

ARJUNA'S DILEMMA

Text adapted from the Bhagavad Gita, which means in English *The Divine Song*. Parenthetical numbers indicate chapter and verse from the Bhagavad Gita.

Text in italics is sung in Sanskrit or Hindi

The tenor is always Arjuna.

The Indian singer is always Krishna.

The Chorus is at times commenting or narrating, at times voicing thoughts of Krishna, and at times thoughts of Arjuna.

PROJECTED TEXT:

Because the mind, indeed,

is very unsteady, turbulent, powerful and obstinate [O Krishna].

I think restraining the mind

is as difficult as restraining the wind (6:34)

Alap

track 1:

INDIAN SINGER (as Krishna)

Sings an unaccompanied opening invoking Krishna's multiple names, representing all his myriad forms.

Gathering Forces

track 2:

Instrumental interlude

I. Arjuna's Dilemma

track 3:

CHORUS (as Arjuna)

Stop my chariot!

Between these two armies until I behold those who stand eager for battle
and with whom I must engage in this act of war! (1:21, 1:22)

track 4:

CHORUS (as narrator)

There Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers,
fathers and uncles, brothers and sons, grandsons, and comrades. (1:26)

ARJUNA

My limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry.

My body quivers and my hairs stand on end. (1:29)

The bow, Gandiva, slips from my hand and my skin intensely burns.

My head turns, I am unable to stand steady.(1:30)

O Krishna, I see bad omens.

I see no use in killing my kinsmen in battle. (1:31)

track 5:

CHORUS (as Arjuna)

O Krishna! (repeats)

KRISHNA

Improvises throughout this section using the various names for Krishna as text.

CHORUS (as Arjuna)

This is a great sin, to kill our own people

through greed for the pleasures of the Kingdom. (1:45)

O Krishna! O Krishna! O Krishna!

track 6:

KRISHNA

Textless vocals (agitated)

track 7:

CHORUS (as narrator)

Teachers, uncles, sons and grandfathers,

maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,

brothers-in-law, and other relatives (1:34)

(Repeats)

ARJUNA

I do not wish to kill them who are about to kill us,

even for the sovereignty of the three worlds,

let alone for this earthly Kingdom, O Krishna. (1:35)

Therefore, we should not kill our brothers, the sons of Dhrtarashtra.

How can we be happy after killing our kinsmen, O Krishna? (1:37)

Teachers, uncles, sons and grandfathers,

maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,

brothers-in-law, and other relatives (1:34)

Though they, blinded by greed,

do not see evil in the destruction of the family,

or sin in being treacherous to friends.(1:38)

Why shouldn't we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family,

think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna? (1:39)

Therefore, we should not kill our brothers, the sons of Dhrtarashtra.

How can we be happy after killing our kinsmen, O Krishna? (1:37)

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by striving to slay our kinsmen

because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom. (1:45)

It would be far better for me if the sons of Dhrtarastra

should kill me with their weapons in battle

while I am unarmed and unresisting. (1:46)

The Battle Within

track 8:

Instrumental interlude

II. The Answer

track 9:

CHORUS (as Arjuna)

My head turns, Oh Krishna. I am unable to stand.

I see bad omens, O Krishna.

I see no use in killing my kinsmen in battle. (1:30:31)

track 10:

KRISHNA

[text from poems of Kabir, in Hindi]

People live in a lie,

they think what's theirs is theirs (your house is your own).

The earth says, "as you dig and smother me one day I will swallow you into me just like this.

All are the same there is not two we all have the same body.

track 11:

KRISHNA

Improvises a reasoned appeal to Arjuna, text based on a traditional North Indian song.

track 12:

CHORUS (as Arjuna)

My head turns, I am unable to stand.

I see no use killing my kinsmen in battle (1:30)

Why should we not turn away from this sin? (1:39)

track 13:

KRISHNA & ARJUNA

Improvised dialog, rhythmic syllables used as text.

A Clear White Light

track 14:

Instrumental interlude

III. The Vision

track 15:

ARJUNA

O Lord, explain to me again in detail,

Your yogic power and glory;

because I am not satiated by hearing your nectar-like words. (10:18)

track 16:

CHORUS (as Krishna)

I am the beginning, the middle, the end of all beings.

In the night sky I am the moon.

Of senses I am the mind, of beings I am the unconscious.

Of words I am the syllable Om

I am time or death among the healers.

