

- CHAPTER 1 -

Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra

Chapter 1—Text 1

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca
dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre
samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva
kim akurvata sañjaya

SYNONYMS

dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ uvāca—King Dhṛtarāṣṭra said; *dharma-kṣetre*—in the place of pilgrimage; *kuru-kṣetre*—in the place named Kurukṣetra; *samavetāḥ*—assembled; *yuyutsavaḥ*—desiring to fight; *māmakāḥ*—my party (sons); *pāṇḍavāḥ*—the sons of Pāṇḍu; *ca*—and; *eva*—certainly; *kim*—what; *akurvata*—did they do; *sañjaya*—O Sañjaya.

TRANSLATION

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?

PURPORT

Bhagavad-gītā is the widely read theistic science summarized in the *Gītā-māhātmya* (*Glorification of the Gītā*). There it says that one should read *Bhagavad-gītā* very scrutinizingly with the help of a person who is a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and try to understand it without personally motivated interpretations. The example of clear understanding is there in the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself, in the way the teaching is understood by Arjuna, who heard the *Gītā* directly from the Lord. If someone is fortunate enough to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* in that line of disciplic succession, without motivated interpretation, then he surpasses all studies of Vedic wisdom, and all scriptures of the world. One will find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* all that is contained in other scriptures, but the reader will also find things which are not to be found elsewhere. That is the specific standard of the *Gītā*. It is the perfect theistic science because it is directly spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The topics discussed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Sañjaya, as described in the *Mahābhārata*, form the basic principle for this great philosophy. It is understood that this philosophy evolved on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, which is a sacred place of pilgrimage from the

immemorial time of the Vedic age. It was spoken by the Lord when He was present personally on this planet for the guidance of mankind.

The word *dharma-kṣetra* (a place where religious rituals are performed) is significant because, on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present on the side of Arjuna. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the father of the Kurus, was highly doubtful about the possibility of his sons' ultimate victory. In his doubt, he inquired from his secretary Sañjaya, "What did they do?" He was confident that both his sons and the sons of his younger brother Pāṇḍu were assembled in that Field of Kurukṣetra for a determined engagement of the war. Still, his inquiry is significant. He did not want a compromise between the cousins and brothers, and he wanted to be sure of the fate of his sons on the battlefield. Because the battle was arranged to be fought at Kurukṣetra, which is mentioned elsewhere in the *Vedas* as a place of worship—even for the denizens of heaven—Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very fearful about the influence of the holy place on the outcome of the battle. He knew very well that this would influence Arjuna and the sons of Pāṇḍu favorably, because by nature they were all virtuous. Sañjaya was a student of Vyāsa, and therefore, by the mercy of Vyāsa, Sañjaya was able to envision the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra even while he was in the room of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. And so, Dhṛtarāṣṭra asked him about the situation on the battlefield.

Both the Pāṇḍavas and the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra belong to the same family, but Dhṛtarāṣṭra's mind is disclosed herein. He deliberately claimed only his sons as Kurus, and he separated the sons of Pāṇḍu from the family heritage. One can thus understand the specific position of Dhṛtarāṣṭra in his relationship with his nephews, the sons of Pāṇḍu. As in the paddy field the unnecessary plants are taken out, so it is expected from the very beginning of these topics that in the religious field of Kurukṣetra, where the father of religion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was present, the unwanted plants like Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana and others would be wiped out and the thoroughly religious persons, headed by Yudhiṣṭhira, would be established by the Lord. This is the significance of the words *dharma-kṣetre* and *kuru-kṣetre*, apart from their historical and Vedic importance.

Chapter 1—Text 2

*sañjaya uvāca
dṛṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkam
vyūḍham duryodhanas tadā
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā
rājā vacanam abravīt*

SYNONYMS

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *dṛṣṭvā*—after seeing; *tu*—but; *pāṇḍava-anīkam*—the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas; *vyūḍham*—arranged in a military phalanx; *duryodhanaḥ*—King Duryodhana; *tadā*—at that time; *ācāryam*—the teacher; *upasaṅgamyā*—approaching; *rājā*—the king; *vacanam*—words; *abravīt*—spoke.

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: O King, after looking over the army arranged in military formation by the sons of Pāṇḍu, King Duryodhana went to his teacher and spoke the following words.

PURPORT

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind from birth. Unfortunately, he was also bereft of spiritual vision. He knew very well that his sons were equally blind in the matter of religion, and he was sure that they could never reach an understanding with the Pāṇḍavas, who were all pious since birth. Still he was doubtful about the influence of the place of pilgrimage, and Sañjaya could understand his motive in asking about the situation on the battlefield. Sañjaya wanted, therefore, to encourage the despondent king and thus assured him that his sons were not going to make any sort of compromise under the influence of the holy place. Sañjaya therefore informed the king that his son, Duryodhana, after seeing the military force of the Pāṇḍavas, at once went to the commander in chief, Droṇācārya, to inform him of the real position. Although Duryodhana is mentioned as the king, he still had to go to the commander on account of the seriousness of the situation. He was therefore quite fit to be a politician. But Duryodhana's diplomatic veneer could not disguise the fear he felt when he saw the military arrangement of the Pāṇḍavas.

Chapter 1—Text 3

*paśyaitām pāṇḍu-putrāṇām
ācārya mahatīm camūm
vyūdhām drupada-putreṇa
tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā*

SYNONYMS

paśya—behold; *etām*—this; *pāṇḍu-putrāṇām*—of the sons of Pāṇḍu; *ācārya*—O teacher; *mahatīm*—great; *camūm*—military force; *vyūdhām*—arranged; *drupada-putreṇa*—by the son of Drupada; *tava*—your; *śiṣyeṇa*—disciple; *dhī-matā*—very intelligent.

TRANSLATION

O my teacher, behold the great army of the sons of Pāṇḍu, so expertly arranged by your intelligent disciple the son of Drupada.

PURPORT

Duryodhana, a great diplomat, wanted to point out the defects of Droṇācārya, the great *brāhmaṇa* commander in chief. Droṇācārya had some political quarrel with King Drupada, the father of Draupadī, who was Arjuna’s wife. As a result of this quarrel, Drupada performed a great sacrifice, by which he received the benediction of having a son who would be able to kill Droṇācārya. Droṇācārya knew this perfectly well, and yet as a liberal *brāhmaṇa* he did not hesitate to impart all his military secrets when the son of Drupada, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, was entrusted to him for military education. Now, on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Dhṛṣṭadyumna took the side of the Pāṇḍavas, and it was he who arranged for their military phalanx, after having learned the art from Droṇācārya. Duryodhana pointed out this mistake of Droṇācārya’s so that he might be alert and uncompromising in the fighting. By this he wanted to point out also that he should not be similarly lenient in battle against the Pāṇḍavas, who were also Droṇācārya’s affectionate students. Arjuna, especially, was his most affectionate and brilliant student. Duryodhana also warned that such leniency in the fight would lead to defeat.

Chapter 1—Text 4

*atra śūrā maheṣv-āsā
bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca
drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ*

SYNONYMS

atra—here; *śūrāḥ*—heroes; *mahā-iṣu-āsāḥ*—mighty bowmen; *bhīma-arjuna*—to Bhīma and Arjuna; *samāḥ*—equal; *yudhi*—in the fight; *yuyudhānaḥ*—Yuyudhāna; *virāṭaḥ*—Virāṭa; *ca*—also; *drupadaḥ*—Drupada; *ca*—also; *mahā-rathaḥ*—great fighter.

