MAHABHARAT
THE WAR OF WORDS
A Modern Epic

AN INTELLECTUAL QUEST INTO
VED VYASA’S GREAT EPIC

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DISHONOUR
IS THE SUBJECT OF MY STORY
DISHONOUR
OF A WOMAN’S MODESTY
DISHONOUR
OF THE OFFICE OF HIS MAJESTY
DISHONOUR
OF HUMAN DIGNITY
DISHONOUR OF HUMAN DIVINITY
Dedication

Lord Krishna
Mukund Madhav Govind Bol
Madhav Hari Hari Bol.
We who have witnessed the television serials Ramayana and Mahabharata telecast in the last part of the previous century, have grown up on a diet of spiritual philosophy of Maryada Purshotam Rama and Gita Sandesh of Lord Krishna. Both the epics deal with wars which extended far beyond human limitations, and involved not only great warriors, but also fundamental philosophical issues.

The Gita forms the philosophical thrust of Mahabharata, or it can be said to be the treatise which justified the war, which brought an end to the careers of great warriors like Bhishma and Dronacharya. Looked from a literary angle, the two epics weave around two great women of Indian mythology, Sita and Daropadi, and the wars were fought to salvage their honour. Another parallel which involves an epical battle and killing of great heroes is Troy, where it was the Helen of Troy whose elopement was the central issue of the entire action involving mass destruction and devastation of a whole city.

There is hardly any Indian who does not know the two epic stories, and every educated person is somehow or the other aware of the Helen of Troy. So, retelling how it all happened does not fall in the scope of this work. I presume that the Indian reader is absolutely aware of the whole story, while a foreign reader, who finds himself interested in Mahabharata, can google out the details of the epic battle between Kaurvas and Pandvas. Before entering this work, it is appropriate if the reader has a fair idea of the story of Mahabharata and the Lord’s Gita Sandesh as well.

Dishonour is the subject of my story, with these words begins this sequel to the Mahabharata, and it is given the title: The War of Words, clearly stressing two aspects of the story: One: that the
whole epic battle had one centre, and it was Daropadi, rather her dishonor in the court of the Kuru King Dhritrashtra; and second, that the attempt is to engage into a multilogue with various stakeholders and try to have a keen inquiry into the philosophical questions that stick out their heads, even after we have seen the Mahabharata for the second time, now by Star Plus.

While the place of action for the Mahabharata of Dwapar Yuga was Kurukshetra, where real actors [mythical, no doubt] were involved in epical fights, the War of Words transmutes the entire action within the consciousness of the reader. The present story picks from where Lord Krishna had left it, believing that the Reign of Good had been established. This work actually questions the modern civilization, and quizzes Lord Krishna, how it all went wrong, for we are proud inhabitants of the great Bharat Rashtrato establish which, Lord Krishna had to wage the great war. Questions range from the social, to political, to philosophical, to mystical.

It is a one sided debate, involving the Lord, fondly called Govind, Keshav, inviting him to clarify the mist, so that one is able to understand how things are going.

‘To be or not to be is the question’, says Hamlet. But, here, the question is: How to be. Because, to be or not to be is not in our hands. In our hands is how to be, our conduct, our actions, whose fall out is still not known, and remains outside the wishes and powers of mankind.

I pray to Lord Krishna to once again put an end to the sordid drama that is going on in the name of faith, and nationalism which conflicts with the idea of a universal identity of man;and I am sure it will involve a war greater than Mahabharata. It may not be Kurukshetra now. It may be the mind of man, his
consciousness, and the actors, instead of real life heroes like Bhishma and Duryodhana, now can be ideas, philosophies, patterns of thought and action, which seek sanction and supremacy.

Dr. JERNAIL S. ANAND
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FOREWORD

Mahabharat: The War of Words: A Narrative Success

Commonly it is understood that Mahabharat is an epic of a war between brothers, a war of passions, a war between good and bad, and so on. Dr. Anand has brought in a new dimension - the war of words. The poet questions the telos of the Mahabharat war – the claim of establishing the good by overpowering the evil. What the war had brought forth unto this world? A good and just civilization? The poet sees our contemporary world from the past – the pain is evident in observing that bad is still going strong in its doings of wrong. It might look as if the poet is in a skeptic mood but truly he is upset about the contemporary state of affairs of the world. The text deconstructs itself when it pitches its hope on the same hopeless hope that once led the brothers to wage a bloody war with mutual belief that their own sides would win. The folly of waging a war is made obvious here – by showcasing that the hope of winning a war is only a hope against hope as both parties would believe so but the turn of events in a battleground would turn slippery, treacherous and unfair for one party to face the humiliating defeat. Why to expect something fair to happen in a battleground when any battle is just a question of being unjust. Why thousands have to die for the sake of sovereignty? A family fights exposing hundreds of thousands to death. The question is whether the so-called advanced contemporary nation-states learn anything at all from the history of wars.

There is an instance of text defeating itself in the chorus of the invocation. The entire chorus is an interplay of light and shadows– involving opaqueness, reflection, shadow, translucency and transparency. When the text declares that ‘the body has a face’, it also signals unreadability because of the claim that ‘face which is only a mark’, (a mark is a semantic code) which
culminates into total frontal opaqueness that does not allow the owner of the face (the larger question would be: whether anyone can own a face or only one face) contrasting the backside opaqueness of the mirror which becomes the necessary condition for a mirror to act as a reflecting medium. Does this shout the failure of the text coming into any reconciliation with its own claimed meaning? Here starts the war of words with its own assigned semantic potentials. The text also brings in the failure of any readability of a text by bringing in a new term mask which is associated with face but it also brings in a seduction of meanings of both the words ‘mask’ and ‘face’. Which is real? The face or the mask. How to unmask? Would the face be uglier than the mask? Where to stop? Keeping these interdeterminacies, the text apparently fails to stand for what it states but keeping this aporia from the start is the success of the poet in creating the theme of the war between words. A narrative success.

Reading a foreword before reading the poem brings in collateral damage to one’s own harvest of meanings from the text. Hence, I earnestly feel I should allow the readers to enter into the poetic world of the text. March ahead! Try to win your battle in the war of words of this text.

Dr. Selvin Vedamanickam
Professor – Department of English
St. Joseph University, Nagaland.
Once again Dr. Jernail Anand questions the highest truths and beliefs and tries to answer the crucial question "How to live?" How to preserve dignity, is the question here. This time it is the ultimate Indian epic Mahabharata that Dr. Anand wrestles with and challenges by invoking muse in the best Western Homeric style and thus unites both epic traditions in his unique transnational and transmodern all too human and poetic way! Good read!

DR MAJA HERMAN SEKULIC
[Global Literary Icon, Serbia]

Jernal S. Anand's Mahabharat: The War of Words presents a new focus on the kernel of the Indian Epic of Growth. The "dishonour" of Daropadi, a 'soft target' in every intra-community clash, particularly in this sub-continent, according to modern feminists and war historians, is one of the most important events in the world, we find in Dr Anand's work. It even disturbs the Cosmos. The ultimate triumph of the good over the evil has been faithfully presented in this long narrative. I believe in readers' acceptability of this new focus.

DR BASUDEB CHAKRABORTI
[Poet, Philosopher and Eminent Scholar, Kolkata, India]

As I began reading this epic poem on Father’s Day (June 21), I recalled what my father had told me while explaining the Mahabharat. “In a war both sides lose. The winner too loses men at war other than the peace of mind.” This he explained when Lord Krishna goes to the Kauravs to negotiate on behalf of the Pandavs.

Dr Anand’s poem goes deeper. He moves to and fro on a time machine. He reflects on the contemporary the 20th-21st-century realities. The metaphor of ants dying under the feet, while we are praying with closed eyes stayed with me much after I finished reading this epic poem.

All poets have their reasons for versing. Dr Anand mentions it clearly, in the opening pages. For him it is:

Dishonour is the subject of my story
Dishonour of a woman’s modesty
Dishonour of the office of his majesty
Dishonour of human dignity
Dishonour of human divinity.

In the 13 Cantos of Mahabharat, he meanders through these themes, seamlessly. He questions Kesav and Govind if the Dharmyudh brought about Sushan and if so for how long.

The dialogue and multilogue makes this work brilliantly unique. We see the poet, Dr Anand, emerge larger and larger, in epic proportions by the end of his work.

Replete with contemporary references, Dr Anand’s version of the great epic, Mahabharat, will be read and reread by poets, researchers, scholars, et al. It shall be debated upon for a long time. Am not sure if we will be able to restore the many
dishonours that the poet mentions in the beginning. But, we love war of words as argumentative Indians. Dr Anand and his work shall live among us, perhaps forever, in various serious researches and poetic addas.

ARINDAM ROY
[Poet and Critic, and CEO, Different Truths]

UNLOCKING MAHABHARATA

Professor Jernail Singh Anand’s Intellectual quest leads to the unlocking of the Great Indian Epic by Ved Vyasa, and consequently trigger questions to which answers are sought in events of the Epic itself, and also in the fictional and factual world of history or in the convulsions which plague the immediate world of contemporary reality.

In the opening lines of the First Parva of Mahabharata, Vaisampayana tells Janmajey: "What's here is found elsewhere; What's not here is no where". The Epic has a comprehensive range and evocative grandeur. No wonder, Jernail Singh Anand had to go deep into this Epic in order to creatively combat the problems of his own time by treating the theme of "dishonour" of a woman's modesty, of majesty and of human dignity.

One is reminded of Som P Ranchan's several books, very intense and electrifying dialogues with Christ, Ma Sharda, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Krishana. Dr Anand has chosen, as he says in Preface, to write "One-sided debate" here. And his originality chooses to bring in Chorus, Characters of his own invention, from literature, and Echo-Names, all this leads to excitingly intense drama, poetry of incredible power, the narrative pitch is dignified, a verse which must be recited loud to enjoy its full Impact.
The War of Words runs to 170 pages, Thirteen Cantos, From the Presence of the Lord to the last one where the Doctor Cometh, followed by Epilogue. In the Epic by Vyasa, Krishna tells Arjun, "He is a Fool that practices truth without knowing the difference between truth and falsehood". Dr Anand wagers his War with words, fully aware:

When things go amiss
It is not the gods who can be called to question
It is men who fail to understand the Dynamics of time.

And in such classic the Poet can intone sublime truths:

Be or not to be, is not the question.
The real question is how to be.

