dadhmuh prthak prthak

ananta-vijayam--the conch named Ananta-vijaya; raja--the king; kunti-putrah--the son of Kunti; yudhisthirah--Yudhisthira; nakulah--Nakula; sahadevah--Sahadeva; ca--and; sughosa-mani-puspakau--the conches named Sughosa and Manipuspaka; kasyah--the King of Kasi (Varanasi); ca--and; parama-isu-asah--the great archer; sikhandi--Sikhandi; ca--also; maha-rathah--one who can fight alone against thousands; dhrstadyumnah--Dhrstadyumna (the son of King Drupada); viratah--Virata (the prince who gave shelter to the Pandavas while they were in disguise); ca--also; satyaki--Satyaki (the same as Yuyudhana, the charioteer of Lord Krsna); ca--and; aparajitah--who had never been vanquished; drupadah--Drupada, the King of Pancala; draupadeyah--the sons of Draupadi; ca--also; sarvasah- prthivi- pate--O King; saubhadrah--Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra; ca--also; maha-bahuh--mighty-armed; sankhan--conchshells; dadhmuh--blew; prthak prthak--separately.

TRANSLATION

King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew his conchshell, the Ananta-vijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva blew the Sughosa and Manipuspaka. That great archer the King of Kasi, the great fighter Sikhandi, Dhrtadyumna, Virata, the unconquerable Satyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and the others, O King, such as the mighty-armed son of Subhadra, all blew their respective conchshells.

(cn/DS) All these conchshells had very significant importance. Only all these warriors whose conchshells had names, survived the battlefield. Except the unconquerable Satyaki who also survived.

TEXT 19

sa ghoso dhartarastranam
hrdayani vyadarayat
nabhas ca prthivim caiva
tumulo 'bhyanunadayan

sah--that; ghosah--vibration; dhartarastranam--of the sons of Dhrtarastra; hrdayani--hearts; vyadarayat--shattered; nabhas--the sky; ca--also; prthivim--the surface of the earth; ca--also; eva--certainly; tumulah--uproarious; abhyanunadayan--resounding.

TRANSLATION

The blowing of these different conchshells became uproarious. Vibrating both in the sky and on the earth, it shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhrtarastra.

(cn/DS) The Pandavas had confidence on the presence of Lord Krsna and that cause fear to the heart of Dhrtarastra's sons.

This is just setting the scene for the philosophy to be spoken. A very important philosophical point comes out:- the devotee due to his confidence in Lord Krsna is never fearful.

[3 . Arjuna then requested Krsna to draw his chariot between the two armies to observe the Kurus. Arjuna sees many relatives and well-wishers on both sides. (20-27)]

TEXT 20

atha vyavasthitan drstva
dhartarastran kapi-dhvajah
pravrtte sastra-sampate
dhanur udyamya pandavah
hrikesam tada vakyam
idam aha mahi-pate

atha--thereupon; vyavasthitan--situated; drstva--looking upon; dhartarastran--the sons of Dhrtarastra; kapi-dhvajah--he whose flag was marked with Hanuman; pravrtte--while about to engage; sastra-sampate--in releasing his arrows; dhanuh--bow; udyamya--taking up; pandavah--the son of Pandu (Arjuna); hrsikesam--unto Lord Krsna; tada--at that time; vakyam--words; idam--these; aha--said; mahi-pate--O King.

TRANSLATION

At that time Arjuna, the son of Pandu, seated in the chariot bearing the flag marked with Hanuman, took up his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows. O King, after looking at the sons of Dhrtarastra drawn in military array, Arjuna then spoke to Lord Krsna these words.

(cn/DS) The same points are mentioned again, indicating the Pandavas' victory:

- The name Hrsikesa for Krsna,
- Hanuman is in the flag of Arjuna's chariot,
- Krsna also means Rama - where is Rama, there is Sita, the goddess of fortune.
- "And above all, the Lord of the senses, Lord Krsna, was personally present to give him (Arjuna) direction. Thus, all good counsel was available to Arjuna in the matter of executing the battle. In such auspicious conditions, arranged by the Lord for His eternal devotee, lay the signs of assured victory."