TRANSLATION

Here in this army are many heroic bowmen equal in fighting to Bhīma and Arjuna: great fighters like Yuyudhāna, Virāṭa and Drupada.

PURPORT

Even though Dhṛṣṭadyumna was not a very important obstacle in the face of Droṇācārya's very great power in the military art, there were many others who were causes of fear. They are mentioned by Duryodhana as great stumbling blocks on the path of victory because each and every one of them was as formidable as Bhīma and Arjuna. He knew the strength of Bhīma and Arjuna, and thus he compared the others with them.

Chapter 1—Text 5

*dhṛṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ
kāśirājaś ca vīryavān
puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca
śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ*

SYNONYMS

dhṛṣṭaketuḥ—Dhṛṣṭaketu; *cekitānaḥ*—Cekitāna; *kāśirājaḥ*—Kāśirāja; *ca*—also; *vīrya-vān*—very powerful; *puruḥjit*—Puruḥjit; *kuntibhojaḥ*—Kuntibhoja; *ca*—and; *śaibyaḥ*—Śaibya; *ca*—and; *nara-puṅgavaḥ*—hero in human society.

TRANSLATION

There are also great, heroic, powerful fighters like Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, Kāśirāja, Puruḥjit, Kuntibhoja and Śaibya.

Chapter 1—Text 6

*yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta
uttamaujāś ca vīryavān
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca
sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ*

SYNONYMS

yudhāmanyuḥ—Yudhāmanyu; *ca*—and; *vikrāntaḥ*—mighty; *uttamaujāḥ*—Uttamaujā; *ca*—and; *vīrya-vān*—very powerful; *saubhadraḥ*—the son of Subhadrā; *draupadeyāḥ*—the sons of Draupadī; *ca*—and; *sarve*—all; *eva*—certainly; *mahā-rathāḥ*—great chariot fighters.

TRANSLATION

There are the mighty Yudhāmanyu, the very powerful Uttamaujā, the son of Subhadrā and the sons of Draupadī. All these warriors are great chariot fighters.

Chapter 1—Text 7

*asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye
tān nibodha dvijottama
nāyakā mama sainyasya
saṁjñārthaṁ tān bravāmi te*

SYNONYMS

asmākaṁ—our; *tu*—but; *viśiṣṭāḥ*—especially powerful; *ye*—who; *tān*—them; *nibodha*—just take note of, be informed; *dvija-uttama*—O best of the *brāhmaṇas*; *nāyakāḥ*—captains; *mama*—my; *sainyasya*—of the soldiers; *saṁjñā-arthaṁ*—for information; *tān*—them; *bravāmi*—I am speaking; *te*—to you.

TRANSLATION

But for your information, O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, let me tell you about the captains who are especially qualified to lead my military force.

Chapter 1—Text 8

*bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇaś ca
kṛpaś ca samitim-jayaḥ
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca
saumadattis tathaiva ca*

SYNONYMS

bhavān—your good self; *bhīṣmaḥ*—Grandfather Bhīṣma; *ca*—also; *karṇaḥ*—Karṇa; *ca*—and; *kṛpaḥ*—Kṛpa; *ca*—and; *samitim-jayaḥ*—always victorious in battle; *aśvatthāmā*—Aśvatthāmā; *vikarṇaḥ*—Vikarṇa; *ca*—as well as; *saumadattiḥ*—the son of Somadatta; *tathā*—as well as; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also.

TRANSLATION

There are personalities like you, Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Kṛpa, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa and the son of Somadatta called Bhūriśravā, who are always victorious in battle.

PURPORT

Duryodhana mentions the exceptional heroes in the battle, all of whom are ever victorious. Vikarṇa is the brother of Duryodhana, Aśvatthāmā is the son of Droṇācārya, and Saumadatti, or Bhūriśravā, is the son of the King of the Bāhlīkas. Karṇa is the half brother of Arjuna, as he was born of Kuntī before her marriage with King Pāṇḍu. Kṛpācārya's twin sister married Droṇācārya.

Chapter 1—Text 9

*anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā
mad-arthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ
nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ
sarve yuddha-viśārādāḥ*

SYNONYMS

anye—others; *ca*—also; *bahavaḥ*—in great numbers; *śūrāḥ*—heroes; *mat-arthe*—for my sake; *tyakta-jīvitāḥ*—prepared to risk life; *nānā*—many; *śastra*—weapons; *praharaṇāḥ*—equipped with; *sarve*—all of them; *yuddha-viśārādāḥ*—experienced in military science.

TRANSLATION

There are many other heroes who are prepared to lay down their lives for my sake. All of them are well equipped with different kinds of weapons, and all are experienced in military science.

PURPORT

As far as the others are concerned—like Jayadratha, Kṛtavarmā and Śalya—all are determined to lay down their lives for Duryodhana's sake. In other words, it is already concluded that all of them would die in the Battle of Kurukṣetra for joining the party of the sinful Duryodhana. Duryodhana was, of course, confident of his victory on account of the above-mentioned combined strength of his friends.

Chapter 1—Text 10

*aparyāptam tad asmākam
balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
paryāptam tv idam eteṣām
balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam*

SYNONYMS

aparyāptam—immeasurable; *tat*—that; *asmākam*—of ours; *balaṁ*—strength; *bhīṣma*—by Grandfather Bhīṣma; *abhirakṣitam*—perfectly protected; *paryāptam*—limited; *tu*—but; *idam*—all this; *eteṣām*—of the Pāṇḍavas; *balaṁ*—strength; *bhīma*—by Bhīma; *abhirakṣitam*—carefully protected.

TRANSLATION

Our strength is immeasurable, and we are perfectly protected by Grandfather Bhīṣma, whereas the strength of the Pāṇḍavas, carefully protected by Bhīma, is limited.

PURPORT

Herein an estimation of comparative strength is made by Duryodhana. He thinks that the strength of his armed forces is immeasurable, being specifically protected by the most experienced general, Grandfather Bhīṣma. On the other hand, the forces of the Pāṇḍavas are limited, being protected by a less experienced general, Bhīma, who is like a fig in the presence of Bhīṣma. Duryodhana was always envious of Bhīma because he knew perfectly well that if he should die at all, he would only be killed by Bhīma. But at the same time, he was confident of his victory on account of the presence of Bhīṣma, who was a far superior general. His conclusion that he would come out of the battle victorious was well ascertained.

Chapter 1—Text 11

*ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu
yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ
bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu
bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi*

SYNONYMS

ayaneṣu—in the strategic points; *ca*—also; *sarveṣu*—everywhere; *yathā-bhāgam*—as differently arranged; *avasthitāḥ*—situated; *bhīṣmam*—unto Grandfather Bhīṣma; *eva*—certainly; *abhirakṣantu*—should give support; *bhavantaḥ*—you; *sarve*—all respectively; *eva hi*—certainly.

TRANSLATION

All of you must now give full support to Grandfather Bhīṣma, as you stand at your respective strategic points of entrance into the phalanx of the army.

PURPORT

Duryodhana, after praising the prowess of Bhīṣma, further considered that others might think that they had been considered less important, so in his usual diplomatic way, he tried to adjust the situation in the above words. He emphasized that Bhīṣmadeva was undoubtedly the greatest hero, but he was an old man, so everyone must especially think of his protection from all sides. He might become engaged in the fight, and the enemy might take advantage of his full engagement on one side. Therefore, it was important that other heroes not leave their strategic positions and allow the enemy to break the phalanx. Duryodhana clearly felt that the victory of the Kurus depended on the presence of Bhīṣmadeva. He was confident of the full support of Bhīṣmadeva and Droṇācārya in the battle because he well knew that they did not even speak a word when Arjuna's wife Draupadī, in her helpless condition, had appealed to them for justice while she was being forced to appear naked in the presence of all the great generals in the assembly. Although he knew that the two generals had some sort of affection for the Pāṇḍavas, he hoped that these generals would now completely give it up, as they had done during the gambling performances.

