

Dhṛtarāṣṭra Asks:
“What Did My People And The Sons
Of Pāṇḍu Do When They Assembled
On The Battle Field Of Kurukṣetra?” v1

1.0

Saṅjaya Replies:
“Arjuna Commands Śrī Kṛṣṇa To Take
His Chariot In The Middle Of The
Two Armies So That He Can Review
The People In The Enemy Line.”

1.1

Seeing His Near And Dear Ones In
The Enemy Line, Arjuna Felt Dejected

1.2

Dejected Arjuna Conjures
Up False Arguments

1.3

Moral Dilemma

- Teacher
- Grandsire
- Cousins/Relatives
- Don't Want Kingdom

1.4

Arjuna Concludes:
“I Can't Fight”



The Yoga Of Arjuna-Grief



Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, the Divine Song of the Lord, occurs in the chapter named, Bhīṣma Parva of the Mahābhārata. Mahābhārata consists of 100,000 verses, authored by Śrī Veda Vyāsa.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* was sung on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It has eighteen chapters and seven-hundred and one verses. Veda Vyāsa, the author of the Mahābhārata offered Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the blind king of Hastināpur, the *divyacakṣu*, the celestial eyes. With this celestial vision, while sitting in the palace, Dhṛtarāṣṭra could see, listen, and even feel emotions of the people on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra refused the offer, as he was aware of his wrong actions and did not have the courage to see the consequences. He knew that the evil and the wicked will always suffer in the long run. He was afraid that his children, the Kauravas, will die in the war. So the celestial eyes were given to Sañjaya, the secretary of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, so that the King sitting in his palace could get the reports of the war.

OVERVIEW

The *Bhagavad Gītā* starts with a question by the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He asks, “O Sañjaya, what did my people, the Kauravas, and the sons of Pāṇḍu do when they assembled together on the holy field of Kurukṣetra, wishing to fight?” Sañjaya describes the scenes, emotions, and conversations of the battlefield to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Seeing King Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s army arrayed, Arjuna commands Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his charioteer, to take his chariot in the midst of the two armies. Arjuna is all ready for the war. He surveyed to see who are the people on the other side of injustice, who are supporting a wrong cause that has brought disharmony in the society making his subjects unhappy! Arjuna slowly swept his gaze over both the armies.

Seeing his beloved grandfather, his revered teacher Droṇācārya, and all his cousins and friends on the other side, a feeling of compassion overwhelmed him. Arjuna lost his composure. He forgot his duty as a prince whose job was to fight for the right of his subjects; but he saw himself as Arjuna, the darling of his grandfather and his teacher!

His mental composure broke down; his self-confidence deserted him; and he felt dejected. Under the situation, he did not know what was the right thing to do. This identity crisis stirred up his heart and he presented many seemingly logical arguments as to why he should not fight the battle!

Arjuna conjures up seemingly logical but false arguments like how can he raise bow and arrow against people he reveres, loves; how can he enjoy even the kingdom after killing his own kith and kin! How can he ever raise his bow and arrow against his revered teacher Droṇācārya and his grandsire Bhīṣma *Pitāmaha* in whose loving lap he has grown up to be who he is!





Why does Arjuna conjure up false arguments, which are convincing and supported his escapism?

Truly, it is the result of confusion of what is the right course of action under the situation but is expressed as a moral dilemma. Kurukṣetra, the historic place, is a symbol of our heart where the positive and negative thoughts, good and bad tendencies are at war constantly.

Many a times, the negative forces, higher in number may win! Such is the case with Arjuna; he wants to run away from the battlefield. Arjuna here concludes, “He cannot go through the war!”

This happens to all of us in life. You have applied for scholarship, you have the grades and you got the letter for an interview! At this point, mind will surface many negative thoughts and if they overpower, like Arjuna, you also would want to give up and find false and seemingly logical arguments to convince parents why you should not go for an interview! Arjuna’s grief is truly and symbolically a depiction of each and everyone of our griefs and quandary in our lives.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna, nay to all of us in the Gīta, why and how we should fight the battle of our life.

KING DHṚTARĀṢṬRA’S QUERY

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ,

māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya. 1.

I. 1 What did my people and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, when, desirous to fight, they assembled together on the holy plain of Kurukṣetra, O Sañjaya?

