

CHAPTER 1 – PART 5; ARJUNA RETREATS FROM THE WAR

*‘Adharmābhibhavātkṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kulastriyaḥ
Striṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇasaṅkaraḥ. 1.41.*

*‘Saṅkaro narakāyaiva kulaghnānām kulasya cha
Patanti pitaro hyeṣām luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ. 1.42.*

*‘Doṣairetaiḥ kulaghnānām varṇasaṅkarakāraikāiḥ
Utsādyante jātidharmāḥ kuladharmāścha sāśvatāḥ. 1.43.*

*Utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana
Narake niyatam vāso bhavatītiyanuśuśruma. 1.44.*

*Aho bata mahatpāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam
Yadrājasukhalobhena hantum svajanamudyatāḥ. 1.45.*

*Yadi māmpratikāramaśāstraṁ sāstrapāṇayaḥ
Dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyustanme kṣemataram bhavet. 1.46.*

Saṅjaya Uvācha

*‘Evamuktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
Viśṛjya saśaram chāpam śokasamvignamānasaḥ. 1.47.*

1.41. ‘Being overcome by adharmā, the women of the family will become defiled. The women being defiled, there will be mixing of the castes.’

1.42. ‘From confusion of the classes, the destroyers of the family and the family are sent to hell; for their ancestors fall, deprived of the offerings of rice and water.’

- 1.43. ‘By these evil deeds of the destroyers of the family, which cause confusion of the classes, the eternal dharmas of the classes and the family are destroyed.’
- 1.44. ‘We have heard, O Janardana, that it is inevitable for those men, in whose families the family dharmas have been destroyed to dwell in hell.’
- 1.45. ‘Alas! We are involved in a great sin, in preparing to kill our kinsmen, from greed for the pleasures of the kingdom.’
- 1.46. ‘If the sons of Dhritarashtra were to slay me with weapons, while I were not to respond, without weapons, that would be best for me.’
- 1.47. ‘Sanjaya said; ‘Having thus spoken in the midst of the battlefield, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot, casting away his bow and arrows, with a mind distressed with sorrow.’

Arjuna is speaking about the defects of war here. The Kauravas aren’t thinking about the destruction of the family that will happen from this. They don’t think this, because they have no discrimination. However, we must think about this. The family will be destroyed, as well as the family dharmas.

If *adharma* grows and overpowers *dharma*, ‘*adharma abhibhavāt kṛṣṇā*.’ ‘Hey Kṛṣṇa! ‘*Adharma abhibhavāt*.’ Once *dharma* is overpowered by *adharma*.’ These are the *dharmas* of the classes, and the *dharmas* of the life-stages. If these aren’t followed, ‘*kulastriyaḥ pradusyanti*.’ The women of the family will become defiled. That is a result of war. And what if the women are defiled? Then, ‘*striṣu duṣṭāsu*,’ once the women are defiled, ‘*vārṣṇeya*,’ Kṛṣṇa, of the *Vṛṣṇi* dynasty, ‘*varṇasaṅkaraḥ jāyate*,’ then the classes become mixed.

‘*Varṇasaṅkaram*,’ means to produce children, by breaking the rules of the classes. The four classes are the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *kṣudra*. These existed in the time of the *Mahābhārata*. The rule was that a person in one class can only marry someone else in the same class. Otherwise, marriage was impossible. That was the rule. ‘A person in one class must not marry someone in another class.’

In the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Anuśāsana Parvam*, it discusses this ‘*varṇa saṅkaram.*’ Besides those included in the four classes, it discusses about those outside of the classes, and those most outside of the classes. This is according to ‘*daya krama.*’ This means the rights inherited by the son of a mother and father. These subjects are discussed there.

Then, this ‘mixing of classes’ is something that existed in that time. If a *brāhmaṇa* has a child through a *kṣatriya* woman, what are the rights of the son? Similarly, what about the other way? If a *kṣatriya* has a child through a *brāhmaṇa* woman, what rights does the child have? In this way, it describes about when a child is produced from two separate classes. However, if a *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya* woman has a child to a *brāhmaṇa* father, the child is considered as a *brāhmaṇa*. This is said there, but this doesn’t apply everywhere.

However, if a *kṣudra* has a child with a *brāhmaṇa* woman, the child becomes a *chaṇḍala*, an outcaste. This means someone who is outside of the classes. Thus, when those in the higher classes have children, it must be with a partner from the same class. However, if those in the lower castes have children with a partner in the higher class, the child becomes an outcaste. This is called, ‘*varṇa saṅkara,*’ the mixing of the classes.

This ‘*varṇa saṅkara*’ only has relevance when the classes are dependant on birth. This only has relevance when each class is determined by the lineage from birth of a person. This is what decided whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *kṣatriya*, or a *vaiśya*. Thus, an ‘outcaste’ is someone who was born from the mixing of two castes. Here, what Arjuna is saying about the castes is what existed in the time of the *Mahābhārata*. At the time, the four classes existed dependant on birth.

