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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS & JJC FOUNDATION

Maha·bhárata
Book Six
Bhishma
Volume One
Including the “Bhagavad Gita” in Context

Translated by
ALEX CHERNIAK
With a Foreword by Ranajit Guha

Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library translation of Volume One (of two) of “Bhishma,” Book Six of the Maha·bhárata.

“Bhishma,” the first of five battle books, narrates the first ten days of the war between the Káuravas and the Pándavas. This volume covers the first four days and includes the world-famous “Bhagavad Gita” (Song of the Lord), set here within its original epic context.

In this ‘bible’ of Indian civilization, at the moment battle is to begin, the charioteer Krishna emancipates his disciple Árjuna from his personal dilemma: whether to follow his righteous duty as a warrior and slay his opponent relatives in the just war, or to abstain from fighting and renounce the warrior code to which he is born. The “Gita” culminates in Krishna’s theophany, when he reveals himself in the horrendous form of Death as the all-devouring fire of Time, a manifestation notoriously echoed by Oppenheimer when he witnessed the first nuclear bomb exploding.

The great survivor, the “Gita” is relevant to all our own times, as is its context and pretext, the bloody book of “Bhishma.”
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# CONTENTS

CSL Conventions  
Foreword  
Introduction  

MAHA-BHÁRATA VI – BHISHMA I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>On the Eve of the Great War</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>Ill Omens and Divine Sight</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–12</td>
<td>Description of the Earth</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–24</td>
<td>Shocking News: Bhishma Fallen</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–42</td>
<td>Bhagavad Gita (Song of the Lord)</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Yudhi-shithira Asks for Blessings</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44–49</td>
<td>Battle Begins: Day One</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–51</td>
<td>Rearranging the Troops</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52–55</td>
<td>Day Two</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56–59</td>
<td>Day Three</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–64</td>
<td>Day Four</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes  
Emendations to the Sanskrit Text  
Proper Names and Epithets  
Index
25-42

BHAGAVAD GITA

(SONG OF THE LORD)
DHARMAKŚETRE KurūkŚetream samavetā yuyutsavah māmakaḥ Pāṇḍavaś ā'śiva kim akurvata, Saṅjaya?

SAṄJAYA uvāca: dṛṣṭvā tu Pāṇḍava'janikāṃ vyūḍhaṃ Duryodhanas tada acarāmaṃ upasāmgaṃmya rājā vacanam abravit:

"paśy' āitām Pāṇḍulputraṃ, acaryā, mahatiṃ caṃūṃ vyūḍhaṃ Droupadaputraṃ tava śiṣyena dhūmatā. atra śūrā mahā|mṛvāsā Bhīmā|Arjuna|samām yudhi: Yuyudhāno, Virāṭaś ca, Droupadaś ca mahā|ratrahāḥ;

Dhrṣṭaketuṣ, Čekitānaḥ, Kāṭijājaś ca viryavān; Purujit, Kuntibhojaś ca, Šaibyaś ca nara|puṇgavaḥ; Yudhāmanuṣaḥ ca vikṛnta, Īṣṭamaṇiḥ ca viryavana; Saubhadro, Drupadeyāś ca. sarva eva mahā|ratrahāḥ.

asmākaṃ tu viśiṣṭā ye, tān nibodha, dvijā|ottama. nāyaka mama saṁyasya, saṁjñā|ārthaṃ tān braṇimī te: bhavāni, Bhīmaśa ca, Kṛnaḥ ca, Kṛpaś ca samitiṃjayaḥ; Aśvatthāmā, Vikarnaś ca, Saumadattis tathā āśiṣa ca. anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā maḍjarthe tyakta[jī]vitāḥ, nānāśastrapraharanaḥ, sarve yuddha|viśāraṇāḥ.

alparīṣantad asmākaṃ balaṃ Bhīmā|abhiraṃkṣitam; paryāptam tv idam eteśaṃ balaṃ Bhīmā|abhiraṃkṣitam. ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā|bhago avasthitāḥ Bhīmaṃ ev ābhiraṃkṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi!»

172
DHRTA-RASHTRA said:

When they assembled, eager to fight, on the field of righteousness, the field of Kuru, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do, Sánjaya?

SÁNJAYA said:

Seeing the Pándava army drawn up for battle, King Dur-yódhana approached the teacher and spoke these words:

"Master, behold this great host of Pandu’s sons, drawn up in battle array by your skillful pupil the son of Drúpada. Here are heroes, mighty archers, to match Bhima and Árjuna in battle: Yuyudhána, and Viráta, and the great warrior Drúpada; Dhrishta-ketu, Chekitána, and the valorous king of the Kashis; Púrujit, and Kunti-bhoja, and the bull-like king of the Shibis; and mighty Yudha-manyu, and valiant Uttamáujas; the son of Subhádra, and the sons of Dráupadi. And all of them are great warriors.