TEXT 21-22

arjuna uvaca
senayor ubhayor madhye
ratham sthapaya me 'cyuta
yavad etan nirikse 'ham
yoddhu-kaman avasthitan
kair maya saha yoddhavyam
asmin rana-samudyame

arjunah uvaca--Arjuna said; senayoh--of the armies; ubhayoh--both; madhye--between; ratham--the chariot; sthapaya--please keep; me--my; acyuta--O infallible one; yavat--as long as; etan--all these; nirikse--may look upon; aham--I; yoddhu-kaman--desiring to fight; avasthitan--arrayed on the battlefield; kaih--with whom; maya--by me; saha--together; yoddhavyam--have to fight; asmin--in this; rana--strife; samudyame--in the attempt.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies so that I may see those present here, who desire to fight, and with whom I must contend in this great trial of arms.

(cn/DS) This is a sign that something wrong is going to happen. And this verse is the first time when our attention is drawn to Lord Krsna - the Supreme Personality of Godhead, so intimate with His devotee that even takes the subordinate position.

TEXT 23

yotsyamanan avekse 'ham
ya ete 'tra samagatah
dhartarastrasya durbuddher
yuddhe priya-cikirsavah

yotsyamanan--those who will be fighting; avekse--let me see; aham--I; ye--who; ete--those; atra--here; samagatah--assembled; dhartarastrasya--for the son of Dhrtarastra; durbuddheh--evil-minded; yuddhe--in the fight; priya--well; cikirsavah--wishing.

TRANSLATION

Let me see those who have come here to fight, wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhrtarastra.

(cn/DS) 'Birds of the same feather flock together.'

TEXT 24

sanjaya uvaca
evam ukto hrsikeso
gudakesena bharata
senayor ubhayor madhye
sthapayitva rathottamam

sanjaya uvaca--Sanjaya said; evam--thus; uktah--addressed; hrsikesah--Lord Krsna; gudakesena--by Arjuna; bharata--O descendant of Bharata; senayoh--of the armies; ubhayoh--both; madhye--in the midst; sthapayitva--placing; ratha-uttamam--the finest chariot.

TRANSLATION

Sanjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, having thus been addressed by Arjuna, Lord Krsna drew up the fine chariot in the midst of the armies of both parties.

(cn/DS) Another symbol is shown here: Arjuna's name is Gudakesa, the conquerer of sleep or ignorance. This shows that his next show of ignorance will soon be conquered by Krsna the Master of the senses.

TEXT 25

bhisma-drona-pramukhatah
sarvesam ca mahi-ksitam
uvaca partha pasyaitan
samavetan kurun iti

bhisma--Grandfather Bhisma; drona--the teacher Drona; pramukhatah--in front of;
sarvesam--all; ca--also; mahi-ksitam--chiefs of the world; uvaca--said; partha--O son of
Prtha; pasya--just behold; etan--all of them; samavetan--assembled; kurun--the members of
the Kuru dynasty; iti--thus.

TRANSLATION

In the presence of Bhisma, Drona and all the other chieftains of the world, the Lord said, Just behold, Partha, all the Kurus assembled here.

(cn/DS) Krsna predicted that Arjuna would be in distress now, and in fact He wanted Arjuna to be in distress so the Bhagavad-gita could be spoken.

Obeying the order of Arjuna to drive the chariot amidst both armies, Krsna brought the chariot right in front of Bhisma and Drona (Bhisma-drona-pramukhatah. 'Pramukhatah' means 'right in the face!'), his grandfather and his guru. Krsna put Arjuna in front of those to whom he was the most attached.

TEXT 26

tatrapasyat sthitan parthah
pitrn atha pitamahan
acaryan matulan bhratr
putran pautran sakhims tatha
svasuran suhrdas caiva
senayor ubhayor api

tatra--there; apasyat--he could see; sthitan--standing; parthah--Arjuna; pitrn--fathers;
atha--also; pitamahan--grandfathers; acaryan--teachers; matulan--maternal uncles;
bhratr--brothers; putran--sons; pautran--grandsons; sakhin--friends; tatha--too;
svasuran--fathers-in-law; suhrdah--well-wishers; ca--also; eva--certainly; senayoh--of the
armies; ubhayoh--of both parties; api--including.