A *brāhmaṇa* is someone who is born in the lineage of *brāhmaṇas*. A *kṣatriya* is one born in a lineage of *kṣatriyas*, and so on. Only then will there be a division between one person and another in a different class. If that didn’t exist, then this problem of ‘mixing of classes’ wouldn’t have existed. That happens, only when the classes are organized according to birth. These are castes.

As the Gita continues through each chapter, we can keep this in mind. Because Arjuna asks here about the mixing of classes, the Lord discusses about the classes in the Gita. ‘*chaturvārṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarmavibhāgaśah.*’ This is later in the Gita. Then the Lord says, ‘*brāhma karma svabhāvajam,*

kṣātradharmā svabhāvajam, vaiśya dharmā svabhāvajam.' In this way, the Lord speaks about the karmas of each varṇa. To refute Arjuna's view here, the Lord says, '*guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ.*'

What Arjuna says is according to the condition of society in that time. The condition of the classes at that time wasn't according to '*guṇa*' and '*karma*' – one's quality and actions. That isn't what determined one's *varṇa*. There was a thinking, 'one's class should be determined by quality and action.' This comes in several parts of the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Shānti Parva*, in *Bhīṣma*'s instruction, and in other parts, this is said clearly. However, in the *Mahābhārata*, there was never a social condition where the classes were determined by quality and action.

The Lord addresses this in the Gita. Keeping this problem of 'mixing of classes' in mind, this problem can only happen where the classes are determined by birth. However, if man's class is determined by quality and action, then there won't be any mixing of the classes. This is because a person doesn't become a certain class by birth. Then there won't exist any social system of the classes. Then how can there be 'mixing of the classes?' There won't be any mixing of the classes.

To refute this '*varṇa saṅkaram,*' the Gita repeats again and again in several parts, 'the *varṇas* are determined by a person's quality and action. This isn't by looking at whose child it is.' This gives importance to a person's qualities and actions. That isn't a part of the social condition, this kind of '*varṇa.*' Instead, that is a special nature of the individual. That is what is said later in the Gita. The Lord gives importance to quality and action.

Here, when the Gita begins, *Duryodhana* calls *Droṇa*, '*dvijottama,*' best among *brāhmaṇas!*' According to the actions of *Droṇāchārya*, he cannot be called, 'best among *brāhmaṇas.*' This is because to fight and lead others in war, and teach warfare aren't the dharmas of a *brāhmaṇa*. According to that person's quality and actions, he should be called a *kṣatriya*. However, what does *Duryodhana* call *Droṇa*? '*Dvijottama,*' greatest of *Brāhmaṇas.*'

This is according to the social condition of that time, not taking into consideration the person's quality or actions. This considers, 'what family does he belong to?' Because he was born in a *Brāhmaṇa* family, no matter what action he does, he is a *brāhmaṇa*.

The *Mahābhārata* also speaks about *Vidūra*. *Vidūra* is in the dynasty of *kṣatriyas*, but was born to a *kṣudra* woman. That is why after *Vidūra* instructs *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* about the fairness of kingship, *Vidūra* says himself, 'I am born to a *kṣudra* woman. Therefore, I don't have any right to give advice. I have no right to instruct *Ātma Vidyā*. I know *Ātma Vidyā*. However, I am not worthy to instruct.'

Thus, even a *Tattvajñāni* says this in the *Mahābhārata*. 'I cannot instruct.' This is because that was the social condition of that time. 'I don't have the authority to instruct you. Therefore, *Vidūra* remembered mentally the *maharṣi Sanasujātiyam*, and he came to instruct *Ātma Vidyā* to *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*.'

Thus, 'only a person from the womb of a *brāhmaṇa* has the right to give instruction. A person born from a *kṣudra* doesn't have any right to that.' *Vidūra* says this himself. Therefore, even though he was a *Jñāni*, *Vidūra* was considered as a *kṣudra*. There are several similar circumstances. When *Bhīṣma* began to fight with *Paraśurāma* for obtaining *Amba*, *Bhīṣma* says, 'you are a *brāhmaṇa*. Your work is not to use weapons.' Other people came, and instructed *Paraśurāma*. 'This isn't a suitable thing for you.' Thus, even though *Paraśurāma* took up weapons and the dharma of a *kṣatriya*, everyone still called him a '*brāhmaṇa*.'

The class system in the society of those times was completely based on birth. That was all it was in the level of a social condition. This wasn't something another person could decide. To select a class, according to one's quality and action- that's not something for another person to do. If that is a social condition, it will be impossible to distinguish people from each other. These are purely individual matters.

Therefore, seeing the system of classes of those times, when the war continues.. all of the great warrior *kṣatriyas* will be destroyed. Then, the women will remain alive. For gaining children, they will gain other men. This creates the mixing of the classes. The children produced from that will become outcastes.' That is the '*varṇa saṅkara*' said here.