As for our most distinguished men, listen, best of the twice-born. So we are clear, I will list my army’s leaders for you: yourself, and Bhishma and Karna, and Kripa victorious in battle; Ashva-tthaman and Vikárna, and the son of Soma-datta too. And many other heroes, armed with various weapons and missiles and all skilled in warfare, are ready to sacrifice their lives for my sake.

Our army, protected by Bhishma, is unlimited; but theirs, protected by Bhima, is limited. So stationed at your positions on all fronts, protect that Bhishma, all of you!"
tasya samjjanayan harṣaṁ
Kurujiyddhaḥ pitāmahāḥ
simhaṇādaṁ vinady'occaiḥ
śaṅkhaṁ dadhumau pratāpavān.
tataḥ śaṅkhaś ca, bheryaś ca, paṇav[ānaka]g[ō]mukhaḥ
sahas’ āiv’ abhyahanyanta. sa sādhas tumulo ‘bhavat.
tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahat syandane sthitau
Mādhavaḥ Pāṇḍavaś c ‘āiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ.

25.15
Pāṇcajanyaḥ Hṛṣikeśo;
Devadattaḥ Dhananāyayaḥ;
Pauṇḍraḥ dadhumau mahāśaṅkhāṁ
bhimaṅkarmā Vṛkodaraḥ;
Anantaviyayaṁ rāja Kuntīputro Yudhiṣṭhirah;
Nakulaḥ Sahadevaś ca Sughoṣaḥ Maṇipuspakau.
Kāśyaḥ ca param[ā]yāśaḥ, Śīkhaṇḍi ca mahārathah;
Dhṛṣṭadyumno, Vīrataś ca, Sātyakiś c ‘ālparājitah;
Drupado, Draupadeyaś ca
sarvaḥ, prthivilīpate,
Saubhadraḥ ca mahābhūḥ
śaṅkhāṁ dadhumuḥ prthak prthak.
sa ghoṣo Dhāṛtarāṣṭrāṇāṁ hṛdayāṁ vyadārayat
nabhaś ca prthiviṁ c ‘āiva tumulo vyanunādayan.

25.20
atha vyavasthitān dṛṣṭvā Dhāṛtarāṣṭrān kapidhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastraśampāte dhanur udyamya Pāṇḍavaḥ
Hṛṣikeśaṁ tadā vākyam idam āha, mahīpate.
Causing him joy, the elder of the Kurus, the mighty
grandfather, roared a great lion-like roar and blew his conch.
And conches and kettledrums, tabors, drums and trumpets were sounded all at once, and there was a tumultuous din. Then, standing on a great chariot yoked with white horses, Mádhava and the son of Pandu blew their divine conches. Hrishi-kesha blew Pancha-janya; Dhananjaya blew Deva-datta; Vrikódara of terrible deeds blew the great conch Paundra; King Yudhišthira, son of Kunti, blew Anánta-vijaya; Nákula and Saha-deva blew Sughósha and Mani-púshpaka. And the excellent archer of Kashi, and the great warrior Shikhándin; Dhrishta-dyumna and Viráta, and invincible Sátyaki; Drúpada and the sons of Drúpadi, and the mighty-armed son of Subhádra, all blew their conches, each his own, lord of the earth. That tumultuous noise, echoing through heaven and earth, broke the hearts of Dhrita-rashtra’s sons.

The monkey-banne red Pándava, seeing Dhrita-rashtra’s troops arrayed for battle, raised his bow as the clash of arms began, and said these words to Hrishi-kesha, Your Majesty.
MAHA-BHARATA VI – BHISHMA I

ARJUNA UVĀCA:

senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpayā me, 'cyuta, yāvad etān nirikṣe 'ham yoddhuhākāmān avasthitān. kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇāsamudyame? yotsyamānān avekṣe 'ham, ya ete 'tra samāgataḥ Dhārtrāṣṭrasya durkṣuddhe yuddhe priyācikīrṣavāḥ.

SAŅJAYA UVĀCA:
evam ukto Hṛṣīkeṣo Guḍākeśeṇa, Bhārata, senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathāḥōrtamam uvāca: «Pārtha, paśyā' āitān samavetān Kurūn itil» tatr' āpaśyāt sthitān Pārthaḥ pīṭhṇ, atha pitāmhaḥ, ācāryān, mātulān, bhrāṭṛṇ, putrān, paurān, sakhīṁs tathā, śvāsūrān, suḥṛḍḥaś c' āiva senayor ubhayor api. tān samikṣaya sa Kauntyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān kṛpayā parayā' āviṣṭo viṣṇānām idam abravīt:

ARJUNA UVĀCA:
dṛṣṭvā' ēmān svaljanān, Kṛṣṇa, yuyutsūn samavasthitān, sidantāi mama gātrāṇi, mukhaṁ ca pariṣusyati; vepathuś ca śāritable me romaḥharṣā ca jāyate.