In the entire Gītā, this is the only verse which is spoken by Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He asked, “What did my people and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, when, desirous to fight, they assembled together on the holy plain of Kurukṣetra, O Sañjaya?” The remaining seven hundred verses are Sañjaya’s narration of what happened on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra name means “one who has usurped the kingdom.” The kingdom really belonged to Pāṇḍu, the father of the Pāṇḍavas; it was handed to Dhṛtarāṣṭra because Pāṇḍavas were young to rule the kingdom after Pāṇḍu’s death. When the Pāṇḍavas were ready to take over the kingdom, Duryodhana, the eldest of Kauravas, refused. Dhṛtarāṣṭra all along knew of Duryodhana’s wrong doing and yet he supported blinded by his attachment to his children. How attachment makes one

blind intellectually is symbolically represented by the blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

This attachment is reflected in his question to Sañjaya when he says, “My people and sons of Pāṇḍu.”

1.0 SAÑJAYA’S REPLY

Sañjaya replied, “Duryodhana, seeing his cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, arrayed for battle, goes to his teacher Droṇācārya and points to the formation of the Pāṇḍava forces.”

Bhīṣma *Pitāmaha*, the grandsire, noticed that the hysterical Duryodhana is making his own officers uncomfortable by his words because Duryodhana knew of his own wicked ways which made him fearful of the outcome of the war. *Pitāmaha* blew his conch, starting the Mahābhārata war. The Kauravas became the aggressors. The commanders of the Kaurava army started blowing their own bugles, conches, and cow-horns, and the Pāṇḍava army answered the battle cry, rending the hearts of the Kauravas.

Seeing King Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s army arrayed, Arjuna, became impatient to start the war and commands Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his charioteer, “Take my chariot in the midst of the two armies. I want to survey the enemy line.”



Arjuna slowly swept his gaze over both the armies. Seeing so many relatives and acquaintances poised for war, he realized the magnitude of disaster this war would bring. A feeling of compassion overwhelmed him.

His mental composure broke down; his self-confidence deserted him; and he felt dejected.

1.1 Arjuna's Dejection



All his life, Arjuna had waited just for such an opportunity to banish the Kauravas in fair battle, where he knew the Kaurava's cunning move would stand no chance against his own mighty prowess. But when such a chance presented itself, it seems strange that he lost heart and found himself lacking the confidence to measure up to such a situation.

Arjuna's self-confidence, at this juncture, deserted him and, he was overwhelmed with grief and dejection. When one wants to strike, but is unable to do so due to the powerful might of the unjust opponent, the feeling that rises in such a heart is called dejection. Arjuna and his brothers had always been the underdogs at every turn in their lives, suffering hardship, meeting challenges, overcoming hurdles, all strewn along their path by

their ruthless cousins, the Kauravas. Arjuna was a conscientious leader of his people and as such was itching to strike Duryodhana and his wicked supporters. But seeing them, he experienced dejection, and a deep sense of frustration that resulted in his incapacity to answer the clear call to battle.

To maintain a righteous front and dignity, to hide the urge to run away from the problem, Arjuna uses the mask of compassion. An urge to run away from the problem in the face of it; an impulse to shirk the weight of responsibility; a mental shrinking from the thought of inevitable consequence is escapism. Such mental shrinkage and cowardice in the face of grave situations rob us of our own successes.

He wanted to run away from the battlefield! To hide his incapability to fight the battle and to save his face, Arjuna conjures up false arguments under the disguise of compassion.