Thus, '*striṣu duṣṭāsu*,' once the women are defiled, '*varṇa saṅkaraḥ jāyate*,' there will be mixing of the classes. That is harmful. The Lord will say later, 'in truth, even if the *varṇas* of the social condition become mixed, the true *varṇa* isn't like that. That is according to quality and action.' When this is said, the

varṇa described by the Lord is never a system of castes in the condition of society. Instead, that varṇa is purely a spiritual class, the class of the individual.

The Lord speaks about a person's spiritual class. In society, there was the material *varṇa*. Everything Arjuna says here is based in materialism. This is because Arjuna is situated on the material level. We discussed this before. Arjuna sees all subjects from the level of materialism. The war, family, and the classes- all of these are solely from a material view. Arjuna understands everything as it is situated around him.

However, the reply of the Lord is completely from the level of spirituality. A Jñāni doesn't see subjects like an ordinary person. An ordinary person sees, values things, makes decisions, etc., through the materialistic thought produced from grasping objects through the senses. However, a spiritual Master won't see these objects as different. Here, the varṇa the Lord describes, as being according to quality and karma, isn't a social condition. Instead, that is a spiritual view of the classes.

The *Varṇa* spoken of in the Gita is a person's internal condition. This isn't an external social condition. A system of classes can only exist in society if it is based on birth. The external condition cannot be determined by quality and karma. However, that isn't what the Lord says. Each human being isn't classified according to the external classes we see. Instead, he should be understood through his internal attitude. One's internal attitude is the person's quality and *karma*.

According to that quality and karma, understand a person! According to that, is a person's *varṇa*. This will be explained later. Here, understanding the purely material view of Arjuna, the Lord gives the spiritual answer. Similar to the classes, Arjuna had a similar view towards other subjects. Therefore, without truly understanding that the true condition of the varṇas in the *Mahābhārata* and the Gita is based on quality and karma, there are people who give speeches, and write books.

However, when we understand subtly the view of the *Mahābhārata* and the Gita, if we try to understand, this is one thing that is clear. This is that the spiritual view of the varṇas has no relation to the social condition of these. That

refers to a person's internal attitude and condition. There, when Arjuna speaks about this 'mixing of classes,' this is not something that can ever happen.

This is because there is no mixing of classes. The varṇas are the different internal attitudes of an individual. The Lord will explain this later on. Man cannot be classified into a social group through this. Instead, each person must become aware for himself, of which class he belongs to.

Therefore, what Arjuna is so afraid of cannot happen at all. However, in the other sense, this can happen. On the level of a social system, when the classes exist, then there can be mixing of classes. That is what happened after the *Mahābhārata* war. This is because it is natural for that to happen, the mixing of the classes. All of the *kṣatriyas* in the war were destroyed. Then, the children that came later were all produced from this 'mixing.'

Thus, that will happen naturally. The Lord doesn't discuss that. The Lord doesn't think about the material mixing. Instead, one should understand that the varṇas aren't like that, in truth. That is something that each person must become aware of for himself; 'what class am I?' That is necessary for deciding one's *svadharma*. A person must accept dharma according to one's *varṇa*. This means one must understand about one's own quality and *karma*. That is why the Lord presents this view.

This same view comes in the *Mahābhārata* in several sections. This is the spiritual view of the *varṇas*. There, '*varṇa*' means the condition of mental modification, not the external social system. This view comes in several sections, where the classes are discussed. This is in *Bhīṣma's* instruction, etc. All of this comes there as well.

That is Arjuna's problem here. 'There will be mixing of the classes.' The Lord will give the reply, that mixing can never occur for the true *varṇa*.' Thus, the śloka says, '*Kṛṣṇa*,' O Kṛṣṇa, '*adharmah abhibhavāt*,' once *adharma* grows and overpowers dharma, '*kulastriyaḥ*,' the women of the family, '*praduṣyanti*,' will become defiled. '*Striṣu duṣṭāsu*,' once the women are defiled, '*varṇa saṅkaraḥ jāyate*,' there will be mixing of the classes. And what about once there is mixing of the classes?

'*Sankaraḥ narakāya eva kulaghnānām kulasya cha*.' '*Kulaghnānām*,' for those who destroy the family, by fighting the war, and destroying each family,

‘*kulasya*,’ and for everyone included in that family.. Once these people end the family lineage in the war, then they, as well as everyone in the family who don’t fight, ‘*narakāya eva*,’ this will only help to attain hell. They will reach hell. That is the meaning. How is that? That is said next.

‘*Eṣāṁ pitarah hi*,’ the ancestors of the family, ‘*luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ*.’ They go without the offerings of rice and water. Without these karmas for the ancestors, these being destroyed, because of the lack of children to perform, ‘*patanti*,’ they will fall to hell. Who? The ancestors.