25.30 Gāṇḍīvaṁ śraṁsate hastāt, tvak c' āiva paridhāyate. na ca śāṅkomy avasthātuṁ, bhramat' īva ca me manaḥ. nimittāṇi ca paśyāmi viparītāṇi, Keśavā. na ca śreya 'nupaśyāmī parvāvaljanam āhare. na kāṅkṣe vijayāṁ, Kṛṣṇa, na ca rājaṁ, sukhāṇi ca. kiṁ no rājyena, Govinda? kiṁ bhogār jīvitena vā?
ÁRJUNA said:
Áchyuta, put my chariot between the two armies so I can see the warriors drawn up keen on battling. Whom do I have to fight in this war? Let me see those who will fight, who have assembled here to do a favor in battle for Dhrita-rashtra’s evil-minded son.

SÁNJAYA said:
Thus addressed by Guda-keshya, O descendant of Bha-rata, Hrishi-keshya put that excellent chariot between the two armies, opposite Bhishma, Drona, and all the kings, and said: “Partha, behold these assembled Kurus!” And standing there in both armies the son of Pritha saw fathers, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, and friends. Seeing all those kinsmen in position, the son of Kunti was filled with profound compassion and said in despair:

ÁRJUNA said:
Krishna, at the sight of my own kin standing here ready to fight, my limbs feel tired and my mouth has gone dry, my body is trembling and my hair is standing on end. Gandiva is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning all over. I can’t stand up, and my mind seems to whirl. I see evil portents, Késhava, and I see no good in killing my own family in war. I don’t desire victory, Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. What use is the kingdom to us, Govinda, or enjoyments, or life itself?
yešām arthe kāṅkṣitaṁ no rājyaṁ, bhogāḥ, sukhāni ca, 
ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prānāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca:
ācāryāḥ, pitaraḥ, putrāś, tathā āiva ca pitāmahāḥ,
matulāḥ, śvaśūrāḥ, pautrāḥ, syālāḥ, saṁbandhinās tathā.
etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi, Madhuśūdana, 
api trailokyaśājyasya hetoḥ; kim nu mahiṇkṛte!
nihatya Dhārtaraṣṭrāṇ naḥ kā pritiḥ syāj, Janārdana? 
pāpam ev' āśrayed asmān harv” ātān ātatāyinaḥ;
tasmān n' ārha vayaṁ hantum Dhārtaraṣṭrāṇ saṁbāndhavān.
svajanaṁ hi kathaṁ hṛtva sukhinaḥ syāma, Madhava? 
yady apy ete na paśyantī lobh'opahata)cetasāḥ 
kulaṅkṣayakṛtaṁ doṣaṁ, mitra|drohe ca pātakam,
kathāṁ na jīyeyam asmābhīḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum, 
kulaṅkṣayakṛtaṁ doṣaṁ praṇaśyadbhir, Janārdana?

kulaṅkṣaye praṇaśyantī kula|dharmāḥ saṁtānāḥ,
dharme naśte kulaṁ kṛṣṇam ājñāharmo 'bhībhavaty uta. 
adharṁ|ābhbhavāt, Krśṇa, pradusyaṁ kula|striyaḥ;
striśu duṣṭāsva, Vāṣṇeya, jāyate varṇāṣaṁkaraḥ. 
svaṁkarō narakāyā' āiva kulālghnānaṁ, kulasya ca;
patantī pitaro hy eṣām luptalpīṇḍajodakakriyāḥ, 
dośaiṁ eitāḥ kulaṅghnānaṁ varṇa|saṁkara|kārakaiḥ 
utsādyante jāti|ḍharmāḥ, kula|dharmās ca śāśvatāḥ, 
utsannājē kula|dharmānāṁ manusyaṇāṁ, Janārdana, 
narakē niyataṁ vāso bhava't, ity anuśūrūma.
Those for whose sake we want kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures are drawn up here for battle, ready to give up their lives and wealth: teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives. Though they would kill me, slayer of Madhu, I wouldn’t want to kill them even for the sovereignty of the triple-world; how much less, then, for the sake of the earth! What joy could there be for us, Janárdana, were we to kill Dhrita-rashtra’s sons? Were we to kill these murderers, evil would befall us; so we mustn’t kill Dhrita-rashtra’s sons, our kinsmen. For how could we be happy having killed our family, Mádhava?

Even though they, blinded by greed, see no harm in ruining the whole family and no crime in betraying friends, why shouldn’t we, who realize the evil in destroying the family, know not to do it, Janárdana?

