

Arjuna Vishada Yoga - The Despondency of Arjuna

1. Dhritarashtra said: Tell me, O Sanjaya, what did my sons and those of Pandu gathered in sacred Kurukshetra, intent on battle, do?
2. Sanjaya replied: Prince Duryodhana, seeing the army of the Pandavas drawn up for battle, approached Dronacharya and addressed him thus:
3. "Behold, O Master, this mighty army of the Pandavas, arrayed for battle by thy talented pupil Dhristadyumna, son of Drupada.
4. "Here are the mighty archers, the peers of Bhima and Arjuna in warfare; Yuyudhana and Virata, and the mighty warrior Drupada;
5. "Dhrishtaketu, Cekitana, valourous Kasiraja, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Saibya, the best among men;
6. "The valiant Yudhamanyu, the brave Uttamauja, Abhimanyu the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi - all great warriors,
7. "Acquaint thyself now, O best of Brahmanas, with the distinguished chiefs amongst us. For thy information, I shall mention the names of the captains of my army.
8. "Thy noble self, Bhishma, Karna and Kripa who is ever victorious in battle, Asvatthama, Vikama and the son of Somadatta;
9. "There are, besides, many others, all skilled in warfare and equipped with diverse weapons who have pledged to lay down their lives for me.
10. "And yet, our army commanded by Bhishma seems weaker compared to their army commanded by Bhima.
11. "Therefore, all of you, each in his appointed place, stand firm. And above all, guard Bhishma carefully!"
12. At this, the grand old sire Bhishma, the oldest of the Kurus, gave a roar like a lion and blew his conch to hearten Duryodhana.
13. Thereupon, conches, drums, cymbals and trumpets suddenly blared forth producing a tumultuous noise.
14. Then, seated in a great chariot drawn by white steeds. Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew their Divine conches.
15. Hrishikesha blew the Panchajanya and Dhananjaya the Devadatta; while Bhima of terrible exploits sounded his great conch, the Paundra.
16. King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew his conch Anantavijaya, while Nakula and Sahadeva blew theirs known as Sughosa and Manipushpaka.

17. And Kasiraja the great archer, Sikhandi the great warrior, Dhristadyumna, Virata and Satyaki the invincible;
18. Drupada, Draupadi's sons, and the mighty-armed son of Suhadra (Abhimanyu), all these, O King, blew each his conch.
19. And the terrible sound echoing through heaven and earth rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons.
20. O King, seeing the army of your sons being arranged and the battle about to commence, Arjuna, whose flag bore the image of Hanuman,
21. Lifting his bow, spake thus to Hrishikesha: "Set my chariot between the two armies, O Achyuta,
22. "So that I may behold them drawn up for battle and know with whom I must wage this combat;
23. "So that I can survey those anxious to please the evil-minded Duryodhana by engaging in battle perverse."
24. Sanjaya said: O King, thus requested by Gudakesha, Hrishikesha placed the magnificent chariot between the two armies,
25. In front of Bhishma, Drona and all the other kings and said: "Behold, O Partha, the Kauravas assembled yonder."
26. Then did Partha see, in both armies, sires, grandsires, preceptors, uncles, cousins, sons, grandsons and comrades;
27. Fathers-in-law and benefactors. Beholding all these kinsmen ranged before him,
28. Overcome with pity, Arjuna said: "Krishna, as I look upon my kinsmen arrayed here, my limbs fail and my mouth is parched; my body quivers and my hair stands on end. My bow Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin bums all over; I am unable to stand and my mind whirls.
29. "Kesava, I portend evil omens and do not see any good ensuing from the slaughter of kinsmen.
30. "Krishna, I seek not victory nor sovereign power, nor earthly joys. Of what avail are kingdom, worldly pleasures and even life, O Govinda?
31. "Those for whose sake we seek kingdom, earthly joys and pleasures, they stand here in battle staking life and property;
32. "Preceptors, sires, grandsires, sons and even grandsons, uncles, fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law and other relatives;

33. "These I would not kill, O Madhusudhana, even though they slay me, not even for the kinship of the three worlds, much less for an earthly kingdom.
34. "What pleasure can there be in killing the sons of Dhritarashtra, O Janardhana? Usurpers they may be, but if we slay them, only sin can be our lot.
35. "Therefore, O Madhava, it does not behove us to kill kinsmen, the sons of Dhritarashtra. For how can we be happy after killing our own kinsmen?
36. "Even if these people, their minds warped by greed, perceive no evil in destroying the family, and no sin in treachery to friends;
37. "How can we, O Janardhana, help recoiling from this destruction, seeing clearly as we do the sin that lies therein?
38. "With the destruction of the family perish the age-old traditions; and virtue having been lost, vice seizes the entire race.
39. "Krishna, when vice prevails the women become unchaste; and with the corruption of women, caste mixture ensues.
40. "Promiscuity ruins both the family and those who defile it; and for lack of obsequial offerings, the departed souls languish.
41. "Through the bad deeds of family-destroyers, caste intermixture results, ruining thereby everlasting caste and family virtues.
42. "We have heard, O Janardhana, that hell is verily the long-lasting abode of those whose family virtues have been ruined.
43. "Alas! Goaded by the greed for a kingdom, what a sin are we ready to commit by slaying our own kinsmen!
44. "Far happier it would be for me if Dhritarashtra's sons, weapons in hand, should strike me down on the battlefield, unresisting and unarmed."
45. Sanjaya said: Thus spoke Arjuna, on the field of battle, and dropping his bows and arrows sank down in his seat on the chariot, overwhelmed with anguish.

Thus in the Bhagavad Gita, the Essence of the Upanishads, the Science of Brahman , the Scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the first chapter, entitled ARJUNA VISHADA YOGA