

“I know not Your purpose” is the frightened inquiry made by Arjuna. The Lord deals with that mystery. He says He is intent on wiping out the world. Death in fact is taking place ceaselessly. When it is scattered and spread out, it is called the law of nature; but when it is concentrated, it is called a catastrophe. The Lord has this work of extermination done in both the ways — severally and collectively; extensively and intensively. The Mahabharata war is an instance of His intensive destruction of mankind. Whenever a need for it arises He does it very effectively. He truly adores God who sees His hand at work in all destructions small and great. Nothing in the world is terrible to the knower of the ways of the Lord.

Arjuna is given to understand now that the destruction of Bhishma, Drona and Karna is inevitable. He who did not want to be the cause of the death of the venerable ones, realizes now that it is not possible for man to avert the design of the Lord. Arjuna's eagerness to take revenge on Karna is now shorn of its personal poignancy and spite.

It is certain that these men of might are going to perish independent of Arjuna's instrumentality. Why then should he at all engage himself in this carnage? The necessity for it is explained :—

तस्माच्चमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३

तस्मात् त्वम् उद्-तिष्ठ यशः लभ-स्व जि-त्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यम् सम्-ऋद्धम् ।
मया एव एते नि-हन्-ताः पूर्वम् एव निमित्त-मात्रम् भव सव्य-साचिन् ॥