When a family is destroyed the ancient family customs die; and when virtue has been lost, vice prevails over the whole family. When vice prevails the family’s women become corrupt; and from the corruption of women comes the mixing of social classes, Varshnéya.” Such mixing leads the family’s destroyers and the family itself to hell, for the ancestors fall if the offerings of rice and water aren’t made. The sins of the family-destroyers cause the mixing of classes and bring the eternal caste traditions and family rites to ruin. We have heard, Janárdana, that people whose family rites have been ruined are doomed to dwell in hell for certain.
25.45 aha bata! mahat pāpaṁ kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam, yad rājyaasukha|lobhena haṁtaṁ sva|jaṁaṁ udyataḥ! yadi mām alpratikāraṁ, aśastraṁ āśatra|pāna|yaḥ Dhāṛtarāṣṭrā raṁe hanyus, taṁ me kṣemataṁ ṛoṁvab.

S āN JAYA uvāca:
evam uktv” Ārjunāṁ saṁkhye rathā|pāṣṭha upāvīṣat visrjya sajāraṁ cápaṁ ṣoka|saṁvigna|mānasāḥ.

S āN JAYA uvāca:

26.1 TA|M TATHĀ KṚPĀ” āvisthaṁ aṣu|pūrṇaḥ|ākula|eṣaṇa|yaṁ visiǔdantam idaṁ vākyam uvāca Madhu|ṣudanāḥ.

S ṚIJBHAGAVĀN uvāca:
kutas tvā kaśmaṁaṁ idaṁ visame samupasṭhitam? anārnya|juṣṭaṁ, aṣu|vargyaṁ, aṁkīrti|kaṁaṁ, Ārjuna. klaibyaṁ mā sma gamāḥ, Pārthā! n’ āitaṁ tvayy upapadyate. kuḍuṛaṁ ṛḥya|daurbalyaṁ tyaktv” ोtiṣṭha, paraṁ|tapaḥ.

ARJUNA uvāca:
kathāṁ Bhīṣmaṁ ahaṁ saṁkhyec, Droṇaṁ ca, Madhu|ṣudana ṣuṣhəḥ pratiyotsyāmi?
pūj”[ārhaḥ, aṁrṣdana.

26.5 guṛuṇ aḥatvā hi mah”jūnubhāvān chreyo bhoktuṁ bhaṁkṣaṁ ap’ iha loke; hātv” ārtha|kāmaṁs tu guṛuṇ īh’ āiva bhuṇjīya bhogān rudhira|pradigdhān. na c’ āitad vidmaḥ, kataran no gariyo: yad vā jaṁe, yadi vā no jayeuṇuḥ. yān eva hātvā na jīviṣānas, te vāṣṭhiṁ pramukhe Dhāṛtarāṣṭrāḥ. kārpanu|daṇḍaṁ|āpahata|suvajbhaṁvāṁ
Woe! We are determined to commit a grave crime, since we are intent upon slaughtering our kinsmen out of greed for the kingdom and its pleasures! It would be better for me if Dhrita-rashtra’s sons, armed with weapons, were to kill me in battle unresisting and unarmed!

SÁNJAYA said:

With these words, his heart struck with grief, Árjuna cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on his chariot platform, on the field of battle.

SÁNJAYA said:

Then the slayer of Madhu spoke to Árjuna, who was dejected and overwhelmed with pity, his eyes blurred with tears.

THE LORD said:

Why has this faintheartedness overcome you at this difficult time, Árjuna? Unworthy of the noble, it doesn’t lead to heaven but causes disgrace. Don’t succumb to cowardice, Partha! It doesn’t become you. Shake off this miserable weakness of heart and get up, scorcher of foes!

ÁRJUNA said:

How can I confront Bhishma and Drona with arrows in battle, slayer of Madhu? They deserve my homage, enemy-slayer. Better in this world to live on alms without killing the mighty elders; for were I to kill the elders, eager though they are for worldly gain, in this very world I would taste pleasures smeared with blood. And we don’t even know which is preferable: to vanquish or be vanquished. Dhrita-rashtra’s sons stand before us, but if we kill them we won’t
práchāmi tvām dharma|saṁmūdhah|cetāh,
yac chreyah syān niścitaḥ, brūhi tān me.
śiṣyas te 'haṃḥ; śādhi māṃ tvaṃ prapaṇnam!
na hi prapaśyāmi, māṃ āpanudyād
yac chokam, ucchōṣaḥam indriyānām,
avāpya bhūmāv alsapatnam ṛddhaṃ
rājyaṃ, surāṇām api c' ādhipatyām.

