

CHAPTER 1 – PART 2;. THE ARMIES CONVERGE

There are some primary questions of Arjuna in the next 17 chapters, as well as some other questions. The answer to these also is said according to the particular circumstance. However, there is a background in the *Mahābhārata* for the questions Arjuna raises in the first chapter. We said earlier, that if we must understand the meaning of these questions, we have to understand the background of the *Mahābhārata*.

Here, Arjuna is thinking of avoiding the war. Because of this, Arjuna asks numerous questions. These questions have also appeared in a previous circumstance in the *Mahābhārata*. There is a circumstance where the Lord approaches the palace of the *Kauravas* as a messenger to try and avoid the war. In the beginning of this situation, there is another matter that takes place.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra sends *Saṅjaya* to the *Pāṇḍavas* as a messenger to avoid the war. The king does this because of the instruction of *Bhīṣma* and others. They said, ‘if there is war, nobody will benefit. Therefore, you must avoid war.’ When all of them advised this, King *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* called *Saṅjaya* and sent him as a messenger. This is because the *Pāṇḍavas* were very fond of *Saṅjaya*. *Saṅjaya* then entered the forest, to talk to the *Pāṇḍavas*.

In the forest, *Saṅjaya* reached *Srī Kṛṣṇa* and King *Drupada* as a messenger. Before them, *Saṅjaya* described many of the defects of war, and many different arguments for avoiding the war. He tried to convey to the *Pāṇḍavas*, ‘the war must not take place for any reason.’

Arjuna had heard all of the things *Saṅjaya* was saying. In that situation, *Saṅjaya* says all of the things Arjuna says in this chapter. Arjuna will describe the defects of war. ‘Killing one’s gurus is bad. The classes will become mixed. The women will become defiled. Better than that is a life of alms.’

Saṅjaya said all of this to the *Pāṇḍavas*. The *Pāṇḍavas* saw *Saṅjaya* as equal to a Guru. Therefore, the words of *Saṅjaya* became a cause for Arjuna’s words to the Lord later in the chapter. This shows us that there is a relation between the first chapter and the parts of the *Mahābhārata* before this. Otherwise, we may think, ‘Arjuna came to the battlefield, and had a sudden change of mind’ – this

isn't so. When Arjuna asks *Kṛṣṇa* whether the war is necessary, at that time, Arjuna was partial to the side that said, 'it is wrong.'

'I don't have any interest in this war. This war will create destruction.' *Dharmaputra* and *Bhīma* were also partial to this view. They didn't desire the war. *Bhīma* says this, 'no one will gain anything through this war.' *Saṅjaya* also says, 'If there is war, it is difficult to say who will be left. If anyone survives, there will only be a few.'

'No one in this dynasty will be able to attain and enjoy the kingdom through this.' Arjuna heard all of these things. Arjuna, as well as *Dharmaputra* and *Bhīma* supported the side, 'war must be avoided.' However, there was a person who said strongly that war is necessary, even after hearing all of this. This is *Pañchali*. There, *Pañchali* said forcefully and without any reservation, 'there must be war.'

'You must fight against those who disgraced me, in the court of the *Kauravas*.' This can only be resolved through war.' *Pañchali* held this view strongly. In that circumstance, *Saṅjaya* speaks about the defects of war, and this was in Arjuna's mind. Here, on the battlefield, this comes again to Arjuna's memory. That is why Arjuna raises such questions about war. This is a primary cause for this.

Otherwise, this isn't a sudden delusion of Arjuna about killing his gurus. We must also keep this matter in mind when we discuss this chapter. We discussed the circumstance of this part the other day. Here, *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* asks *Saṅjaya* about the beginning of the war, and what happened after. 'What events took place?' *Saṅjaya* is explaining this.

*Paśyaitāṁ pāṇḍaputrāṇāṁ āchārya mahatīm chamūm
Vyūḍham drupaputreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā. 1.3.*

1.3. 'Behold, O Teacher, this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed by the son of Drupada, thy wise disciple.'

Saṅjay is again speaking. He is describing *Duryodhana* speaking to *Droṇa*. ‘*Achārya*,’ O teacher!, ‘*tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā drupaputreṇa, vyūḍham pāṇḍaputrāṇām etām mahatīm chamūm paśya.*’

‘*Tava śiṣyeṇa.*’ By your disciple, ‘*dhīmatā,*’ the intelligent, ‘*drupada putreṇa,*’ the son of *Drupada* (*Dr̥ṣṭyadyumna*), the brother of *Pañchali*. *Dr̥ṣṭyadyumna* was born is a sacrificial fire, with the purpose of killing *Droṇa*. Even after knowing that *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna* was born to kill him, *Droṇa* accepted *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna* as a disciple, made him stay near him, and taught him the science of weaponry (*astra vidyā*). That is indicated by the words, ‘*tava śiṣyeṇa.*’

By your disciple, the son of *Drupada*, *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna*, ‘*vyūḍham,*’ in formation, prepared, ‘*pāṇḍaputrāṇām,*’ of the *Pāṇḍavas*, ‘*etām mahatīm chamūm,*’ this great army, ‘*paśya,*’ see this. ‘*Etām chamūm paśya,*’ look at this army!’