Chapter 1—Text 12

*tasya sañjanayan harṣam
kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
simha-nādam vinadyoccaiḥ
śaṅkham dadhmau pratāpavān*

SYNONYMS

tasya—his; *sañjanayan*—increasing; *harṣam*—cheerfulness; *kuru-vṛddhaḥ*—the grandsire of the Kuru dynasty (Bhīṣma); *pitāmahaḥ*—the grandfather; *simha-nādam*—roaring sound, like that of a lion; *vinadya*—vibrating; *uccaiḥ*—very loudly; *śaṅkham*—conchshell; *dadhmau*—blew; *pratāpa-vān*—the valiant.

TRANSLATION

Then Bhīṣma, the great valiant grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, the grandfather of the fighters, blew his conchshell very loudly, making a sound like the roar of a lion, giving Duryodhana joy.

PURPORT

The grandsire of the Kuru dynasty could understand the inner meaning of the heart of his grandson Duryodhana, and out of his natural compassion for him he tried to cheer him by blowing his conchshell very loudly, befitting his position as a lion. Indirectly, by the symbolism of the conchshell, he informed his depressed grandson Duryodhana that he had no chance of victory in the battle, because the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa was on the other side. But still, it was his duty to conduct the fight, and no pains would be spared in that connection.

Chapter 1—Text 13

*tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca
paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ
sahasāivābhyahanyanta
sa śabdāḥ tumulo 'bhavat*

SYNONYMS

tataḥ—thereafter; *śaṅkhāḥ*—conchshells; *ca*—also; *bheryaḥ*—large drums; *ca*—and; *paṇava-ānaka*—small drums and kettledrums; *go-mukhāḥ*—horns; *sahasā*—all of a sudden; *eva*—certainly; *abhyahanyanta*—were simultaneously sounded; *saḥ*—that; *śabdāḥ*—combined sound; *tumulāḥ*—tumultuous; *abhavat*—became.

TRANSLATION

After that, the conchshells, drums, bugles, trumpets and horns were all suddenly sounded, and the combined sound was tumultuous.

Chapter 1—Text 14

*tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte
mahati syandane sthitau
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś caiva
divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ*

SYNONYMS

tataḥ—thereafter; *śvetaiḥ*—with white; *hayaiḥ*—horses; *yukte*—being yoked; *mahati*—in a great; *syandane*—chariot; *sthitau*—situated; *mādhavaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa (the husband of the goddess of fortune); *pāṇḍavaḥ*—Arjuna (the son of Pāṇḍu); *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *divyau*—transcendental; *śaṅkhau*—conchshells; *pradadhmatuḥ*—sounded.

TRANSLATION

On the other side, both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, stationed on a great chariot drawn by white horses, sounded their transcendental conchshells.

PURPORT

In contrast with the conchshell blown by Bhīṣmadeva, the conchshells in the hands of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are described as transcendental. The sounding of the transcendental conchshells indicated that there was no hope of victory for the other side because Kṛṣṇa was on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. *Jayas tu pāṇḍu-putrāṇām yeṣāṁ pakṣe janārdanaḥ*. Victory is always with persons like the sons of Pāṇḍu because Lord Kṛṣṇa is associated with them. And whenever and wherever the Lord is present, the goddess of fortune is also there because the goddess of fortune never lives alone without her husband. Therefore, victory and fortune were awaiting Arjuna, as indicated by the transcendental sound produced by the conchshell of Viṣṇu, or Lord Kṛṣṇa. Besides that, the chariot on which both the friends were seated had been donated by Agni (the fire-god) to Arjuna, and this indicated that this chariot was capable of conquering all sides, wherever it was drawn over the three worlds.

Chapter 1—Text 15

*pāñcajanyaṁ hṛṣīkeśo
devadattam dhanañjayaḥ
pauṇḍram dadhmau mahā-śaṅkham
bhīma-karmā vṛkodaraḥ*

SYNONYMS

pāñcajanyaṁ—the conchshell named Pāñcajanya; *hṛṣīka-īśaḥ*—Hṛṣīkeśa (Kṛṣṇa, the Lord who directs the senses of the devotees); *devadattam*—the conchshell named Devadatta; *dhanam-jayaḥ*—Dhanañjaya (Arjuna, the winner of wealth); *pauṇḍram*—the conch named Pauṇḍra; *dadhmau*—blew; *mahā-śaṅkham*—the terrific conchshell; *bhīma-karmā*—one who performs herculean tasks; *vṛka-udaraḥ*—the voracious eater (Bhīma).

TRANSLATION

Lord Kṛṣṇa blew His conchshell, called Pāñcajanya; Arjuna blew his, the Devadatta; and Bhīma, the voracious eater and performer of herculean tasks, blew his terrific conchshell, called Pauṇḍra.

PURPORT

Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Hṛṣīkeśa in this verse because He is the owner of all senses. The living entities are part and parcel of Him, and therefore the senses of the living entities are also part and parcel of His senses. The impersonalists cannot account for the senses of the living entities, and therefore they are always anxious to describe all living entities as senseless, or impersonal. The Lord, situated in the hearts of all living entities, directs their senses. But He directs in terms of the surrender of the living entity, and in the case of a pure devotee He directly controls the senses. Here on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra the Lord directly controls the transcendental senses of Arjuna, and thus His particular name of Hṛṣīkeśa. The Lord has different names according to His different activities. For example, His name is Madhusūdana because He killed the demon of the name Madhu; His name is Govinda because He gives pleasure to the cows and to the senses; His name is Vāsudeva because He appeared as the son of Vasudeva; His name is Devakī-nandana because He accepted Devakī as His mother; His name is Yaśodā-nandana because He awarded His childhood pastimes to Yaśodā at Vṛndāvana; His name is Pārtha-sārathi because He worked as charioteer of His friend Arjuna. Similarly, His name is Hṛṣīkeśa because He gave direction to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

Arjuna is referred to as Dhanañjaya in this verse because he helped his elder brother in fetching wealth when it was required by the king to make expenditures for different sacrifices. Similarly, Bhīma is known as Vṛkodara because he could eat as voraciously as he could perform herculean tasks, such as killing the demon Hidimba. So the particular types of conchshell blown by the different personalities on the side of the Pāṇḍavas, beginning

with the Lord's, were all very encouraging to the fighting soldiers. On the other side there were no such credits, nor the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme director, nor that of the goddess of fortune. So they were predestined to lose the battle—and that was the message announced by the sounds of the conchshells.