SAṆJAYA uvāca:
evam ukṛtvā Hṛṣikeśaḥ Guḍākeśaḥ, parāṇṭapa,
«na yotsya' iti» Govindam ukṛtvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha.

tam uvāca Hṛṣikeśaḥ prahasann Īva, Bhārata,
senayor ubhayor madhye viṣidantam idaṃ vacaḥ.

ŚRĪBHAGAVĀN uvāca:
alśocṣān anvaśocas tvām, praśābvādāṃś ca bhāṣase.
gat'āsūn aigat'āśūṃś ca n' ānusocantī paṇḍitāh,
nā tv ev' āḥam jātu n' āsaṃ, na tvāṃ, n' ēme jan'ādhipāḥ;
nā c' āiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayaṃ atāḥ param.
dehino śmin yathā dehe kaumāraḥ, yauvanam, jārā,
tathā deh'āntara|prāptir. dhīras tatra na muhyati.
mātrā|parās tu, Kaunteya, śīt|ōṣṇa|sukha|dhuḥkha|dāḥ,
āgām'|āpāyino, 'nityāṃ. tāṃś titikṣasva, Bhārata.

26.15 yaṃ hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣaṃ, puruṣa'|rśabh,
samajhuḥ|khaṣukhaṃ, dhīraṃ, so 'mrta|vāya kalpate.
n' āśato vidyate bhāvo, n' ābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.
ubhayor api drṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tatvam|darśibhiḥ.
ā|vināśi tu tad viddhi, yena sarvam idaṃ tataṃ;
vināśam ā'vyayasy' 'asya na kaś cīt kartum arhati.

182
want to live. My whole being afflicted with the vice of pity, my mind confused over my duty, I ask you to tell me for sure what would be best. I am your disciple; teach me, I am at your mercy! For were I to get an unrivaled thriving kingdom on earth and lordship even over the gods, I see no way to dispel the sorrow that withers my senses.

SÁNJaya said:

Having said this to Hrishi-kesha, Guda-kesha told Go-vinda “I won’t fight!” and fell silent, enemy-scorcher. And Hrishi-kesha, almost laughing, spoke to the distressed hero between the two armies, Bhárata.

THE LORD said:

You are grieving for those you shouldn’t grieve for, and yet you speak words of wisdom. But wise men don’t grieve for the dead or the living. There wasn’t a time when you and I and these lords of men didn’t exist; and none of us will cease to exist hereafter. Childhood, youth and old age befall the embodied soul’s body; and likewise it attains another body. A wise person isn’t confused by this. Contacts with the material world, Kauntéya,* cause feelings of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, but they are unstable, they come and go. Endure them, Bhárata. Bull of a man, the wise man whom these contacts don’t disturb, to whom pain and pleasure are one and the same, is fit for immortality.

The non-existent can’t come into being, and the existent can’t cease to be. Those who see the truth* see the boundary between these two. So you should know that by which all this is pervaded is indestructible; no one can bring about the destruction of this imperishable. It is only bodies that
antavanta ime dehā nityasyā' ὄκταḥ śārīraḥ, 
ānāśino, 'prameyasya, tasmād yudhyasva Bhārataḥ!
 ya evaṃ vetti hantāraṃ, yaś c’ āiṇaṃ manyate hatam,
ubhau tau na vijānīto. n’ ayāṃ hanti, na hanyate.

26.20
na jāyate mriyate vā kadā cin;
 n’ āyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ.
ajō, nityāḥ, śāsvato 'yaṃ, purāṇo;
na hanyate hanyamāne śārīre.
ved’ ājvināśinaṃ, nityaṃ ya enam ājaṃ, āvyayam,
kathāṃ sa puruṣaḥ, Pārtha, kam ghātayati? hanti kām?
vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni grhatāti naro 'parāṇi,
tathā śārīraṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
anyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī.

n’ āiṇaṃ chindanti śastraṇi; n’ āiṇaṃ dhaṭti pāvakaḥ;
na c’ āiṇaṃ kledayanty āpo; na śoṣayaṭi māruṭaḥ.
a(cchedyo 'yaṃ, aḍāhyo 'yaṃ, aḷkledyo, 'ṣosya eva ca.
nityaḥ, sarvaṛghataḥ, sthānar, aḍcalo 'yaṃ, sanātanaḥ,
āvyakto 'yaṃ, aḍcintyo 'yaṃ, aḍvikāryo 'yaṃ ucyate.

26.25
 tasmād evaṃ viditvā āiṇaṃ n’ ānuśoṣitum arhasi.
atha c’ āiṇaṃ nityajātaṇ, nityaṃ vā manyase mṛtaṃ, 
tathā ‘api tvāṃ, māhābhāho n’ āiṇaṃ śoṣitum arhasi.
jiṭasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur; dhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca;
tasmād alparīhārye 'rthe na tvāṃ śoṣitum arhasi.
āvyakta[ś]adini bhūtaṇi, vyakta[ś]adhyāṇi, Bhārata, 
āvyakta[n]īdhanāny eva. tatra kā paridevanā?
are said to come to an end—the bodies of the eternal, indestructible, immeasurable embodied soul. So fight, Bhárata!