When the words ‘*paśya*’ and ‘*etām*’ are joined, it forms ‘*paśyaitām.*’ *Droṇāchārya* and *Drupada* were fellow students. However, when *Droṇa* was in poverty, he approached *Drupada*, who had become the king of *Pañchal*. *Drupada* rejected *Droṇa* and didn’t help him. *Droṇa* felt revenge towards *Drupada*. He then went to *Hastinapur* and taught the *Pāṇḍavas* and *Kauravas astra vidyā*.

Finally, they fought and defeated *Drupada*, and brought him before *Droṇa* tied up. However, *Droṇa*’s mind felt pity, so he freed *Drupada*, and re-established friendship. In the name of that friendship, *Droṇa* taught *Drupada*’s son *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna astra vidyā*. However, there was revenge in the mind of *Drupada*. Therefore, after having become freed by *Droṇa*, *Drupada* left and again took control of the kingdom *Pañchala*. There, he held a sacrifice. From that sacrifice emerged *Pañchālī* and *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna*.

To prepare *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna* for killing *Droṇa*, *Drupada* sent him to learn *astra vidyā* from *Droṇa* himself. *Duryodhana* is reminding *Droṇa* that this *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna* is leading the formation of the *Pāṇḍava* army.

Droṇa knows this. *Droṇa* taught all *vidyās* to *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna*, saying, ‘if that is fate, then let it be so.’ That *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna* is standing here. Next it will say everyone else who is situated in the *Pāṇḍava* army.

*Atra sūrā maheśvāsā bhīmārjunasamā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭascha drupaścha mahārathaḥ. 1.4.*

1.4. 'Here are herous, mighty archers, equal in battle to Bhima and Arjuna, Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada.'

*Drṣṭaketuśchekitānaḥ kāśirājaścha vīryavān
Purujit kuntibhojaścha śaibyaścha narapuṅgavaḥ. 1.5.*

1.5. 'Dhrithaketu, Chekitana, and the valiant king of Kashi, Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Saibya, the best of men.'

*Yuddhāmanyuścha vikrānta uttamaujāścha vīryavān
Saubhadro draupadeyaścha sarva eva mahārathāḥ. 1.6.*

1.6. 'The strong Yudhamanyu and the brave Uttamaujas, the son of Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi, all of them, divisional commanders.'

This is telling who all of the warriors are on the *Pāṇḍava* side. A '*mahāratha*' is the name for a warrior who can fight with 10,000 soldiers at once. The name '*atirathaḥ*' means a person who can fight with countless soldiers. This is described in the *Mahābhārata*. '*Atra*,' here, in this army, '*sūrāḥ*,' brave, '*maheśvāsā*,' mighty bowmen.. this means one who holds a mighty bow, '*mahā isvāsa*.' '*yuddhi bhīmārjunasamāḥ*' - these people are equal to *Bhīma* and Arjuna in battle.

It says next who these are. '*Yuyudhāno*,' Yuyudhāna, '*Virāṭaḥ*,' the king of Virāt, '*mahārathaḥ drupadaḥ*,' and the great warrior Drupada, '*Drṣṭaketuḥ, Chekitānaḥ*,' these are the names of kings, '*vīryavān kāśirājaḥ*,' the courageous king of Kāśi, '*Purujit*,' the name of another king, '*Kuntibhojaḥ*,' Kuntibhoja, '*Shaibyaḥ narapuṅgavaḥ*,' Shaibya, great among men, '*Vikrāntaḥ Yuddhāmanyuḥ*,' the valiant Yudhāmanyu, '*vīryavān uttamaujaḥ*,' the courageous Uttamauja, '*Saubhadraḥ*,' the son of Subhadra, Abhimanyu, '*Draupadeyaścha*,' the 5 sons of Drupadi, '*sarve eva*..' because of the *sandhi*, it becomes '*sarva eva*,'

‘*mahārathāh*’ – it says that everyone is a great warrior. Like wise, the names of all of the warriors on the Pāṇḍava side are given.

***Asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tānnibodha dvijottama
Nāyakā mama sainyaṣya saṁjñārtham tān bravīmi te. 1.7.***

1.7. ‘Know also, O best among brāhmaṇas, the names of those who are the most distinguished amongst ourselves, the leaders of my army; these I will name to you for your knowledge.’

Next, *Duryodhana* says, ‘*Dvijottama*,’ great among *Brāhmaṇas*.. Droṇa was born in a lineage of *Brāhmaṇas*. However, he had accepted the dharma of a kṣatriya, by practicing and teaching war. ‘O greatest of Brāhmaṇas, ‘*asmākaṁ ye viśiṣṭāḥ*.’ ‘*Asmākaṁ*,’ for us, ‘*ye viśiṣṭāḥ*,’ who are distinguished? It says, ‘*mama sainyaṣya nāyakāḥ*,’ the leaders of my army, ‘*tān nibodha*,’ understand them. ‘*Te saṁjñārtham*,’ for your knowledge, ‘*tān bravīmi*,’ I will tell them.