Chapter 1—Texts 16–18

*anantavijayaṁ rājā
kuntī-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca
sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau

kāśyaś ca parameṣv-āsaḥ
śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca
sātyakiś cāparājitaḥ

drupado draupadeyāś ca
sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate
saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ
śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak pṛthak*

SYNONYMS

ananta-vijayaṁ—the conch named Ananta-vijaya; *rājā*—the king; *kuntī-putraḥ*—the son of Kuntī; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*—Yudhiṣṭhira; *nakulaḥ*—Nakula; *sahadevaḥ*—Sahadeva; *ca*—and; *sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau*—the conches named Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka; *kāśyaḥ*—the King of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī); *ca*—and; *parama-iṣu-āsaḥ*—the great archer; *śikhaṇḍī*—Śikhaṇḍī; *ca*—also; *mahā-rathaḥ*—one who can fight alone against thousands; *dhṛṣṭadyumnaḥ*—Dhṛṣṭadyumna (the son of King Drupada); *virāṭaḥ*—Virāṭa (the prince who gave shelter to the Pāṇḍavas while they were in disguise); *ca*—also; *sātyakiḥ*—Sātyaki (the same as Yuyudhāna, the charioteer of Lord Kṛṣṇa); *ca*—and; *aparājitaḥ*—who had never been vanquished; *drupadaḥ*—Drupada, the King of Pāñcāla; *draupadeyāḥ*—the sons of Draupadī; *ca*—also; *sarvaśaḥ*—all; *pṛthivī-pate*—O King; *saubhadraḥ*—Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā; *ca*—also; *mahā-bāhuḥ*—mighty-armed; *śaṅkhān*—conchshells; *dadhmuḥ*—blew; *pṛthak pṛthak*—each separately.

TRANSLATION

King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, blew his conchshell, the Ananta-vijaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva blew the Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka. That great archer the King of Kāśī, the great fighter Śikhaṇḍī, Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Virāṭa, the unconquerable Sātyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadī, and the others, O King, such as the mighty-armed son of Subhadrā, all blew their respective conchshells.

PURPORT

Sañjaya informed King Dhṛtarāṣṭra very tactfully that his unwise policy of deceiving the sons of Pāṇḍu and endeavoring to enthrone his own sons on the seat of the kingdom was not very laudable. The signs already clearly indicated that the whole Kuru dynasty would

be killed in that great battle. Beginning with the grandsire, Bhīṣma, down to the grandsons like Abhimanyu and others—including kings from many states of the world—all were present there, and all were doomed. The whole catastrophe was due to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, because he encouraged the policy followed by his sons.

Chapter 1—Text 19

*sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām
hṛdayāni vyadārayat
nabhaś ca pṛthivīm caiva
tumulo 'bhyanunādayan*

SYNONYMS

saḥ—that; *ghoṣaḥ*—vibration; *dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām*—of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *hṛdayāni*—hearts; *vyadārayat*—shattered; *nabhaḥ*—the sky; *ca*—also; *pṛthivīm*—the surface of the earth; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *tumulaḥ*—uproarious; *abhyanunādayan*—resounding.

TRANSLATION

The blowing of these different conchshells became uproarious. Vibrating both in the sky and on the earth, it shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

PURPORT

When Bhīṣma and the others on the side of Duryodhana blew their respective conchshells, there was no heart-breaking on the part of the Pāṇḍavas. Such occurrences are not mentioned, but in this particular verse it is mentioned that the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were shattered by the sounds vibrated by the Pāṇḍavas' party. This is due to the Pāṇḍavas and their confidence in Lord Kṛṣṇa. One who takes shelter of the Supreme Lord has nothing to fear, even in the midst of the greatest calamity.

Chapter 1—Text 20

*atha vyavasthitān dṛṣtvā
dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajāḥ
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte
dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ
hṛṣikeśam tadā vākyam
idam āha mahī-pate*

SYNONYMS

atha—thereupon; *vyavasthitān*—situated; *dṛṣtvā*—looking upon; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*—the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *kapi-dhvajāḥ*—he whose flag was marked with Hanumān; *pravṛtte*—while about to engage; *śastra-sampāte*—in releasing his arrows; *dhanuḥ*—bow; *udyamya*—taking up; *pāṇḍavaḥ*—the son of Pāṇḍu (Arjuna); *hṛṣikeśam*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tadā*—at that time; *vākyam*—words; *idam*—these; *āha*—said; *mahī-pate*—O King.

TRANSLATION

At that time Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu, seated in the chariot bearing the flag marked with Hanumān, took up his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows. O King, after looking at the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra drawn in military array, Arjuna then spoke to Lord Kṛṣṇa these words.

PURPORT

The battle was just about to begin. It is understood from the above statement that the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were more or less disheartened by the unexpected arrangement of military force by the Pāṇḍavas, who were guided by the direct instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield. The emblem of Hanumān on the flag of Arjuna is another sign of victory because Hanumān cooperated with Lord Rāma in the battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, and Lord Rāma emerged victorious. Now both Rāma and Hanumān were present on the chariot of Arjuna to help him. Lord Kṛṣṇa is Rāma Himself, and wherever Lord Rāma is, His eternal servitor Hanumān and His eternal consort Sītā, the goddess of fortune, are present. Therefore, Arjuna had no cause to fear any enemies whatsoever. And above all, the Lord of the senses, Lord Kṛṣṇa, was personally present to give him direction. Thus, all good counsel was available to Arjuna in the matter of executing the battle. In such auspicious conditions, arranged by the Lord for His eternal devotee, lay the signs of assured victory.

Chapter 1—Texts 21–22

arjuna uvāca
senayor ubhayor madhye
ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta
yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṁ
yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam
asmin raṇa-samudyame

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *senayoḥ*—of the armies; *ubhayoḥ*—both; *madhye*—between; *ratham*—the chariot; *sthāpaya*—please keep; *me*—my; *acyuta*—O infallible one; *yāvat*—as long as; *etān*—all these; *nirīkṣe*—may look upon; *aham*—I; *yoddhu-kāmān*—desiring to fight; *avasthitān*—arrayed on the battlefield; *kaiḥ*—with whom; *mayā*—by me; *saha*—together; *yoddhavyam*—have to fight; *asmin*—in this; *raṇa*—strife; *samudyame*—in the attempt.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies so that I may see those present here, who desire to fight, and with whom I must contend in this great trial of arms.

PURPORT

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, out of His causeless mercy He was engaged in the service of His friend. He never fails in His affection for His devotees, and thus He is addressed herein as infallible. As charioteer, He had to carry out the orders of Arjuna, and since He did not hesitate to do so, He is addressed as infallible. Although He had accepted the position of a charioteer for His devotee, His supreme position was not challenged. In all circumstances, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord of the total senses. The relationship between the Lord and His servitor is very sweet and transcendental. The servitor is always ready to render service to the Lord, and, similarly, the Lord is always seeking an opportunity to render some service to the devotee. He takes greater pleasure in His pure devotee's assuming the advantageous position of ordering Him than He does in being the giver of orders. Since He is master, everyone is under His orders, and no one is above Him to order Him. But when He finds that a pure devotee is ordering Him, He obtains transcendental pleasure, although He is the infallible master of all circumstances.

As a pure devotee of the Lord, Arjuna had no desire to fight with his cousins and brothers, but he was forced to come onto the battlefield by the obstinacy of Duryodhana, who was never agreeable to any peaceful negotiation. Therefore, he was very anxious to see who the

leading persons present on the battlefield were. Although there was no question of a peacemaking endeavor on the battlefield, he wanted to see them again, and to see how much they were bent upon demanding an unwanted war.

Chapter 1—Text 23

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'ham
ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher
yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

SYNONYMS

yotsyamānān—those who will be fighting; avekṣe—let me see; aham—I; ye—who; ete—those; atra—here; samāgatāḥ—assembled; dhārtarāṣṭrasya—for the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; durbuddheḥ—evil-minded; yuddhe—in the fight; priya—well; cikīrṣavaḥ—wishing.

TRANSLATION

Let me see those who have come here to fight, wishing to please the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

PURPORT

It was an open secret that Duryodhana wanted to usurp the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas by evil plans, in collaboration with his father, Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Therefore, all persons who had joined the side of Duryodhana must have been birds of the same feather. Arjuna wanted to see them on the battlefield before the fight was begun, just to learn who they were, but he had no intention of proposing peace negotiations with them. It was also a fact that he wanted to see them to make an estimate of the strength which he had to face, although he was quite confident of victory because Kṛṣṇa was sitting by his side.