TRANSLATION

There Arjuna could see, within the midst of the armies of both parties, his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, and also his fathers-in-law and well-wishers.

(cn/DS) REVIEW:

The opening scenes of the battle of Kuruksetra were described and how Sanjaya was describing to Dhrtarastra what was happening in the battlefield, and first we see Duryodhana going to Dronacarya and describing the armies of the opposing side. And then, he describes his own army and Bhismadeva who is there, the valliant grandsire of both sides, blows his conchshell. After that Krsna, Arjuna and the other Pandavas and the other worriers on their side, they also blow their conchshells. And the sound of the transcendental conchshell of Krsna shatters the hearts of Dhrtarastra's sons.

Then Arjuna after picking up his bow and arrows and just as he is prepared to fight, he asks Krsna to drive the chariot in the midst of both the armies.

And Krsna, the Supreme Lord, He drives that chariot directly in front of Bhisma and Drona. And when Arjuna sees these two great warriors, his grandfather who protected him since he was a young boy and his martial-arts' teacher, his heart becomes overflowed with compassion. He looses in this way, his desire to fight. He sees just before him, his brothers, his uncles, his friends, etc, and seeing his kinsmen, he looses completely his desire to take part in this ghastly warfare. And yet, while Arjuna is feeling like this, both armies are still lined-up just ready to begin the trial of arms.

TEXT 27

tan samiksyā sa kaunteyaḥ
sarvaṁ bandhūn avasthitaṁ

krpaya parayavisto
visidann idam abravīt

tan--all of them; samiksyā--after seeing; sah--he; kaunteyaḥ--the son of Kunti; sarvaṁ--all kinds of; bandhūn--relatives; avasthitaṁ--situated; krpaya--by compass paraya--of a high grade; avistah--overwhelmed; visidan--while lamenting; idam--thus; abravīt--spoke.

TRANSLATION

When the son of Kunti, Arjuna, saw all these different grades of friends and relatives, he became overwhelmed with compassion and spoke thus.

[B . ARJUNA'S DILEMA (1. 28-46)

Arjuna's mind reels thinking how this battle will finish his family and its traditions. He sees great sinful reaction awaiting him for killing his family members. Feeling it better to be killed unarmed than fight, Arjuna, his mind overwhelmed with grief, cast aside his bow and sits down on upon his chariot.]

TEXT 28

arjuna uvāca
drstvemam sva-jānam kṛṣṇa

yuyutsum samupasthitam
sidanti mama gatrani
mukham ca parisusyati

arjunah uvaca--Arjuna said; drstva--after seeing; imam--all these; sva janam--kinsmen; krsna--O Krsna; yuyutsum--all in a fighting spirit; samupasthitam--present; sidanti--are quivering; mama--my; gatrani--limbs of the body; mukham--mouth; ca--also; parisusyati--is drying up.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: My dear Krsna, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up.

(cn/DS) These were people that he grew up with. Naturally so much affection, was in his heart, for all these people - and there they were, to keep the kingdom for themselves, they wanted to fight and kill. But would Arjuna, such a softhearted devotee, wanted to do such a foolish thing? To kill so many, to commit unlimited sins, just to get a kingdom?

TEXT 29

vepathus ca sarire me
roma-harsas ca jayate

gandivam srmsate hastat
tvak caiva paridahyate

vepathuh--trembling of the body; ca--also; sarire--on the body; me--my; roma-harsah--standing of hair on end; ca--also; jayate--is taking place; gandivam--the bow of Arjuna; srmsate--is slipping; hastat--from the hand; tvak--skin; ca--also; eva--certainly; paridahyate--is burning.

TRANSLATION

My whole body is trembling, my hair is standing on end, my bow Gandiva is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning.

TEXT 30

na ca saknomy avasthatum
bhramativa ca me manah
nimittani ca pasyami
viparitani kesava

na--nor; ca--also; saknami--am I able; avasthatum--to stay; bhramati--forgetting; iva--as; ca--and; me--my; manah--mind; nimittani--causes; ca--also; pasyami--I see; viparitani--just the opposite; kesava--O killer of the demon Kesi (Krsna).