Without the *sandhi*, it reads, ‘*tān nibodha*.’ That should be separated and read in the *śloka*. Then, the word ‘*saṁjñārtham*’ means ‘for the purpose of *saṁjñā*, of knowledge. ‘*Tān bravīmi*,’ I will speak about them. Who are the distinguished leaders of our army? I will say all of them for your knowledge.

***Bhavān bhīṣmaścha karṇaścha kṛpaścha samitiñjaya
Aśvatthāmā vikarṇaścha saumadattirjayadrathaḥ. 1.8.***

1.8. ‘Yourself and Bhishma, and Karna and also Kripa, who are victorious in battle; Asvatthama, Vikarna and so also the son of Somadatta.’

Who are distinguished in the *Kaurava* army? First is ‘*bhavān*,’ you yourself. ‘*Bhīṣmaścha*,’ and then *Bhīṣma*, ‘*Karṇaścha*,’ and *Karṇa*, ‘*Kṛpaḥ*,’ and *Kṛpa*, ‘*Samitiñjayaḥ*,’ those who are victorious in battle. ‘*Samiti*’ means ‘war.’ This word should be connected to everyone. In this war, *Droṇa*, *Bhīṣma*, *Karṇa*, and *Kṛpa* are all ‘*samitiñjaya*,’ victorious in battle. They can never be defeated.

‘*Aśvatthāmaḥ*,’ the son of *Droṇa*, *Aśvatthāma*, ‘*Vikarṇaḥ*,’ *Vikarṇa*, the brother of *Duryodhana*, ‘*Saumadattiḥ*,’ then ‘*tathaiva cha*.’ These last words are seen differently in some books. In some, it says, ‘*Jayadrathaḥ*,’ *Jayadratha*. All of these names appear in the *Mahābhārata*. Their histories and other matters aren’t important. Those can be understood from the *Mahābhārata*.

In this *śloka*, many people commentate according to their imagination. I have seen some commentaries, full of imagination. However, those are mainly commentaries for the sake of commentating. When we read a commentary, we will think, ‘I should write a commentary. It must be different from this one.’ So, to write a commentary that hasn’t been written before, many commentate, using a lot of imagination.

However, if a person has read at least a little of the *Mahābhārata*, that desire to commentate will diminish. This is because all of these explanations come in so many parts of the *Mahābhārata*. In the sections before and after, these names are repeated so many times. In that, there are thousands of ‘*cha*’s, and ‘*ha*’s.’ If someone commentates on this much, they will have to commentate on the entire *Mahābhārata*.

Therefore, there are commentaries for the sake of commentating. When we think in relation to the previous sections, much of this will become unnecessary. Therefore, any more commentary isn’t necessary for this section. This is presenting a circumstance. This circumstance doesn’t begin here. This circumstance is described in many previous chapters. The first chapter comes as a continuation of those chapters.

Therefore, I have felt that there is not the need to commentate on many matters here. So, I am not going to try to comment on these sections more.

***Anye cha bahavaḥ sūrā madarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ
Nānāśāstrapraharaṇāḥ sarve yuddhaviśārādāḥ. 1.9.***

1.9. ‘And many other heroes who are determined to give up their lives for my sake, armed with various weapons and missiles, all well-skilled in battle.’

‘*Madarthe tyaktajīvitāḥ.*’ ‘Madarthe,’ for me, ‘*tyaktajīvitāḥ,*’ those who have sacrificed their lives. This means those who are ready to die for me. ‘*Nānāśāstra praharaṇāḥ*’ – those with the expertise in using different kinds of weapons, those courageous in battle. ‘*Sarve yuddhavisāradāḥ,*’ all of these are expert in war. ‘*Anye cha,*’ and there are others. Besides the names I have mentioned, there are others.

The majority of the warriors in the battle are on the side of the *Kauravas*, so *Duryodhana* says, ‘that’s not all. There are many other courageous warriors. There are more *mahārathas* and *atirathas.*’

Aparyāptam tadasmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
Paryāptam tvidameteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam. 1.10.

1.10. ‘This army of ours defended by Bhishma is unlimited, whereas the army of theirs defended by Bhima is limited.’

‘*Bhīṣmābhirakṣitam asmākaṁ tad balaṁ aparyāptam.*’ Here, the word ‘*aparyāptam*’ has been explained in several ways. If we take the ordinary meaning of this word in Malayalam, ‘*Bhīṣmābhirakṣitam,*’ being protected by *Bhīṣma*, ‘*asmākaṁ tad balaṁ,*’ our army, ‘*aparyāptam,*’ is insufficient. It is not sufficient. It has shortcomings. It’s strength is lesser, and is going to be defeated.’ This kind of meaning would be derived from that meaning of ‘*paryāptam.*’

However, the word ‘*paryāptam*’ also means ‘unlimited.’ This doesn’t just mean ‘insufficient, with shortcomings.’ It also means ‘unlimited.’ That meaning has been commented on. Thus, this army, protected by *Bhīṣma*, is ‘unlimited.’ This means it is more in number. When this is said, this is suitable for the side of the *Kauravas*. The number of soldiers is more on the side of the *Kauravas*.