Chapter 1—Text 24

*sañjaya uvāca
evam ukto hṛṣīkeśo
guḍākeśena bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye
sthāpayitvā rathottamam*

SYNONYMS

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *evam*—thus; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *guḍākeśena*—by Arjuna; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *senayoḥ*—of the armies; *ubhayoḥ*—both; *madhye*—in the midst; *sthāpayitvā*—placing; *ratha-uttamam*—the finest chariot.

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, having thus been addressed by Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew up the fine chariot in the midst of the armies of both parties.

PURPORT

In this verse Arjuna is referred to as Guḍākeśa. *Guḍākā* means sleep, and one who conquers sleep is called *guḍākeśa*. Sleep also means ignorance. So Arjuna conquered both sleep and ignorance because of his friendship with Kṛṣṇa. As a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, he could not forget Kṛṣṇa even for a moment, because that is the nature of a devotee. Either in waking or in sleep, a devotee of the Lord can never be free from thinking of Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes. Thus a devotee of Kṛṣṇa can conquer both sleep and ignorance simply by thinking of Kṛṣṇa constantly. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or *samādhi*. As Hṛṣīkeśa, or the director of the senses and mind of every living entity, Kṛṣṇa could understand Arjuna's purpose in placing the chariot in the midst of the armies. Thus He did so, and spoke as follows.

Chapter 1—Text 25

*bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ
sarveṣāṁ ca mahī-kṣitām
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān
samavetān kurūn iti*

SYNONYMS

bhīṣma—Grandfather Bhīṣma; *droṇa*—the teacher Droṇa; *pramukhataḥ*—in front of; *sarveṣāṁ*—all; *ca*—also; *mahī-kṣitām*—chiefs of the world; *uvāca*—said; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *paśya*—just behold; *etān*—all of them; *samavetān*—assembled; *kurūn*—the members of the Kuru dynasty; *iti*—thus.

TRANSLATION

In the presence of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the other chieftains of the world, the Lord said, Just behold, Pārtha, all the Kurus assembled here.

PURPORT

As the Supersoul of all living entities, Lord Kṛṣṇa could understand what was going on in the mind of Arjuna. The use of the word Hṛṣīkeśa in this connection indicates that He knew everything. And the word Pārtha, or the son of Kuntī, or Pṛthā, is also similarly significant in reference to Arjuna. As a friend, He wanted to inform Arjuna that because Arjuna was the son of Pṛthā, the sister of His own father Vasudeva, He had agreed to be the charioteer of Arjuna. Now what did Kṛṣṇa mean when He told Arjuna to “behold the Kurus”? Did Arjuna want to stop there and not fight? Kṛṣṇa never expected such things from the son of His aunt Pṛthā. The mind of Arjuna was thus predicted by the Lord in friendly joking.

Chapter 1—Text 26

*tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ
pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn
putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā
śvaśurān suhṛdaś caiva
senayor ubhayor api*

SYNONYMS

tatra—there; *apaśyat*—he could see; *sthitān*—standing; *pārthaḥ*—Arjuna; *pitṛn*—fathers; *atha*—also; *pitāmahān*—grandfathers; *ācāryān*—teachers; *mātulān*—maternal uncles; *bhrātṛn*—brothers; *putrān*—sons; *pautrān*—grandsons; *sakhīn*—friends; *tathā*—too; *śvaśurān*—fathers-in-law; *suhṛdaḥ*—well-wishers; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *senayor*—of the armies; *ubhayor*—of both parties; *api*—including.

TRANSLATION

There Arjuna could see, within the midst of the armies of both parties, his fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, and also his fathers-in-law and well-wishers.

PURPORT

On the battlefield Arjuna could see all kinds of relatives. He could see persons like Bhūriśravā, who were his father's contemporaries, grandfathers Bhīṣma and Somadatta, teachers like Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya, maternal uncles like Śalya and Śakuni, brothers like Duryodhana, sons like Lakṣmaṇa, friends like Aśvatthāmā, well-wishers like Kṛtavarmā, etc. He could see also the armies which contained many of his friends.

Chapter 1—Text 27

*tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ
sarvān bandhūn avasthitān
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo
viṣīdann idam abravīt*

SYNONYMS

tān—all of them; *samīkṣya*—after seeing; *saḥ*—he; *kaunteyaḥ*—the son of Kuntī; *sarvān*—all kinds of; *bandhūn*—relatives; *avasthitān*—situated; *kṛpayā*—by compassion; *parayā*—of a high grade; *āviṣṭaḥ*—overwhelmed; *viṣīdan*—while lamenting; *idam*—thus; *abravīt*—spoke.

TRANSLATION

When the son of Kuntī, Arjuna, saw all these different grades of friends and relatives, he became overwhelmed with compassion and spoke thus.

Chapter 1—Text 28

arjuna uvāca
dṛṣṭvemaṁ sva-janaṁ kṛṣṇa
yuyutsum samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi
mukham ca pariśuṣyati

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *dṛṣṭvā*—after seeing; *imam*—all these; *sva-janam*—kinsmen; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *yuyutsum*—all in a fighting spirit; *samupasthitam*—present; *sīdanti*—are quivering; *mama*—my; *gātrāṇi*—limbs of the body; *mukham*—mouth; *ca*—also; *pariśuṣyati*—is drying up.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: My dear Kṛṣṇa, seeing my friends and relatives present before me in such a fighting spirit, I feel the limbs of my body quivering and my mouth drying up.

PURPORT

Any man who has genuine devotion to the Lord has all the good qualities which are found in godly persons or in the demigods, whereas the nondevotee, however advanced he may be in material qualifications by education and culture, lacks in godly qualities. As such, Arjuna, just after seeing his kinsmen, friends and relatives on the battlefield, was at once overwhelmed by compassion for them who had so decided to fight amongst themselves. As far as his soldiers were concerned, he was sympathetic from the beginning, but he felt compassion even for the soldiers of the opposite party, foreseeing their imminent death. And while he was so thinking, the limbs of his body began to quiver, and his mouth became dry. He was more or less astonished to see their fighting spirit. Practically the whole community, all blood relatives of Arjuna, had come to fight with him. This overwhelmed a kind devotee like Arjuna. Although it is not mentioned here, still one can easily imagine that not only were Arjuna's bodily limbs quivering and his mouth drying up, but he was also crying out of compassion. Such symptoms in Arjuna were not due to weakness but to his softheartedness, a characteristic of a pure devotee of the Lord. It is said therefore:

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ

“One who has unflinching devotion for the Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material

qualifications that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.” (*Bhāg.* 5.18.12)

Chapter 1—Text 29

*vepathuś ca śarīre me
roma-harṣaś ca jāyate
gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt
tvak caiva paridahyate*

SYNONYMS

vepathuḥ—trembling of the body; *ca*—also; *śarīre*—on the body; *me*—my; *roma-harṣaḥ*—standing of hair on end; *ca*—also; *jāyate*—is taking place; *gāṇḍīvaṁ*—the bow of Arjuna; *sraṁsate*—is slipping; *hastāt*—from the hand; *tvak*—skin; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *paridahyate*—is burning.

TRANSLATION

My whole body is trembling, my hair is standing on end, my bow Gāṇḍīva is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning.

