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**Context of the
Bhagavad Gita**

**Bhishma Parva
Chapters 2, 16, 41**

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center

वैशम्पायन उवाच

Rishi Vaishampayana said,
vaiśampāyana uvāca

ततः पूर्वापरे सन्ध्ये

After seeing armies gathered on the East and West,
tataḥ pūrvāpare sandhye

समीक्ष्य भगवानृषिः ।

Rishi Vyasa,
samīkṣya bhagavān ṛṣiḥ

वैचित्रवीर्यं राजानं

unto King Dhritarashtra,
vaicitra-vīryam rājānam

स रहस्यं ब्रवीदिदम् ॥

told this secret.

sa rahasyam bravīd idam (2.1,3)

व्यास उवाच

Rishi Vyasa said,
vyāsa uvāca

राजन्परीतकालास्ते

O King, this is the last moment of life
rājan parīta-kālās te

पुत्राश्चान्ये च भूमिपाः |

for your sons and the other kings.
putrās cānye ca bhūmipāḥ

ते हनिष्यन्ति सङ्ग्रामे

They will be killed in battle
te haniṣyanti saṅgrāme

समासाद्येतरेतरम् ||

fighting with each other.
samāsādyetaretaram (2.4)

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

King Dhritarashtra said,
dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

यदि त्विच्छसि सङ्ग्रामे

But, if you want
yadi tv icchasi saṅgrāme

द्रष्टुमेनं विशां पते |

to see what happens on the battlefield, O King,
draṣṭum enaṁ viśāṁ pate

चक्षुर्ददानि ते हन्त

I will give you the ability to see
cakṣur dadāni te hanta

युद्धमेतन्निशामय ||

the battle. Be at peace.
yuddham etan niśāmaya (2.6)

न रोचये ज्ञातिवधं

The death of my relatives, I do not want
na rochaye jñāti-vadhaṁ

द्रष्टुं ब्रह्मर्षिसत्तम |

to see, O best of sages.
draṣṭuṁ brahmarṣi-sattama

युद्धमेतत्त्वशेषेण

But all about the war
yuddham etat tvaśeṣeṇa

शृणुयां तव तेजसा ||

I would hear from you through your power.
śṛṇuyāṁ tava tejasā (2.7)

व्यास उवाच

Rishi Vyasa said,
vyāsa uvāca

चक्षुषा सञ्जयो राजन्

O King, Sanjaya will be
cakṣuṣā sañjayo rājan

दिव्येनैष समन्वितः ।

endowed with divine sight.
divyenaīṣa samanvitaḥ

कथयिष्यति ते युद्धं

He will tell you about the war.
kathayiṣyati te yuddhaṁ

सर्वज्ञश्च भविष्यति ॥

He will know everything.
sarvajñaś ca bhaviṣyati (2.10)

दिष्टमेतत्पुरा चैव

This war was destined to happen long ago.
diṣṭam etat purā caiva

नात्र शोचितुमर्हसि ।

You should not grieve about it.
nātra śocitum arhasi

न चैव शक्यं संयन्तुं

Nothing can be done to prevent it.
na caiva śakyaṁ saṁyantum

यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ॥

Those who are righteous will be victorious.
yato dharmas tato jayaḥ (2.14)

सञ्जय उवाच

Sanjaya said,
sañjaya uvāca

प्रत्यक्षं यन्मया दृष्टं

What I can directly see
pratyakṣaṁ yan mayā dr̥ṣṭaṁ

दृष्टं योगबलेन च |

with my power,
dr̥ṣṭaṁ yoga-balena ca

शृणु तत्पृथिवीपाल

listen to that, O King.
śṛṇu tat pṛthivī-pāla

मा च शोके मनः कृथाः ||

Don't let your mind dwell on sadness.
mā ca śoke manaḥ kṛthāḥ (16.5,6)

शृणु मे विस्तरेणेदं

Now hear from me at length about this
śṛṇu me vistareṇedaṁ

विचित्रं परमाद्भुतम् |

complicated, amazing,
vicitraṁ paramādbhutam

भारतानां महद्युद्धं

great battle of the Bharatas
bhāratānāṁ mahad-yuddhaṁ

यथाभूल्लोमहर्षणम् ||

as it was -- hair-raising.
yathā-bhūl loma-harṣaṇam (16.10)