Duryodhana will never say, ‘our army is bad.’ Therefore, the word ‘unlimited’ is more suitable for the word ‘*aparyāptam.*’ This means ‘almost impossible to destroy.’ However, in Malayalam, there is only one meaning given to the word ‘*aparyāptam.*’ This is, ‘what is not sufficient, what has shortcomings.’ This isn’t so in Sanskrit. This can also mean, ‘unlimited,’ ‘*aparimitaḥ.*’ This

means, '*paritaḥ āptaṁ vyāptaṁ.*' This means what is pervaded all around. That is the meaning of '*aparyāptaṁ.*'

This means, 'pervaded everywhere' – that which cannot be counted, immeasurable. Thus, this word means 'unlimited.' '*Paritaḥ āptaṁ,*' pervading the surroundings. The army of the *Kauravas* was larger than the *Pāṇḍavas*. The vastness of this army couldn't be measured with the eyes. It was that vast. That army pervaded the *Kurukṣetram*.

Taking into consideration that pervasiveness, the word '*tat*' is used. The word '*tat*' is used to indicate something far away. The word '*idaṁ*' is used to indicate something close. That is why it says, '*idaṁ balam,*' this tiny army we see in front. '*Bhīmābhirakṣitaṁ,*' protected by *Bhīma.*' *Duryodhana* uses the word '*tat*' to indicate his own army, which is pervaded everywhere, in all four directions. That is how vast it is. Then, he described the small army before him as '*idaṁ,*' this. '*Eteṣāṁ balam pāṇḍaputrāṇāṁ.*' This army of the *Pāṇḍavas*, '*paryāptaṁ,*' is limited.

There are one or two shortcomings of ordinary commentaries. One is this. These commentators always try to display their individuality. For showing this, they discover meanings that aren't before them, finding the meanings of words that aren't before them, and discover new meanings. This is for satisfying the mind. Otherwise, this may sometimes be to make one's own ego content.

This is for the satisfaction that one has created a new commentary. Sometimes, this won't in order to understanding the truth, when they comment like this. This is seen in numerous commentaries in different ways. When that happens, they leave a clear, easy meaning, and go down a crooked path to discover new meanings. There are some commentaries like that.

Thus, there have been several kinds of commentaries on these matters. It is good for us to not get caught in that net of commentary. Grasp what is necessary. There is no point in going into the arguments and counter-arguments of this. Commentary is for understanding things; not for creating new confusions. Therefore, we will accept the simple meanings in these simple situations. Here, the '*tu*' is combined with '*idaṁ*' and *eṣāṁ.*' This forms, '*tvidameṣāṁ.*'

Ayaneṣu cha sarveṣu yathābhāgamavasthitāḥ
Bhīṣmamevābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi. 1.11.

‘Therefore, all of you protect Bhishma, being stationed in your respective positions in the several divisions of the army!’

‘*Bhavantaḥ sarve.*’ ‘*Sarve Bhavantaḥ*’ – ‘all of you..’ this means ‘all warriors, all leaders of the army on our side, ‘*sarveṣu ayaneṣu,*’ being in their correct position.. when the army is prepared in formation, the gate-ways to that are called ‘*ayanam.*’ In these positions, ‘*yathā bhāgam avasthitāḥ.*’ ‘*Yathā bhāgam,*’ each person, according to their entrusted division, ‘*avasthitāḥ,*’ being firmly established, ‘*Bhīṣmam eva abhirakṣantu,*’ you must all protect *Bhīṣma!*’

I have said the circumstance of this before. *Bhīṣma* won’t protect himself. That is something *Bhīṣma* had previously said. Once *Shikhandhi* comes before him, he won’t lift a weapon. *Bhīṣma* said, ‘I will fight, except with *Shikhandhi.*’ Therefore, he has said that he won’t use any weapon against *Shikhandhi.* If *Bhīṣma* is protected from *Shikhandhi,* he is invincible. He has obtained a boon, that nobody can defeat him in battle. That isn’t possible for *devas* or men. As long as *Bhīṣma* stands, victory is impossible for the *Pāṇḍavas.*

Duryodhana knows all of these matters. Because *Bhīṣma* is unwilling to protect himself, *Duryodhana* instructs the others to protect *Bhīṣma* while he fights. That is the war strategy accepted by *Duryodhana.* Part of that is the strategy, ‘*Shikhandhi* must never approach *Bhīṣma!* He must not utilize any weapon against *Bhīṣma.*’ For that purpose, *Duryodhana* says that all divisions of the army must protect *Bhīṣma* in their correct positions.

This is something that is made clear by the previous sections. If we don’t read these previous sections, we won’t be able to understand these matters. For example, why does *Duryodhana* say for everyone to protect *Bhīṣma?* Does *Bhīṣma* have any shortcoming? Because of this doubt, a person will have to commentate in several different ways. However, this matter is said clearly.

In truth, *Bhīṣma*’s favor was with the *Pāṇḍavas.* From the day the war began, and before, this is shown. Both *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa* would wake up, bathe, and perform their morning rites. With a pure mind, they would pray, ‘may

the *Pāṇḍavas* win!’ This is said in the *Mahābhārata*. ‘The *Pāṇḍavas* must win!’ Praying this, everyday, they fought for *Duryodhana*.