TRANSLATION

I am now unable to stand here any longer. I am forgetting myself, and my mind is reeling. I see only causes of misfortune, O Krsna, killer of the Kesi demon.

(cn/DS) In his Purport, Srila Prabhupada summarizes for all practical purposes, the all purpose of the Bhagavad-gita and what Arjuna's trouble is: "Arjuna envisioned only painful reverses in the battlefield--he would not be happy even by gaining victory over the foe. The words nimittani viparitani are significant. When a man sees only frustration in his expectations, he thinks, "Why am I here?" Everyone is interested in himself and his own welfare. No one is interested in the Supreme Self. Arjuna is showing ignorance of his real self-interest by Krsna's will. One's real self-interest lies in Visnu, or Krsna. 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."

The word 'nimittani' means 'the causes'. And 'viparitani' means 'the opposite'. These words are significant in this verse, Srila Prabhupada explains, because "the causes of what I want to happen, just the opposite is going to happen, if I fight in this battle", Arjuna is thinking. "I want happiness, I want to regain the kingdom, I want these type of pleasures, to fight with Duryodhana... but just the opposite of the actual res are going to come from my fighting. How can I be inspired to fight if just misery is going to come?"

Arjuna was examining the results of this battle just from the point of view of how it is going to affect him and with his great intelligence he saw that the effects were going to be just the opposite of what he desires. Therefore he is extremely up-set and don't want to fight at all.

Now Arjuna is thinking: "If I fight in this battle, I've practically been empowered by Krsna, I am going to survive and all this people is going to die. How strange it is that their death is going to bring them to the heavenly planets and for me, who is not going to die, what is going to happen? I will be responsible for killing this people, getting unlimited sin and no good is going to come to me. I will not even go to the heavenly planets like the people that I am going to kill."

We may say: "Even if Arjuna doesn't go to heaven at least he will gain the kingdom." But Arjuna doesn't agree that it is worth of it. Thus he says:

TEXT 31

na ca sreya 'nupasyami
hatva sva-janam ahave
na kankse vijayam krsna
na ca rajyam sukhani ca

na--nor; ca--also; sreyah--good; anupasyami--do I foresee; hatva--by killing; svajanam--own kinsmen; ahave--in the fight; na--nor; kankse--do I desire; vijayam--victory; krsna--O Krsna; na--nor; ca--also; rajyam--kingdom; sukhani--happiness thereof; ca--also.

TRANSLATION

I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle, nor can I, my dear Krsna, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom, or happiness.

(cn/DS) He is seeing that the people that he may kill in this battle will cause him so much misery to his own life, after their death, that will be any sense or point of enjoying the kingdom. "There is no happiness awaiting for me. I am going to be alive and miserable!"

It is also interesting to note that in this verse, Arjuna, uses the word 'Krsna'. Krsna means the 'all-attractive', and one way of looking the 'all-attractive' is: "because He is so-attractive everyone is coming towards Him. Whichever Krsna does, whichever Krsna moves, He is pulling everyone towards Him. So, in this way Arjuna is using the name Krsna, showing that Krsna is actually the One pulling him around in this battlefield and therefore there is Krsna's purpose to be served by the actual battle.

TEXT 32-35

kim no rajyena govinda
kim bhogair jivitena va
yesam arthe kanksitam no
rajyam bhogah sukhani ca

ta ime 'vasthita yuddhe
pranams tyaktva dhanani ca
acaryah pitarah putras
tathaiva ca pitamahah

matulah svasurah pautrah
syalah sambandhi nas tatha
etan na hantum icchami
ghnato 'pi madhusudana

api trailokya-rajyasya
hetoh kim nu mahi-krte
nihatya dhartarastran nah
ka pritihsyaj janardana