Thus, there are karmas performed for those who die. These karmas are performed for the ancestors situated in *Pitr Loka*. To perform these karmas, according to the Vedic law, the male successor must perform them. The one to perform the *karma* for the departed mother and father, or for the ancestors in *Pitr Loka* is the son. It is said, ‘*punāma narakād trāyate iti putrah*.’ This is the meaning of the word ‘*putra*,’ son.’

According to the rules of the Vedas that were sustained in India for a long time, a son has the right for studying the Vedas and performing Vedic karmas, not a daughter. That was the old law. It was normally men who studied the Vedas. Only those who study the Vedas have the right to perform the Vedic karmas. That is why importance was given to the son, not to the daughter.

The birth of a son was celebrated like a festival, in one time. The cause is this. The primary reason is because only a son had the right to study the Vedas. Because the son studies the Vedas, only a son has the right to perform Vedic karma. Thus, an important job of a son is this ‘*piṇḍodakakriyā*’ – the offering of rice and water.

Once the father dies, the son performs this karma, and saves the father from going to hell, helping him to reach heaven. That is why it is said that a son is one who saves the father from hell. This is the reason why so much importance was given to a son, to men.

Here, who is dying in the war? It isn’t women, but men. If these men die, there won’t be anyone to perform these karmas. The family and dynasty will be destroyed. Thus, when one dies, one is in the condition of a spirit. In that condition, the son performs this ceremony for the soul to obtain Liberation. Here, it will happen that there is nobody to do this.

After the *Mahābhārata* war, *Dharmaputra* performed the *piṇḍodaka kriya* for all who died in battle. For some, there was nobody left in that dynasty. There was no one to perform this *kriya*. Therefore, *Dharmaputra* performed this for everyone. According to the rule of the *Smṛtis*, only a father's own son can perform this rite.

Suppose a person gets married, but doesn't produce a son, and dies. After death, his wife gets married again and has a child. If that child performs the rite for the father, the father won't receive the benefit.' These are certain rules in the *Smṛtis*. Thus, only if his own son performs the rite will the father be benefited.

Then, once the lineage of men is destroyed, there won't be anyone left to perform this rite. The soul will fall to hell. The soul won't attain Liberation. These are all rules in the *Smṛtis*. Having all of this in mind, Arjuna is saying this. In this *śloka*, many commentators discuss about this, in the light of the *Smṛtis*. It says, 'only men have the right to perform this rite. If a man doesn't perform this, the father will fall to hell.'

That is said here. However, the Lord answers to all of these problems. For that, the Lord reveals, 'what is the true nature of the *Ātman*? What happens after death? What are the two paths after death?' All of these matters are discussed in the Gita. In the Supreme Truth, this rice and water ceremony isn't necessary. That won't help in attaining *Mokṣa*. All of these are views in materialistic levels. The Lord replies in this way.

In other words, the course of the soul after death is discussed in the Gita in several parts. There is the Southern Path, and the Northern Path. Then, what happens after death? These answers are given while considering these problems in Arjuna's mind. Arjuna was thinking, 'if one dies, the son must perform the rice and water rite. If he does, the father will go directly to heaven.'

This is a thought from the *Smṛtis*. There are the scriptural proofs behind this faith. However, when the Lord replies, he says, 'another person's karma doesn't determine whether one goes to heaven. That depends on oneself.' '*Antakāle 'pi māmēva smaran tyaktvā kalebaran̄.*' All of this is said in the Gita. This is the answer to Arjuna. *Mokṣa* doesn't depend on whether the son performs the rice ceremony. 'Whoever remembers Me in the final time, leaving the body, he is Liberated.' Here, the rice and water ceremony isn't necessary.

This is the answer. This is how the Lord answers the thoughts of Arjuna. All of these subjects are discussed. This is the importance of this chapter. Here, because Arjuna was unable to see clearly, the problems Arjuna raises are solely on a material level, a low level. However, the answer the Lord says to all of these is from a very high level. The Lord gives answers to several questions that Arjuna hadn't asked. Otherwise, when the Lord gives answers, Arjuna again raises questions. In each section, Arjuna asks a question.

Thus, 'what is the course of the soul after death? In truth, for whom does death occur?' The Lord says, '*Na jāyate mriyate.*' All of that is the answer to these questions. The Lord says, 'the Atman is something that is neither born nor dies. Then what is the relevance of the rice and water ceremony? How can that happen?' In this way, accepting Arjuna's questions asked in his level, the Lord gives answers to matters Arjuna didn't even ask for. That is why the Gita is given importance as a *Mokṣa Shāstra*.

When we discuss all of that, we must also be aware of the problems faced by Arjuna, the problems of an ordinary man. For that purpose, *Vyāsa* brings all of these problems together in the first chapter. What does Arjuna say here? 'The ancestral rites will be destroyed, and the ancestors will fall to hell.' Therefore, 'we should avoid this war.'