They fight very sincerely for *Duryodhana*. However, their prayer was for the *Pāṇḍavas*. This is because *Dharma* is on the *Pāṇḍavas*’ side. Here, when it says, ‘everyone must protect *Bhīṣma*!’, this means that *Bhīṣma*’s life is in danger.

***Tasya saṁjanayan harṣaṁ kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
Simhanādaṁ vinadyocchaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān. 1.12.***

1.12. ‘Then the glorious grandsire Bhishma, the eldest of the Kauravas, sounded aloud a lion’s roar and blew his conch, delighting Duryodhana.’

‘*Kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ*’ Here, the word ‘*vṛddhaḥ*’ means ‘one who is worthy of worship.’ In the *Kuru* dynasty, he who is worthy of worship, ‘*Pitāmahaḥ*,’ the grandsire of all of us, *Bhīṣma*, ‘*pratāpavān*,’ is full of courage. That courageous grandsire, ‘*harṣaṁ saṁjanayan*,’ producing delight in *Duryodhana*, ‘*ucchaiḥ*,’ loudly, ‘*simhanādaṁ vinadya*,’ produced the sound of a lion, showing his readiness for battle, and for giving courage to *Duryodhana* and the rest of the army. Then, for showing the strength of the *Kuru* army, ‘*śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau*,’ he blew his conch.’

This indicates the beginning of the war. That is a rule of war. One must not begin war unexpectedly, without following the rules. One must fight face-to-face. One can only fight a war after the sun has risen. The war must finish by sunset.’ Like this, there are several rules to war. The war in which these rules are followed is a *Dharma yuddham* (*dharmic* war).

It says one must follow these, but that will never happen in war. It is said, ‘one must never attack someone unexpectedly, without warning.’ That is why both sides blow their conches, etc. Both sides make each other aware, ‘we are ready to confront and fight in battle.’ That is done according to the rules of warfare.

These are described in the sections that deal with the rules of warfare. It says, ‘one cannot use a weapon against a person whose mind is engaged elsewhere.’ A person cannot use a weapon without looking directly at the person,

by looking in another direction.’ ‘If a person is engaged in any other action, you cannot use a weapon.’ ‘When the enemy is sitting in the chariot, you cannot use a weapon.’ ‘If the enemy gets out of the chariot and is on the ground, you cannot use a weapon.’ In this way, there are many rules.

Among these is one primary thing. ‘One can fight against someone, only after being aware that he is ready to fight.’ That is a law. How can a person understand? That is why they blow conches, etc. One person blows the conch. From that sound, another person understands, ‘he is ready for battle. Now the battle can begin.’ Otherwise we think in normal terms. This is because they blow conches in temples. We will think, ‘why are they blowing conches on the battlefield?’

That is a sign that shows one is ready for battle. That gives courage to the warriors on one’s own side, as well. When they understand that the leader is ready, they will become ready to fight. These instruments are in their hands as well. They have different instruments, such as kettledrums, cymbals, big drums, etc. They will sound all of these, showing the readiness of the army.

This is like a kind of ‘band’ for the army. This is for giving courage to the soldiers. In that way, ‘*simhanādam vinadya,*’ having making the sound of a lion,’ *śaṅkham daddhau,*’ *Bhīṣma* blew his conch. ‘*Uchchaiḥ vinadya,*’ he sounded this loudly.

***Tataḥ śaṅkhāścha bheryaścha paṇavānakagomukhāḥ
Sahasaivābhyahanyanta sa śabdastumulo ‘bhavat. 1.13.***

1.13. ‘Then conches and kettledrums, tabors, drums and cow-horns blared forth suddenly and the sound was tremendous.’

There is another rule of war. Before beginning the battle, each side must introduce themselves. ‘I am born from this dynasty. I am the king of this kingdom.’ This shows the lineage of the dynasty. This is needed for beginning the war. There are certain customs before the war begins. Only after all of those does the war begin. A part of that is *Duryodhana* saying all of these names. The

reason is because when both sides introduce themselves, if the opposition isn't suitable for battle, then one shouldn't fight.

The freedom for doing that is there. A person may withdraw from the war. That is what *Bhīṣma* says; 'if *Shikhandhi* comes, I won't fight.' That was the custom in those days. When *Bhīṣma* expressed his readiness to fight, everyone else in the army sounded their instruments. This is said next.

'*Tataḥ*,' then, after *Bhīṣma* expressed his readiness for battle, '*sahasā*,' at once, '*eva*' indeed.. this becomes '*sahasaiva*,' all at once, '*śaṅkhāścha*,' conches, '*bheryaścha*,' and kettle-drums, '*paṇava ānaka gomukhāḥ*' – these are all the instruments that were used. '*Paṇava ānakaṁ gomukhaṁ*' – these instruments aren't used today. '*Abhyahanyantaḥ*,' all of these sounded.' From this sounding of the instruments, '*sa śabdaḥ*,' that sound, '*tumulaḥ abhavat*,' resounded everywhere.

The word '*tumulaḥ*' means a great sound. When it says, '*tumulaḥ abhavat*,' it means that this resounded everywhere. It was as if it blasted through all the eight directions. 'That sound resounded everywhere.'