नमस्कृत्वा पितुस्तेऽहं

I bow to your father,
namas kṛtvā pitus te 'haṁ

पाराशर्याय धीमते |

the wise Vyasa
pārāśaryāya dhīmate

यस्य प्रसादाद्दिव्यं मे

by whose grace I received
yasya prasādād divyaṁ me

प्राप्तं ज्ञानमनुत्तमम् ||

this excellent divine sight.
prāptaṁ jñānam anuttamam (16.7)

ततो धनञ्जयं दृष्ट्वा

When Arjuna was seen again
tato dhanañjayaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā

बाणगाण्डीवधारिणम् |

bearing his bow and arrows,
bāṇa-gāṇḍīva-dhāriṇam

पुनरेव महानादं

a great uproar
punar eva mahā-nādaṁ

व्यसृजन्त महारथाः ||

was made by all the warriors.
vyasṛjanta mahā-rathāḥ (41.1)

दध्मुश्च मुदिताः शङ्खान्

With delight, the warriors blew their conches
dadhmuś ca muditāḥ śaṅkhān

वीराः सागरसम्भवान् |

which came from the sea.
vīrāḥ sāgara-sambhavān

सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त

Suddenly, there blared out
sahasaiivābhyahanyanta

ततः शब्दो महानभूत् ||

a great tumult.
tataḥ śabda mahān abhūt (41.2,3)

पितामहमभिप्रेक्ष्य

Looking towards Bhishma,
pitāmaham abhiprekṣya

धर्मराजो युधिष्ठिरः |

Yudhishtira, king of dharma,
dharma-rājo yudhiṣṭhiraḥ

वाग्यतः प्रययौ येन

walked silently
vāg-yataḥ prayayau yena

प्राङ्मुखो रिपुवाहिनीम् ||

towards the enemy army.
prāṅ-mukho ripu-vāhinīm (41.8)

ततो युधिष्ठिरो दृष्ट्वा

Then, Yudhishtira, seeing
tato yudhiṣṭhiro dṛṣṭvā

युद्धाय सुसमुद्यते |

the armies assembled for war,
yuddhāya susamudyate

अवरुह्य रथात्तूर्णं

descended from his chariot, and quickly
avaruhya rathāt tūrṇam

पद्भ्यामेव कृताञ्जलिः ||

walked with folded hands.
padbhyām eva kṛtāñjaliḥ (41.6,7)

तं प्रयान्तमभिप्रेक्ष्य

Seeing Yudhishtira walking,
taṁ prayāntam abhiprekṣya

कुन्तीपुत्रो धनञ्जयः |

Arjuna, the son of Kunti,
kuntī-putro dhanañjayaḥ

अवतीर्य रथात्तूर्णं

descended from his chariot,
avatīrya rathāt tūrṇam

भ्रातृभिः सहितोऽन्वयात् ||

and with his brothers, followed Yudhishtira.
bhrātr̥bhiḥ sahito 'nvayāt (41.9)

अर्जुन उवाच

Arjuna said,
arjuna uvāca

किं ते व्यवसितं राजन्

O King, what have you decided
kiṁ te vyavasitaṁ rājan

यदस्मानपहाय वै ।

to make you leave us behind
yad asmān apahāya vai

पद्भ्यामेव प्रयातोऽसि

and walk on foot
padbhyām eva prayāto 'si

प्राङ्मुखो रिपुवाहिनीम् ॥

towards the enemy army?
prāṅ-mukho ripu-vāhinīm (41.11)

सञ्जय उवाच

Sanjaya said,
sañjaya uvāca

एवमाभाष्यमाणोऽपि

Being thus addressed
evam ābhāṣyamāṇo 'pi

भ्रातृभिः कुरुनन्दन ।

by his brothers, O King,
bhrātr̥bhiḥ kuru-nandana

नोवाच वाग्यतः किञ्चिद्

Yudhishtira remained silent, saying nothing,
novāca vāg-yataḥ kiñcid

गच्छत्येव युधिष्ठिरः ॥

and just walked on.
gacchaty eva yudhiṣṭhiraḥ (41.15)

भीष्ममेवाभ्ययात्तूर्णं

Yudhishtira quickly walked towards Bhishma
bhīṣmam evābhyayāt tūrṇam

भ्रातृभिः परिवारितः ।

accompanied by his brothers,
bhrātr̥bhiḥ parivāritaḥ

तमुवाच ततः पादौ

and spoke, after clasping Bhishma's feet
tam uvāca tataḥ pādau

कराभ्यां पीड्य पाण्डवः ॥

with his hands.
karābhyāṁ pīḍya pāṇḍavaḥ (41.30,31)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

