



भगवत् गीता
Bhagvad Gita
Chapter 1
Volume 5

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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अपि त्रैलोक्य राज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥	1-35
निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान् नः का प्रीतिः स्यात् जनार्दन । पापमेव आश्रयेत् अस्मान् हत्या एतान् आततायिनः ॥	1-36

Replying to the war-call of Bhishma and the Duryodana–army, the Pandava side responded as follows:

The response came, first from Sri Krishna then from Arjuna, followed by the other commanders, each separately, but one immediately following the other, in continuous succession – Reporting this event, Sanjaya says:

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः । पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥	1-15
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Sri Krishna blew the conch called Panchajanya
Then Arjuna blew the conch called Devadatta
Then Bhima blew the conch called पौण्ड्र
Then Yudishtira blew the conch called अनन्त विजय
Then Nakula blew the Conch called सुघोष
Then Sahadeva blew the conch called मणिपुष्पक
Then the King of Kasi followed by Sikandi, धृष्टद्युम्न, Virata, Satyaki, the King of Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and finally सौभद्र (Abhimanyu), blew their respective conches,

पृथक् पृथक् - each separately, in quick succession such that there appeared to be only one harmonious sound.



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

1-19

That harmonious sound (सः घोषः - please note the singular noun here – there was only one continuous sound); it was not a noise (a शब्द as it was in the case of the sound which came from the Duryodana army). That harmonious sound filled the earth and the sky with resounding reverberation which penetrated and tore the hearts of the guilty conscious Duryodanas.

Now, one can comment on these verses in many ways, giving meaning to the names of the conches used by the Pandava commanders and also on the sequence in which the Pandava commanders responded. For our purpose, no further comments on these verses are necessary except to note that the response from the Pandava side came first with the Grace of परमेश्वर – the conch sound of Sri Krishna Himself – which naturally assured the ultimate Pandava Victory.

अथ व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुः उद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥

1-20

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यं इदमाह महीपते ।

Both sides have now finally declared war on each other; there can be no going back; everyone is now obliged to get on with the war, and do whatever is one's duty at this time and place.

अथ – Then – here, the word अथ has Upanishadic meaning – when the war situation has progressed thus far, and the time has come for the Mission of the भगवत् गीता to begin – अथ – Then; thus the word अथ here is मङ्गल वचनं – Word of Auspiciousness; It has the same significance as औं.

An event of extraordinary significance is about to happen; that event is अर्जन विषाद योग; how that event happens – we will see as it happens. From the point of view of भगवत् गीता उपनिषत्, अर्जन विषाद योग is मोक्ष साधनं – and hence is an auspicious event. Sanjaya starts reporting this event by uttering the मङ्गल वचनं औं – in the form of अथ – Then... Then what?

- व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा -... महीपते ॥



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Sanjaya tells Dhritarashtra – महीपते – O! King, seeing the Duryodana army standing fully arrayed, ready for action and fighting is about to begin, Arjuna gets himself ready for action, lifts his bow in his hand, stands up in his chariot – which carries the Hanuman Flag (कपिध्वजः), and tells these words of command to Sri Krishna who is playing the role of the Driver of his chariot.

The Mission of the भगवत् गीता now begins.

अर्जुन उवाच Arjuna said

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥

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Arjuna is now in full War mood; he is in high spirits – enthusiastic and aggressive totally appropriate to his upbringing and the need of the moment; he says in a commanding voice:

अच्युत – O! Achuta – O! Krishna.

मे रथं, स्थापय – Please drive, and place my chariot (मे रथं)

सेनयोः उभयोः मध्ये – in between the two armies – what for?

यावदेतान् निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामान् अवस्थितान्
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यं अस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥

1-22

योत्स्यमानान् अवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेः युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥

1-23

Please place my chariot in such a way, यावत् एतान् निरीक्षे अहं – so that I can see clearly all those standing in front of me – योद्धुकामान् अवस्थितान् – those who are standing here desiring to fight with me.

कैः मया सह योद्धव्यं अस्मिन् रण समुद्यमे – I want to see at this time (on the eve of the battle) all the people with whom I have to fight.

Let me see them – all of them – whoever they are, who have chosen to come here to fight, to please the evil minded Duryodanas.

Arjuna has been away in the forest for the past so many years; he does not know most

of the people who have come to the battle field to fight with him. He is indeed so

amazed at the vast number of people who have chosen to fight on the side of



Duryodana. “How could Duryodana collect so many people to fight on his side? Why would these people want to fight with me? What did I do to them? Who are they anyway? - Let me see all of them – see them clearly so that I may know their strength.”

That is the mood of Arjuna at this moment.

From the point of view of भगवत् गीता – The Upanishad, this mood of Arjuna is of particular significance. If one stops to think about oneself, one will always be amazed at the tremendous strength of the negative forces in one’s own self; to realize their strength clearly is the first step in overcoming their strength, and gaining mastery over one’s own senses.