Śaṅkarāchārya didn't commentate at all on this section. One reason for this is because if a person explains this, he will have to explain several chapters. This section is related to several chapters before. Some of the matters that appear here come in previous chapters. Only if these are explained will it be clear. One will have to explain several previous chapters. That is why *Śaṅkara* avoided that.

After this, *Śaṅkara* wrote a commentary on the Lord's words. That begins in the second chapter, verse 11; '*aśochyān anvaśochas tvam*.' In truth, that is the *Gītā*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Therefore, *Śaṅkara* only commentated on that. However, there are other commentators on the *Gītā*, such as *Madhusūdana Sarasvati* and *Anandagiri*, who have commentated on this section. The reason for this is that the Lord's instruction is the reply to all of these questions raised by *Arjuna*.

Therefore, if those answers must be correctly understood, one must correctly understand these questions. The commentary on this section is for understanding the questions properly.

*Tataḥ śvetairhayairyukte mahati syandane sthitau
Mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaśchaiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ. 1.14.*

1.14. 'Then also, Madhava and the son of Pandu, seated in their magnificent chariot yoked with white horses, blew their divine conches.'

Bhīṣma blew his conch, showing the readiness of the *Kaurava* army. 'We are ready!' For showing this, the other warriors all blew their conches. 'Tataḥ,' immediately after that, 'sthitau,' being situated, 'mahati syandane,' in a great chariot, 'śvetaiḥ hayaiḥ yukte,' yoked to white horses, 'mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaḥ cha eva,' *Sri Kṛṣṇa* and *Arjuna*, 'divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ' sounded their divine conches.

We have to pick apart the words in the *śloka*; 'śvetaiḥ, hayaiḥ, yukte.' This forms, 'śvetairhayairyukte.' Then, 'pāṇḍavaḥ, cha, eva.' This becomes 'pāṇḍavaśchaiva.' Then there is the part, 'divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ.' We said before, '*Bhīṣma daddhmatuḥ*.' Here, it says 'mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścha.' There are two people. Therefore, it says, 'dadhmatuḥ,' both people sounded. This is expressing the *Pāṇḍava* army's readiness. After that, each person on that side blows their conch, showing their readiness for battle. This is shown next. Both sides are completely ready for battle.

*Pāñchajanyaṁ hr̥ṣīkeśo devadattaṁ dhanañjayaḥ
pauṇḍraṁ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṁ bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ. 1.15.*

*Anantavijayaṁ raja kuntiputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
nakulaḥ sahadevaścha sughoṣamaṇipuṣpakau. 1.16.*

*Kāśyaścha parameśvāsaḥ śikhaṇḍī cha mahārathaḥ
Dṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaścha sātyakiśchāparājitaḥ. 1.17.*

*Drupado draupadeyāścha sarvaśaḥ pṛthivīpate
Saubhadraścha mahābāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmau pṛthak pṛthak. 1.18.*

1.15. 'Hrishikesha blew the Panchajanya and Dhananjaya blew the Devadatta.

Vrikodara, the doer of incredible deeds, blew the great conch Paundra.'

1.16. 'King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the conch Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva blew their conches, called each Manipushpaka.'

1.17. 'The king of Kashi, an excellent bowman, Shikhandi, the great warrior, Dhrishtadyumna and Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered;'

1.18. 'Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, O king, and the son of Subhadra, the mighty-armed, blew their respective conches.'

'*Hṛṣīkeṣaḥ*,' Hṛṣīkeṣa, '*Pāñchajanyaṁ dadhmau*,' blew his conch, Pāñchajanyaṁ. This conch was taken from an asura named Pāñchajana, after the Lord killed him. The Lord blew this conch. '*Dhanañjayaḥ*,' Arjuna blew the conch, '*Devadattaḥ*.' '*Bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ*.' Bhīmakarmā means 'one who performs gigantic deeds. These are things that are impossible for ordinary men. That is '*bhīmakarmā*.' These are karmas such as killing *Bakāsura*, etc.

In that way, being '*bhīmakarmā*,' performing acts that are impossible for normal people, '*vṛkodaraḥ*,' Bhīma, '*mahāśaṅkham pauṇḍram*.' The name '*Bhīma*' itself means 'huge.' *Bhīma* had a great body. Therefore, the conch that he has '*Paundra*,' a great conch, '*mahāśaṅkha*.' It is extremely big. '*Dadhmau*,' *Bhīma* sounded that conch.

Then, '*Kuntiputraḥ rājā yudhisṭhiraḥ*.' The son of *Kunti*, the king *Yudhisṭhira*, '*anantavijayaṁ dadhmau*,' sounded the conch '*Anantavijayam*.' Then, '*Nakalaḥ Sahadevaścha*,' *Nakula* and *Sahadeva*, '*sughoṣa maṇipuṣpakau dadhmauḥ*,' blew loudly their conches, both called, '*Maṇipuṣpakam*.'

'*Parameśvāsaḥ kāśyaścha*,' the King of *Kāśi*, who holds a great bow, a great warrior, '*mahārathaḥ śikhaṇḍhi*,' the great warrior *Shikhaṇḍhi*, '*Drṣṭadyumnaḥ Virātaḥ cha aparājitaḥ Sātyakiḥ*,' as well as *Drṣṭadyumna*, *Virāta*, and the undefeated *Sātyaki*..'