kim--what use; nah--to us; rajyena--is the kingdom; govinda--O Krsna; kim--what; bhogaih--enjoyment; jivitena--living; va--either; yesam--of whom; arthe--for the sake; kanksitam--is desired; nah--by us; rajyam--kingdom; bhogah--material enjoyment; sukhani--all happiness; ca--also; te--all of them; ime--these; avasthitah--situated; yuddhe--on this battlefield; pranah--lives; tyaktva--giving up; dhanani--riches; ca--also; acaryah--teachers; pitarah--fathers; putrah--sons; tatha--as well as; eva--certainly; ca--also; pitamahah--grandfather matulah--maternal uncles; svasurah--fathers-in-law; putrah--grandsons; syalah--brothers-in-law; sambandhinah--relatives; tatha--as well as; etah--all these; na--never; hantum--to kill; icchami--do I wish; ghnatah--being killed; api--even; madhusudana--O killer of the demon Madhu (Krsna); api--even if; trai-lokyah--of the three worlds; rajyasya--for the kingdom; hetoh--in exchange; kim nu--what to speak of; mahi-krte--for the sake of the earth; nihatyah--by killing; dhartarastran--the sons of Dhrtarastra; nah--our; ka--what; priti--pleasure; syat--will there be; janarda maintainer of all living entities.

TRANSLATION

O Govinda, of what avail to us are a kingdom, happiness or even life itself when all those for whom we may desire them are now arrayed on this battlefield? O Madhusudana, when teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives are ready to give up their lives and properties and are standing before me, why should I wish to kill them, even though they might otherwise kill me? O maintainer of all living entities, I am not prepared to fight with them even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone this earth. What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhrtarastra?

(cn/DS) Arjuna is calling Krsna 'the maintainer of all living entities' because "how is that, Krsna, You whose business is to maintain everyone, is desiring this fight that is going to cause the death of everyone?"

Arjuna is also calling Krsna, 'Janardana' (Jana= persons + dana= killer), to tell Him: "You are the killer of all people, why don't You do the killing on this battlefield, and I just seat on the chariot, in that way I will not become involved in all this sinful reactions."

Arjuna is actually detached. He is not thinking: "Let me get the kingdom! Let me get unlimited power, let me get unlimited wealth!" Rather he is saying: "I am not prepared to fight even though these people are war-like, they want to fight. I am not prepared, it is not worthy. Better that I think of You than think of the wealth that I am going to gain by gaining the kingdom. It is not worthy. What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhrtarastra?"

The Pandavas, after this great battle, they stayed in power only for 37 years. If one kills millions of people for putting himself in power and as a result of that killing gets millions and millions of years of suffering in hell (because of the reactions), is that worthy for 30 or 40 years of being a king?

So, Arjuna's conclusion, knowing the philosophy that this type of wealth, this type of enjoyment that overlooks future sin, it is not worthy. "Please Krsna, O Janardana, You do the killing, I will just seat here!"

TEXT 36

papam evasrayed asman
hatvaitan atatayinah
tasman narha vayam hantum
dhartarastran sa-bandhavan
sva-janam hi katham hatva
sukhinah syama madhava

papam--vices; eva--certainly; asrayet--must come upon; asman--us; hatva--by killing; etan--all these; atatayinah--aggressors; tasmāt--therefore; na--never; arhah--deserving; vayam--we; hantum--to kill; dhartarastran sons of Dhrtarastra; sa-bandhavan--along with fri sva-janam--kinsmen; hi--certainly; katham--how; hatva--by killing; sukhinah--happy; svama--will we become; madhava--O Krsna, husband of the goddess of fortune.

TRANSLATION

Sin will overcome us if we slay such aggressors. Therefore it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhrtarastra and our friends. What should we gain, O Krsna, husband of the goddess of fortune, and how could we be happy by killing our own kinsmen?

(cn/DS) Arjuna says specifically "sin will overcome us if we kill such aggressors". But Srila Prabhupada explains in his Purport that according to the Vedic injunctions (artha-sastra), the aggressors are allowed to be killed and there is no sin for killing them.

There are six types of aggressors. Each one of them are mentioned: (1) a poison giver, (2) one who sets fire to the house, (3) one who attacks with deadly weapons, (4) one who plunders riches, (5) one who occupies another's land and (6) one who kidnaps another's wife.