'*Ṣaṅkaraḥ kulaghnānām kulasya cha narakāya eva.*' This becomes, '*narakāyaiva.*' '*Eṣām pitaraḥ hi,*' our ancestors, '*luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ,*' without the ancestral rites, '*patanti,*' will fall to hell.

***Doṣairetaiḥ kulaghnānām varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ
Utsādyante jātidharmāḥ kuladharmāścha śāśvatāḥ. 1.43.***

'*Etaiḥ varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ doṣaiḥ kulaghnānām śāśvatāḥ jātidharmāḥ kuladharmāḥ cha utsādyante.*' This is the order. '*Etaiḥ varṇasaṅkarakāraiḥ*' - this creates the mixing of the classes, '*doṣaiḥ,*' this defect.. if the war takes place, then all men will be destroyed. Then the varṇas will become mixed. From that, children will be born. From this defect, '*kulaghnānām,*' of those who destroy the family, those who fight in war and destroy the family, for them, '*kuladharmāḥ*

śāśvatāḥ,’ their eternal family dharmas, *’jātidharmāḥ,*’ and their class dharmas, *’utsādyante,*’ will be destroyed.

Arjuna is thinking that the *jāti dharmas* and *kula dharmas* are eternal. However, the Lord makes Arjuna understand that ‘these aren’t eternal.’ Therefore, there is no eternal family dharmas or caste dharmas. That is what the Gita says as an answer. Those dharmas of caste and family only exist as long as they are a system in society. However, in truth, *’varṇa’* is not a social system. That is speciality of the individual.

When this is said, there is no eternal family dharmas or caste dharmas. According to the changes in the individual, that person’s *dharmas* will constantly change. If qualities are the basis of a person’s class, then those qualities will constantly evolve in that individual. According to the change of those qualities, the *dharmas* of the person will constantly evolve. Thus, there is no such thing as an eternal family *dharma* or caste *dharma*.

Therefore, ‘these will be destroyed.’ There is no point in grieving over that.’ We can understand this later. This is what we see in history. No family *dharma* has existed eternally. There is none existing today. According to the unique qualities of the individual, the dharmas of that person will constantly change. Any period of time is like that.

In each period of history, the systems in society are constantly shaped by time. In that way came the family dharmas and castes dharmas of those times. They are systems that change according to the growth and expansion of man. That isn’t anyone’s fault in particular. This happens in all societies. As time goes, the systems of society are formed. In that way, this caste dharma and other things took form as a social system. However, Arjuna had thought that that was eternal.

Therefore, that must not be destroyed.’ The Lord doesn’t show the varṇas as a social system. Instead, the dharmas that are dependant on a person’s quality and actions will continue, as long as there are individuals. That isn’t in the level of a social system. That isn’t as an external system in society. We can understand this is the section of the Lord’s answer.

Again, Arjuna is speaking, next. *’śāśvatāḥ kuladharmāḥ jātidharmāḥ cha.’* Arjuna says, ‘the eternal caste *dharmas*, and the *dharmas* of the family, *’utsādyante,*’ will be destroyed. The result of the war will be calamity. ‘

Then it says, next, '*janārdana,*' O *Janārdana,* '*utsanna kuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām narake niyataṁ vāsaḥ bhavati iti anuśuśrūma.*' 'O *Janārdana,* '*utsanna kuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām,*' when the family dharmas are destroyed, then the people, '*narake,*' in hell, '*niyataṁ vāsaḥ,*' eternally dwelling, without being ever able to return, '*bhavati,*' this will happen, '*iti*' thus, '*anuśuśrūma,*' I have heard from others.

'Thus, once the family dharmas are destroyed, when adharma grows in the family, and the members because sinners, immersed in sinful acts, then the fruit of that will be to dwell in hell for infinite time.' I have heard this being said.' Therefore, we should avoid this war, which creates an opportunity for men to perform adharmic acts. That is what Arjuna says.

'*Utsannakuladharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām narake niyataṁ vāsaḥ bhavati iti anuśuśrūma.*' The *Smṛtis* and *Dharma Shāstras* deal with how to make man's material life disciplined. How can social dharmas be sustained? These kinds of subjects are discussed there. This is a discussion taking into consideration these external systems.

That same subject, in the view of the *Adhyātmika Shāstras* – how must one approach these problems? How should they be seen? When the answer comes, how can one view these problems in a spiritual level? That questioner presents the questions in the material level. We must understand the difference between these two.

Here, we can see Arjuna as a materialist and the Lord as the spiritualist. Therefore, don't think that the Lord responds to Arjuna's problems in the same level. The Lord doesn't give a material solution to Arjuna's material problems. Normally, we must find a material solution for our material problems. The question and answer are both on the level of materialism. Here it isn't like that. Here, the question is materialistic, and the answer is spiritual. That is the difference. Therefore, 'we should avoid this war, which will cause the entire family to fall to hell.'

Here, Arjuna is raising material problems. What is the material solution for these problems? It is to avoid the war. This is because if the defects caused by the war must be avoided, the war must be avoided. That is the materialistic peace.