Then, '*Drupadaḥ*,' *Drupada*, '*Draupadeyāḥ cha*,' as well as the five sons of *Drupada*, '*Saubhadraḥ mahābāhuḥ*,' the mighty-armed *Saubhadra* also,

‘*Pr̥thivīpate,*’ O King, *Dhṛ̥taraṣṭra,* ‘*sarvaśaḥ,*’ in every manner, from every division, ‘*pr̥thak pr̥thak,*’ individually, ‘*śaṅkhān dadhmuh,*’ all of them blew their conches.

Thus, each one sounded their conches. This presents their readiness for battle. This says that they are fully ready for war. They are ready with everyone together.’ To show why Arjuna thought of withdrawing from the war, this explanation is given here. Otherwise, if it starts suddenly in the battle, it will create confusion. Here, it shows the complete readiness of both sides to fight, in order to avoid this confusion. That is why this readiness to fight is indicated in each person.

This indicates that Arjuna’s mind changed, even after this much preparation. There are other ślokas like this. If we look in the *Mahābhārata*, it is said there is 125,000 ślokas. We won’t be able to read every single śloka. If we merely glance over each section, we can see that each description repeats in every section. Only if there is such repetition could there be 125,000 ślokas. Like this, these names here are repeated many times in several sections. This description of blowing the conches is shown in so many battles.

This is a constant event in the *Mahābhārata*. This isn’t a special preparation for the Gītā. It is just that this section repeats in the Gītā also. Therefore, there is a special importance because it appears before the Gītā. These are the descriptions of war. How much does the *Mahābhārata* describe war, in so many circumstances! In all of these, the aim is only one; to indicate the readiness of both sides to fight. That is why both sides sound their conches.

The discussion of this section is only considering its relation to the epic, the *Mahābhārata*. As a part of this historical event, all of these things happened. The discussion of this is necessary, only when we relate the Gītā to an event in history or in the epic. Otherwise, this discussion of blowing conches isn’t necessary for understanding the philosophy of the Gītā.

There are some who commentate like this, with meanings connected with Yoga. However, when that happens, these people go to great difficulty to commentate each section symbolically. ‘What is the symbol of each name, of each conch?’ That is difficult for us. These people have gone through great difficulty and perspiration to do this.

However, we will think when we read these commentaries, ‘is this much necessary?’ That is how much trouble they go through to comment. When we look at the other parts of the *Mahābhārata*, we will also have to comment like that. When we start to give spiritual commentary on all of the writer’s imagination and descriptions, that spirituality becomes something that makes one perspire.

Therefore, when we look at the rest of the *Mahābhārata*, we will feel that these commentaries aren’t suitable. This is because it is more suitable to grasp these as descriptions that are part of the epic. If we go and try to find specific meanings for everything, it won’t ever end. It will just cause the intellect to perspire. Therefore, there isn’t any particular benefit from that.

*Sa ghoṣo dhārtaraṣṭrāṇām hṛdayāni vyadārayat
Nabhaścha pṛthivīm chaiva tumulo vyanunādayan. 1.19.*

1.19. ‘That tumultuous sound rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra’s sons and resounded in the sky and on Earth.’

‘*Sa ghoṣaḥ*,’ that uproar of sound, ‘*hṛdayāni*,’ the hearts, ‘*dhārtaraṣṭrāṇām*,’ of the sons of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, ‘*vyadārayat*,’ pierced. They became afraid. ‘*Nabhaścha pṛthivīm chaiva*.’ ‘*Nabhaḥ*,’ the sky, ‘*pṛthivīm*,’ the Earth, ‘*cha eva*,’ both of these, ‘*tumulaḥ*,’ resounding, ‘*vyanunādayan*,’ that sound echoed.

That sound resounded in all directions. That is the meaning. Hearing that sound, the sons of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* became afraid. That is what *Saṅjaya* says. Hearing the courageous sound of the *Pāṇḍavas*, they thought about and understood what they faced. They felt afraid. That is the meaning.

*Atha vyavasthitān dṛṣtvā dhārtaraṣṭrān kapidvajāḥ
Pravṛtte śastrasaṁpāte dhanurudyamya pāṇḍavaḥ. 1.20.*

*Hṛṣīkeṣām tadā vākyam idamāha mahīpate.
Senayorubhayormadhye rathām sthāpaya me ‘chyuta 1.21.*

*Yāvadetānnirikṣyeham yoddhukāmānavisthitān
Kairmayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇasamudyame. 1.22.*

1.21-22. Then, seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra standing arrayed and the discharge of weapons about to begin, Arjuna, whose ensign was Hanuman, took up his bow and said these words to Krishna, O king!

1.21-22. 'In the midst of the two armies, place my chariot, O Achyuta, that I may behold those who stand here desirous of fighting and, on the eve of this battle, let me know with whom I must fight.'