Whoever thinks this soul can kill or be killed, doesn’t understand. It neither kills, nor is it killed. It isn’t born; it never dies; it isn’t something that comes into existence and then ceases to be. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primordial; it is not killed when the body is killed. If a man* knows it to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, Partha, how can he be made to kill? Whom can he kill? Just as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on other new ones, so the embodied soul casts off its worn-out bodies and takes other new ones.

Weapons can’t cut it; fire can’t burn it; water can’t wet it; wind can’t dry it. It is uncuttable, unburnable, unwettable, and undryable. It is eternal, all-pervading, fixed, immovable, everlasting. It is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and immutable. So, knowing it as such, you shouldn’t grieve.

But even if you think of it as repeatedly born and repeatedly dying, strong-armed one, nonetheless you shouldn’t grieve. For death is certain for those who are born, and birth is certain for those who die; and so, this being inevitable, you shouldn’t grieve. Creatures are unmanifest at first, manifest in the middle, and unmanifest again at the end, Bhárata. What is there to mourn for in this?

26.20

26.25

185
āścaryavat paśyati kaś cid enam,
āścaryavad vadati tathā āiva c' ānyaḥ,
āścaryavac c' āinam anyāḥ śṛṇoti;
śrutvā āpy enaṃ veda na c' āiva kaś cit.

26.30 dehi nityam āvadhāyo 'yaṃ dehe sarvasya, Bhārata;
tasmāt sarvāni bhūtāni na tvam śocitum arhasi;
svādharmaṃ api c' āveksya na vikampitum arhasi;
dharmyāḍh hi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat kṣatriyasya na vidyate.

26.35 yadṛcchayā c' āpapannāṃ svargādevāram apāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ, Pṛthva, labhante yuddham idṛśām.

atha cet tvam imāṃ dharmyaṃ samgrāmaṃ na kariṣyasi,
tataḥ svādharmaṃ kṛtiṃ ca hitvā pāpam avāpyasi.
āḥ kṛtiṃ c' āpi bhūtāni kathayisyanti te 'vyayāṃ;
samabhāvitaṣya c' āḥ kṛti maraṇāt atiricyate.

bhayād raṇād uparataṃ maṃśyante tvāṃ mahājratāḥ,
yeṣām ca tvām bahujmato bhūtvā yāyasi lāghavam.
āvācyāvādaṃś ca bahūṃ vadiṣyanti tav' āḥhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmarrhayaṃ; tato duḥkkhataram nu kim?
hato vā prāpyasi svargaṃ, jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahāṃ.

26.40 tasmād uttīṣṭha, Kaunteya, yuddhāya kṛṣṭaṃśyaḥ!
sukhādūḥkhe same kṛtvā, lābhā'ālābhau, jayā'ājayau,
tato yuddhāya yujyasya. n' āvāṃ pāpam avāpyasi.
esa te 'bhihitā Sāṃkhya buddhir; yoge te imāṃ śṛṇu,
buddhyā yuko yāyā, Pṛthva, karmaṇbandhāṃ prahāyasya.
n' ēḥ 'ābhikramaṃśa 'sti, pratvāvayo na vidyate;
svālpaṃ apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.
vyavasāya'ātmikā buddhir ek' ēha, Kurujñandana;
bahujāśkhā hy anāntāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām.
Rarely does anyone see it, or speak of it, or hear of it; and even having heard of it no one really knows it. The soul is always inviolable in everyone’s body, Bhárata; so you shouldn’t grieve for any creature. You should attend to your own duty and stand firm, for there is nothing better for a warrior than a legitimate battle. Happy the warriors who find such a battle, Partha—an open door to heaven, arrived at by chance.

But if you won’t wage this legitimate war, then, forsaking your duty and your fame, you will have committed a sin. For people will tell of your lasting disgrace; and to an honored man, disgrace is worse than death. The great warriors will think you withdrew from the battle out of fear, and though highly regarded by them before, you will be slighted. Your enemies too will say many unseemly things, disparaging your ability; and what could be more painful than that? Get up, son of Kunti, and resolve to fight! For you will either be killed and attain heaven, or you will prevail and enjoy the earth. Make yourself indifferent to pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat, and so gird yourself for battle. In this way you will incur no evil.