The Lord doesn't discuss about such a peace. The solution that the Lord says is from a level beyond war and peace.

Both war and peace are on the material level. The normal war, and the normal peace that we see aren't the subject of the Gita. That is something beyond both of these. Seeing all of these problems from another level, the Lord tries to make Arjuna aware. Therefore, the teaching that the Gita is a scripture of war, or that the Gita teaches peace, or that the Gita encourages violence, or that the Gita encourages avoiding war.. when we enter into such a discussion, the first thing we should consider is from level we are seeing things. Is it from the material level, or the spiritual level?

The normal arguments and debates held on this are on the material level. People think about war and peace. Both of these are material. Both sides of the debate are on the side of materialism. These are the sides of war, and peace. The Lord's answer isn't from that level. These are dualities. Happiness and sorrow, war and peace, victory and defeat.. all of these are dualities. The level of the Lord is beyond dualities. The Lord sees this subjects in a level that is beyond.

When we understand this, we can understand what spirituality is in the Gita. Arjuna speaks next,

*Aho bata mahatpāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam
yadrājasukhalobhena hantuṁ svajanamudyatāḥ.* 1.45.

'Aho bata,' alas! or 'kaṣṭam!' 'Vayaṁ mahatpāpaṁ kartum vyavasitāḥ.' 'Vayaṁ,' we, 'mahatpāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitāḥ.' 'Mahatpāpaṁ,' a great sin, 'kartum,' in doing, 'vyavasitāḥ,' we are standing ready. Here, Arjuna is thinking about virtue and sin. He says, 'the war is sin.' If sin must be avoided, the war must be rejected.

If one must gain merit, one must perform good actions. Thus, Arjuna is situated on the level of merit and sin. This is a material level, the level of thinking about sin and merit. When the Lord replies, He speaks about a level beyond sin and merit. 'There, there is no sin, no merit.' That is the answer the Lord gives.

There is something beyond sin and merit.' That is what the Gita calls, 'niṣkāma karma, 'desireless action.' This is karma where one doesn't accumulate sin or merit. Here, Arjuna has awareness about sin. To get rid of this, the Lord instructs Desireless Action. This is because Arjuna had the desire for merit. A person who has a desire for merit will have to perform virtuous acts. In the level of virtuous actions, merit cannot exist apart from sin. There, sin and merit can only exist together. They are like the two sides of a coin.

In the level of merit, there will be some kind of demerit. If we want, we can have more merit, but we cannot completely get rid of demerit. That is the level of dualities. This is the material level. That itself is materialism; to act, while considering merit and demerit.

Arjuna's problem, his question here is in the Lord's mind. That is said next. The Lord tells Arjuna to perform niṣkāma karma, desireless action. There is no merit or demerit in that. There, one doesn't perform a karma for merit, nor does one perform a karma that causes demerit. One performs karma with non-attachment. Then merit and demerit don't bind the person.

What is the primary instruction of the Gita? It is niṣkāma karma. One thing that all commentators accept, whether it is *Advaita*, or *Dvaita*, or *Vaśiṣṭa Dvaita*, is the Lord's instruction about *niṣkāma karma*. The reason for the Lord instructing that is the condition of Arjuna here. What is that? 'We have decided to commit a great sin. This is a huge sin that we are going to do. Why is this? '*Rājyasukhalobhena*.' This is because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. Because of that greed, '*svajanaṁ hantum udyatāḥ*.' 'We are ready to kill our relatives.'

'*Svajanaṁ*.' Arjuna repeats this word in several sections; 'my own people, my relatives.' The Lord doesn't say, 'they aren't yours!' Instead, 'who are you?' What is the relationship between you and the body?' In this way, the Lord makes Arjuna aware of the *Ātman*, beyond the level of the body. In truth, what is that *Ātman*? In truth, it is the *Paramātman* itself, the Supreme Self. That is completely pure, supremely purifying. In that, there is no feeling of 'I' and 'mine.' Therefore, in your true nature of the Self, there are no relatives or enemies. There are no friends. There is nobody who is 'yours.' Therefore, there is no '*svajanam*' in That.'

In this way, the Lord makes Arjuna aware. For that purpose, the Lord gives Arjuna instruction about the true nature of the *Ātman*. Otherwise, ‘you talk about killing relatives, but you have no relatives.’ If the Lord said this, Arjuna wouldn’t have understood. Instead, the Lord showed Arjuna, ‘what is the *Ātman*?’

Arjuna says here, ‘*hantum*,’ we are going to kill them.’ As an answer to this, the Lord says, ‘*na jāyate mriyate*.’ The *Atman* doesn’t kill, nor make kill, nor does It die. There is no destruction for the *Atman*.’ Then who can you kill? Thus, having showed Arjuna a spiritual level to all of his material problems, the Lord gives answers to all of the questions here. That is the Lord’s instruction.