Each and everyone of these acts of aggression were committed by the Kauravas on the Pandavas:

- (1) They gave a poison cake to Bhima;
- (2) They set fire to the house of the Pandavas after kindly inviting them to live in that new mansion specially built for them;
- (3) While the Pandavas were in exile, in the forest, the Kauravas attacked them with deadly weapons;
- (4) They were right now occupying the Pandavas' land;
- (5) Draupadi was kidnapped by those aggressors;
- (6) All their riches were taken away by means of treachery.

So, they could be killed according to 'artha-sastra', but Arjuna is saying "sin will overcome us by this type of killing". Why?

Because though according to 'artha-sastra', diplomacy and war, it is alright to do this, according to 'dharma-sastra', which is an higher principle, it is not proper, in any case, to kill one's friends and relatives. They should be forgiven or sin will overcome us.

TEXT 37-38

yady apy ete na pasyanti
lobhopahata-cetasah
kula-ksaya-krtam dosam
mitra-drohe ca patakam

katham na jneyam asmabhih
papad asman nivartitum
kula-ksaya-krtam dosam
prapasyadbhir janardana

yadi--if; api--even; ete--they; na--do not; pasyanti--see; lobha--by greed; upahata--overpowered; cetasah--their hearts; kula-ksaya--in killing the family; krtam--done; dosam--fault; mitra-drohe--in quarreling with friends; ca--also; patakam--sinful reactions; katham--why; na--should not; jneyam--be known; asmabhih--by us; papad--from sins; asmat--these; nivartitum--to cease; kula-ksaya--in the destruction of a dynasty; krtam--done; dosam--crime; prapasyadbhir--by those who can see; janardana--O Krsna.

TRANSLATION

O Janardana, although these men, their hearts overtaken by greed, see no fault in killing one's family or quarreling with friends, why should we, who can see the crime in destroying a family, engage in these acts of sin?

(cn/DS) To be king of the world is a job for 'mahabhagavats' not for ordinary devotees. The Pandavas had such a high karma to be born in such a powerful family able to govern all the world.

Many times Krsna addressed Arjuna 'O prthal"', remarking his high lineage. "This is your family heritage, how can you not fight?"

This was the mood of the ksatriyas, they were proud of their families. They would uphold their family tradition. And if this family tradition was destroyed, then practically, because all the rest of the population was dependent on the kings, the rest of the population would be in trouble. And the sacrifices that the elders of the family would perform for the benefit of the forefathers and the future generations which practically the future of the world, these would stop. Therefore Arjuna is saying that too much bad is going to come.

TEXT 39

kula-ksaye pranasanti
kula-dharmah sanatanah
dharme naste kulam krtam
adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta

kula-ksaye--in destroying the family; pranasanti--become vanquished; kula-dharmah--the family traditions; sanatanah--eternal; dharme--religion; naste--being destroyed;

kulam--family; krtsnam--whole; adharmah--irreligion; abhibhavati--transforms; uta--it is said.

TRANSLATION

With the destruction of dynasty, the eternal family tradition is vanquished, and thus the rest of the family becomes involved in irreligion.

(cn/DS) If Arjuna would kill his grandfather Bhisma and his teacher Drona, then the women would say that Arjuna and the other menfolk are engaged in irreligious acts so they also could do it. And then,

TEXT 40

adharmabhibhavat krsna
pradusyanti kula-striyah
strisu dustasu varsneya
jayate varna-sankarah

adharmah--irreligion; abhibhavat--having become predominant; krsna--O Krsna; pradusyanti--become polluted; kula-striyah--family ladies; strisu--by the womanhood; dustasu--being so polluted; varsneya--O descendant of Vrsni; jayate--comes into being; varna-sankarah--unwanted progeny.

TRANSLATION

When irreligion is prominent in the family, O Krsna, the women of the family become polluted, and from the degradation of womanhood, O descendant of Vrsni, comes unwanted progeny.