This understanding has been presented to you according to the Sankhya teaching; now hear about it in relation to yoga practice. With this understanding, Partha, you will escape the bondage of the act. In this matter no attempts are in vain, there are no disappointments; even very little of this virtue can deliver one from great danger. There is one resolute understanding here, delight of the Kurus, but the understandings of the irresolute are multifarious without limit.
yāṁ imāṁ puṣpītāṁ vacāṁ pravadanty ajvipaścitah,
vedāvādaḥ ratah, Pārtha, «n’ anyay ast’, iti» vādinaḥ
kāṁ’ātmānaḥ svargaḥ parā janmaḥ karmaḥ phalaḥ pradām
kriyāvīšeṣaḥ bahulaṁ bhogā以此vāraḥgatiṁ prati.
bhogā以此vāraḥprasaktānāṁ tay’ āpahṛtaḥ cetasām
vyavasāyā’ātmikā buddhāḥ samādhaḥ na vidhiyate.

Vedā

traiguṇyaḥvisayā vedā. niśtraiguṇyo bhav, Ārjuna,
nirdvandvo, nityāṣattvaḥstho, nīrliyogākṣema, ātmāvān.

yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ sampluto’dake,
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ.

karmay ev’ ādhikāras te, mā phaleṣu kādā cana.

mā karmaḥ phalaḥhetur bhūr, mā te saṅgaḥ ‘stv a’jkarmanī.
yogaṣṭhaḥ kuru karmaṁ saṅgaṁ tyaktvā, Dhanañjaya,
siddhyāṣiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā; samatvam yoga ucyate.

dūreṇa hy avaraṁ karma buddhiyogād, Dhanañjaya.
buddhau śaraṇaṁ anviccha; krpaṇāḥ phalaḥhetavaḥ.

Buddhiyuḥkaḥ jaḥaḥ’ iha ubhe suṣikṣṭaḥduṣṭaṁ;
tasmād yogāya yujyaśva. yogāḥ karmasu kauśalam;
karma-jām budhhiyuḥkāḥ hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manuṣaṁ
janmaḥ bandhaḥvinirmuktāḥ padam gacchanty anāmayam.
Delighting in the words of the Veda and claiming there is nothing else, undiscerning men, full of desire and bent on heaven, speak flowery words accompanied by particular rites, Partha, for the acquisition of pleasure and power; but these cause rebirth as the fruit of the acts. The resolute understanding, when settled, isn't disturbed by the words of the mindless who cling to pleasure and power. The Vedas have the three modes* as their scope. Be free of the three modes, Árjuna, free of dualities, always established in purity, beyond acquisition and preservation, and self-possessed.* For the discerning brahmin, all the Vedas are as much use as a water-tank is when there are floods all around.

You have a right to the action alone, never to its fruits. Don't let the action's fruits be your motivation, and don't be attached to inactivity. Perform actions while established in yoga, Dhanan·jaya, having abandoned attachment, having become even-minded towards success and failure; for yoga is said to be evenness of mind. But action is far less important than the yoga attitude, Dhanan·jaya. Seek refuge in this attitude, for those who are motivated by the fruits are pitiful. The man of disciplined understanding leaves his deeds here, both good and bad; so be disciplined in yoga. Yoga is skillfulness in actions; the wise ones of disciplined understanding renounce the fruit produced by action and, released from the bondage of rebirth, they attain the perfect state.

*For the discerning brahmin, all the Vedas are as much use as a water-tank is when there are floods all around.

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yadā te mohajalāṁ buddhir vyatitarisyati, 
tadā gant” āsi nirvedam śrotavyasya śrutasya ca; 
śrutijvpratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścalā, 
samādhāv aţcalā buddhis, tadā yogam avāpsyasi.

ARJUNA UVĀCA:
sthitaiprajñasya kā bhāśā samādhīśthasya Keśava? 
sthitaipdhiḥ kim prabhāṣeta? kim āsita? vrajeta kim?

ŚRIJBHAGAVĀN UVĀCA:

26.55 prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān, Pārtha, manoigatān, 
ātmān ev’ ātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaiprajñas tad” ācyate. 
duṣkheṣv an’udvigna’manah, sukeṣṭu vigataśpṛhaḥ, 
vitaśrāgalbhayaśraddhāḥ, sthitaipdhir munir ucyate. 
yaḥ sarvat’ānabhisnehas, tat tat prāpya śubhaśubham 
n’ ābhinandati na dveśti, tasya prajñā praṭiśhitā. 
yadā samāhara te ‘yām, kūrmo ‘ngāṇi’ iva, sarvasaḥ 
indriyān’ āndriyā’ṛthebhyaḥ, tasya prajñā praṭiśhitā. 
vīṣṇāḥ vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ; 
rasaśvarjān. raso ‘ṣya paraṁ drśtvā nivartate.