'*Atha*,' after this..' Both sides have expressed their readiness to fight. Now, it's enough if they begin the battle. That is '*atha*,' immediately after, once that has begun, '*Kapidvajaḥ*,' Arjuna, whose chariot has the emblem of *Hanumān*, '*vyavasthitān dhārtaraṣṭraṇām dṛṣṭvā*,' seeing the sons of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, and all those on their side, '*śastrasaṁpāte pravṛtte*,' while the weapons are being used.. this means, 'that is enough.' Once two people express to each other that they are ready to fight, then it's enough to use weapons.

Till now, there hasn't been a single problem with Arjuna. That is what is said next. '*Dhanuḥ udyumya*,' lifting his bow.. Arjuna is fully ready for battle. While in the front of the army, Arjuna didn't have any delusion. Therefore, he lifts his bow, ready for battle. This is '*śastrasaṁpāte pravṛtte*' – this has already begun. To prepare for that, Arjuna took his bow and lifted it, directly facing the enemies.

Then, '*pāṇḍavaḥ*,' Arjuna, '*Mahīpate*,' O King *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*!, (*Saṅjaya* is saying to *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*), '*tadā*,' in that circumstance, in that state of being prepared, '*hr̥ṣīkeṣam*,' to the Lord, the controller of the senses, '*idaṁ vākyam āha*,' Arjuna said these words which I will say.'

Having becoming fully prepared, just after the beginning of battle, '*Hṛṣīkeṣam*,' to *Srī Kṛṣṇa*.. The *Hṛṣī*'s are the senses. The '*Iṣa*,' or Lord of those, is *Hṛṣīkeṣaḥ*.' This is the One situated as the *Jīvātman* in all bodies. That is '*Hṛṣīkeṣam*.' This is the Lord of the senses, the Inner Self. As the Inner Self of

all beings, to that *Paramātmān*, to *Sri Kṛṣṇa*, ‘*idaṁ vākyam*,’ these words, which I am going to say, ‘*āha*,’ Arjuna spoke.

Then, Arjuna speaks, ‘*Achyuta*,’ *O Kṛṣṇa*!, ‘*ubhayoḥ senayoḥ madhye me ratham sthāpaya*.’ Arjuna says one thing. ‘*Ubhayoḥ senayoḥ madhye*,’ in the midst of these two armies, ‘*me ratham sthāpaya*,’ bring my chariot.’ Now Arjuna’s chariot is on the *Pāṇḍava*’s side, facing the *Kauravas*. Arjuna says, ‘that’s not enough. Move me to the midst of both groups. Then I can see both my side and theirs.’ That’s why it says ‘*madhye*.’

If one directly faces the enemy, one can’t see one’s own side. He has to go to the side, in the middle, to see both groups. ‘*Ubhayoḥ senayoḥ madhye*,’ in between these two armies, ‘*me ratham sthāpaya*,’ place my chariot.

‘*Yāvat*,’ from that, ‘*yoddhukāmān avasthitān etān ahaṁ nirikṣye*.’ From there, or ‘in that way,’ ‘*yoddhukāmān*,’ those who desire for battle, ‘*avasthitān*,’ standing ready, ‘*etān*,’ these people, both sides, my side and the opposing side, ‘*ahaṁ nirikṣye*,’ let me see!’ ‘*Yāvat*,’ means, in a way that I can see.’

‘In that way, place my chariot between both armies, so that I may see both of them.’ Why must he see them? That is said next. ‘*Asmin raṇasamudyame*.’ ‘*Asmin*,’ in this, ‘*raṇasamudyame*,’ endeavor of war.. The word ‘*raṇa*’ means ‘war.’ This is the *karma* of war. The word ‘*samudyamaṁ*’ means action. In this *karma* of war, ‘*kaiḥ mayā saha yoddhavyam*’ – with whom must I fight?

‘*Kaiḥ*’ with whom, ‘*mayā saha yoddhavyam*,’ must I fight with? Here, old matters suddenly enter into Arjuna’s mind. These are the things *Saṅjaya* said previously. What did he say? ‘When you step onto the battlefield, with whom are you fighting with? It is with your brothers, relatives, gurus, grandfather, etc. You will have to fight with people that are that close to you. You must remember that!’

Saṅjaya had said before, ‘you must remember that, before you prepare for battle!’ Then, that suddenly enters into Arjuna’s mind in this situation, spontaneously. *Saṅjaya* advised many times, ‘the war must not happen!’ That awareness is within the mind. That is why Arjuna says, ‘with whom must I fight? Let me see them.’

That suddenly enters the mind, and Arjuna feels that he needs to think things over again. That is what he requests. ‘*Atra samāgatāḥ*,’ those who have

conjoined here, 'ete,' who are they? 'Yutsyamānāṇ ahaṁ avekṣe.' Let me see those who desire to fight. Why did they come here?

'Yuddhe,' in this war, 'durbuddheḥ dhārtaraṣṭrasya,' of that evil-minded son of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, *Duryodhana*, 'priyachikīrṣavaḥ,' those who are eager to please *Duryodhana*. These people are eager for the pleasing of evil-minded *Duryodhana*. Thus, Arjuna is saying each thing specifically.

Who has come here to fight? Let me see them. They came here because they desire the good of evil-minded *Duryodhana*. They have come to make *Duryodhana* succeed. I want to see them directly, those with whom I must fight. Place my chariot in a manner by which I can see them.' .