

The *Bhagavad Gita*

Translated by Ramanand Prasad

Chapter 1: Arjuna's Dilemma

Dhritaraashtra said: O Sanjaya, assembled in the holy field of Kurukshetra and eager to fight, what did my people and the Paandavas do? (1.01)

Sanjaya said: Seeing the battle formation of the Paandava's army, King Duryodhana approached his guru, Drona, and spoke these words: (1.02)

O master, behold this mighty army of the sons of Paandu, arranged in battle formation by your talented disciple, the son of Drupada. (1.03)

There are many heroes and mighty archers equal to Bheema and Arjuna in war such as Yuyudhaana and Viraata; and the great warrior, Drupada; (1.04)

Dhrishtaketu, Chekitaana, and the heroic King of Kaashi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja, and the great man Saibya; (1.05)

The valiant Yudhaamanyu, the formidable Uttamauja, the son of Subhadraa, and the sons of Draupadi; all of them are great warriors. (1.06)

Also know, O best among the twice born, the distinguished ones on our side. I name the commanders of my army for your information. (1.07)

Yourself, Bheeshma, Karna, and the victorious Kripa; Ashvatthaamaa, Vikarna, and the son of Somadatta. (1.08)

And many other heroes who have risked their lives for me. They are armed with various weapons, and all are skilled in warfare. (1.09)

Our army, commanded by Bheeshma, is invincible; while their army, protected by Bheema, is easy to conquer. (1.10)

Therefore all of you, occupying your respective positions on all fronts, protect Bheeshma only. (1.11)

The mighty Bheeshma, the eldest man of the Kuru dynasty, roared as a lion and blew his conch loudly bringing joy to Duryodhana. (1.12)

After that, conches, kettledrums, cymbals, drums, and trumpets were sounded together. The commotion was tremendous. (1.13)

Then Lord Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a grand chariot yoked with white horses, blew their celestial conches. (1.14)

Krishna blew His conch, Paanchajanya; Arjuna blew his conch, Devadatta; and Bheema, the doer of formidable deeds, blew (his) big conch, Paundra. (1.15)

The son of Kunti, King Yudhishthira, blew (his conch) Anantavijaya, while Nakula and Sahadeva blew Sughosha and Manipushpaka conches, respectively. (1.16)

The King of Kaashi, the mighty archer; Shikhandi, the great warrior; Dhristadyumna, Viraata, and the invincible Saatyaki; (1.17)

King Drupada, and the sons of Draupadi; the mighty son of Subhadraa; all of them blew their respective conches, O lord of the earth. (1.18)

The tumultuous uproar, resounding through earth and sky, tore the hearts of the Kauravas. (1.19)

Seeing the sons of Dhritaraashtra standing; and the war about to begin; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Hanumana, took up his bow; and (1.20)

Spoke these words to Lord Krishna: O Lord, (please) stop my chariot between the two armies until I behold those who stand here eager for battle and with whom I must engage in this act of war. (1.21-22)

I wish to see those who are willing to serve the evil-minded son of Dhritaraashtra by assembling here to fight the battle. (1.23)

Sanjaya said: O King, Lord Krishna, as requested by Arjuna, placed the best of all the chariots in the midst of the two armies; (1.24)

Facing Bheeshma, Drona, and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Behold these assembled Kurus! (1.25)

There Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and comrades. (1.26)

Seeing fathers-in-law, all those kinsmen, and other dear ones standing in the ranks of the two armies, (1.27)

Arjuna was overcome with great compassion and sorrowfully said: O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing with a desire to fight, (1.28)

My limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body quivers and my hairs stand on end. (1.29)

The bow, Gaandeeva, slips from my hand and my skin intensely burns. My head turns, I am unable to stand steady and, O Krishna, I see bad omens. I see no use of killing my kinsmen in battle. (1.30-31)

I desire neither victory nor pleasure nor kingdom, O Krishna. What is the use of the kingdom, or enjoyment, or even life, O Krishna? (1.32)

Because all those, for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures, are standing here for the battle, giving up their lives and wealth. (1.33)

Teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives. (1.34)

I do not wish to kill them, who are also about to kill, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna. (1.35)

O Lord Krishna, what pleasure shall we find in killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra? Upon killing these felons we shall incur sin only. (1.36)

Therefore, we should not kill our brothers, the sons of Dhritaraashtra. How can we be happy after killing our kinsmen, O Krishna? (1.37)