PURPORT

There are two kinds of trembling of the body, and two kinds of standings of the hair on end. Such phenomena occur either in great spiritual ecstasy or out of great fear under material conditions. There is no fear in transcendental realization. Arjuna's symptoms in this situation are out of material fear—namely, loss of life. This is evident from other symptoms also; he became so impatient that his famous bow Gāṇḍīva was slipping from his hands, and, because his heart was burning within him, he was feeling a burning sensation of the skin. All these are due to a material conception of life.

Chapter 1—Text 30

*na ca śaknomy avasthātum
bhramatīva ca me manaḥ
nimittāni ca paśyāmi
viparītāni keśava*

SYNONYMS

na—nor; *ca*—also; *śaknomy*—am I able; *avasthātum*—to stay; *bhramati*—forgetting; *iva*—as; *ca*—and; *me*—my; *manaḥ*—mind; *nimittāni*—causes; *ca*—also; *paśyāmi*—I see; *viparītāni*—just the opposite; *keśava*—O killer of the demon Keśi (Kṛṣṇa).

TRANSLATION

I am now unable to stand here any longer. I am forgetting myself, and my mind is reeling. I see only causes of misfortune, O Kṛṣṇa, killer of the Keśi demon.

PURPORT

Due to his impatience, Arjuna was unable to stay on the battlefield, and he was forgetting himself on account of this weakness of his mind. Excessive attachment for material things puts a man in such a bewildering condition of existence. *Bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniवेशताḥ syāt* (*Bhāg.* 11.2.37): such fearfulness and loss of mental equilibrium take place in persons who are too affected by material conditions. Arjuna envisioned only painful reverses in the battlefield—he would not be happy even by gaining victory over the foe. The words *nimittāni viparītāni* are significant. When a man sees only frustration in his expectations, he thinks, “Why am I here?” Everyone is interested in himself and his own welfare. No one is interested in the Supreme Self. Arjuna is showing ignorance of his real self-interest by Kṛṣṇa’s will. One’s real self-interest lies in Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. The conditioned soul forgets this, and therefore suffers material pains. Arjuna thought that his victory in the battle would only be a cause of lamentation for him.

Chapter 1—Text 31

*na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi
hatvā sva-janam āhave
na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa
na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca*

SYNONYMS

na—nor; *ca*—also; *śreyaḥ*—good; *anupaśyāmi*—do I foresee; *hatvā*—by killing; *sva-janam*—own kinsmen; *āhave*—in the fight; *na*—nor; *kāṅkṣe*—do I desire; *vijayaṁ*—victory; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *na*—nor; *ca*—also; *rājyaṁ*—kingdom; *sukhāni*—happiness thereof; *ca*—also.

TRANSLATION

I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle, nor can I, my dear Kṛṣṇa, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom, or happiness.

PURPORT

Without knowing that one's self-interest is in Viṣṇu (or Kṛṣṇa), conditioned souls are attracted by bodily relationships, hoping to be happy in such situations. In such a blind conception of life, they forget even the causes of material happiness. Arjuna appears to have even forgotten the moral codes for a *kṣatriya*. It is said that two kinds of men, namely the *kṣatriya* who dies directly in front of the battlefield under Kṛṣṇa's personal orders and the person in the renounced order of life who is absolutely devoted to spiritual culture, are eligible to enter into the sun globe, which is so powerful and dazzling. Arjuna is reluctant even to kill his enemies, let alone his relatives. He thinks that by killing his kinsmen there would be no happiness in his life, and therefore he is not willing to fight, just as a person who does not feel hunger is not inclined to cook. He has now decided to go into the forest and live a secluded life in frustration. But as a *kṣatriya*, he requires a kingdom for his subsistence, because the *kṣatriyas* cannot engage themselves in any other occupation. But Arjuna has no kingdom. Arjuna's sole opportunity for gaining a kingdom lies in fighting with his cousins and brothers and reclaiming the kingdom inherited from his father, which he does not like to do. Therefore he considers himself fit to go to the forest to live a secluded life of frustration.

Chapter 1—Texts 32–35

*kiṁ no rājyena govinda
kiṁ bhogair jīvitena vā
yeṣāṁ arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no
rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca*

*ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe
prāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca
ācāryāḥ pitaraḥ putrāḥ
tathaiva ca pitāmahāḥ*

*mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ
śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā
etān na hantum icchāmi
ghnato 'pi madhusūdana*

*api trailokya-rājyasya
hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahī-kṛte
nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ
kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana*

SYNONYMS

kiṁ—what use; *naḥ*—to us; *rājyena*—is the kingdom; *govinda*—O Kṛṣṇa; *kiṁ*—what; *bhogaiḥ*—enjoyment; *jīvitena*—living; *vā*—either; *yeṣāṁ*—of whom; *arthe*—for the sake; *kāṅkṣitaṁ*—is desired; *naḥ*—by us; *rājyaṁ*—kingdom; *bhogāḥ*—material enjoyment; *sukhāni*—all happiness; *ca*—also; *te*—all of them; *ime*—these; *avasthitāḥ*—situated; *yuddhe*—on this battlefield; *prāṇān*—lives; *tyaktvā*—giving up; *dhanāni*—riches; *ca*—also; *ācāryāḥ*—teachers; *pitaraḥ*—fathers; *putrāḥ*—sons; *tathā*—as well as; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *pitāmahāḥ*—grandfathers; *mātulāḥ*—maternal uncles; *śvaśurāḥ*—fathers-in-law; *pautrāḥ*—grandsons; *śyālāḥ*—brothers-in-law; *sambandhinaḥ*—relatives; *tathā*—as well as; *etān*—all these; *na*—never; *hantum*—to kill; *icchāmi*—do I wish; *ghnataḥ*—being killed; *api*—even; *madhusūdana*—O killer of the demon Madhu (Kṛṣṇa); *api*—even if; *trailokya*—of the three worlds; *rājyasya*—for the kingdom; *hetoḥ*—in exchange; *kiṁ nu*—what to speak of; *mahī-kṛte*—for the sake of the earth; *nihatya*—by killing; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*—the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *naḥ*—our; *kā*—what; *prītiḥ*—pleasure; *syāt*—will there be; *janārdana*—O maintainer of all living entities.

TRANSLATION

O Govinda, of what avail to us are a kingdom, happiness or even life itself when all those for whom we may desire them are now arrayed on this battlefield? O Madhusūdana, when teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives are ready to give up their lives and properties and are standing

before me, why should I wish to kill them, even though they might otherwise kill me? O maintainer of all living entities, I am not prepared to fight with them even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone this earth. What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra?

PURPORT

Arjuna has addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as Govinda because Kṛṣṇa is the object of all pleasures for cows and the senses. By using this significant word, Arjuna indicates that Kṛṣṇa should understand what will satisfy Arjuna's senses. But Govinda is not meant for satisfying our senses. If we try to satisfy the senses of Govinda, however, then automatically our own senses are satisfied. Materially, everyone wants to satisfy his senses, and he wants God to be the order supplier for such satisfaction. The Lord will satisfy the senses of the living entities as much as they deserve, but not to the extent that they may covet. But when one takes the opposite way—namely, when one tries to satisfy the senses of Govinda without desiring to satisfy one's own senses—then by the grace of Govinda all desires of the living entity are satisfied. Arjuna's deep affection for community and family members is exhibited here partly due to his natural compassion for them. He is therefore not prepared to fight. Everyone wants to show his opulence to friends and relatives, but Arjuna fears that all his relatives and friends will be killed on the battlefield and he will be unable to share his opulence after victory. This is a typical calculation of material life. The transcendental life, however, is different. Since a devotee wants to satisfy the desires of the Lord, he can, Lord willing, accept all kinds of opulence for the service of the Lord, and if the Lord is not willing, he should not accept a farthing. Arjuna did not want to kill his relatives, and if there were any need to kill them, he desired that Kṛṣṇa kill them personally. At this point he did not know that Kṛṣṇa had already killed them before their coming into the battlefield and that he was only to become an instrument for Kṛṣṇa. This fact is disclosed in following chapters. As a natural devotee of the Lord, Arjuna did not like to retaliate against his miscreant cousins and brothers, but it was the Lord's plan that they should all be killed. The devotee of the Lord does not retaliate against the wrongdoer, but the Lord does not tolerate any mischief done to the devotee by the miscreants. The Lord can excuse a person on His own account, but He excuses no one who has done harm to His devotees. Therefore the Lord was determined to kill the miscreants, although Arjuna wanted to excuse them.

