

Chapter 1: Arjunvishaad Yog - The Yoga of Despondency of Arjuna

The blind king, Dhritarashtra, in the capital city of Hastinapur, asks Sanjaya to relate to him the events taking place at the holy field of Kurukshetra where his sons and those of Pandu (his deceased brother) faced each other with the desire of war. Sanjaya having been blessed with "Tele-vision" by Sage Vyasa tells the King that his eldest son Duryodhan after reassessing the two armies felt the need to protect Grand sire Bhishma from all sides and tells his army to do so. Bhishma feels his due importance and blows the conch signalling the readiness of war on behalf of the Kauravas. Lord Krishna blows the conch on behalf of the Pandavas, followed by all others on His side, in a disciplined manner.

At this point of beginning of the war, Arjuna expresses his desire to see the two armies from a vantagepoint. Lord Sri Krishna as his charioteer takes his chariot to the middle of the two armies, directly in front of Grand sire Bhishma and Great warrior teacher Drona, and tells Arjuna to behold the Kuru dynasty gathered in front of him, ready for war.

Arjuna starts getting second thoughts on seeing his own clan who were ready for their own destruction. In order to win the battle and thus attain kingdom and unsurpassable wealth, he would have to fight his cousins and kill them.

Arjuna develops despondency towards material objects. He felt that to fight, in order to obtain worldly materials for own self, was an inappropriate action. Arjuna, beset by extreme grief, setting aside his famous Gandiva bow and arrows sat down in the back of the chariot and refused to fight.

People who perform unholy actions for their own self, they not only perform impure actions themselves but they also perform impure actions on behalf of the society. The fruits of their actions, are so far reaching that even their ancestors, who have left their bodies and are placed in a particular state, also incur pain and fall further into impure worlds (hells). Arjuna felt that to obtain happiness from himself, he should not cause sadness to the society. Selfish people, in the hunt of pleasures to glorify the self, perform the worst forms of actions and incur sin. Hence, he was refusing to fight.

Arjuna was not a coward. He was not afraid of death. Hence, there should be no cause for him to be afraid of. Arjuna develops hatred towards selfish ends and thus was able to get the blessings of the Lord.

The first chapter is known as the Yoga of Despondency of Arjuna. When a person develops extreme despondency towards material objects, then he becomes the right claimant to receive the Divine love of God. Lord Krishna graced Arjuna and delivered the sermon of the true religion, the Geeta, for the salvation of his soul.