Though they, blinded by greed, do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends. (1.38)

Why shouldn't we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna? (1.39)

With the destruction of the family, the eternal family traditions are destroyed, and immorality prevails due to the destruction of family traditions. (1.40)

And when immorality prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupted; when women are corrupted, social problems arise. (1.41)

This brings the family and the slayers of the family to hell, because the spirits of their ancestors are degraded when deprived of ceremonial offerings of rice-ball and water. (1.42)

The everlasting qualities of Varna and family traditions of those who destroy their family are ruined by the sinful act of illegitimacy. (1.43) *(Note: Varna means color, or the make up and the hue of mind; a social division or order of society such as caste in India.)*

We have been told, O Krishna, that people whose family traditions are destroyed necessarily dwell in hell for a long time. (1.44)

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by striving to slay our kinsmen because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. (1.45)

It would be far better for me if the sons of Dhritaraashtra should kill me with their weapons in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting. (1.46)

Sanjaya said: Having said this in the battle field and casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow. (1.47)

Chapter 2: Transcendental Knowledge

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and downcast, and who was overwhelmed with compassion and despair. (2.01)

The Supreme Lord said: How has the dejection come to you at this juncture? This is not fit for an Aryan (or the people of noble mind and deeds). It is disgraceful, and it does not lead one to heaven, O Arjuna. (2.02)

Do not become a coward, O Arjuna, because it does not befit you. Shake off this weakness of your heart and get up (for the battle), O Arjuna. (2.03)

Arjuna said: How shall I strike Bheeshma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship, with arrows in battle, O Krishna? (2.04)

It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with (theirs) blood. (2.05)

Neither do we know which alternative (to beg or to kill) is better for us, nor do we know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. We should not even wish to live after killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra who are standing in front of us. (2.06)

My heart is overcome by the weakness of pity, and my mind is confused about Dharma. I request You to tell me, decisively, what is better for me. I am Your disciple. Teach me who has taken refuge in You. (2.07) *(Dharma may be defined as the eternal law governing, upholding, and supporting the creation and the world order. It also means duty, righteousness, ideal conduct, moral principles, and truth. Adharma is an antonym to Dharma. Expert guidance should be sought during the moment of crisis.)*

I do not perceive that gaining an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom on this earth, or even lordship over the gods will remove the sorrow that is drying up my senses. (2.08)

Sanjaya said: O King, after speaking like this to Lord Krishna, the mighty Arjuna said to Krishna: I shall not fight, and became silent. (2.09)

O King, Lord Krishna, as if smiling, spoke these words to the despondent Arjuna in the midst of the two armies. (2.10)

The Supreme Lord said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet speak the words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. (2.11)

There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. (2.12)

Just as the Atma acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly Atma acquires another body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (See also 15.08) (2.13) *(Atma or Atman means consciousness, spirit, soul, self, the source of life and the cosmic power behind the body-mind complex. Just as our body exists in space, similarly our thoughts, intellect, emotions, and psyche exist in Atma, the space of consciousness. Atma cannot be perceived by the senses, because, the senses abide in Atma.)*

The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, and pain and pleasure. They are transitory and impermanent. Therefore, (learn to) endure them, O Arjuna. (2.14)

Because the calm person, who is not afflicted by these feelings and is steady in pain and pleasure, becomes fit for immortality, O Arjuna. (2.15)

There is no nonexistence of the Sat (or Atma) and no existence of the Asat. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth. (2.16) *(Sat exists at all times -- past, present, and future. Atma is called Sat. Asat is a notion that does not exist at all (like the horns of a rabbit or the water in a mirror). The one that has a beginning and an end is neither Sat nor Atat. The body is neither Sat nor Atat, an*

both Sat and Asat, because, it has a temporary existence. Mithya is the one that appears Sat at first sight, but is really Asat. Body, like the universe or Jagat, is called Mithya.)