Chapter 1—Text 36

*pāpam evāśrayed asmān
hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ
tasmān nārḥā vayaṁ hantum
dhārtarāṣṭrān sa-bāndhavān
sva-janaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā
sukhinaḥ syāma mādḥava*

SYNONYMS

pāpam—vices; *eva*—certainly; *āśrayet*—must come upon; *asmān*—us; *hatvā*—by killing; *etān*—all these; *ātatāyinaḥ*—aggressors; *tasmāt*—therefore; *na*—never; *arḥāḥ*—deserving; *vayaṁ*—we; *hantum*—to kill; *dhārtarāṣṭrān*—the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *sa-bāndhavān*—along with friends; *sva-janaṁ*—kinsmen; *hi*—certainly; *kathaṁ*—how; *hatvā*—by killing; *sukhinaḥ*—happy; *syāma*—will we become; *mādḥava*—O Kṛṣṇa, husband of the goddess of fortune.

TRANSLATION

Sin will overcome us if we slay such aggressors. Therefore it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and our friends. What should we gain, O Kṛṣṇa, husband of the goddess of fortune, and how could we be happy by killing our own kinsmen?

PURPORT

According to Vedic injunctions there are six kinds of aggressors: (1) a poison giver, (2) one who sets fire to the house, (3) one who attacks with deadly weapons, (4) one who plunders riches, (5) one who occupies another's land, and (6) one who kidnaps a wife. Such aggressors are at once to be killed, and no sin is incurred by killing such aggressors. Such killing of aggressors is quite befitting any ordinary man, but Arjuna was not an ordinary person. He was saintly by character, and therefore he wanted to deal with them in saintliness. This kind of saintliness, however, is not for a *kṣatriya*. Although a responsible man in the administration of a state is required to be saintly, he should not be cowardly. For example, Lord Rāma was so saintly that people even now are anxious to live in the kingdom of Lord Rāma (*rāma-rājya*), but Lord Rāma never showed any cowardice. Rāvaṇa was an aggressor against Rāma because Rāvaṇa kidnapped Rāma's wife, Sītā, but Lord Rāma gave him sufficient lessons, unparalleled in the history of the world. In Arjuna's case, however, one should consider the special type of aggressors, namely his own grandfather, own teacher, friends, sons, grandsons, etc. Because of them, Arjuna thought that he should not take the severe steps necessary against ordinary aggressors. Besides that, saintly persons are advised to forgive. Such injunctions for saintly persons are more important than any political emergency. Arjuna considered that rather than kill his own kinsmen for political reasons, it would be better to forgive them on grounds of religion and

saintly behavior. He did not, therefore, consider such killing profitable simply for the matter of temporary bodily happiness. After all, kingdoms and pleasures derived therefrom are not permanent, so why should he risk his life and eternal salvation by killing his own kinsmen? Arjuna's addressing of Kṛṣṇa as "Mādhava," or the husband of the goddess of fortune, is also significant in this connection. He wanted to point out to Kṛṣṇa that, as husband of the goddess of fortune, He should not induce Arjuna to take up a matter which would ultimately bring about misfortune. Kṛṣṇa, however, never brings misfortune to anyone, to say nothing of His devotees.

Chapter 1—Texts 37–38

*yady apy ete na paśyanti
lobhōpahata-cetasah
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ
mitra-drohe ca pātakam*

*kathaṁ na jñeyam asmābhiḥ
pāpād asmān nivartitum
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ
prapaśyadbhir janārdana*

SYNONYMS

yadi—if; *api*—even; *ete*—they; *na*—do not; *paśyanti*—see; *lobha*—by greed; *upahata*—overpowered; *cetasah*—their hearts; *kula-kṣaya*—in killing the family; *kṛtaṁ*—done; *doṣam*—fault; *mitra-drohe*—in quarreling with friends; *ca*—also; *pātakam*—sinful reactions; *kathaṁ*—why; *na*—should not; *jñeyam*—be known; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *pāpāt*—from sins; *asmāt*—these; *nivartitum*—to cease; *kula-kṣaya*—in the destruction of a dynasty; *kṛtaṁ*—done; *doṣam*—crime; *prapaśyadbhiḥ*—by those who can see; *janārdana*—O Kṛṣṇa.

TRANSLATION

O Janārdana, although these men, their hearts overtaken by greed, see no fault in killing one's family or quarreling with friends, why should we, who can see the crime in destroying a family, engage in these acts of sin?

PURPORT

A *kṣatriya* is not supposed to refuse to battle or gamble when he is so invited by some rival party. Under such an obligation, Arjuna could not refuse to fight, because he had been challenged by the party of Duryodhana. In this connection, Arjuna considered that the other party might be blind to the effects of such a challenge. Arjuna, however, could see the evil consequences and could not accept the challenge. Obligation is actually binding when the effect is good, but when the effect is otherwise, then no one can be bound. Considering all these pros and cons, Arjuna decided not to fight.

Chapter 1—Text 39

*kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti
kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam
adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta*

SYNONYMS

kula-kṣaye—in destroying the family; *praṇaśyanti*—become vanquished; *kula-dharmāḥ*—the family traditions; *sanātanāḥ*—eternal; *dharme*—religion; *naṣṭe*—being destroyed; *kulam*—family; *kṛtsnam*—whole; *adharmāḥ*—irreligion; *abhibhavati*—transforms; *uta*—it is said.

TRANSLATION

With the destruction of dynasty, the eternal family tradition is vanquished, and thus the rest of the family becomes involved in irreligion.

PURPORT

In the system of the *varṇāśrama* institution there are many principles of religious traditions to help members of the family grow properly and attain spiritual values. The elder members are responsible for such purifying processes in the family, beginning from birth to death. But on the death of the elder members, such family traditions of purification may stop, and the remaining younger family members may develop irreligious habits and thereby lose their chance for spiritual salvation. Therefore, for no purpose should the elder members of the family be slain.

Chapter 1—Text 40

*adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa
praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya
jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*

SYNONYMS

adharmā—irreligion; *abhibhavāt*—having become predominant; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *praduṣyanti*—become polluted; *kula-striyaḥ*—family ladies; *strīṣu*—by the womanhood; *duṣṭāsu*—being so polluted; *vārṣṇeya*—O descendant of Vṛṣṇi; *jāyate*—comes into being; *varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*—unwanted progeny.

TRANSLATION

When irreligion is prominent in the family, O Kṛṣṇa, the women of the family become polluted, and from the degradation of womanhood, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, comes unwanted progeny.