TEXT 41

sankaro narakayaiva
kula-ghnanam kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy esam
lupta-pindodaka-kriyah

sankarah--such unwanted children; narakaya--make for hellish life; eva--certainly; kula-ghnanam--for those who are killers of the family; kulasya--for the family; ca--also; patanti--fall down; pitarah--forefathers; hi--certainly; esam--of them; lupta--stopped; pinda--of offerings of food; udaka--and water; kriyah--performances.

TRANSLATION

An increase of unwanted population certainly causes hellish life both for the family and for those who destroy the family tradition. The ancestors of such corrupt families fall down, because the performances for offering them food and water are entirely stopped.

(cn/DS) Even Lord Caitanya offered 'sraddha' ceremony for His father in Gaya. We can't think that this is just superficial, that we are vaisnavas, that is not important to perform these things. This is very important for the entire culture. The ancestors are dependent on these types of sacrifices to become free from all types of sufferings.

TEXT 42

dosaih etaih kula-ghnanam
varna-sankara-karakaih
utsadyante jati-dharmah
kula-dharmas ca sasvatah

dosaih--by such faults; etaih--all these; kula-ghnanam--of the destroyers of the family; varna-sankara--of unwanted children; karakaih--which are causes; utsadyante--are devastated; jati dharmah--community projects; kula-dharmah--family traditions; ca--also; sasvatah--eternal.

TRANSLATION

By the evil deeds of those who destroy the family tradition and thus give rise to unwanted children, all kinds of community projects and family welfare activities are devastated.

TEXT 43

utsanna-kula-dharmanam
manusyanam janardana
narake niyatam vaso
bhavati anususuma

utsanna--spoiled; kula-dharmanam--of those who have the family traditions; manusyanam--of such men; janardana--O Krsna; narake--in hell; niyatam--always; vasah--residence; bhavati--it so becomes; iti--thus; anususuma--I have heard by disciplic succession.

TRANSLATION

O Krsna, maintainer of the people, I have heard by disciplic succession that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell.

TEXT 44

aho bata mahat papam
kartum vyavasita vayam
yad rajya-sukha-lobhena
hantum sva-janam udyatah

aho--alas; bata--how strange it is; mahat--great; papam--sins; kartum--to perform; vyavasitah--have decided; vayam--we; yat--because; rajya-sukha-lobhena--driven by greed for royal happiness; hantum--to kill; sva-janam--kinsmen; udyatah--trying.

TRANSLATION

Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing to commit greatly sinful acts. Driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness, we are intent on killing our own kinsmen.

TEXT 45

yadi mam apratikaram
asastram sastra-panayah
dhartarastra rane hanyus
tan me ksemataram bhavet

yadi--even if; mam--me; apratikaram--without being resistant; asastram--without being fully equipped; sastra-panayah--those with weapons in hand; dhartarastrah--the sons of Dhrtarastra; rane--on the battlefield; hanyuh--may kill; tat--that; me--for me; ksema-taram--better; bhavet--would be.

TRANSLATION

Better for me if the sons of Dhrtarastra, weapons in hand, were to kill me unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield.

(cn/DS) To beg, for a ksatriya, is not part of his culture. And Arjuna is saying that is better for him to beg and suffer complete humiliation in this life then to have to kill all those kinsmen and then suffer all the reactions for all the sins that will make him suffer for thousands and thousands of years.

TEXT 46

sanjaya uvaca
evam uktvarjunah sankhye
rathopastha upavisat
visrjya sa-saram capam
soka-samvigna-manasah

sanjaya uvaca--Sanjaya said; evam--thus; uktva--saying; arjunah--Arjuna; sankhye--in the battlefield; ratha--of the chariot; upasthe--on the seat; upavisat--sat down again; visrjya--putting aside; sa-saram--along with arrows; capam--the bow; soka--by lamentation; samvigna--distressed; manasah--within the mind.

TRANSLATION

Sanjaya said: Arjuna, having thus spoken on the battlefield, cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with grief.

(cn/DS) Arjuna has put down his bow. And to understand how significant is this, he had vowed: "If anyone suggests me to put down this gandiva bow of mine, I vow I will kill him!"

Here we can understand how heavy it was for Arjuna to take part in this battle against his own kinsmen.

THUS ENDS THE STUDY OF CHAPTER ONE.