Know That, by which all this (universe) is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can destroy the indestructible (Atma) . (2.17)

Bodies of the eternal, imperishable, and incomprehensible soul are said to be perishable. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna. (2.18)

The one who thinks that Atma is a slayer, and the one who thinks that Atma is slain, both are ignorant, because Atma neither slays nor is slain. (2.19)

The Atma is neither born nor does it die at any time, nor having been it will cease to exist again. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Atma is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. (2.20)

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Atma is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed? (2.21)

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones, similarly Atma acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies. (2.22)

Weapons do not cut this Atma, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry. (2.23)

This Atma cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried up. It is eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable, and primeval. (2.24)

The Atma is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchanging. Knowing this Atma as such you should not grieve. (2.25)

If you think that this (body) takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. (2.26)

Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. (2.27)

All beings, O Arjuna, are unmanifest before birth and after death. They are manifest between the birth and the death only. What is there to grieve about? (2.28)

Some look upon this Atma as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it no one actually knows it. (2.29)

O Arjuna, the Atma that dwells in the body of all (beings) is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn for any body. (2.30)

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver. Because there is nothing more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. (2.31)

Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven. (2.32)

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.33)

People will talk about your disgrace forever. To the honored, dishonor is worse than death. (2.34)

The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you. (2.35)

Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful than this? (2.36)

You will go to heaven if killed, or you will enjoy the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna. (2.37)

Chapter 11: Vision of the Cosmic Form

Arjuna said: My illusion is dispelled by Your profound words, that You spoke out of compassion towards me, about the supreme secret of the Self. (11.01)

O Krishna, I have heard from You in detail about the origin and dissolution of beings, and Your imperishable glory. (11.02)

O Lord, You are as You have said, yet I wish to see Your divine cosmic form, O Supreme Being. (11.03)

O Lord, if You think it is possible for me to see this, then O Lord of the yogis, show me Your imperishable Self. (11.04)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, behold My hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms of different colors and shapes. (11.05)

See the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashvins, and the Maruts. Behold, O Arjuna, many wonders never seen before. (11.06)

O Arjuna, now behold the entire creation; animate, inanimate, and whatever else you like to see; all at one place in My body. (11.07)

But, you are not able to see Me with your physical eye; therefore, I give you the divine eye to see My majestic power and glory. (11.08)

Sanjaya said: O King, having said this; Lord Krishna, the great Lord of (the mystic power of) yoga, revealed His supreme majestic form to Arjuna. (11.09)

(Arjuna saw the Universal Form of the Lord) with many mouths and eyes, and many visions of marvel, with numerous divine ornaments, and holding divine weapons. (11.10)

Wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with celestial perfumes and ointments, full of all wonders, the limitless God with faces on all sides. (11.11)

If the splendor of thousands of suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, even that would not resemble the splendor of that exalted being. (11.12)

Arjuna saw the entire universe, divided in many ways, but standing as (all in) One (and One in all) in the body of Krishna, the God of gods. (11.13)

Then Arjuna, filled with wonder and his hairs standing on end, bowed his head to the Lord and prayed with folded hands. (11.14)

Arjuna said: O Lord, I see in Your body all the gods and multitude of beings, all sages, celestial serpents, Lord Shiva as well as Lord Brahmaa seated on the lotus. (11.15)

O Lord of the universe, I see You everywhere with infinite form, with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. Neither do I see the beginning nor the middle nor the end of Your Universal Form. (11.16)

I see You with Your crown, club, discus; and a mass of radiance, difficult to behold, shining all around with immeasurable brilliance of the sun and the blazing fire. (11.17)

I believe You are the imperishable, the Supreme to be realized. You are the ultimate resort of the universe. You are the protector of eternal Dharma, and the imperishable primal spirit. (11.18)

I see You with infinite power, without beginning, middle, or end; with many arms, with the sun and the moon as Your eyes, with Your mouth as a blazing fire whose radiance is scorching all the universe. (11.19)

The entire space between heaven and earth is pervaded by You alone in all directions. Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O Lord. (11.20)

These hosts of demigods enter into You. Some with folded hands sing Your names and glories in fear. A multitude of Maharishis and Siddhas hail and adore You with abundant praises. (11.21)

Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Saadhyas, Vishwedevas, Ashvins, Maruts, Ushmapas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas; they all amazingly gaze at You. (11.22)

Seeing your infinite form with many mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and many fearful teeth; the worlds are trembling with fear and so do I, O mighty Lord. (11.23)

Seeing Your great effulgent and various-colored form touching the sky; Your mouth wide open and large shining eyes; I am frightened and find neither peace nor courage, O Krishna. (11.24)

Seeing Your mouths, with fearful teeth, glowing like fires of cosmic dissolution, I lose my sense of direction and find no comfort. Have mercy on me! O Lord of gods, refuge of the universe. (11.25)