1.2 Arjuna's False Arguments

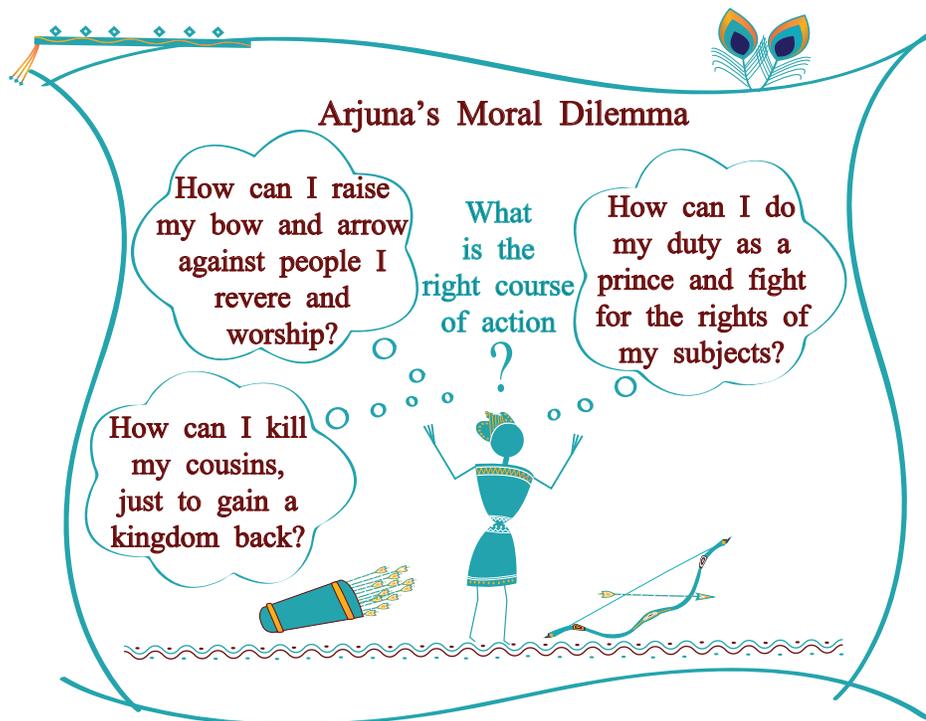
He says, "O Kṛṣṇa, how can I raise my bow and arrow against people I revere and worship? How can I kill my cousins, just to gain a kingdom back? Seeing these kinsmen, arrayed, eager to fight, my bow slips from my hand, my mouth is parched, my limbs fail, and my mind is whirling."

To hide his incapability, he tries to take shelter behind even superstitions, myths, and beliefs and adds, “O Kṛṣṇa, “I see bad omens!”

These are the physical symptoms characterizing the state of his mental breakup. This breakup of personality we shall call the Arjuna Disease. The Arjuna Disease is universal—it is common at all times, in all places, to people of all races, classes, creeds, and cultures. It is a human disease, natural to anyone of action. The cure is given in the rest of the chapters of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

This is the story in the first chapter of the *Gītā*.

1.3 Moral Dilemma



Whenever we want to hide our cowardice, we come up with seemingly logical arguments represented here as the moral dilemma. Truly, it is the result of confusion of what is the right course of action under the situation that Arjuna was facing.

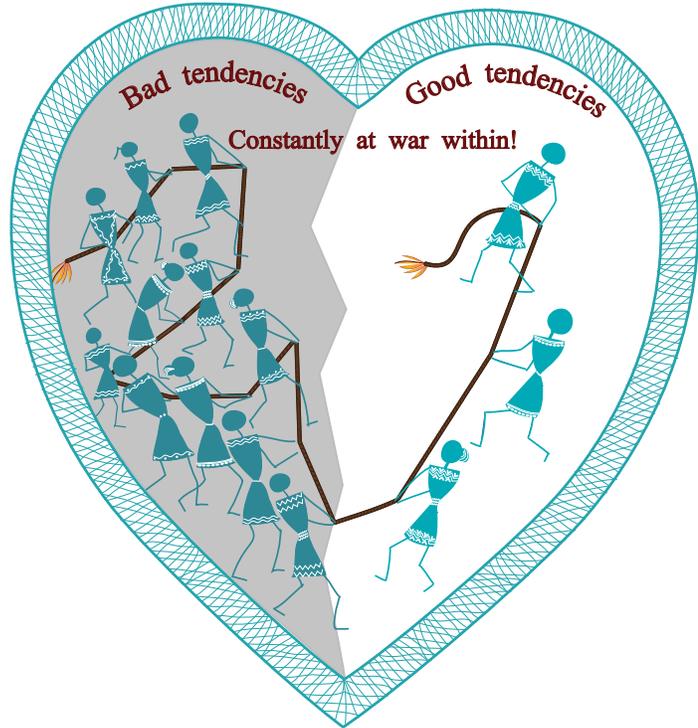
The confusion of the mind is expressed as a moral dilemma and Arjuna is covering it up with compassion, the noble value! “How can I raise my bow and arrow against people I revere and worship? How can I kill my cousins, just to gain a kingdom back? Even though they may kill me, I do not wish to kill them O Kṛṣṇa, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds; how much less for the sake of the earth.”

1.4 Arjuna Concludes: “I Can’t Fight.”

Arjuna concludes and declares, “I can’t fight the battle.” Such conclusion in life is a result of the confusion or war within our mind.