Thus Arjuna gives an order to his Driver – Sri Krishna – to move his War-Chariot in the battle field, and place it in the middle of both the forces, so that he can take a good look at all the people who have assembled there to fight with the Pandavas.

संजय उवाच
एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ 1-24
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरून् इति ॥ 1-25

Having been addressed in this manner by Arjuna, Sri Krishna moved the chariot and stationed it in between the two armies, directly in front of Bhishma, Drona, and all the great generals on both sides of the army, and then said this to Arjuna:

पार्थ – O! Arjuna

पश्य – see – see what?

एतान् समवेतान् कुरून् – all the Kauravas gathered together.

इति – That is all he said –

These are the only words spoken by Sri Krishna, in the First Chapter of the भगवत् गीता – namely, पार्थ – O! Arjuna पश्य, एतान् समवेतान् कुरून्



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See all the Kauravas gathered together.

What exactly Arjuna sees and how he reacts – we will see in a few minutes. Before that, let us take time to remember a few of the Upanishadic words we have heard in the above verses.

First about कपिद्वजः

Arjuna's War Chariot carries a Flag with the ensign of भगवान् हनुमान्. From the time of Sri Rama, Hanumanji has been the symbol of confidence, courage and success, born of spiritual strength. Whenever, and wherever one undertakes a mission of any magnitude for the good of all beings, one invokes the Grace of भगवान् हनुमान् in the following words:

मनोजवं मारुत तल्यवेगं, जितेन्द्रियं बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठं ।
वातात्मजं वानर यूथ मुख्यं, श्री राम दूतं शिरसा नमामि ।
श्री राम दूतं, शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ श्री राम दूतं, नमो नमस्ते ॥

Such invocation is auspicious beginning for any human endeavour.

Now about हृषीकेश and अच्युत

Arjuna addresses Sri Krishna as हृषीकेश and अच्युत; we also worship परमेश्वर in the names of हृषीकेश and अच्युत - ओं हृषीकेशाय नमः - ओं अच्युताय नमः

हृषीकेश literally means ONE who has mastery over one's senses – organs of perception and action; in the Upanishad हृषीकेश means much more than control of one's senses. It means exactly what is indicated by the famous verse in केनोपनिषत् – namely:

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं, मनसो मनो, यद् वाचो ह वाचं, स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः, चक्षुषश्चक्षुः That ONE Supreme Being who is simultaneously the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Word of the word, the प्राण of the प्राण, the Eye of the eye, and, in short, the ONE who is all – which is सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. अच्युत means the one who has never fallen from the realization of one's true nature - which is indicated by the three words अच्युत, अनन्त and गोविन्द - ओं अच्युताय नमः, ओं अनन्ताय नमः, ओं गोविन्दाय नमः- with which we start all our Vedic rituals. Finally, let us recall again the only words Sri Krishna spoke in this chapter: namely, पार्थ – O! Arjuna,

पश्य, एतान् समवेतान् कुरुन् See all the Kauravas gathered here.



Now who is a कौरव - The one who is the result of a कर्म is a कौरव; in the context here, कौरव includes everybody in the battlefield in both the armies. Indeed, every one of us is a कौरव. I am just an assembly of all my past कर्मs which have matured into an integrated effect – which is what, I usually call as, “myself.” The whole purpose of Upanishadic Teaching is only to help me see the true nature of myself. That is the meaning of पश्य – See.

This seeing has different levels:

At the initial level, one sees only the gross cause–effect results: and as one progresses spiritually, at the final level, one sees the cause of all causes, and one realizes the Eternal Fact that:

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं ।
पूर्णं अदः, पूर्णं इदं ।
पूर्णात् पूर्णं उदच्यते ।

It is this progress in seeing with which we are concerned in The भगवत् गीता; How this progress is accomplished, we will see as we go along.

Now let us return to Gita – text.

Sri Krishna moves the chariot, and stations it, between the two armies, directly in front of Bhishma, Drona, and all the great Generals on both sides of the army and tells Arjuna:

पार्थ, पश्य, एतान् समवेतान् कुरून् - O! Arjuna, See, all the Kauravas gathered together.

That is the scene, we are in now. What Arjuna sees, and how he reacts – that is what is being reported now by Sanjaya.

Sanjaya says:

त्रापश्यत् स्थितान् पार्थः पितृन् अथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान् मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखीन् तथा ॥ 1-26

श्वशुरान् सुहृदः चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।
तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धून् अवस्थितान् ॥ 1-27

कृपया परयाऽऽविष्टो, विषीदन् इदं अब्रवीत् ।



There, in the rank and file of the armies, Arjuna saw पितृन् – paternal uncles, पितामहान् – grandfathers, grand uncles, आचार्यान् – Teachers, मातुलान् – maternal uncles, भ्रातृन् – brothers and cousins, पुत्रान् – sons, पौत्रान् – grandsons, श्वसुरान् – inlaws, सुहृदः - very many good people all dedicated to धर्म – they are all standing there ready to fight with no shadow of hesitation on their faces. Seeing all these relatives and friends arrayed for battle in both the armies, Arjuna was overwhelmed by deep compassion for all of them (कृपया परया आविष्टः), and that brought him to a state of विषीदन् – extraordinary sadness.