The sons of Dhritaraashtra along with the hosts of kings; Bheeshma, Drona, and Karna together with chief warriors on our side are also quickly entering into Your fearful mouths having terrible teeth. Some are seen caught in between the teeth with their heads crushed. (11.26-27)

As many torrents of the rivers rush toward the ocean, similarly, those warriors of the mortal world are entering Your blazing mouths. (11.28)

As moths rush with great speed into the blazing flame for destruction, similarly all these people are rapidly rushing into Your mouths for destruction. (11.29)

You are licking up all the worlds with Your flaming mouths, swallowing them from all sides. Your powerful radiance is burning the entire universe, and filling it with splendor, O Krishna. (11.30)

Tell me who are You in such a fierce form? My salutations to You, O best of gods, be merciful! I wish to understand You, the primal Being, because I do not know Your mission. (11.31)

The Supreme Lord said: I am death, the mighty destroyer of the world, out to destroy. Even without your participation all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to exist. (11.32)

Therefore, you get up and attain glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these (warriors) have already been destroyed by Me. You are only an instrument, O Arjuna. (11.33)

Kill Drona, Bheeshma, Jayadratha, Karna, and other great warriors who are already killed by Me. Do not fear. You will certainly conquer the enemies in the battle, therefore, fight! (11.34)

Sanjaya said: Having heard these words of Krishna; the crowned Arjuna, trembling with folded hands, prostrated with fear and spoke to Krishna in a choked voice. (11.35)

Arjuna said: Rightly, O Krishna, the world delights and rejoices in glorifying You. Terrified demons flee in all directions. The hosts of Siddhas bow to You in adoration. (11.36)

Why should they not, O great soul, bow to You, the original creator who is even greater than Brahmaa? O infinite Lord, O God of gods, O abode of the universe, You are both Sat and Asat, and the imperishable Brahman that is beyond both (Sat and Asat). (11.37)

You are the primal God, the most ancient Person. You are the ultimate resort of all the universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme abode. The entire universe is pervaded by You, O Lord of the infinite form. (11.38)

You are Vaayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Shashaanka, and Brahmaa as well as the father of Brahmaa. Salutations to You a thousand times, and again and again salutations to You. (11.39)

My salutations to You from front and from behind. O Lord, my obeisances to You from all sides. You are infinite valor and the boundless might. You pervade everything, and therefore You are everywhere and in everything. (11.40)

Considering You merely as a friend, not knowing Your greatness, I have inadvertently addressed You as O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend: merely out of affection or carelessness. (11.41)

In whatever way I may have insulted You in jokes; while playing, reposing in bed, sitting, or at meals; when alone, or in front of others; O Krishna, I implore You for forgiveness. (11.42)

You are the father of this animate and inanimate world, and the greatest guru to be worshipped. No one is even equal to You in the three worlds; how can there be one greater than You? O Being of Incomparable Glory. (11.43)

Therefore, O adorable Lord, I seek Your grace by bowing down and prostrating my body before You. Bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to a friend, and as a husband to his wife, O Lord. (11.44)

I am delighted by beholding that which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is tormented with fear. Show me that (four-armed) form. O God of gods, the refuge of the universe have mercy! (11.45)

I wish to see You with a crown, holding mace and discus in Your hand. O Lord with thousand arms and universal form, appear in the four-armed form. (11.46)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, being pleased with you I have shown you, through My own yogic powers, this supreme, shining, universal, infinite, and primal form of Mine that has never been seen before by anyone other than you. (11.47)

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by Yajna, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in the cosmic form in this human world by anyone other than you, O Arjuna. (11.48)

Do not be perturbed and deluded by seeing such a terrible form of Mine as this. With fearless and cheerful mind, now behold My four-armed form. (11.49)

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna, having thus spoken to Arjuna, revealed His four-armed form. Then assuming His gentle human form, Mahatma Krishna consoled Arjuna who was terrified. (11.50)

Arjuna said: O Krishna, seeing this gentle human form of Yours, I have now become composed and I am normal again. (11.51)

The Supreme Lord said: This (four-armed) form of Mine that you have seen is very difficult, indeed, to see. Even the gods are ever longing to see this form. (11.52)

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by charity, nor by ritual, can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me. (11.53)

However, through single-minded devotion alone, I can be seen in this form, can be known in essence, and also can be reached, O Arjuna. (11.54)

The one who does all works for Me, and to whom I am the supreme goal, who is my devotee, who has no attachment, and is free from enmity towards any being attains Me, O Arjuna. (See also 8.22) (11.55)