Arjuna says, ‘we have become ready for killing our own relatives. In this way, we are preparing to do a great sin.’

***‘Yadi māmāpratikāramaśāstram śāstrapāṇayah
Dhārtaraṣṭrā raṇe hanyustanme kṣemataram bhavet. 1.46.***

Arjuna is speaking again. ‘*Yadi apratikāram aśāstram mām*.’ ‘*Apratikāram*,’ without fighting back, ‘*aśāstram*,’ without weapons, ‘*mām*,’ me, without fighting or holding weapons, ‘*śāstrapāṇayah dhārtaraṣṭrāḥ*,’ the sons of *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, holding weapons, ‘*raṇe hanyuḥ*,’ let them kill me! ‘*Tat*,’ that, ‘*me kṣemataram bhavet*,’ that would be the best thing for me. That will bring me the most good. Therefore, the suitable dharma for me is to not fight. That is my *svadharma*.’ That is what Arjuna is deciding.

Here, after raising all of these justifications, how does the Lord hear all of this? This is said later. It says, ‘*prahasanniva*.’ This means the Lord was smiling. While seeing Arjuna lose his balance and collapse, the Lord didn’t have a single change in his *bhāva*, even externally. Instead, the Lord sees this condition of Arjuna with great lightness, with a smile. Here, Arjuna decides, ‘I won’t fight.’

‘I give up my weapons. I will stand on the battleground. Let them kill me. If they kill me, at least I will attain heaven.’ Thus, the Lord sees the problems in all the circumstances here, as well as elsewhere, with great lightness, and with a smile. After Arjuna decided, ‘I won’t fight. I am avoiding the war,’ the Lord showed Arjuna the vision of His Universal Form. What is that? This is that in

the war to come, He is destroying all of these warriors, in the form of Time. The Lord shows this to Arjuna. In truth, the war must take place. Arjuna isn't able to withdraw from the war. This is because the Lord will say, 'it is I who am performing this destruction.'

Even *Gandhāri* cursed the Lord. After the war, *Gandhāri* came to the battlefield, to the Lord. When she reached there, the war ground was covered with the corpses of great warriors. There, the wives were embracing the corpses and crying. In that scene, *Gandhāri* went to see *Srī Kṛṣṇa*. Then, the wife of each warrior was embracing their dead body and crying out. *Gandhāri* pointed these queens and said, 'Don't you see these dead kings? How were they killed?' She asks this to *Kṛṣṇa*.

Gandhāri pointed out to *Kṛṣṇa* that the wives of each of the great warriors killed were holding onto the dead corpses of their husbands and crying out. At the end, she says, 'You are the cause for all of this. All of these brave warriors died because of your actions alone. Therefore, this same thing will happen to your dynasty.' That was the curse. 36 years after this, the men in your clan will fight with each other like this. Here, these relatives fought each other and killed. Similarly, those in your clan will and fight with themselves and die.

On that day, the women *Yādavas* will embrace the dead bodies of their husbands like this, and cry. You will see that. Seeing that, you will leave that land. You will have to go to the forest. You won't be able to stay in that land. Having gone to the forest, you will be in some accident and die.' That was the curse.

In this way, even when He was being cursed, what did the Lord do? He was continuously smiling. All of the things that *Gandhāri* said were correct. However, the Lord says, 'the same destruction that has happened to your family, I will do the same to mine.' This doesn't happen because you curse it. I myself am doing all of this.' The Lord performs the actions of creation, sustenance, and dissolution. Therefore, on that level, 'it is my responsibility for everything.' Therefore, you are simply saying what is going to happen. What is that? Something that I don't do doesn't happen because you are saying it. Instead, this is something I myself am doing.

How is the future decided? *Vyāsa* says this is 'fate.' What does the Lord say? This is something that I myself have decided and am doing. Therefore, the war is something that is already decided. God has decided this. Therefore, it isn't possible for Arjuna to move away from that. He must perform.

Therefore, if it has been decided that the Yādava family will be destroyed, that will happen. Having heard this curse, the Lord didn't feel any kind of turmoil. 'I myself have already decided this.'

Like this, Arjuna is retreating from the war here. This isn't something possible, because the Lord has decided, 'the war will take place.' Arjuna will have to kill whoever must be killed.' Here, what does Arjuna say? '*Apratikāramī, aśāstramī,*' without fighting, without weapons, I will stand. Then let them kill me! Saying this is mere childishness. These are just words. The Lord knows what will really happen. That is why when Arjuna says all of this, the Lord is smiling, hearing everything. Then He instructs Arjuna.

Therefore, what is the condition of Arjuna? 'If I don't fight and retreat, I will avoid this war.' This is in answer to this view of Arjuna; the vision of the Universal Form. That is what the Lord shows Arjuna. What does the Lord show Arjuna in the Universal Form? It is the war itself. The Lord shows the transformation of the war. This is the war that is going to happen, the war that is taking place. Then, Arjuna became aware; 'this war has already begun. Then, it isn't possible for me to step aside from this.'