Thus all of a sudden, a crisis has landed in the mind of Arjuna. He has become the victim of the bonds of relationships, forcing an apparent change in attitude towards his impending duties. Overcome by such sadness, Arjuna tells Sri Krishna:

अर्जुन उवाच दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥	1-28
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति । वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥	1-29
गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात् त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते । न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥	1-30
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव । न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥	1-31

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण – O! Krishna, seeing all this स्वजनं my own people
युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् – who have all come here well prepared, eager to fight – seeing all this
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि – all my limbs in my body are shaking,
मुखं च परिशुष्यति – also my mouth has gone dry.
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे –Further my body is shivering – as you see,
रोमहर्षश्च जायते – the hairs in my body stand on ends – they are in horripilation,
गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात् –the Gandiva (my bow) slips down from my hand – I am unable to hold it.
त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते – There is intense burning sensation all over my skin.



न च शक्नोमि अवस्थातुं – I am not even able to stand; I seem to have lost my strength in my legs.

भ्रमतीव च मे मनः – My mind is as though stunned, confused, perplexed and disordered – unable to see what is right and what is wrong.

केशव – O! Krishna

विपरीतानि निमित्तानि च पश्यामि – I see very bad omens – all these indications in my body and mind are not conducive to undertake fighting; further,

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनं आहवे – I see no overriding virtue in destroying my own people.

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥

1-32

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण – Krishna, I do not seek any victory in this War;

न च राज्यं सुखानि च – nor do I seek this Kingdom, nor the pleasures of this Kingdom.

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द, किं भोगैः जीवितेन वा – O! Govinda – O! Sri Krishna – for us, Pandavas – for me who has विवेक बुद्धि – who has the understanding of what is धर्म and what is अधर्म – what is it that is achieved by a Kingdom, or the pleasures of Kingdom. I have no value for Kingdom, or the pleasures of Kingdom as such.

Because, for gaining राज्य and भोग – Kingdom and pleasures of Kingdom, I will have to give up all धर्म, by destroying my own people in the battle-field. If I give up all धर्म and kill all my own people, then what kind of भोग – earthly pleasure I can enjoy later; even living is not worth it, after killing all my own people.

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

ते इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥

1-33

The very people for whose sake I should like to seek a kingdom, in whose company I should enjoy the pleasures of life, those very people are already standing here, ready to fight, giving up all their wealth, and their very lives.

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्राः तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥

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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Teachers, paternal uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, in-laws, grandsons, cousins, and other various relatives – these are all स्वजनाः:- my own people; all of them are standing here, ready to fight. These are the people in whose company I would be happy to live and enjoy the Kingdom and the wealth.

एतान् न हन्तुं इच्छामि धृतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ 1-35

मधुसूदन – O! Krishna – I do not wish to kill these people; I do not wish to be the cause for the death of these people, even if I am killed by them in this war; I would not like to kill them, even for the sake of gaining all the three worlds – let alone this earthly world.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान् नः का प्रीतिः स्यात् जनार्दन ।
पापमेव आश्रयेत् अस्मान् हत्या एतान् आततायिनः ॥ 1-36

जनार्दन – O! Krishna, by destroying the sons of Dhritarashtra – Duryodana and his associates – what pleasure can there be for us; only sin will come to us by killing these great sinners. By killing these great sinners, we also become sinners. Therefore, I do not wish to kill them, even if they wish to kill me.

Sri Krishna is listening.

Arjuna continues, and he has much more to say to Sri Krishna; we will stop right here for to-day, and take a few moments to meditate on to-day's verses.

Arjuna – the man of upright action, firmly rooted in धर्म, seeking universal prosperity, success and happiness – that Arjuna is in every one of us, in some measure. That Arjuna is now suffering from a temporary human problem, called मोह, which is sorrow and suffering, caused by delusion and infatuation.

Delusion is the incapacity of the mind to discriminate between नित्य and अनित्य – what is eternal and what is transient; and – Infatuation is the incapacity of the mind to extricate itself from a mistaken position, into which somehow one has got into; this mistaken position can be with respect to a thought, word, or deed.

In the case of Arjuna, it is all the three: The thought is स्वजन (one's own people) which creates a bondage.

The word is धर्म, whose meaning is confusing in a particular situation.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

The deed is युद्ध – act of war – whose outcome is always in doubt.

These are the ingredients of Arjuna's मोह – sorrow, sadness and suffering. Every one of us suffers from मोह of some kind, most of our lives.

Arjuna shares his problem with Sri Krishna, and seeks His Grace and His Help in overcoming his problem; Sri Krishna uplifts Arjuna, and restores him to his real Self by the Gita Teachings.

Let us also do likewise, and seek the Grace and Help of Sri Krishna in overcoming मोह in our own daily lives. May the teachings of The Gita uplift us, and restore us to the real-Self in ourselves.

We will be completing this chapter next time.