Among beasts I am the lion, among birds the eagle.

I am the true self abiding in the heart of all beings.

I am the beginning, the middle, the end of all being.

Among weapons I am the thunderbolt.

I am time or death among the healers.

Among beasts I am the lion, among birds the eagle.

Among the alphabet I am the letter A.

I have faces on all sides.

I am death and the origin of all beings.

I am spring among the seasons.

I am cunning of the cheats, the splendor of the splendid,

I am the goodness of the good.

I am the power among the rulers

I am the scepter that metes out punishment

I am silence among the secrets

I am the seed of all beings

There is nothing that can exist without me.

(all from 10:20 - 10:39)

track 17:

ARJUNA

Oh Lord, You are as You have said,

yet I wish to see Your divine cosmic form,

O Supreme Being (11:03)

O Lord, if You think it is possible for me to see this, the,

O Lord of the yogis, show me Your immutable Self. (11:04)

CHORUS (as Krishna)

O Arjuna, behold My multitude of divine forms of different colors and shapes. (11:05)

O Arjuna, now behold the entire creation, all at one place in My body. (11:07)

You are not able to see Me with your own eyes;

therefore, I give you the divine eye to see My majestic power and glory. (11:08)

track 18:

The Vision Unfolds (Instrumental) interlude.

track 19:

ARJUNA

O Lord, of the universe, I see You everywhere with infinite form,

with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes.

Neither do I see the beginning nor the middle nor the end of your Universal Form. (11:16)

I see You with Your crown, club, discus; and a mass of radiance,

difficult to behold, shining all around

like the immeasurable brilliance of the sun and the blazing fire (11:17)

The entire space between heaven and earth

is pervaded by You alone in all directions.

Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form,

the three Lokas (worlds) are trembling with fear, O Lord. (11:20)

Seeing your infinite form with many mouths, eyes, arms,

thighs, feet, stomachs, and many fearful teeth;

the worlds are trembling with fear and so do I, O mighty Lord. (11:23)

Seeing Your great effulgent and various colored form touching the sky;

Your mouth wide open and large shining eyes;

I am frightened and find neither peace nor courage, O Krishna. (11:24)

Seeing Your mouths, with fearful teeth, glowing like fires of cosmic dissolution,

I lose my sense of direction and find no comfort.

Have mercy on me! O Lord of demigods, refuge of the universe. (11:25)

The sons of Dhrtarastra come along with the hosts of kings;

Bhisma, Drona, and Karna together with chief warriors on our side. (11:26)

Quickly entering into Your fearful mouths, some are seen caught

in between the teeth with their heads crushed. (11:27)

As many torrents of the rivers rush toward the ocean, similarly,

those warriors of the mortal world are entering Your blazing mouths. (11:28)

As moths, flying fast, rush into the blazing flame for destruction, similarly

all these people are rapidly rushing into Your mouths for destruction. (11:29)

You are licking up all the worlds with Your flaming mouths,

swallowing them from all sides.

Your powerful radiance is burning the entire universe,

and filling it with splendor, O Krishna. (11:30)

Tell me who are You in such a fierce form?

My salutations to You, O best of all demigods, be merciful!

I wish to understand You, the primal Being, because I do not know Your mission. (11:31)

track 20:

CHORUS (as Krishna)

I am death the destroyer, the mighty destroyer of the world.

Even without your participation

all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies

shall cease to exist. (11:32)

Therefore, get up and attain glory.

Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom.

All these warriors have already been destroyed by Me.

You are only an instrument, O Arjuna. (11:33)

track 21:

ARJUNA

Rightly, O Krishna, the world delights and rejoices in glorifying You.

Terrified demons flee in all directions.

The hosts of Siddahs bow to You in adoration. (11:36)

I wish to see You with a crown, holding mace and discus in Your hand.

O Lord with a thousand arms and universal form,

appear in the four-armed form. (11:46)

Epilogue

track 22:

CHORUS (as Krishna)

Oh Arjuna, did you listen, did you hear?

Has your illusion, born of ignorance, been destroyed? (18:72)

(Textless vocals)

KRISHNA

Improvises using the various names for Krishna as text.

ARJUNA

I will fight (alternately translated as "I will do as you wish") (18:73)

Postlude

track 23:

KRISHNA

As in the Alap section at the beginning of the piece, the multitude of names of Krishna are invoked.