War Within

The historic spot of Kurukṣetra is a symbol of our heart where the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, the bad and the good tendencies, are constantly at war with each other. These good and bad tendencies are like cousins because of their common origin. The Kauravas, a hundred in number, represent the ungodly forces of negative tendencies within us. And the Pāṇḍavas, represent the diviner impulses in us. A constant Mahābhārata war is being waged in everyone of us at all crucial moments of action. Often the negative



tendencies in us are larger in number like the Kaurava army and usually mightier in their effectiveness, while the inner divine army is very small in number like the Pāṇḍava army and apparently weaker in efficiency.

If we give into negativity, our likes and dislikes, we end up making the wrong decision. Hang on to the diviner impulses within and be a victor in life.

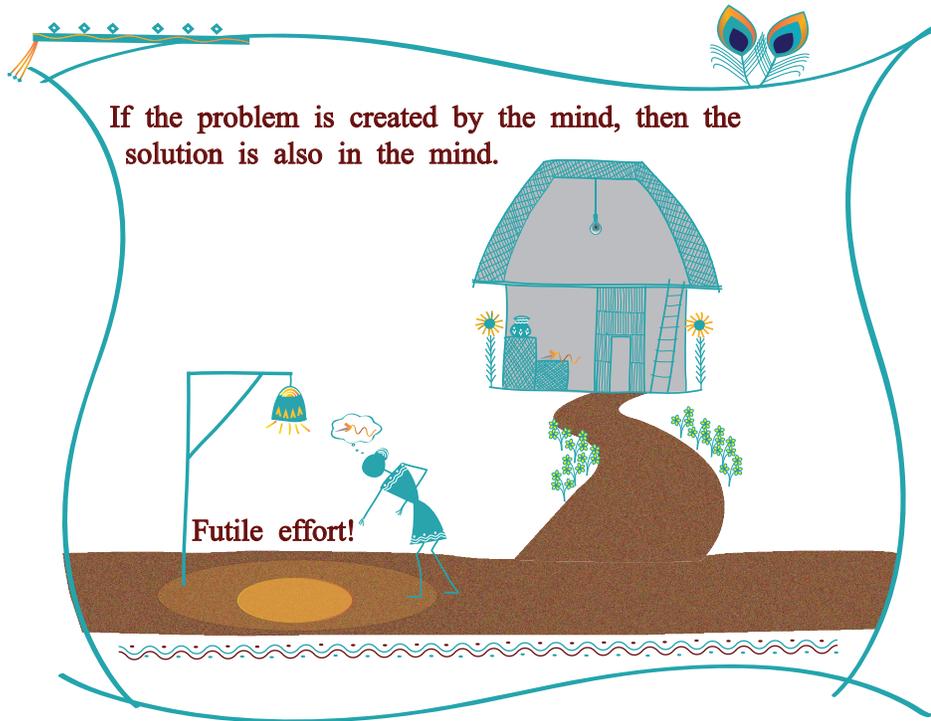
Below are the words of wisdom from *Pūjya Guruji* and *Pūjya Gurudeva* to guide us.

Problems Versus Situation

Swami Tejomayananda, lovingly called, *Pūjya Guruji* says, “Only situations come to our lives, never problems. It is we, when we feel physically, psychologically, or outwardly ill-equipped to deal with them, we call situations, ‘problems.’ When we are capable of facing them, they are not problems. Therefore, it is our inadequacy that causes problems, not the situations.”

When we encounter problems, generally we try to escape the situation like how Arjuna wanted to run away from the battlefield under the guise of compassion! Or, we would want to change the situation and waste all our energy or we would

complain about our luck and blame all in the world! According to Kṛṣṇa none of these is a way to take care of a problem; otherwise He would have done it for Arjuna!



The problem is created by the mind, so the solution is also in the mind. Often, we behave like the lady who had lost the needle inside the home but was looking for it under the light on the street as it is dark in the home! Such efforts are futile.

Make Life A Sport Not A Tragedy

Pūjya Gurdeva, Swami Chinmayananda says, “If you have got the mental poise in yourself, no situation is beyond you. Play your game—sometimes you win, sometimes you lose; so what? The game is important, not the winning and the losing; simply enjoy the game. Make life a sport not a tragedy, not a calamity, not a despairing situation. To the one with a quietened mind, with faith in himself and the higher, no situation is so despairing!”

LESSONS LEARNED

In this chapter, we learned:

- ◆ Play the game of life.
- ◆ Not give into negative emotions.