

Chapter 2 Arjuna Vishadha yoga

• The Critical Moment

The showdown had finally come. The war was about to begin. At such a crucial time, instead of shooting the first arrow, Arjuna sat down in utter dejection.

- Why are we nervous about-facing situations?
- Many students, the world over, get examination fever or develop cold feet and do not write the exam.
- Some mess up a job interview; others buckle at crucial decision-taking moments or do not deliver when it is most needed.
- Many brilliant performers are nervous wrecks just before show time.
- **All of us have faced many such moments in life.**
 - Often, the consequence of an action strikes us suddenly, just when we are about to do it.
 - As Arjuna stood in the middle of the battlefield, he was suddenly struck with the scale of the inevitable destruction and the sure death of his revered grandsire and teacher, probably at his very hands.
 - Fear of failure always brings about an onslaught of nervousness.
 - Arjuna feared that they might even lose the war.
 - A faulty perception of oneself and the situation allows emotions to take over.
 - Arjuna felt: 'I' will be killing 'my' relations. 'I do not want to fight a battle for wealth and kingdom (2.8).'
- **Arjuna's Condition**
 - Having exhausted all seemingly logical arguments, he sat down in utter despair and despondency, unable to think or act.
 - There are thousands around the world even today who are in Arjuna's condition.
 - In fact, all of us, in a deeper sense, are in Arjuna's condition

• **Thinking**

- Learn 'how' to think.
- As children, we are taught how to talk, walk and eat; in school, how to read, write and compute; in college, about medicine, engineering or catering; but no one taught us how to think.

We cannot escape from our thoughts. From morning to night and from birth to death.

If our thoughts were to be broadcast, we would all appear mad!

It is, therefore, most important to know how to think.

Gita teaches you how to think.

• **Holistic Vision**

- A painting should be viewed from various angles to appreciate its true glory. Else it's a distorted vision.
- Similarly, important situations must be viewed from many perspectives to give us a holistic vision of them.

• **Arjuna's Surrender**

- Faced with insurmountable problems, we surrender to a higher cause or authority – often to God.
- Like Arjuna, however, our initial surrender is conditional and partial.
 - Such surrender, even though conditioned, opens us to guidance and reflection.
- With the maturity and wisdom resulting from Sri Krishna's guidance, later Arjuna surrendered completely and unconditionally. 'I shall do as you say' (18.73).
- What do we surrender and to whom?
 - To give up one's ego at the altar of a higher authority is surrender.
- In partial or conditional surrender, we retain our ego partially.
 - whilst a rank egotist never accepts another as a higher authority, so never surrenders.

- The Lord has bestowed human beings with the greatest gift – the freedom to choose.
- We are not preprogramed, like animals:
 - Ex: a cow is choicelessly herbivorous.
- We can do, not do, or do otherwise.
- This freedom to choose can become either a blessing or a curse, and can be used to make or mar ourselves.
- To choose to do the right thing and not do the wrong thing is to use our freedom wisely.
- However, we even have the choice to surrender this choice to the will of God.
- This is the highest wisdom, since His will, the will of Totality, is the highest.
- **SHreyas – Absolute Good**
 - **SHreyas**
 - What is good for one may be bad for another.
 - Profit to me may cause loss to another.
 - A bigger pay packet may mean more working hours.
 - What is good at one time and place may not be so at another time and place.
 - Absolute good is that which is good for all, irrespective of time, place, and circumstance.
 - *At the physical level*
 - *At the mental level*
 - *At the intellectual level*
 - *At the spiritual level*
 - Arjuna asked Sri Krishna to teach him about the absolute good (Shreyas) which would destroy his delusion and sorrow and make him truly happy.
- **Dharma Discourse by Arjuna**

- The arguments offered by the emotionally immature can also be surprisingly sophisticated, and even correct in a different context.
- These are the arguments put forward by Arjuna to justify his unwillingness to fight.
 - War causes destruction of family.
 - Destruction of the family causes destruction of family cultures and values
 - Destruction of family cultures increases unrighteousness.
 - Increase in unrighteousness causes impurity in women.
 - Impurity in women causes admixture of castes.
 - Failure to offer ‘food and water’.
 - Fall in family values destroys the community.
 - Destruction of family values brings hell.
- ***Misplaced Thoughts***
 - No thought, emotion, or action by itself is good or bad.
 - It has to be seen in its overall context.
 - Good intentions may backfire.
 - Actions in the name of progress can cause global warming – a long-term loss.
 - Arjuna’s love for his relatives, reverence for his elders, and thoughts on dharma would have been laudable had they not sprung from confusion and fear and had been articulated in a different place and time.
 - Peace-time philosophy when the enemy has already entered one’s land, and cross-border firing when peace talks are in progress – both are inappropriate.
- **The GITA’s Message**
 - Is Gita an instigator of war?
How can a holy book recommend violence?
 - Often in the Gita, Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to fight.

- Arjuna 's delusion and grief had brought him to a state of inaction in the battle field.
- Sri Krishna taught Arjuna Self-knowledge, which removed his grief and delusion which was the main purpose of this inspiring revelation.
- Arjuna and the war – an excellent opportunity
- The efficacy of this universal message of the *Gita* has been beautifully and dramatically demonstrated for eternity.
- Arjuna and the war became an excellent opportunity to teach this immortal knowledge to mankind.
- Do your Duty!!!
- On the battlefield, as a soldier, Arjuna's duty was to fight.
- Sri Krishna is asking Arjuna to do his duty, which was to fight.
- If the Lord were talking to a student, he would be asked to study!
- When anti-social elements in society cross the limits of law, severe action is required, so that law and order can be restored.
- If righteous elements shy away from such actions, all of society suffers.
- 'Actively resist all evil'.
- If we allow the negative tendencies within us to rule, we too would suffer.
- Hence the message of the *Gita* is not 'Fight', but 'Actively resist all evil' – both within and without.

• **Recap of Chapter 1: Arjuna-viSHAdA-yoga**

- The word 'Vishadha' means grief.
- 'Arjuna- Vishadha -yoga' is the 'Yoga of the Arjuna's Grief'.
- Grief is a powerful mechanism that can lead to a new worldview, a 'perspective transformation' that can heal.
- Arjuna's grief too becomes Yoga, bringing with it a totally new vision, a means to Liberation as he seeks guidance from Lord Krishna.

- His helplessness and dejection trigger in him the urge to surrender to the Guru, in this case the Lord Himself.
- This chapter vividly describes how Arjuna enters the battlefield full of enthusiasm and then becomes grief-stricken and deluded when he sees his near and dear ones arrayed for battle; it sets the foundation for the discourse that follows.

Om Tat Sat.