26.60 yatato hy api, Kaunteya, puruṣasya vipaścitāḥ 
indriyāṇi pramāthini haranti prasabhaṣṭi manah, 
tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yuktā āsita māṭipraṇāḥ:
When your understanding passes beyond its tangle of delusion, then you will become indifferent to what should be heard and what has been heard; and when, parting company with such hearsay, your understanding remains steady, fixed in concentration, then you will have achieved yoga.

**Árjuna said:**

How would you describe the man of steady wisdom who remains in concentration, Késhava? How might he whose thoughts are steadied speak? How might he sit? How might he walk?

**THE LORD said:**

When a man discards all desires from his mind, Partha, and by his own efforts becomes content within himself, then he is called a man of steady wisdom. He whose mind is unperturbed in times of sorrow, who has lost the craving for pleasures, and who is rid of passion, fear and anger, is called a sage of steadied thought. His wisdom is secure who is free of any affections and neither rejoices nor recoils on obtaining anything good or bad. When he completely withdraws his senses from the sense objects like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, then his wisdom is secure. For the embodied one who doesn’t feed on them, the sense objects fade away; but their flavor doesn’t. For the one who has seen the highest, even his taste fades away.

Even if a learned man tries hard, Kaunéya, the turbulent senses forcibly carry away his mind. He should restrain them and sit in yoga, intent on me; only when his senses are under control is his wisdom secure. When a man dwells...
vaśe hi yasy ēndriyāṇi, tasya prajñā pratiśthitā.
dhyāyato viśayān puṃsāḥ saṅgas teṣā upajāyate.
saṅgat saṃjñāyate kāmaḥ, kāmāt krodha bhijāyate.
krodhād bhavati saṃmohāḥ; saṃmohat smṛtiḥ vibhramaḥ;
smṛtiḥ vibhraṃśad buddhiḥnāsāḥ; buddhiḥnāsāt pranāśyati.
rāgañvesaḥ viyuktās tu viśayān indriyās taraṇ
ātmāṅvaśyāir vidheyaḥ ātma prasādam adhigacchati.

prāśād sarvajduḥkhānāṃ hānir asyāḥ opajāyate,
prasannācetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiśṭhate.

nāsti buddhir ājyuktasya, na cā ājyuktaḥ bhāvānā.
na cā āj bhāvayataḥ śāntir; āśāntasya kutaḥ sukhām?
indriyāṇāṃ hi caratāṃ yan mano 'nuvidhiyate,
tad asya harati prajñāṃ, vāyur navaṃ ivāmāhasi.

tasmād yasya, mahaḥbhāho, nigṛhitāni sarvāsāḥ
indriyāṇāṃ indriyārthebhyaḥ, tasya prajñā pratiśthitā.
yā niśā sarvaḥ bhūtānāṃ, tasyāṃ jāgātri samyāmāṃ;
yasyāṃ jāgātri bhūtāni, sā niśā paśyato muneḥ.

āpūrṇyāmānam ajalāḥ pratiśṭhām
samudrām āpaḥ praviśānti yadvat,
tadvat kāma yaṃ praviśānti sarve
sa śāntim āpnoti; na kāmaḥkāmī.

vihāya kāmaṃ yaḥ sarvāṃ puṃmaṃ carati niḥṣprḥaḥ,
nirmamo, nirahāṃkārāḥ, sa śāntim adhigacchati.
esā brāhmaḥ sthitih, Pārthā. nā ānāṃ traṇya vismuhyati.
sthitvāṇiḥ ātmaḥ antākāle pi brahmaṁ nirvānāṁ ācchati.
upon sense objects, he becomes attached to them. From attachment arises desire, and from desire, anger. From anger comes confusion; confusion disturbs the memory; when memory fails, so does understanding; and without understanding, one perishes. But the man whose self is restrained, who meets the sense objects with senses which are controlled by him and free of passion and aversion, attains serenity. In serenity all his sorrows come to an end, for a serene-minded man’s understanding soon becomes secure.

The undisciplined man has no real understanding and no powers of contemplation. Without contemplation he has no peace, and how can there be happiness for those without peace? A mind that runs after the wandering senses carries away one’s wisdom like the wind tossing a boat on the water.

And so, mighty-armed one, he whose senses are withdrawn altogether from sense objects is a man of secure wisdom. When it is night for all creatures, the self-restrained man is awake; and when all creatures are awake, it is night for the discerning sage. Water enters the ocean, but while being filled it remains unmoved in its depths. When this is how all desires affect a man, he attains peace; but he who cherishes desires is not like this. A man attains peace by abandoning all desires and acting without craving, selfishness or ego. This is the state of Brahman, Partha; having attained it, one is confused no longer. Remaining in it even at the time of death, one attains the nirvana* that is Brahman.*
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