

## ARJUN'S DILEMMA

*The war of Mahabharata has begun after all negotiations by Lord Krishna and others to avoid it, failed. The blind King (Dhritarashtra) was never very sure about the victory of his sons (Kauravas) in spite of their superior army. Sage Vyasa, the author of Mahabharata, wanted to give the blind king the boon of eyesight so that the king could see the horrors of the war for which he was primarily responsible. But the king refused the offer. He did not want to see the horrors of the war; but preferred to get the war report through his charioteer, Sanjaya. Sage Vyasa granted the power of clairvoyance to Sanjaya. With this power Sanjaya could see, hear, and recall the events of the past, present, and the future. He was able to give an instant replay of the eye witness war report to the blind King sitting in the palace.*

*Bhishma, the mightiest man and the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava's army, is disabled by Arjuna and is lying on deathbed in the battleground on the tenth day of the eighteen day war. Upon hearing this bad news from Sanjaya, the blind King loses all hopes for victory of his sons. Now the King wants to know the details of the war from the beginning, including how the mightiest man, and the commander-in-chief of his superior army  $\frac{3}{4}$  who had a boon of dying at his own will  $\frac{3}{4}$  was defeated in the battlefield. The teaching of the Gita begins with the inquiry of the blind King, after Sanjaya described how Bhishma was defeated, as follows:*

The King inquired: Sanjaya, please now tell me, in details, what did my people (the Kauravas) and the Pandavas do in the battlefield before the war started? (1.01)

Sanjaya said: O King, After seeing the battle formation of the Pandava's army, your son approached his guru and spoke these words: (1.02)

O Master, behold this mighty army of the Pandavas, arranged in battle formation by your other talented disciple! There are many great warriors, valiant men, heroes, and mighty archers. (1.03-06)

### ***Introduction Of The Army Commanders***

Also there are many heroes on my side who have risked their lives for me. I shall name few distinguished commanders of my army for your information. He named all the officers of his army, and said: They are armed with various weapons, and are skilled in warfare. (1.07-09)

Our army is invincible, while their army is easy to conquer. Therefore all of you, occupying your respective positions, protect our commander-in-chief. (1.10-11)

### ***War Starts With The Blowing Of Conch Shells***

The mighty commander-in-chief and the eldest man of the dynasty, roared as a lion and blew his conch loudly, bringing joy to your son. (1.12)

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

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

Krishna blew His conch first, and then Arjuna and all other commanders of various divisions of the army of Pandavas blew their respective conches. The tumultuous uproar, resounding through the earth and sky, tore the hearts of your sons. (1.15-19)

### ***Arjuna Wants To Inspect The Army Against Whom He Is About To Fight***

Seeing your sons standing, and the war about to begin with the hurling of weapons; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Lord Hanumana, took up his bow and 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 the battle and with whom I must engage in this act of war. (1.20-22)

I wish to see those who are willing to serve and appease the evil-minded Kauravas 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 facing Arjuna's grandfather, his guru and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Behold these assembled soldiers! (1.24-25)

Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and other comrades in the army. (1.26)

### ***ARJUNA'S DILEMMA***

After seeing fathers-in-law, companions, and all his kinsmen standing in the ranks of the two armies, Arjuna was overcome with great compassion and sorrowfully spoke these words: O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing with a desire to fight, my limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body quivers and my hairs stand on end. (1.27-29)

The bow 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? Because all those  $\frac{3}{4}$  for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures  $\frac{3}{4}$  are standing here for the battle, giving up their lives. (1.32-33)

I do not wish to kill my teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives who are about to kill us, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna. (1.34-35)

O Lord Krishna, what pleasure shall we find in killing our cousin brothers? Upon killing these felons we shall incur sin only. (1.36)

Therefore, we should not kill our cousin brothers. How can we be happy after killing our relatives, O Krishna? (1.37)

Though they are blinded by greed, and do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends. Why should not we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna? (1.38-39)

### ***ARJUNA DESCRIBES THE EVILS OF WAR***

Eternal family traditions and codes of moral conduct are destroyed with the destruction of the family. And immorality prevails in the family 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, unwanted progeny is born. (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 love and respect by the unwanted progeny. (1.42)

The everlasting qualities of social order and family traditions of those who destroy their family are ruined by the sinful act of illegitimacy. (1.43)

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 relatives because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. (1.45)

It would be far better for me if my cousin brothers kill me with their weapons in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting. (1.46)

### ***WHEN GOING GETS TOUGH, EVEN TOUGH ONES CAN GET DELUDED***

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