आमन्त्रये त्वां दुर्धर्ष

I salute you, O mighty Bhishma.
āmantraye tvām durdharṣa

योत्स्ये तात त्वया सह ।

I will fight with you.
yotsye tāta tvayā saha

अनुजानीहि मां तात

Please give me permission
anujānīhi mām tāta

आशिषश्च प्रयोजय ॥

and give me your blessings.
āśiṣaś ca prayojaya (41.32)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhishma said,
bhīṣma uvāca

प्रीतोऽस्मि पुत्र युध्यस्व

O son, I am pleased with you. Go and fight.
prīto 'smi putra yudhyasva

जयमाप्नुहि पाण्डव ।

May you be victorious, O Yudhishtira.
jayam āpnuhi pāṇḍava

त्रियतां च वरः पार्थ

Ask a boon, O Yudhishtira.
vriyatāṁ ca varaḥ pārtha

किमस्मत्तोऽभिकाङ्क्षसि ॥

What do you want from us?
kim asmatto 'bhikāṅkṣasi (41.34,35)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

मन्त्रयस्व महाप्राज्ञ

O wise one, advise me.
mantrayasva mahā-prājña

हितैषी मम नित्यशः ।

You have always been my well-wisher.
hitaiṣī mama nityaśaḥ

युध्यस्व कौरवस्यार्थे

Fight on behalf of the Kauravas -
yudhyasva kauravasyārthe

ममैष सततं वरः ॥

this is the boon I request.
mamaiṣa satataṁ varaḥ (41.38)

सञ्जय उवाच

Sanjaya said,
sañjaya uvāca

प्रायात्पुनर्महाबाहुर्

Then, mighty Yudhishtira walked
prāyāt punar mahā-bāhur

आचार्यस्य रथं प्रति ।

towards the chariot of his teacher.
ācāryasya ratham prati

स द्रोणमभिवाद्याथ

After saluting Drona,
sa droṇam abhivādyātha

कृत्वा चैव प्रदक्षिणम् ॥

he then performed pradakshina.
kṛtvā caiva pradakṣiṇam (41.45,46)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

आमन्त्रये त्वां भगवन्

I salute you, O Lord.
āmantraye tvām bhagavan

योत्स्ये विगतकल्मषः ।

Without sinning, I will fight
yotsye vigata-kalmaṣaḥ

जयेयं च रिपून्सर्वान्

and defeat all my enemies
jayeyaṁ ca ripūn sarvān

अनुज्ञातस्त्वया द्विज ॥

with your permission, O Drona.
anujñātas tvayā dvija (41.47)

द्रोण उवाच

Drona said,
droṇa uvāca

तद्युधिष्ठिर तुष्टोऽस्मि
O Yudhishtira, I am pleased
tad yudhiṣṭhira tuṣṭo 'smi

पूजितश्च त्वयानघ |
and honored by you.
pūjitaś ca tvayānagha

अनुजानामि युध्यस्व
I give my permission. Go fight.
anujānāmi yudhyasva

विजयं समवाप्नुहि ||
May you be victorious.
vijayaṁ samavāpnuhi (41.49)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच
Yudhishtira said,
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

करवाणि च ते कामं
I will fulfill your desire.
karavāṇi ca te kāmam

ब्रूहि यत्तेऽभिकाङ्क्षितम् |
Tell me what you want.
brūhi yat te 'bhikāṅkṣitam

एवं गते महाराज
O King, thus blessed,
evaṁ gate mahā-rāja

युद्धादन्यत्किमिच्छसि ||
in addition to fighting, what do you want?
yuddhād anyat kim icchasi (41.50)

जयमाशास्व मे ब्रह्मन्
O brahmana, bless me with victory
jayam āśāssva me brahman

मन्त्रयस्व च मद्दितम् |
and advise me for my welfare.
mantrayasva ca mad-dhitam

युध्यस्व कौरवस्यार्थे
Fight on behalf of the Kauravas -
yudhyasva kauravasyārthe

वर एष वृतो मया ||
this is the boon I choose.
vara eṣa vṛto mayā (41.53)

द्रोण उवाच

Drona said,
droṇa uvāca

ध्रुवस्ते विजयो राजन्

O King, you will certainly be victorious
dhruvas te vijayo rājan

यस्य मन्त्री हरिस्तव ।

having Krishna as your advisor.
yasya mantrī haris tava

यतो धर्मस्ततः कृष्णो

Where there is righteousness, there is Krishna.
yato dharmas tataḥ kṛṣṇo

यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ॥

And where there is Krishna, there is victory.
yataḥ kṛṣṇas tato jayaḥ (41.54,55)