To retreat is just a thought; that won't ever happen. That must take place. Why is that? *Vyāsa* says that is the unavailability of Time. Man cannot change that. That is God's will. That is the decision of Justice. Man cannot change that. In the level of a *Jiva*, Arjuna doesn't have that kind of freedom. Arjuna doesn't have the freedom to withdraw from the war. He can only be subservient to that. That is unavoidable.

The vision of the Lord in the Universal Form is for making Arjuna understand that as well. Then, the answer to each one of Arjuna's problems and questions is in the Lord's instruction and actions. Therefore, what does Arjuna say here? He says 'that is best for me. Them killing me is best.'

Evamuktva 'rjunah saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
Viśṛjya saśaram chāpaṁ śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ. 1.47.

'*Saṅkhye*,' in battle, the battleground, '*rathopastha*,' situated in the chariot, '*arjunah*,' Arjuna, '*evam uktvā*,' having said all of this, '*saśaram chāpaṁ*,' his bow along with the arrows, '*viśṛjya*,' releasing, rejecting, '*śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ*,' with a mind full of grief, '*upāviśat*,' he sat near the Lord. Thus, having experienced this much mental turmoil and despair, Arjuna now reaches a decision. What is that? 'I won't fight.'

How was Arjuna saved from that decision? '*Upāviśat*.' The Lord is still there, standing nearby. Therefore, this continues, and Arjuna thinks twice about his decision. Arjuna has reached a decision here. In other words, his mind is mixed and confused. He has become controlled by despair. In such a condition, if a person tries to find the solution for his problems by himself with a confused mind, that solution will never be correct.

A person with a turbid mind, if he makes a decision with that mind, if he finds an answer for his problems, then that answer will never be right. Another person will have to find the answer for such a mind. He won't ever be able to do that. Here, what does Arjuna do? He gives himself treatment for his disease. This is treatment, without properly understanding the disease. However, that's not right, that kind of treatment.

Still, Arjuna is saved. How is that? That is said, '*upāviśat*.' Arjuna is seated in the presence of the Lord. Having made his decision, Arjuna is saved because of that. Next, the Lord begins to treat Arjuna Himself. Then, all of Arjuna's disease will leave. Thus, Arjuna suddenly will become aware that he cannot treat himself. Why is that? It is because the Lord is nearby. The Lord hasn't left. That is why Arjuna says in the next chapter, '*sādhi mām tvām prapannaṁ*.' 'Instruct me, who am surrendered to You.' This is said after giving up this decision.

What is that? '*Dharmasamuḍhachetasāḥ*.' Arjuna says, 'I am deluded as to what is dharma or adharma.' Therefore, after changing his decision, Arjuna says, 'I don't know what I should do. Should I fight, or not? I'm not able to reach a correct decision. Therefore, You must instruct me.'

There, Arjuna offers complete surrender to the Lord, in changing this decision. First, what we can understand is the material state of mind in an ordinary person. A person experiences sorrow and problems in life. The mind becomes unsettled. That mind that has lost its poise finds a solution for the problems. If that ends there, it won't do any good.

One must not find a solution like that. In that condition, the one who should find the solution is the Guru. Approach the Guru. This is called 'guru upasati.' That will be shown here. Arjuna wasn't ready for that till now. Here, Arjuna hasn't attained the Guru. Instead, Arjuna is finding the solution for all his problems and making decisions by himself. He hasn't reached the Guru. That's not enough.

Approaching the Guru, one must find the answer. Only a Guru can lead the *Jiva* to the other shore of this condition. That is what Lord *Vyāsa* shows us in the beginning of the second chapter. What *Vyāsa* shows is the ordinary condition of the *Jiva*. Everyone experiences this. After this, the second level shown isn't reached by ordinary *Jivas*.

Instead, when a problem comes, they make a decision. A problem comes again, and he makes a decision, by himself. Placing one's ego in front, a person finds the solutions to his problems by himself. As long as that happens, he continues in *Samsāra*. Those decisions won't be firm. The problems will repeat, and this will continue.

Till approaching a Guru and seeking His instructions, a person continues in the cycle of *Samsāra*. The first chapter ends in such a stage. This first chapter is very important. If we must understand the Gita on the level of a *Mokṣa Shāstra*, we should correctly understand the condition of Arjuna. This is not for understanding the condition of someone else; it is for understanding our own condition. This is for each *Jiva* understanding his own state. This shows all of the states that pass before he reaches the Guru, and where he reaches. In the end, how does he reach the presence of the Guru? This is to show this. Next, we will discuss the second chapter.

Iti śrīmahābhārate śatasāhasryām saṁhitāyām vaiyāsikyām bhīṣmaparvaṇi
śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde arjunaviśādayogaḥ nāma prathamo 'dhyāyaḥ.