PURPORT

Good population in human society is the basic principle for peace, prosperity and spiritual progress in life. The *varṇāśrama* religion's principles were so designed that the good population would prevail in society for the general spiritual progress of state and community. Such population depends on the chastity and faithfulness of its womanhood. As children are very prone to be misled, women are similarly very prone to degradation. Therefore, both children and women require protection by the elder members of the family. By being engaged in various religious practices, women will not be misled into adultery. According to Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, women are generally not very intelligent and therefore not trustworthy. So the different family traditions of religious activities should always engage them, and thus their chastity and devotion will give birth to a good population eligible for participating in the *varṇāśrama* system. On the failure of such *varṇāśrama-dharma*, naturally the women become free to act and mix with men, and thus adultery is indulged in at the risk of unwanted population. Irresponsible men also provoke adultery in society, and thus unwanted children flood the human race at the risk of war and pestilence.

Chapter 1—Text 41

*saṅkaro narakāyaiva
kula-ghnānām kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy eṣām
lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ*

SYNONYMS

saṅkaraḥ—such unwanted children; *narakāya*—make for hellish life; *eva*—certainly; *kula-ghnānām*—for those who are killers of the family; *kulasya*—for the family; *ca*—also; *patanti*—fall down; *pitaraḥ*—forefathers; *hi*—certainly; *eṣām*—of them; *lupta*—stopped; *piṇḍa*—of offerings of food; *udaka*—and water; *kriyāḥ*—performances.

TRANSLATION

An increase of unwanted population certainly causes hellish life both for the family and for those who destroy the family tradition. The ancestors of such corrupt families fall down, because the performances for offering them food and water are entirely stopped.

PURPORT

According to the rules and regulations of fruitive activities, there is a need to offer periodical food and water to the forefathers of the family. This offering is performed by worship of Viṣṇu, because eating the remnants of food offered to Viṣṇu can deliver one from all kinds of sinful actions. Sometimes the forefathers may be suffering from various types of sinful reactions, and sometimes some of them cannot even acquire a gross material body and are forced to remain in subtle bodies as ghosts. Thus, when remnants of *prasādam* food are offered to forefathers by descendants, the forefathers are released from ghostly or other kinds of miserable life. Such help rendered to forefathers is a family tradition, and those who are not in devotional life are required to perform such rituals. One who is engaged in the devotional life is not required to perform such actions. Simply by performing devotional service, one can deliver hundreds and thousands of forefathers from all kinds of misery. It is stated in the *Bhāgavatam* (11.5.41):

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇaṁ śaraṇyaṁ
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

“Anyone who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, the giver of liberation, giving up all kinds of obligation, and has taken to the path in all seriousness, owes neither duties nor obligations to the demigods, sages, general living entities, family members, humankind or forefathers.” Such obligations are automatically fulfilled by performance of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 1—Text 42

*doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām
varṇa-saṅkara-kāraiḥ
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ
kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ*

SYNONYMS

doṣaiḥ—by such faults; *etaiḥ*—all these; *kula-ghnānām*—of the destroyers of the family; *varṇa-saṅkara*—of unwanted children; *kāraiḥ*—which are causes; *utsādyante*—are devastated; *jāti-dharmāḥ*—community projects; *kula-dharmāḥ*—family traditions; *ca*—also; *śāśvatāḥ*—eternal.

TRANSLATION

By the evil deeds of those who destroy the family tradition and thus give rise to unwanted children, all kinds of community projects and family welfare activities are devastated.

PURPORT

Community projects for the four orders of human society, combined with family welfare activities, as they are set forth by the institution of *sanātana-dharma*, or *varṇāśrama-dharma*, are designed to enable the human being to attain his ultimate salvation.

Therefore, the breaking of the *sanātana-dharma* tradition by irresponsible leaders of society brings about chaos in that society, and consequently people forget the aim of life—Viṣṇu. Such leaders are called blind, and persons who follow such leaders are sure to be led into chaos.

Chapter 1—Text 43

*utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām
manuṣyāṇām janārdana
narake niyatam vāso
bhavatīty anuśuśrūma*

SYNONYMS

utsanna—spoiled; *kula-dharmāṇām*—of those who have the family traditions; *manuṣyāṇām*—of such men; *janārdana*—O Kṛṣṇa; *narake*—in hell; *niyatam*—always; *vāsaḥ*—residence; *bhavati*—it so becomes; *iti*—thus; *anuśuśrūma*—I have heard by disciplic succession.

TRANSLATION

O Kṛṣṇa, maintainer of the people, I have heard by disciplic succession that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell.

PURPORT

Arjuna bases his argument not on his own personal experience, but on what he has heard from the authorities. That is the way of receiving real knowledge. One cannot reach the real point of factual knowledge without being helped by the right person who is already established in that knowledge. There is a system in the *varṇāśrama* institution by which before death one has to undergo the process of atonement for his sinful activities. One who is always engaged in sinful activities must utilize the process of atonement called the *prāyaścitta*. Without doing so, one surely will be transferred to hellish planets to undergo miserable lives as the result of sinful activities.

Chapter 1—Text 44

*aho bata mahat pāpam
kartum vyavasitā vayam
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena
hantum sva-janam udyatāḥ*

SYNONYMS

aho—alas; *bata*—how strange it is; *mahat*—great; *pāpam*—sins; *kartum*—to perform; *vyavasitāḥ*—have decided; *vayam*—we; *yat*—because; *rājya-sukha-lobhena*—driven by greed for royal happiness; *hantum*—to kill; *sva-janam*—kinsmen; *udyatāḥ*—trying.

TRANSLATION

Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing to commit greatly sinful acts. Driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness, we are intent on killing our own kinsmen.

PURPORT

Driven by selfish motives, one may be inclined to such sinful acts as the killing of one's own brother, father or mother. There are many such instances in the history of the world. But Arjuna, being a saintly devotee of the Lord, is always conscious of moral principles and therefore takes care to avoid such activities.

Chapter 1—Text 45

*yadi mām apratīkāram
aśastram śastra-pāṇayaḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus
tat me kṣemataram bhavet*

SYNONYMS

yadi—even if; *mām*—me; *apratīkāram*—without being resistant; *aśastram*—without being fully equipped; *śastra-pāṇayaḥ*—those with weapons in hand; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*—the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *raṇe*—on the battlefield; *hanyuḥ*—may kill; *tat*—that; *me*—for me; *kṣemataram*—better; *bhavet*—would be.

TRANSLATION

Better for me if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, weapons in hand, were to kill me unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield.

PURPORT

It is the custom—according to *kṣatriya* fighting principles—that an unarmed and unwilling foe should not be attacked. Arjuna, however, decided that even if attacked by the enemy in such an awkward position, he would not fight. He did not consider how much the other party was bent upon fighting. All these symptoms are due to soft-heartedness resulting from his being a great devotee of the Lord.

Chapter 1—Text 46

*sañjaya uvāca
evam uktvārjunaḥ sañkhye
rathopastha upāviśat
viṣṭjya sa-śaram cāpaṁ
śoka-saṁvigna-mānasaḥ*

SYNONYMS

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *evam*—thus; *uktvā*—saying; *arjunaḥ*—Arjuna; *sañkhye*—in the battlefield; *ratha*—of the chariot; *upasthe*—on the seat; *upāviśat*—sat down again; *viṣṭjya*—putting aside; *sa-śaram*—along with arrows; *cāpaṁ*—the bow; *śoka*—by lamentation; *saṁvigna*—distressed; *mānasaḥ*—within the mind.

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: Arjuna, having thus spoken on the battlefield, cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot, his mind overwhelmed with grief.

PURPORT

While observing the situation of his enemy, Arjuna stood up on the chariot, but he was so afflicted with lamentation that he sat down again, setting aside his bow and arrows. Such a kind and soft-hearted person, in the devotional service of the Lord, is fit to receive self-knowledge.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta Purports to the First Chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā in the matter of Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra.