

## **Bhagavad Gita Play: chapters 1-5**

**NARRATOR:** Arjuna and his brothers had tried everything they could think of to make peace with their cousins and return to their kingdom. But after years of exile, they day had finally arrived. All of their relatives and friends had taken sides. Some were with Arjuna and his brothers, but many had sided with their cousins. The day of the great battle had finally come, and thousands of warriors were lined up, facing each other across a large field. The great warriors have all blown their conches, signaling the beginning of a great battle.

**ARJUNA:** Krishna, bring the chariot in between the armies! I want to see the men who have come to fight against us.

**NARRATOR:** Krishna drove the chariot out onto the battlefield, and brought it to a halt in between the two armies.

**KRISHNA:** Arjuna, see the many men who have gathered here to fight against you.

**NARRATOR:** Arjuna looked across the battlefield and saw on the far side the men who had come to fight him: his grandfather, his cousins, his beloved archery teacher, and many other relatives and friends. Overcome with sadness, Arjuna put down his bow.

**ARJUNA:** Krishna, see all my kinsmen, gathered here for war. Krishna, what good can come of this? There is no victory here. These men are our teachers and our relatives. I do not want to kill them! I would rather be killed unarmed in battle than kill my own relatives. I have put down my bow; I shall not fight.

**KRISHNA:** Arjuna, why this sudden cowardice on the eve of battle? This is shameful conduct for a warrior! Banish this weakness! Rise up and fight!

**ARJUNA:** I am so confused, Krishna! My mind is confounded by conflicting sacred duties. Please tell me Krishna. What should I do?

**KRISHNA:** You are grieving for those who should not be mourned. Wise men never grieve, either for the dead nor the living. Our bodies will end, but the self is enduring and indestructible. Anyone who thinks this self is a killer, or thinks that it is killed, fails to understand. The self neither kills nor is it killed. It is not

born, it does not die. Just as a person discards worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, just so the self discards its worn-out bodies to take on a new one.

Arjuna, you are a warrior. It is your sacred duty to fight. Do not tremble in fear before your own duty. If you fail to wage this war, you will abandon your duty and fall into evil. The great warriors will think that you ran away in fear. If you withdraw from this battle, you will be despised and slandered wherever you go.

Arjuna, stand up and fight this battle! Do not worry about the outcome. Focus on your action, not on the outcome of your action. Be firm and disciplined, let go of all attachment. Be impartial to whether you fail or you succeed. This equanimity is yoga. Act with wisdom; act with skill. Yoga is skill in action.

**ARJUNA:** Krishna, you are completely confusing me. Tell me something simple, so that I can do what is right.

**KRISHNA:** Arjuna, everyone is forced to act. Right now, you have to act! Since you have to act, you should do the action that is necessary. But do it with wisdom! Control your senses with your mind and be disciplined.

Now I will tell you the key to doing what is right. Do your duty, do what is needed. But make your action an offering! The power of offering has existed since the beginning of time. By offering your actions, you can act with wisdom.

There are many types of offering. Some make offerings of precious substances into the sacred fire. Some offer their senses by restraining them. Others offer all of their actions in yogic discipline. This is the fire of yogic knowledge that leads to the mastery of one's own self.

When you act with wisdom and offer all your actions, this is far better than making material offerings into the fire, Arjuna. Just as a flaming fire reduces wood to ashes, the fire of this knowledge reduces all actions into ashes. Arjuna, you will not be bound by your actions if you cut off your doubt with wisdom.

If you offer all your actions and let go of the outcome, you will attain perfect peace. You will discover joy and delight within yourself; you will find the pure calm of infinity.