What's equally reassuring is when the Poet can speak as a comforting teacher to his fellow men among whom he stands and to whom he belongs:

We are less than Arjuna
But more than Duryodhan
And far superior to Shakuni

In the Epic by Vyasa, Dharma says to Yudhishtra, "Without doubt, all kings, O son, Must once See Hell". For the Poet of The War of Words, the Nasty feel and alarming damage is palpable. Ninth Canto, The Virat Rupa of Adharma ends with:

It is rotten world, Keshav
Desperately in need of you.
Elsewhere, he writes:

Men are living not like men, but only as symbols
And another place:
We plant trees on Facebook
We celebrate Mother's day Father's day on Facebook
...
Nationalism has now given a new orientation to religion
...
Dharma is now defined now in terms of Nationalism
...
Now that Voice of despairing protest
Stands charmed
...
Speech is considered treason

In Canto VI, an Oriental drama, the Poet dwells on how everyone is favourite of fate, how actually claimants are illegitimate. Oblivius is son of Cosmo; Chorus, Babble, Cosmo, and Echo-sounds of characters from the original Mahabharata not merely appear in Anand’s Sequel, but also undergo a core transformation, or one can call it the course correction. In this imaginative set-up, Mansi is pulled by her hair on to stage, but Meharbaan intervenes and Susashana can’t carry out the vastar-haran. King Trashta is blind, but Ratna is off with the blindfold. Guru Charya, Thama, Karin, Idur, Yodhana, Rajana ( Arjun), Cheena.... the list of characters can be easily recognised for the identity each has, and yet there are changes and assertions which only amplify your appreciation and understanding of the Epic by Vyasa. Introduction of Babble as a character by JS Anand is not only commendable for it's dramatic quality but it also enriches the canvas of this Squad. In fact, Babble like Shakespeare's Fool, combines in himself, the world of contemporarity and the world of ethicality.
It has to be an endeavour of epic proportions if one has the compulsive longing to write a sequel has such. Professor Anand is gifted with a felicity of articulation which comes but rarely to us mortals. At one place, he writes of the elements as Earthina, Aerina, Waterex, Fiery, and the latter sings:

I am a fairy when I nourish life  
And a fiend, when men  
Turn upon me  
In greed and deceit

The taste of the pudding lies in partaking it. No amount of possible ingredients or nature of recipes shall bring us any nearer. But having tasted it and after genuinely going back to the text of JS Anand’s epic poem, no reader can deny the evolving gladness of aesthetic experience of a High quality.

DR LALIT MOHAN SHARMA  
[Poet, Critic, and Retd. Principal, Dharamsala, H.P. India]

Dishonour is the subject of my story, says Dr Jernail S Anand, highlighting the stone age human thought patterns of gender inequality and male chauvinism hardwired in the collective social consciousness. How long the other half of man has to suffer, O Keshav, he asks. Seeking answers to the age-old problem of progressive degeneration of Dharma implanted by Lord Krishna some 5000+ years back, after the terrible bloodshed in the battle of Mahabharata, has proved to be inadequate to motivate man for a change of heart. His epic poetic creation is indeed an eye opener and soul searching for contemporary humanity as well because woman, the true builder of home and heavenly hearth, suffers today the terrible scourge of gender inequality and dishonour at every step and place from home to office.
His poetic prowess knows no limits, as it addresses human thought in the East, in the same breath, it questions the human thought of the West about the global moral collapse and degeneration of democratic values by the upholders of Dharma, the leaders like "Meharbaan" of his play. He takes his reader on a whirlwind tour around the world from war of Mahabharata to war of Troy, and then to modern day scourge of exclusive nationalism, racism, fanaticism and inhuman acts of terrorism. He asks Lord Krishna to revisit earth again to set the course of Dharma right through a change of heart of man so that his 5000+ old dream of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam" can be materialized in letter and spirit.

As always, once Dr Jernail S Anand puts his golden pen to task, it flows from the depths of his loving humanitarian heart speaking equally to a prophet or publican, a king or pauper, a leader or layman, a rich man or poor invoking the change of heart for a better world for all. He is indeed a great philosopher among poets and a great Poet among philosophers as rightly quoted by Global Icon of Poetry, Maja Herman Sekulic. A must read, his epic poetic creation of 13 cantos is a glorious example of his deep concern and care for humanity; and his clarion call for rediscovering the innate goodness of man will set a new benchmark for global humanitarian Literature.

BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY

[Poet, Spiritualist, Votary of Cosmic Consciousness, CEO, Global Literary Society, New Delhi, India]

Dr. Jernail S. Anand’s poem in 13 cantos is a medley of existential, metaphysical and epistemological queries to Lord Krishna, who preached Arjuna a complete philosophy of life, that is practicable even today.

"The War of Words" is not just a sequel, so to say or a revisit to our historical texts, but is an empirical statement of the challenges
of contemporary life. The poet, with no reluctance, questions Lord Krishna addressed as Keshav in the poem, about his presence in the modern world where Dharma has taken a u-turn and definitions of virtues have completely undergone mutations.

The poet dauntlessly questions the acts of dishonour against the virtuous people like the Pandavas that disheveled their lives in that age. He asservates his opinions about the loss of honour in the court of the King in those times.

The poem is a strong indictment of man' s deviation from the path of Dharma to that of chaos. He begs to Lord Krishna to make his presence in "the rotten world " where he is "desperately" needed.

In the course of a dialogue with Keshav, the poet defines several modern concepts and ideologies like 'democracy', 'nationalism', 'Dharma', 'goodness' and other virtues.

Dr. Anand, as a poet has put forth his observations, rationalist opinions, emotional effusions as well as the anger submerged deep within the subconscious to form a trajectory of pictures of modern society.

I congratulate him for writing a poem of epic stature .

DR PARNEET JAGGI
[Poet, Scholar, Critic and Assoc. Prof. of English, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Govt College, Sri Ganganagar (Rajasthan)]

A poetry monologue of epic dimension written with pertinence to contemporary times, Mr. Jernail S Anand has, in simple yet scintillating language, delivered amazing verses in Sakha Bhava with Lord Krishna, in this novel epic within an epic rendition of “Mahabharat: The War of Words”.

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Analysing almost all the main characters from this Scripture “Mahabharata”, the erudite poet has also rechristened many of them to transform their intrinsic countenance for a better denouement.

Through 13 cantos of a very engaging word volley a final imploration to Lord Krishna affectionately addressed as Keshav, to set right this world emerges, as one can literally be in the skin of the poet whose relentless struggle to change the world as a poet, surfaces as he becomes a witness to all that transpires in Kali Yuga, where moral degradation and deterioration of values rule this world. In this land of Karma Bhoomi India, indeed such a book of introspection and retrospection is a catalyst to view our ancient motherland, with a new perspective of changing it to a Dharma Bhoomi.

As he draws a parallel to the characters in Mahabharata, the poet has dextrously portrayed the present day equivalents of the same characters in today’s world.

Dealing with an ancient text of 5000 years ago, venerated to this day, and applying an intellectual sagacity to the unchanging human psyche is indeed a great responsibility, well analysed.

Kudos to this poet of scholarly dimensions who has succeeded in adding one more gem to the treasure trove our Indian writers in English.

GEETHANJALI DILIP
[Professor of French, Salem, TN, India]

Far from the conch blowing victors of times ancient, almost mythical, where heroes brandished supernatural weapons that defeated logic, Dr Jernail S Anand brings us to the modern reality of warfare: A War Of Words. Here he questions the living god in
human form whether, after the decisive altercation that led to a war, his claim to change and begin anew proved true? He also questions the venerable elders and revered tutors who played an almost deceitful role during the events that led to the eighteen day war between siblings. Aren’t we surrounded with such situations and such men these days?

Dr. Anand presents a reverberating commentary comparing the legendary classic Mahabharata to events modern and close to heart. A Herculean task dealt with the finesse of a philosopher committed to lasting values of humanity.

In a very understandable language, Dr. Anand produces a formidable literary creation of colossal proportions. A mammoth enterprise filled with cosmic innuendos that whets a readers palate, Dr. Anand's work purports to be the most discussed work of the present century.

A master of the word, Dr Anand, after the success his seminal works of philosophy, Bliss, The Festival of Fire, Geet, and The Satanic Empire, all works of epical proportions, proves himself once again in his War Of Words.

TARIQ MUHAMMAD
[Poet, Scholar, Reviewer, USA]

Battlefield of four obelisks of our existence:
Whole Mahabharata, but specially Bhagavadgita contains divine words emanating from the lips of God Himself. None can really describe it. Even Shesa, the thousand-headed serpent god, whose back forms the couch of God Vishnu, and Shiva and Ganesha, cannot fully depict this glory. This glory is infinite, unlimited and immortal. How can a being so finite, limited and mortal expect to do it?
But, Jernail S. Anand, torn between wisdom from past, apocalypse of today and utopia of future, [for whom the basic question....to do or not to do, is transformed into …how to do….] gives to us his answer with The War of Words – his great epic journey about lost battle of four obelisks in our existence Daronachaya /our egoism/, Bhishma /our holiness/, Daropadi/our consciously – appearance/ and Sita/ our unconsciously- spirituality/Every war, outside and inside us as single, family, group, nation or state, started with this eternal opponent in us and around us …our Kaurvas and Pandvas Disappointed by the weakness to reach a higher form of existence, Jernail S. Anand embarked on a journey to experience the world, to seek a reason of his existence, because in the act of self-awareness, he forgets about all his desires and dreams that lead him to despair. Leaving the desired things, he is freed from the slavery to his will and transcends to a condition of pure knowledge.

Dr. Jernail S. Anand, as one of greatest poets, leads us through his 13 cantos, over his and ours dilemmas and knowledge of our present life, to great target of his writing sublimated in one great advice for present and future.....firstly we must define ourselves what we are...Sattva, Rajas or Tamas...second we must finish our War of Thoughts inside us...and then start War of Words around us.....

Our beings, tortured by rapture and anguish become suddenly revived….Our spirit is calmed in a sublime way with unique conclusion that.....Happiness doesn’t lie in that the better and more beautiful future should be built on dead bodies but to preserve the live people, show respect for the values and works created to insert into planetary system and remain mentally sane.
Accordingly, isn’t it important that a human being can finish his own War of Words and feel freedom and truth of existence in nature or in the prison of civilization.

AMB. Dr. LJUBOMIR MIHAJLOVSKI
[Poet, Scholar, Critic, Philosopher and World Peace Activist from Macedonia] “Mahabharata- The War of Words” Piercing itself into the opaque plains of our consciousness with insights philosophical and mature, this book, "Mahabharata- The War of Words" written by Dr. Jernail Singh Anand stands monumental, defying time. This is indeed a post, post modern epic nuancing itself to the contemporary, daring to put to question and redefine, age old thought processes and actions. The ease and the verve with which the task is accomplished is in perfect balance, with right reverence to the past and the present, accommodating alternate modes of thought.

The epic pattern is skillfully embedded in various strands of the discourse..primarily it is an address to Lord Krishna, as Govind or Kesav, asking him "to clarify the ways of God to men " as Milton put it.

The points of departure from the time old concepts on Dharma, and nationalism are very clearly spelt out. So much of the contemporary "world" in undates the "word". The choric element, the characters, even the interludes of Dr. Faustus provide insights through parody and parataxis. If it was war that ravaged the Mahabharata times causing suffering and destruction, the modern day world counters it through epidemics like Covid that sweep over to kill. High time minds that have been quarantined on rigid notions of supremacy came out of their fossilized thinking.

Only a philosopher poet like Dr. Jernail Singh can talk on the essential futility of war, war of minds and faiths built on shallow concepts of nationalism.

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Filling up the silences of Mahabharata text, interrogating its ideological premises, the dignity of man, woman and human existence becomes the paramount concern. This mega epic is not a howl in despair, but ends on an exhortation to Keshav to come back and redeem mindsets that are straight jacketted.

Here is a book that can withstand the ravages of time offering sustaining plains of balance amidst the maddening clouds of contemporaneity.

Dr. MOLLY JOSEPH
[Poet and Prof. of English, Kerala, India]

As such, the Original Epic Mahabharata lends itself to multiple number of interpretations and it is precisely these seemingly never ending cloud burst of views and refractions that sustains this ageless master piece. What distinguishes Dr. J.S. Anand’s Epic poem is the author’s ‘one to one’ approach with Keshav or Govind and his no holds barred shooting of all his ‘Astras’ at the target! Once you take it for reading, it is difficult to put down the book till you finish the last sentence.

The epic effort starts with a very powerful invocation. Dishonour is the prime subject of the story. Draupadi who is the biggest casualty is the centre of cataclysm called The Mahabharata. Dhritarashtra is called ‘double blind’…’He could not see nor could foresee’!... Parallel is drawn with King Lear… Sita and Draupadi with Helen of Troy. Does only War matter, the poet shoots at Keshav?

Duryodhna has not hundred but million brothers now and Dushshasnas are presently ruling the world, as are Shakunis, is the undisguised anguish of this scholarly Poet.
Alluding to the pandemic, Dr. Anand asserts that Adharma is deadlier than the virus Corona! The apocalypse showed that Man is not the central concern of the cosmic forces. What I liked so much about the book was the judicious juxtaposition of ancient events with modern day trends.

Fortunately, Dr. J.S. Anand is neither a weeping philosopher nor a prophet of doom. He is a POET at heart. Who can forget a great saying that ‘civilizations perish because they listen to their politicians and not to their poets’!

So, ‘as more and more people are going the Faustian ways and signing contract with devils’ and evil has become amphibious, the Poet in J.S. Anand takes over and pleads that ‘This world needs you again my Lord ‘ but this time a stronger Lord, a Lord who should not establish a new order only on the ravages of war and ashes but to reorder the chaos on the basis of inherent goodness of humanity, on the basis of Vasudeiva Kutumbhakam.

RAVI RANGANATHAN
[Spiritualist and Poet, Chennai, India]
INVOCATION

I intend not, O Muse, to restate What the great Lord To Arjuna did say: The winds bear the brunt Of that Wisdom divine, Words, which still in the firmament, shine.

I intend not to tell the great story That Rishi Ved Vyasa did tell, In such splendor That it is called the Fifth Veda, Embracing the ancient wisdom of Bharat Rashtra.

I also do not intend to be true to the details Of the story, and tell it Page after page, And refer to sage after sage, How the great battle was lost and won, And how Arjuna killed Bhishma, and Bhima, Duryodhana.

Men, O Muse, I believe, Are found to live lives at two levels, As men who eat, drink, suffer and die, And men, who transcend this lowly estate, And realize, it is history they are born to create.

The evil too are made of divine stuff, For, you know, O Muse, and me too, The earth is divine, Which shapes them all, The sky is divine, water is divine, And divine are the winds which sustain all.
In their constitution,
The divine gets eclipsed by the rough,
In the dust, they do not see enough,
Their visions are riveted on their own self,
Tokens of greatness, line the shelf.

The more they get absorbed in this game,
The finer stuff of their minds,
Loses grip,
They lose their translucent being,
And finding themselves in darkness,
Take recourse to lamps, and duplicate shineware.

Beyond the light, exist thy realms,
But in this light they see regions grey,
With eyes, entirely rooted in clay,
Looking not into the far away
Where contradictions hold their sway.

O Muse, bless my pen,
To delve deep into the minds of men,
Who read the Gita every day,
Yet when the time comes,
Warriors turn into beasts of prey.

And commit deeds, O Muse, which
Innocent men would never enact.
Their faults turn sins when knowing
The fall out of their deeds,
They stop not,
And plunge headlong into the depths of barbarity.
Let me call back to life,
The Lord with all reverence,
And his beloved Pandvas,
And ask them some questions
Which remain unasked and, hence, unresolved.

**Chorus**
You have lost the shining stuff.
Through this opaque mind,
The light does not pass
Causing darkness all around.

Why are you obsessed
With your front?
You have a back too,
Which you let go unattended.

The body has a face
Which is only a mark.
How I look, can you tell, O Mirror?
What I am, don’t ask.

Can you decipher me?
No, you can only guess.
Where I really exist,
I too can’t transgress.

The dusky realms
I wade when I am asleep
From where they appear
A mystery deep.
You wonder at my charms
I stumble at my chasms
A mechanism clever,
Can’t put two and two together.
To this side in the morn
By evening, to that side,
Gods have a hard time
Reading what I write.

Every time, a new mask,
Same liquid, new flask,
Miss take after miss take,
Every time I spoil the cake.

I am a chip off a living mass,
Flying in a cage,
A passion, a desire,
Dying in a rage.
CANTO I

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD
[EXPOSITION]
Govind,
How was man better in those times
And, if after Mahabharta,
‘Dharma’ had been established,
How long it continued
Because, history tells a different story.

I am much concerned about the millions
Who were fighting on this side or that,
And who went down in the fight,
Leaving behind them,
Widows, children, and crying parents.

What do you think of Duryodhana, my Lord?
And Shakuni?
Were they imported with the evil
That they represented,
Or were the circumstances responsible for it?

To me, Bhishma and Dronacharya,
And to a great extent, Karna,.
Appear to be ranged against themselves.
Duryodhanawho had won the Kareeda with deception,
Here, himself becomes the victim
Of this divided loyalty of his warlords.

I am not convinced why Dhritrashtra
Was so blind, and Gandhari,
And her hundred sons, so foolish,
And how is it that a Prince like Duryodhana
Could be so allergic to reason?
And Shakuni, so impartially inclined towards
Evil and deception.
Was dishonouring a woman in the presence
Of the court,
And, then, her revenge,
The central motif of the great war which claimed
Valiant warriors like Abhimanyu?
Was this revenge worth it,
When Daropadi had got the foreknowledge
That all her sons would be lost in the
Impending disaster?

When the sage mentions to Dhritrashtra
A night before the war,
About his carrying the ashes of his hundred sons,
Was this warning not enough
For a human being to stop and think?
Were these people kings only,
Immune of senses,
And believed only in self-glorification?

My questions do not end here, Lord!
What is the fun of fighting a battle
In which your mind
Does not support your body?
The real protection that Karna loses,
Was the knowledge that he was the eldest of the Pandvas.
His talk of Arjuna Vadh thereafter
Appears sheer bravado shorn of a surreal wish,
Which is proved by his actions, culminating in his death.

What type of characters fought that great war,
Lord?
You say it was to save the ‘dharma’.
And you said, even acts of ‘adharma’ are passe
If they help restore the ‘dharma’.
If just ‘dharma’ was at stake,
Were Bhishma, Daronacharya, and Karna,
Immune from this realization?
If so, how can they be considered great?

The very fact that they were on the side
Of Kaurvas,
Revolts common sense.
Why, unless they believed them to be right.
If they felt they were siding with the wrong,
And if they believed the Pandvas to be right,
Who was there to stop Maha Muhim
To say NO to Duryodhana?
A man can do a thousand things against his will,
But will never go to a war like Mahabharta
Where your very truth is at stake.

I find Daronacharya too,
More in need of instruction, although he was called Guru.
A son like Aswasthama can blackmail a father,
But not to the point at which the father knows
It would be a sin to keep silent,
When a daughter-like Princess is being dishonoured.

These characters whom we call great
Govind,
Were finally pardoned by you
And they might still be resting in Swargdham,
But their worldly role as legendary warriors
Comes under a cloud,
And my pen falters calling them great.
I have to ask the Creator
How could he build human species
In the mould of Duryodhanas
Who are avowed enemies of sense,
Too arrogant, too proud,
And focused at a single fact of eternity: Self.

The greatest enemy of Duryodhana,
If you had given him some insight,
And a chance to look into the mirror,
Was Shakuni, the fiend,
And Dhritrashtra, his own father,
Who should have checked his turbulent whims.

Keshav, like all our other activities,
Child rearing too is a social act,
And in this act,
We fault irrevocably and unpardonably,
If our offspring pays scant regard to its elders,
And harbours no sense of social obligations.

Frankly speaking, if I find one character,
Most convincing, it was Karna.
And don’t mind, dear Keshav,
If I say, he was the real hero
Of this great drama about ‘dharma’.

I hold not anything against your favourite stars,
Arjuna, Bhima, et al,
The war was indispensable if they were
To establish the reign of truth.
And, for this, they had suffered long.
War also exacts a tough price from them
In the killing of Abhimanyu and Ghatotkach,
And all their sons.
Lord, it was a men’s world,  
Where woman could be lost or won.  
Daropadi appears to be a grand sufferer,  
As she, as the wife of five persons,  
Does not project any credible model  
Of womanhood.  
However, she is the centre of the cataclysm  
Called Mahabharta,  
And retains her grandeur inspite of  
All that happens to her.

Kunti too is devastated by Surya Naryana’s  
Unwanted gift of a son,  
Which brings her more pain,  
Than any joy, being her sixth son,  
Whom Bhishma declines to accept  
As an offshoot of the Kuru Vansha.

My questions do not end here.  
Yudhishtra too is not an ideal ruler.  
You can curse me for such an assertion.  
I think he proved himself absolutely deficient  
In the art of royalty,  
When he failed to defend himself in the Kareeda,  
And knowing that the other party was playing a foul game,  
Went on losing, in the name of ‘dharma’.

Such men are unfit to be taken as ideal kings,  
Who are responsible for life and property  
Of their subjects.  
Yes, if we put the wits of all the Pandvas together,  
They form a formidable ruling combine.  
[It was Daropadi’s desire too, as the scripture says].  
But, how can every subsequent ruler have so many brothers  
Cast in such luminous history?
The Pandvas having no sister creates a void
In contemporary consciousness
And can start an issue of Gender Equality.
I admire the way you brought in Daropadi’s sister
Shikhandini as the proposed Commander [Senapati]
On the first day,
To lead the forces of the Pandvas,
[It was rejected by the Kaurvas before the war started]
And also, feel quite happy, how she was
Treated by her father, Dharupad, at Panchal.
It was an honour but still,
When it came to killing Bhishma,
She had to turn Shikhandi, a man, for a day.
Yes, it was a war for which men are most suited.

Women are there only to give blessings
To their departing husbands,
And then, break their bangles
When they fall in the battle field.

I intend no irreverence, Keshav.
It is simply an intellectual quest into what happened
And what is happening now, and to know,
How much ‘dharma’ was established,
And at what cost.
Why was there a war of flesh and blood?
Why couldn’t there be a Security Council,
To Wage a Thousand Years of War of Words.

Is swordsmanship the best option to determine
Eternal questions of right and wrong?
Just as in a Swayambra,
The lady must garland the man who wins her
On the power of his muscles.
How funny it was! How poor in taste!
And how shocking too!
If that too was your world,
Did you never think of punishing the articulators
Who created those conditions for women?
The superior gender?

Gita is a war ethic.
It invites you to go to war for the right.
If you cannot convince the other side
With the power of your might,
You are proved wrong.
The only chance of winning against Shakunis
Is a superior wit.
You will never be able to sleep, in peace, my Lord.
For, I know my fellow men.
Only you think, the war ended with restoration of Yudhishtra.

What we have seen since that time,
Is entirely a different unfolding of the saga of human lusts.
Man can never be convinced of his limitations.
He is always jittery.
From the heart of absolute happiness,
He can dig out absolute unrest.

I am not a lover of war, which tests man’s wits,
And his power to endure,
And also his willingness to inflict
Wounds on his adversary.
It is an uncivilized and barbaric way to
Deal with dissent,
And finish the person who does not agree with you.
How come the gods bless people
With killer boons only?
Did Arjuna or Karna had no ‘Brahm Astar’
To establish peace?
If Aswasthama can kill a son in the womb of Uttra,
Why can’t jealousy, hatred, arrogance, and pride
But killed in the womb?

Among the five Pandvas,
I find missing the person who could have
Understood their crisis at the intellectual level.
Yudhista was too pious a man,
With a uni-dimensional mind.
Almost an ideal prototype of a king.
He could not assimilate even Shakuni,
And his evil.
All others were just fighters.
Can you contend with this vile world simply
With swords and arrows?

You were the only intellectual force among them.
And you brought them to fight each other.
Daropadi, when shown into the future,
Was scared of war,
Gandhari too had a mortal fear of it.
Yet, you wanted it.
It was your way to establish the right.
I still wonder if physical might
Is the sole arbiter of Truth.
If Pandvas had fallen, as truth often does,
Do you think Duryodhana might have been proved right?

And if you had not used deceit
To sign off Bhishma and Drona,
And if Karna had been granted
A fair chance,
And if Arujuna had fallen, my Lord,  
Where would have ‘Dharma’ stood?  
With the Kaurvas?  
Proving right what they did to Daropadi?  
Justified would have stood the Lakshagraha too.

I have seen in history worse specimens  
Like Hitler,  
Who was all out to kill the Jews,  
His concentration camps,  
And how he exterminated millions,  
And Duryodhana seems to be his peer in cruelty.  
How much evil ammunition of arrogance,  
Pride and non-sense, might have gone  
Into the making of such charismatic bigots?  
Truth, my Lord, is a boring subject.  
People love to enjoy a truthless stint on this earth.  
Full of kicks and joy, not these lengthy debates on ethics.

Its men, who stand aloft, in purity of heart and soul,  
Unacceptable as they are,  
Are soon raised as icons in public squares.  
That is all.  
This world is the realm of the second best.  
The ordinary, the get going,  
The just working.  
Pure gold is mixed with brass, to make it workable.

The world acquires a condescending tone  
When talking of great souls  
Like Socrates and Rumi.  
But, how eagerly, our younger and older people  
Relish the taste of Alexander’s world conquest!  
How great was Julius Caesar!
These people really send us in great awe
Of human power over lesser men.
Is it not poor in taste?
We glorify men who killed millions?

Is it only war that matters?
Is man incapable of even amean understanding?
Does he want truth to be pushed into his nostrils by force?
Does he turn silent only when he is butchered for a mean cause?
I look at the shabby history of mankind,
Which is splattered with blood and littered with human flesh.
And am often possessed with a vague sense
Of having perished a hundred times in the streets of Rome,
Or felled in the great War at Kurukshetra.

When your actors talk of being great Kuru Vansha,
I feel stumped, shocked, and humiliated too.
I wish to side by Karna,
Who suffered indignities being a SutPutra.
And although Karna time and again asserted
Merit had nothing to do with Vanshes,[castes, and dynasties]
Still, the minds of great men like Bhishma
Were riddled with such mean considerations.
You smiled over it all, and never stopped them
From thinking amiss.

I entirely disagree with certain actors,
And their acting too.
Can you say, you didn’t create them?
They were the material you were called upon to handle.
Look at Daropadi.
If I were to create Daropadi,
First of all, I consider Dharupad a fool
To have asked for
Such travails for his daughter.
My Daropadi would have refused to be born to a man
Who does not respect the arrival of a daughter.
She would have challenged
Her father, Darupad’s son-centric behavior
At the Yagyabhumi.
My Daropadi would revolt against the idea of Swaymbara?
Is a woman a trophy?
To be won in a duel, or a war?
It is most derogatory, she must have said.
And garlanded the one she loved.
May be someone other than Arujuna.
What is bad if she liked Karna?

My Daropadi would not take chances,
And reverse the course of history.
Even if she garlands Arjuna,
She would never accept Kunti’s blind barb
“Share it mere putro” [my sons, share among yourselves]
Was a mother’s innocent barb more sacred
Than a woman’s honour?
My Daropadi would not be lost in plus and minus,
The good and evil of this act,
She would in no time stand apart
And tell the Pandvas
“No”.

My Lord, do you think her “No”
Would have brought in what actually happened thereafter?
My Daropadi would never allow Pandu Putras
To go to Hastinapur after the dishonor
Duryodhana had suffered at Indra Prastha.
Such an insight is the shared possession of ordinary souls.
A woman can smell a man standing a hundred yards
Away from her, if he intends any evil for her.
My Daropadi would never allow herself
To be gambled away.
She would use her Yagyasaini powers,
And turn dust,
Before she is touched by Dusashana.
There was no point in forgiving
Yudhishtra for his foolish act,
Even if she chose to keep alive.
Your Daropadi too
Does not forgive Duryodhana,
In spite of all the philosophizing
And spiritualizing by you, my Lord.

Mahabharta war took place,
Because you wanted it to destroy evil,
And establish a Bharat Rashtra based on Good.
And Daropadi, Arjuna, Bhima..were actors
In that great cosmic play.
Those who won the world, were bound to lose.
And the losers of the world were to unite in victory.

That was the vision which worked
To create Daropadi, and fill her life with indignities,
She is the greatestloser, and the greatest winner too.
All because you wanted Mahabharta.
Your Daropadi is a sublime character,
Who plays a central role
In the unfolding of the great cosmic drama.
At her gravest cost.
She is the biggest casualty of the Mahabharata.

Frankly speaking, Keshav,
My Daropadi would have reacted differently
To the indignities heaped on her.
I would have granted her intellectual powers,
To contend with Bhishma and Drona,
And disarm them in the court of Kaurvas,
And make them leave the court
In spite of all their vows.
Something, you too could have accomplished.
But then, Keshav, you know, and I too,
Who would give a free fling to evil
To overreach itself?

My Bhishma would have broken all his vows,
And identifying the throne with Duryodhana,
Who was trying to ascend it,
Would have left the royal court,
And joined the Pandvas.
This is what you also wanted him to do.

You tried hard to convince him
Of the untenability of his vows.
But, alas, it was too late,
When he had already wreaked death on the Pandva army.
His realization of his stand which violated truth
Comes rather too late,
And it only helps him regain his position
As a man of character.
But, I would not have allowed him to suffer a divided fall.

I disagree with Dhritrashtra also.
He was double blind.
He could not see, nor could he foresee.
Was it a plot hatched by the forces above
To let Daryodhana go on with his follies?
Can a father dote on an arrogant son like him?
He seems to be a prototype of a Lear
Who parts away with his senses in absolute abnegation.
My Dhritrashtra would not allow his wife
To blindfold herself,
As a proof of her devotion to her husband.
So that if one of the spouses is blind
The other helps him find his way.
Darkness, ignorance, and folly double up
With Dhritrashtra’s blindness
Laced up with Gandhari’s blindfolded non-presence.
If it was providence who created this duo
In a state of absolute selfishness,
I disagree with it too.
My Dhritrashtra, even if blind,
Would be supported by a wife,
Who disapproves the dishonor of Daropadi,
And stands upto the evil designs of Shakuni and Duryodhana.

On the eve of the great War,
A sage comes with the ashes of Satyawati,
And when Dhritrashtra trembles
Getting hold of the ash-can,
The sage tells him in no unclear words,
That he was going to handle the ashes of his hundred sons.

Was this not enough for Dhritrashtra
To kill the father within, and
To intervene like a King,
And, next morning, reach Kurukshetra,
And sit in ‘dharna’ in the battlefield,
Forcing an end to the war-mongering of his son?

Where was the need to shed so much blood?
Did Duryodhana merit such a huge devastation?
Why was it essential for Gurus like Dron to die?
And why had Bhishma to be put out?
Some strange feeling inside me is stirred to ask
What if they had lived beyond the war?
In his last moments,
Guru Dron was a reformed soul.
Was he not better alive, on the side of the Pandvas,
Working for a brave new world?

Where was the logic for Bhishmato die?
Even if it was Ichha Mrityu? {Death by Will}
I have really deep differences with regard to him.
You also did not like his untenable love for his vows
Which proved counter-productive for the forces of the good,
And, went on to support evil.
Only he needed a clearer vision,
Which was imparted to him, but only too late.
Was it necessary to die with that awakened vision of reality?
Why he couldn’t have lived to support the Pandvas?

You used these great men as manure,
To fertilize the soil of Hastinapur,
So that goodness could be given a better environment
To breed and multiply.
I differ, Keshav.
My Bhishma would have looked into the folly of his vows,
Which ultimately meant to support Evil.
Daropadi’s dishonor must have been the last straw
For the camel.

And Keshav, just think,
If you had converted Bhishma before the war took off,
And if he and Drona, both had deserted the Kauravas,
Do you think there would be any war?
You will agree with me,
These two persons were not evil.
Nor was Karna?
Why were they wasted in the battle?
They would have been better alive for years,
To give support to the Pandavas.

*Perhaps, the gods above,*
*Have only an academic interest in peace.*
*Actually, they rest absolute faith in violence.*
*The multi-armed deities are carrying*
*Every type of weapon of war.*

If they are always in a state of war,
It is clear that world is a threatened zone,
With fear of ambush by demons.
And, like we people,
They too believe in superior violence,
As the only method to end
The madness of human and non-human races.

In the war,
I am irked by your insistence on Arjuna to fight.
Take up your Gandeev, you ordered him.
And convinced him with your great Gita
That, faced with evil,
It was his duty to pick up arms
Even if at the target stood the people he once revered.

No doubt, it was a great war.
Arjuna was a great warrior. So was Karna.
And Bhishma and Drona, all were great in their mite.
Still, I have a feud with my senses,
Why you allowed Shakuni to hijack the Kareeda
And Duryodhana to outplay himself?
Maha Muhim Bhisham and Guru Drona
Fought on the side of Kauravas,
Still, we consider them great heroes.
If they were heroes,
Why were they allowed to support evil?

Keshav, with due reverence to your superior godly wisdom,
As a human being, I question
Why you could not disarm Shakuni in Kareeda?
Why you let Yudhishtira turn a fool?
You did save Daropadi from dishonor.
But it was not enough my Lord.

Keshav, when Arjuna refused to fight
In the battlefield,
You delivered the Message of Gita.
The doubts of Arjuna still persist,
Are rather turned more confounding
In the present set of circumstances.

I seek your guidance, and more clarifications,
As I know, the battle is still raging,
And the Kuru-kshetra is now
Not any physical entity,
But internalized by the combatant legions
Of the good and the evil.
CANTO II

THE DESERT OF REASON
I feel an enveloping, enraging, and engaging desert
Of reason in the proceedings.
I cannot convince myself that you were around,
Protecting the Pandvas,
Yet, the Kaurvas could manage such an army,
And bring the world to its worst crisis.

You have said again and again,
Violence and War are must, to establish a new order.
And, this is what happened.
All the Kaurvas were done to death.
Like Ravana, and Kamsa,
Duryodhana too represented all that was evil.
And Dushashana, is the great forefather of all the
Kings and administrators down the ages,
I wonder, after Yudhishtra,
Any king got it right.

Things have gone from bad to worse.
Even today, when we find no kings,
But only Shashaks and Parshashaks [administrators]
Parshashan and Sushashan [good administration] are missing.
What we find prospering everywhere is Dushashana
Whom you got killed at the hands of Bhima.

Look up and down, Keshav.
Was Dushashana really killed?
Was he a real trophy for Bhima?
If that world and this world – all live under
Your sway,
What do you think of this world?
Nothing has changed.
I still cannot contend with the idea what inspiration
Got into the head of the blind sire,
Who named his eldest son, Dur Yodhan.
Did he really give his son this name?
Was he in his genuine senses to call his son
A fallen brave man?
When they uttered the names of Duryodhana, and Dusashana,
Did not Gandhari ever come across the idea,
How foul were these names they had given to their sons?
Did they really love them?
Or were they born to be wasted?
Although Gandhari says she remembers the names of her sons,
And they were a boon given to her,
Would it not have been better to have one son,
And name him Susashan?

The evil worked in their minds to such an extent,
That they were turned physically blind,
They were metaphorically blind too,
And they were responsible
For hastening the tragic events that unfold.
Dhritrashtra’s approval of Duryodhana’s actions
In Kareeda and Lakshagraha,
Was he a king or a killer?
And knowing all this,
It was a matter of shame for Bhishma
To still go on protecting an empire
Which had lost all sense of the good
And thrived only on Evil.

Even if Bhishma prayed in the last moments,
Realised his folly of politics of vows,
And blessed the Pandvas,
It comes too late, Keshav.
Bhishma needed you much earlier.  
Before they killed Abhimanyu.  
Drona committed that great folly for the sake of his son.  
Are great men visited by passions so mean?

You should have driven sense into the minds  
Of Bhishma and Drona,  
And forced them to quit,  
Before the infamous chakravyu  
I still don’t know what these men of great wisdom  
Were doing with the Kaurvas?  
Why they did not leave them?  
O Keshav! Would that the entire script was written by you!

Man is often asked to look up to gods,  
And pray.  
But this is an erratic posture.  
Just look down, to see how many ants  
You have under your feet undone.  
Now, don’t tell me to believe,  
All those who were crushed under my feet,  
While I prayed with my eyes lifted up,  
Have gone to Heaven, as you said  
For the fighters of Kurukshetra:  
That is ‘Dharma Bhumi,’ that anyone who dies here,  
Will be carried straight to the Heaven.  
And released from the cycle of birth and death.  
I feel a slender sense of compensation to realize  
That the ants are in one among the 84 lakh incarnations  
Which encumber a soul,  
And you have helped a few of them to get out of it.

* a war strategy, perfected by Daronacharya
You made us all look at Arjuna,
Bhishma, and Karna, at their best,
In fighting.
And at the same time,
Kill like ants, millions who fought for their rulers,
Whether they were good or bad--
Were these multitudes,
Whose bodies lay in pools of blood
Aware of your superior polemics?
Heaven might have been overcrowded
With millions dying during
The eighteen days of the war.
I am interested to know where is Shakuni?
Has the eternal schemer too found a safe berth in Heaven?

This cosmos where the men are the best of species
To enjoy the boons available to them,
Is actually a house of prey.
All the created things are objects of prey,
Look at the insects, birds, animals,
Forests know how living beings behave.
Kill.
Kill the lesser beings,
Kill those who cannot fight.
Kill those who can fight.
And only those survive who can kill.
Survival is struggle, a violent struggle.
And in violence, we too believe.
And after us, our gods too.
They too carry firearms.
Evil has to be killed, or it will kill you.
Keshav, don’t you believe in transformation?
I am sorry for millions who were killed.
And I am sorry, the few
Who brought them to war,
Could not be made to disbelieve war.
I still am not convinced with your obsession with war.

With your powers of oration,
You made Arjuna pick up the bow.
It was a transformation, which placed the
Right thing at the right place.
Vision became clear.
And he did see into the life and death of things.

I wish to stop you here.
Your ‘Gita Sandesh’ was meant for Arjuna only.
Don’t you think Arjuna was a good man,
Whom your Message prepared for a great job?
I believe, this divine service was more in place
For the rotten souls,
Shakuni, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra,
Dusashana,
They all needed this transformative experience.
You only prescribed ‘Dand’ [retribution] for them.

Or you believed they were inconsolably gone astray,
Couldn’t be retrieved,
Until they had undone themselves with Abhimanyu.
In fact, they needed a serious dose after Lakshagraha.
And even after Kareeda,
There were many climactic moments
Where your presence was needed.
Your absence at the Kareeda, contrived or natural,
Was the point of sharp decline for the Kaurvas.
Like other gods, were you too obsessed with violence?
Has peace no chance with gods? Keshav?
Mahabharta, Ramayana,
Appear like War of Troy,
Triggered by a woman.
Followed by deaths in millions.
Can we afford to waste warriors like Achilles
And Hector,
Simply for the sake of a woman?

Mahabharta too is a revenge drama, Keshav.
A melodrama which cashes on
The lust of human eyes
For blood and gore,
And the mind of man, for thrillers.
You must kill, or you will get killed.
This is the fundamental wisdom of war
On which this entire drama seems to have been built.
A hundred wrongs come together,
To weave the plot of a thriller,
In which gods play their role,
To set or upset the human applecart.
CANTO III

THE UMBILICAL CORD
Mother’s womb represents a man’s belonging to the Earth.
And, when we cut the umbilical cord,
We only formally release the man
Into this world of opportunities
Base and sublime.
And the grandmother monitors
The actions of her offspring
Waiting keenly
They would return to her not as a dilapidated mass of clay,
But as beings who were human and divine
And for whom,
Stay in the world was not merely
Power, wealth, and pelf,
But whether they outgrew the base
Impulses of humanity,
And did something which shines behind.
This is the other end of the umbilical cord
Which binds man to the cosmos,
Through his mother.

Man is never alone,
He comes bricked in dynasties.
We can trace our origin back to millions of years,
To as many transparencies,
Suffering joys and pains, births and deaths,
Parents and sons, and daughters in the way.
Who comes from where no one knows
But the umbilical cord binds us all together
To the mother, and to all that has been
Human, emphatic or erratic in our lives.

Who is to be born where, is a mystery,
To whom, and when,
And when to die and how,
A million histories have their conclusions preordained. We are not an accident, nor are we born at random, If our actions are calculated, And we don’t do anything just for the heck of it, So are gods, too preoccupied with their plans, And don’t let a leaf fall without permission.

The ants that we crush underfoot, And the millions of vagrant thoughts That flit across our fantasies, Our actions, our dreams, Our silences, our violence, Nothing is in vain, or out of the blue, We are part of the Chain of being And, dictated by our ‘Karma’ Emerge and submerge in the waters of eternity

Govind, Creation and generation are words Denoting reproductive capabilities of the species, Not only human beings procreate, The whole vegetation, the flowers, the birds, Animals, everything has genetic organs And earth is aware of its own destiny If it denies any object, these productive boons.

Still, among human beings, sex is an act of calculation While in the vegetation, and birds, It is a natural impulse. Human world is far removed from reality. Don’t you know sex is at the centre of human depravity, Is it a degenerative potion that every man carries for every woman? Men and women even in your world were
Two different genders,
One treated the best, and the other, worst,
Given to subjugation and servility,
And promoting the well-being of the former.
Do you stand by these people who make discriminations
And consign women to a secondary position,
Where they are exploited,
In the name of tradition and goodness.

I cannot forget how Gandhari, the mother of hundred sons
Was treated in Hastinapur?
Even if nothing really happened, and all was a myth,
It was poor in taste.
Why blindfold?
Devotion is one thing,
And blind following quite another.

And Keshav,
You and Rukmani loved each other.
And you eloped with her.
You also made Arjuna elope with Subhadra.
You had a friend in Radha, and in Daropadi too.
But remember what happened to Bhanumati?†
Why our world, the world you established,
Believes in honour killing?
Why are girls coerced in the name of Samskara?

Why fathers say: take care of my turban, means Izzat.
And millions of young girls down the ages
Have just cried in the wedding songs:
Kaan kanayia war lodiye
[I want a husband like Krishna]

† Duryodhana’s wife, who was forcibly taken as bride at the Swaymbra by Duryodhana
Yet, who gets a husband of her choice?
Don’t you think the unions that we have been making
Since ages, are spurious,
And the harvest of this sin is before us:
Duryodhana has millions of brothers,
And as many Dusashanas are ruling this world.
It is not your world. It is moral chaos.
Can’t you inject some sense into the bones of this world?

Where is the sense if you do not marry for love?
And I see people marrying just for PR to Canada.
Or, women are after wealthy old men,
Who might die, leaving them a largesse.
Or, before marriage,
Look how wisdom works.
The wedding check list goes like this.

What is the father of the boy?
How much is the land?
Is the father in Govt. service?
What about his mother?
His brothers? His sisters?
If he is a Canadian NRI?
Then no questions.
Tell us what you want?
And the girl is packed off to Canada.

Keshav, do you think it is a marriage?
It is a business contrivance in the name of a sacred union.
Can such people be happy?
Or is happiness a consideration for them?
Girls when they grow up must marry.
And they depend upon their parents to find a boy.
And parents know, no daughter can be married off
Without dowry.
Who bothers anti-dowry laws, Keshav.
The world over,
I don’t find people in the right company.
Marriage mars all their chances of happiness.
What have you to say to these sufferers?
They are moral transgressors,
Rapes, abductions, killings are going on.
Young men, who are despised, throw acid
On fair faces.
This is really a dirty world.
And all in the absence of Love.
Keshav, how can man be brought to his senses?
So that he returns to the path of moral righteousness.
And creativity, which now stands blurred
With his single minded concentration
On marrying someone and having a family.

Women must have their choice.
It is no fun living for sixty years with a man
You don’t like to look at,
Simply because your parents wanted.
I object, Keshav.
I also object to that Swyambra custom,
In which the brave deserve the fair.
It is a tribal custom,
Shorn of civilized values.
The fair often possess mental powers also.
And the brave can be the man with a transcendent vision.
Why all your philosophy centres around muscles.
Think of this mind too, Keshav.
You were a colossus of wisdom.
Why can’t your lovers be like you?
Right thinkers. Right actors?
Keshav, I don’t find anything amiss
In your efforts to establish a Dharma Rashtra.
And for this,
You did not mind liquidating the forces of evil.
May be for some time,
It might have done good to human thought.
But the end result of all is:
That the best men [Awwal] find no takers.
Look at Christ. The great Sikh Gurus.
The people love the Second Rate [Doem]
The best are an anathema.
Still you pressed for a perfect world,
And engineered the exit of the ‘doem’ [second]

I wonder, Keshav,
If the massacre really served its purpose.
The armies of the darkness are multiplying.
And the worst thing is:
Duryodhana has patented his laughter.
Dusashana is a craze. Shakuni, a fashion.
And it is also an official formality,
To call them evil, condemn them publicly,
And then, join their legions on the sly.

When men go out, they are in a hurry to return home.
Every morning they leave,
And before it is too late in the night, return.
How many decide to keep away from the home?
How many just don’t come back?
Home is a prototype of the earth’s extended womb.
A family. Kids. And a wife, on whose soul,
We write love, and reap affections.
How strong is our bond!
With our home.
But Keshav! Is it not a strange thing?
This home they remember, but the real they forget.
They came from the earth on a sojourn.
And, they must pine for returning to that home.
But, here that idea of family, home and love,
Appears to go off the track.
Those who come to Canada,
Have no plans to go back.
I consider it infidelity.
An act against the ethics of fertility.
To forget the home
Where you were endowed with divinity.
I can see the great war
Which sent them all to their original home,
Against moving to which,
They fought with all their might.
All that was false, in their reckoning,
All that was true, out of sight.

Keshav! You told Arjuna,
That action is in his hands, not its fall out.
And that action is best, which is done Nishkaam
[without any desire to fulfil a purpose]
And its results too would be positive.
Your parting advice to Karna too was identical.
That when a man meditates with a purpose
Without any reference to general human good,
All powers bestowed on him turn counterproductive.
He may kill his enemy,
But it cannot be an intelligent action,
An awakened and intelligent action
Brings about and adds to general well being,
Opening the doors for Mukti[Liberation]
While an unintelligent action binds man faster
To the coils of life and death, interspersed with misery.
Always the question remains:
You want to die a man, or a superman.
On a man’s death, kinsmen shed tears,
Because it is apersonal death.
But, on an impersonal death -
A death which is the result of a greater cause,
A part of a great plan, and earned with effort -
The sons and daughters of such a man do not shed tears
Rather tell the world with pride,
Our father laid down his life for a great cause.
He died a martyr,
Not a victim of a sword, or a crooked scam.

Keshav, this is how I feel.
A blind death and an intelligent death.
In the same way, we can have
A blind life, and an intelligent life.
You were able to measure out the lives
Of these characters in a few words,
So that, at least for once,
At the end of their lives,
They feel what they have been doing.

These people like Karna, Bhishma, and Drona,
Who considered themselves great men of ‘dharma’,
Driven by propriety, forced to fight on the side of Kaurvas
Although they blessed the Pandvas with Vijayshree,
[The boon of Victory]
Were objects of criticism, at your hands.
Each of them was shown his place,
And made to realize his foolish perversion of truth.
I feel a bit irritation here, Govind.
These men were so great in their character, their lives,
And even in their death,
Why they could not even once have that enlightened vision,
That intelligent life-awakening,
In which they could even for a while
Judge their own conduct,
Wherein lay the chances of their retreat into sense.

Over a very long life of self-love,
Self-obsession and self-glorification,
Bhishma fails even once to have a lucid interval
And be convinced of his fallen sojourn into ignominy.
Drona too looks a poor shadow of Bhishma,
Great warriors fail to let sense visit them even once.
Otherwise, they would have left
Their pursuit of defending Hastinapur
And deserted its senseless sovereign
Who held wisdom and judgement
In a perpetual contention with vision-blindness.

Karna too fails miserably.
We might call him great in his death.
He accepted it willfully.
And his pain at being the eldest of the Pandvas
And the suffering he has to undergo as Sut Putra
Are understandable,
More sinned against than sinning.
Makes him an object of sympathy.
But, I pity him, the great Daanveer
Gave sense, and wisdom, and judgment a go by.
And, Lord, they persisted
In fighting on the side of the Kaurvas.
On the side of wrong.
Supporting Evil.
Would they, if they had been in their wits?
Who had sucked their wits?
Could Duryodhan do it?
How could Shakuni,
A mean wit,
Force them into such a situation?

The fact remains, Keshav,
They were warriors, who thought with their muscles,
And fought, not with ideas,
But with their arrows.
From their actions, it seems war was pre-written,
And even if you wanted,
Could not have been averted.
These people were destined
To perish in the war
Fighting on the wrong side.
CANTO IV

THE FALL OUT
Keshav, Indians down the ages have venerated you,
And your Gita Sandesh is now read
Like the Bible of all times.
You talked about action and its reaction.
Newton too talked about it, but more bluntly,
In the western tradition.
People who believed in science,
Yield not much space to the Spiritual,
The Mystical and the Mysterious.
This is what divides the two worlds.
While they believe that action and reaction
Are equal and opposite
On this very theorem,
The entire system of the western world was built.

We do not buy this idea.
Every action has a reaction. This is understandable.
But equal and opposite?
Here, we often refer to your words in the Gita.
Action is in our hands. But not its reaction.
Its fall out is not in our hands,
Nor can our wishes dictate the superior forces
To let the fall-out fall out as we wished.

Can you marry the woman of your choice?
Sita married Rama, not because she loved him, and liked him,
Because he broke Shiva’s bow.
Daropadi married Arjuna on the dead body of a fish.
Did Gandhari love the blind sovereign?
How many, except of course you, Keshav,
Marry out of our will?
Even if Arjuna and Subhadhra loved,
You intervened to help them elope.
And, may I now mention,
It was done to fulfil a cosmic design:
The world needed Abhimanyu,
And the War demanded him dead.
And the way he was done to death,
Scripted the death of many like Karna.

Keshav, marriage too is intelligence-proof zone.
I can tell you our men here are not only intelligent,
But intellectual too,
And they marry after looking into a thousand details,
And, then go to the shrines to get divine branding.
And once they come out of it,
Go and see any household.
Even if they offer prayers to you,
Or any other god or gods,
It is a sheer formality.
They don’t know whom to love, how to love,
And whether to love or not.
Unwanted husbands, undesired wives,
Think life is meant only to bear two kids,
Bring them up in the best way,
Eating fast food and watching Tom & Jerry,
Teaching them in the best school
Both working day and night,
And getting no time even at night, to throw it all away,
And return to their bodies, their minds, and their selves.

They think of you, only when they are in trouble.
And they are always in trouble.
And you are remembered most of the times.
Not for any good reason, Keshav.
Can you be feeling proud of it?
Where is man’s intelligent self?
Where are his intellectualities?
He has chosen for himself a life like asses.  
Life is a load of dirty linen which he conducts  
From home to the dhobi ghat[washery].  
And that is all.

I pity this marriage, Keshav.  
If you had been a simple youth, loving Rukmani,  
And made her flee from the wedding court,  
By now, Khaps would have tracked both of you  
And shot you dead.  
They are unrelenting. Unlistening.  
Dead set against love.  
And they are the men who guard tradition,  
Who guard religion.  
They are the best men of this society.  
The dharma society which you established  
Thousands of years ago.  
This is what remains of that grand dream  
For which that great war was fought  
And slowly lost.

And see human power over death.  
Except you, who knows  
How and when man will die.  
Adolf Hitler shot himself.  
But with all his power,  
Did he know he would have to die?  
And in this manner?  
I think Alexander and Gaznavi,  
And Julius Caesar, always thought of  
Killing others, and establishing empires,  
Rather than ever thinking  
They too would fall one day.  
And where? And when?
Were they capable of mapping their own exit?
Was Mussolini aware that his own compatriots
Would do him in,
And in his dead mouth,
A woman would urinate in public view?

Death is a mystery, Keshav, so is life,
And, I agree,
It is possible you can take a calculated action,
But how it will all end, or in other words, its fall out,
That depends on the will of gods.
How you are to be rewarded lies in the realm of the unknown.
And you have no power over how you will be rewarded.

I belong to this age of science,
And therefore, tend to put my faith in what Einstein said.
Action and reaction are equal and opposite.
Yes, we don’t know how. That is mysterious.
And we can’t see even the obvious.
Gods have a game up their sleeves.
And they play with mortals like pawns.

**Chorus**
The most important part of my body is my face
Which houses my head too.
I have never seen it.
I see it in the mirror only in reflection.

God too is a part of me,
Though He remains unseen,
Yet, He can be seen reflected around in nature,
In the universal spread, here and there.
I am not without my head,  
Nor am I without my God,  
Who is a part of my existence,  
Is there any need to find him in forests?  
Or lonely banks of meditating rivers?

Am I a headless entity?  
Body here, head somewhere else?  
If no, then, I am sure,  
To this existence is bound my Lord.  
Visible only to the eye blessed with vision.

....

Keshav,  
How many have such visions  
Of God being a part of his body system  
And thinking apparatus?  
Man’s tragedy is:  
He begins by a raging belief that he is to find God.

Most religions teach their followers:  
How to seek God? How to seek salvation?  
If you knew that the pot is made of the clay,  
Where would be the question of a pot  
Running out in search of its maker  
The touch of whose hands can be felt  
In the shape it was given?

And the only way to get back to godly existence  
Is to disintegrate,  
But only after doing its job here.  
It is pitiable if it goes back,  
Without serving any useful purpose  
For which it was created.  
We tend to turn this life into a tomb of waste, Keshav.
Chorus
As we progress in time,
Every moment comes to life.
We live it, and it slips into history.

We think we have unlimited stock of moments.
Let us not play ducks and drakes.
Nor ladders and snakes.

Let us light up these moments,
With love and care,
Otherwise, our history will be a dark tomb of waste.

From waste to waste is easy to move.
Those who move fast, and without trouble,
Are trudging downward, they discover.

O Powerful! Stop the day from turning night
So that you retain your youth,
And save yourself from death.

The end is drawing near and near,
And how devastating this is,
You don’t know when the stock will be over.

Today is the last day.
Tomorrow is the breath of hope.
Who is sure to be alive the next morning?
--

Keshav,
I am reminded of the absurdity of vows.
Bhishma takes a vow. Karna takes a vow.
Even giving your word is like taking a vow.
Men think it is a part of manhood
To take a vow and stand by it.
Bhishma Pratigya [the Vow of Bhishma] is now
A social usage.
Karna, as a Danveer, too is an accepted fact.
They are great people.
In Indian lore, this line goes:
Pran Jaye par Vachan na Jayee.
Let not a man’s word go unfulfilled,
Even if he has to die for it.

You drew a fine distinction between a personal vow
And its universal irrelevance
If it confronts general well-being.
These great men, suffered,
And the cause of good governance and society
Also suffered due to their indiscreet vows.
We see how fate works in bringing Bhishma
Face to face with a moment
When he has no choice but to fight out the Master.
He knew it was a losing battle.
Perhaps this realization added to his greatness.

But I accord him the epithet of greatness
With a lot of reservation.
He was a prisoner of his own paranoia.
Self-love, self-glorification, Self-concoction
Were his tragic flaws.
He was a tragic hero at whose death,
We feel a great sense of loss,
And heave a sigh of flooding relief too.
He was godly, yet so human.
He fell being human,
But was raised above all mortals, being divine.
He considered himself an epitome of ‘dharma’.
He believed it was his ‘dharma’ to defend Hastinapur.
But Keshav, look at what the great Sikh guru,
Guru Nanak says:
Every thing is below Truth.
But there is one thing above it.
And it is Truthful Conduct.
Bhishma falters here.

Chorus
What is the ‘dharma’ of iron?
Is it the same as in the case of the wheel?
Do all wheels have the same dharma?
Can one ‘dharma’ bind all steel?

Our feet when they walk
Are driven as much by passion
As the push of the circumstances
And human compassion.

There is one ‘dharma’ which
Governs human fate,
And there is another ‘dharma’
Which changes date to date.

Wherever you stand,
A thousand paths diverge.
Only one is absolutely right,
While all others are a compromise.
Babble Enters

[Babble is a character who appears to disrupt the flow of spiritual discourse, with his babble about life and existence, resembling Shakespeare’s fools. He represents a time link and a bridge which connects the two worlds: of contemporaneity and the world of ethicality which runs counter to the flow of civilization.]

Let us live today.
Tomorrow will take care of itself.
There is enough of today.
O you who are running towards your homes,
You left this home for the sake of tomorrow.
Now, you are returning to your past,
In the search for the same tomorrow.

What a cataclysm!
Who wants to go to America now?
Who gives ads for NRI grooms?
All is topsy-turvy,
Look for your life now.
Life simply means today.
And a negative report from a doctor.

From our isolated self-quarantine,
Let us pray for our friends in America,
Germany, Spain, Iran, France,
And our own countrymen, of course.
For doctors, nurses, fighting this menace hands-on.

How foolish we look with our great missiles,
And weapons of mass destruction,
Our Hitlers, our Mussolinis,
And even our Arujunas,
Our warheads and our manless missions
To Mars and beyond!
In front of a virus! A mean virus!
Or is it the 3rd world war?
Folly ranged against folly?
Wisdom has no place
In the Empire of Whimsical Nonsense.

Is there a tomorrow for which we have been
Struggling and fighting so long?
Will empires stay?
Do you still want to sell your arms?
To people crying in isolation?
Are you sure we have our wits around?
Are we in a moral asylum?
…

Keshav,
Don’t mind his babble.
Sometimes, when passions rise to his breath,
Our Babblesticks out his fractured head
And from their sleep raises the dead.

Let us pick up the thread.
Empires do not stay.
Even the one you had established has vanished.
Couldn’t it be in some other way?

My Karna, upon knowing the truth of his birth,
Would never dream of glory
In a duet with his own younger brother.
I am sure now,
Karna was neither human nor divine,
For his action violated all norms of rationality.
Duryodhana’s favours were too little a burden
To justify his fighting on the side of evil
And against his own brothers.
It is in bad taste, if not cheap altogether,
To ignore family ties,
For a man who had
A permanent feud with wisdom.
If a man is known by the company he keeps,
Karna and Aswasthama stand
On the same plank,
Aswasthama does, what Karna could have done.
But it does not absolve Karna of the fundamental blame.
Calling Panchali a whore!!!!

It was entirely unKarnic.
It was an interpolation.
A Danveer, so well cultured in human wisdom,
Would he not know what he was up [or down] to?
The war appears to have been the handiwork
Of stumped senses and etherized wisdom of major actors.

Chorus
Nobody knows himself from his beginnings,
Life is a film which we start watching
From in-between,
And we head hard to make sense of it.
Ultimately ending up
Making a confusion of our existence
Which belies all theories and systems of thought.

The men we meet in the streets,
Too are confused.
Some are going in this direction.
And some, heading in the other.
No one knows men moving around reaching anywhere.
Best word for it is chaos.
Still better, Pandemonium.
Presided over by devils.
Used for parliamentary discussions
On how to perpetuate status quo.
And fight attempts at re-order,
Labeling it treason against the established order.

Gods from far above throw the dice.
We don’t know when lightning strikes.
Just run for life, like ants and mice,
Who knows who lives who dies?
Not one man knows the ends of the rope
Which one’s head, and other’s feet ties.
CANTO V

GROOMING-THE STEP UP TO CHAOS
Keshav,
People are not interested in good.
See the queues at the booking window
For heaven and hell.
There are long queues at the gate of Hell,
While Heaven’s Reception has no footfall at all.

I see some saints from the Heaven’s side
Approach the people on the Reception to Hell,
And show them a recent circular
From the HQ,
Increasing the Wage Limit.

Previously, only people with ten percent
Were allowed to enter Heaven,
And now, seeing there is a great fall in the footfall,
Heaven has increased the wages limit,
From 10 to 30 percent.

They tell many whose score card showed
Between 10 to 30 percent,
That they are eligible for Heaven.
Only they will have to spend sometime
In Quarantine for a few hundred years.
Still, it was better, to enter Heaven.
Whose value no one knows better than Faustus.

But it is a surprise, Keshav,
I see many clad as saints,
Some people still bowing before them,
In the long line for Hell.
Brisk business indeed!
Nobody is willing to enter Heaven.
Even those who had a better score card
Prefer hell.
They don’t want to change gear.
Want status quo.
It is the same as earth, they declaim.
Same saints, same complaints.

Keshav,
They are all from the land of dharma
You had established after that great war,
In which all evil, had been vanquished,
And only good survived.
I see all those citizenry lining up for hell.
It must have been a shock for you too.
I show you a video grab.
From the talk between Satan and Faustus.

Babble, come. Where is the video?
[Babble comes with a mobile in which there is a video shot]

Mephisto
Faustus, we will give you twenty four years of
Unlimited power, joy, and your every wish
Will be carried out.
But at the end of twenty for years,
We shall take your soul away.

Faustus
My Lord, where is the contract?
I am ready to sign it in my blood.

[Aside]
Keshav, Look, how eager he is to sign the contract!
Faustus
What are the other terms?

Mephisto
You shall not utter the name of Christ.
Nor enter any religious shrine.
[And Faustus signs the document in his blood]

Commentator
Dr. Faustus was a German intellectual,
Who got interested in black magic,
Conjured the Devils,
And bartered away his soul for twenty four years of kicks.
[Video over]

Keshav,
Are you not shocked to see
How increasing number of your followers
Are now turning to crime
And, nobody has ever bothered about Heaven.
No surprise.

Chorus
The times are over
When people discussed Heaven and hell,
Like their morning breakfast and evening dinner,

Women would cook a spare chapatti
For the visiting monks,
And seek blessings from them.

People had in the background of their minds,
A wish to be faithful to the gods,
And qualify for being conducted to heaven.
They believed in giving away,
Charity was as common as the mouthstick,‡
People had a loving heart;

And even in their vile ways,
They would find time
To visit temples, and give alms.

Babble
Now also they go to shrines.
They hold big congregations to appease gods.
They undertake long pilgrimages.
Just as a formality,
To look religious and good to the third eye.

Inside, they are neither afraid
Of gods,
Nor anyone,
Not even one, has ever wished
To be in Heaven after death.

They come for flimsy reasons,
One wants a son,
Another his daughter’s marriage,
Most of them come
For benedictions relating to their business.
They buy Prasad [holy offerings] from outside,
Which is sold by the shrine keepers to the shops outside,
And it is cycled back and forth.
Who bothers, once offered,
The offering loses its freshness.

‡ acasia stick used to clean the mouth in the morning
Just as we are take a fake drug
Without any plausible consequences,
Same is happening to this world.
Morning evening they register their names,
Drink the potion,
Listen to the hymns, sing a few,
And wave their heads,
But even while they are doing so,
Business remains an actinent of their consciousness.

Babble, have you ever found these people
Praying for Paradise.

**Babble**
Never.

Keshav,
Now I want to know what you think of these people.
You allowed the killing of millions,
Is it not a devastating harvest?
Has the world lost direction?
Are we again in the deep seas?
Threatened to be engulfed by our own voids.

Keshav,
When nobody remembers Paradise,
When nobody wants to go to Paradise,
When people have started thinking
This world, this property, these kids,
This pleasure, these joys,
Are their ultimate Paradise,
Don’t you think they are rotten beyond repair?
Can you salvage a human tribe
Whose mind is in utter disrepair?
They are mentally sick people, Keshav,
They lack grooming.
Who will groom them?

Will they be groomed into goodness
And righteous thought
By the teachers?
And into spiritual orientation by the preachers?

Babble
Teachers on strike.
Pay cut due to corona.
No jobs.
Every business going on line.
Jobs abolished.
Industries closed.
Hell unleashed on the roads.

Spiritual gurus quarantined in jails
For fear of spreading virus
Among the population.
Men are not safe from spiritual contamination
And women, from exploitation.

Hitler is the hero of the political world.
Germanize the whole east.
China has germanized the whole world.
Trump has once again divided mankind.
Man whose ancestors are Gauri and Gazanvi
Is highly ungroomed in kindness and modesty.
Keshav,
I am shocked at all this.
Chorus wants to say something.
Chorus
Stop shedding tears.
Drop all hope.
Inevitable is the decline
Down the slope.

Keshav,
Head for Vasundhra,
And find a new womb.
Or all goodness of the earth
And all its aplomb,
Will head for the tomb.

Grooming in case of Duryodhana was so lax.
Did Dusashana show any reverence
For his elders?
And this lack of grooming
Could be seen in Dronacharya also,
Who had given everything to his son Aswasthama
Except culture, a sense of the ‘Samskara’.

Men of poor culture and grooming,
Were responsible for breaking apart
The moral order of Hastinapur.
Dhritrashtra presided gleefully,
Over this dastardly fun.
And see, what he got in return?
Over which he was left to weep.
All his sons,
Turned a grandless heap.
This world has lost all respect for the teacher,
And holds not in reverence
Even the preacher,
They have lost the divine powers
They would once exercise,
Over the minds and imaginations of their estate.
Teachers, who get paid for their teachings,
And who ask for awards,
Are not Gurus. Just teachers.
And preachers, too, are no more than monks,
Who assemble wealth,
And turn their ashrams into minefields of crime.

Switch me off, Keshav.
Let me for a moment return to that neutral ground
Where I can see the Invisible,
And hear the Inaudible,
Sharing a bit of the great Being.
In your presence, I feel a great awe,
It is awe of fear, and joy too.
I have seen your Viraat rupa [grand spectacle]
Show it to man after man,
So that they learn their lessons, if they can.

Only you can make them realize their follies,
Which are compounding day by day,
They need a spiritual platform
And a god directly addressing them,
To shake them into realization of their foolish pranks,
And, thus, to shun their colossal ignorance.
I am a mortal being, scattered with as many pitfalls,
The big ones, too were not without theirs,
They were bigger at that,
It is only under your spell and awe,
They can be retrieved, and to humanity restored.
Even if it means a catastrophic death.
CANTO VI

PRESENTING AN ORIENTAL DRAMA
Chorus
Who knows small acts of ineptitude  
Coupled with human folly  
Layer after layer  
Create an alarm in divine ranks  
And force the attention of gods  
On human ingratitude,  
When men undertake action to offend  
Common sense and commands divine.

Man is in the habit of thinking he is right  
Until a calamity stops him  
From uprooting the tree  
On which he is securely stationed  
And looks at the whole world from the hole  
Which he considers the only one available to a soul.

All cruel men who slaughtered human beings  
Were acting at the behest of wisdom,  
If not direct from the gods,  
For, folly has a strange character,  
While the whole world might see,  
The foolish man sticks to it with religiosity.

Confusion strikes the earth in a big way  
When everyone claims he is right  
Truth, like a picture, looks equally at all,  
And everyone thinks he is the favourite of fate  
And all other claimants are illegitimate.

[Enter Oblivius, the Crown Prince of Retalia]

Oblivius
O that you had not blessed me with eyes  
But given me insight.  
Now, how I waste my vision,  
How I feel hooked up here and there
A thousand things invade my consciousness
And keep me in thrall
Even beautiful cliffs and wavy rivers
Cast a spell, yet confuse after all.

Left thou no address, no clue, O Lord,
That I could from the cliffs
Ride further into reaches unknown
Nor the rivers carried any other address
Except the oceans from where
They returned to steam.
By you O Lord!
These aviation czars too
Never flapped their wings to drive senses
Into my obliviated wits
That my Lord waited for me behind them.

I thought I am born to this legacy
Of this earth,
This wonderful environment
Gurgling streams
These winds abundant
Never going to exhaust,
Nor this sun,
Born to such plenty,
I was never in alarm about these things falling scant.

Born to a rich parentage,
I behaved like a prince.
And took everything for granted.
Thought of the vegetation,
The rivers, the winds,
Not as my cousins standing by me
In my crusade of life,
But just cast a dismissive look upon them
As we look at second rate citizens,
The servants.
Chorus
Those who think life is a permanent feature
And they are going to enjoy
Till eternity
All the benedictions of gods
How misplaced they are in their vain belief!
And how fast they keep tied
To falsehoods,
Taking them for truths deified.
[Enter Cosmo, the King of Retalia]

Cosmo
Oblivius!
The most sacred bond
With the all breeding earth is life,
Suffering is a surrogate of love,
Mother loves to bear the child
Her labour pains notwithstanding,
And can you just imagine her pain
When she loses her offspring?

You see the vegetation always giving out smiles.
Flowers blooming, and birds singing.
This is the seemly world,
No doubt true
But as true is the suffering, pain, loss
And bloodshed,
Which is a part of life.

See how the insects suffer, the birds suffer
The oxen when yoked to loads
Bleed in their hearts!

Life is conceived in slow suffering
And finally death.
And you Oblivius, my son,
Are oblivious of the sacredness of this suffering.
Babble
His Majesty!
Today we have a drama troupe from overseas,
From the Orient to be precise,
They want to stage a drama.
Can we gather people in these times of Covid?
Or we organize it online?
Still they would be together on the stage.
However, your majesty,
I will ask them to wear masks
And maintain social distancing.

Cosmo
Babble,
Covid is an instrument of change,
Just as that great Mahabharta war was,
Which set on the reign of the righteous.
Covid too is nature’s ploy to smoothen man’s vanity,
And bring him down to the bare minimum.
It is more of a scare,
A mystery which time will resolve in time.

Chorus
Man’s is just an empty rage.
The world moves as the cosmic forces envisage.
God sends his emissaries to reset the applecart
And put the things in place.
Those who refuse to budge are physically removed,
For they obstruct the justice’s tirade.

Divinity believes in evening it out,
Make not claims taller than your mite.
Gods head for the earth, and cause earthquakes
Which swallow millions without a fight.
Human and Divine Justice are not at variance,  
If deference to duty is the human component.  
Things fall asunder, and centre cannot hold  
When good from evil cannot be told apart.  
Confusions grow, clouding human judgement,  
And the genuine loses against the smart.

**Cosmo**  [To Babble]  
Oblivius is my son, no doubt,  
But he resembles me not in many perspectives.  
When born, he carried a slip, on his forehead,  
“This is a piece of fiction,  
And if any resemblance is found,  
It is entirely accidental”.

He behaves like a fictitious character,  
And considers every body alike,  
Doubts every truth,  
And hates to stick to any conviction.  
Anyway, let me know about that Oriental drama.  
What was its name?

**Babble**  
Mahabharta.

**Cosmo**  
What is this?

**Babble**  
It is the story of revenge,  
A great war ensued  
Supported by gods,  
In which millions of people were massacred.  
It was fought between Pandvas and Kaurvas,
Blood relations, of the same dynasty,
But in the name of Dharma.
Orchestrated by Lord Krishna,
Who delivered a great Message to Arjuna
The main warrior of Pandvas.

**Cosmo**
Interesting. Why the war came about?

**Babble**
It was because Duryodhana,
The eldest son of blind king Dhritrashtra
Wanted to accede to the throne of Hastinapur,
Whereas as per tradition,
It belonged to the eldest Pandu son, Yudhishtra.
Shakuni and Duryodhana conspired to kill them
In Laksha Graha, a palace built of lac,
From where they were saved by providence.
Thereafter, Duryodhan and his Maternal Uncle Shakuni
Played a treacherous game of dice,
Made King Yudhishtra lose everything,
His kingdom, his brothers one by one,
And their wife, Daropadi too.
Who was dragged into the court,
And dishonoured,
Duryodhana’s brother, Dusashana, tried to disrobe her.

Although Daropadi was saved by Lord Krishna,
It sowed the seeds of deep hatred for the Kaurvas,
And they sent the Pandvas on 12 years exile,
And one year anonymous living.
After thirteen years,
They demanded their share in the kingdom,
Which was blatantly denied.
It was a world of conspiracies, and crookedness,
In which the king only worried about himself
And his son’s promotion
And, this state of affairs was rampant
In other parts of Arya Vrata.
Krishna, the Yadava King, was upset to see all this.
He had been sent by gods specifically to reorder the chaos.
And, Lord Krishna knew, there was no alternative
But an all out war, against the Kaurvas,
Which would destroy everything,
And on the ashes of which,
A new world order could be established.

**Cosmo**
I see. The most important character of Mahabharata
Was Lord Krishna, the philosophic centre,
Of the entire happenings.
I am really very eager to see the drama
Enacted here by the Eastern Troupe.

**THE AMPHITHEATRE**

**Chorus**
Evil is not a one time phenomenon.
Human heart is the breeding ground of passions.
And passions undelivered turn into wells of despair
Which irrigate man’s ambitions, and
Also his follies.

What happens today,
Happens again and again.
And man makes history repeat itself.
For there is no improvement in his thinking patterns.
It is human greatness that he can store
Knowledge and wisdom,
And he can pass it on to his progeny too,
But have you seen a man
Born with the intelligence of his previous age?

We all begin like clear slates.
Then the impressions of the past,
Our fate, and chances,
Work together to give a shape
To our life work.
It is really a wonder, if you come again
To this earth,
With the same set of circumstances,
How will you act?
Will you be able to circumvent the disasters
That attended your previous stint?

May be.

Enter...
King Trashta, Queen Ratna, and their two eldest sons, Yodhana and Susashana.

Babble
Excuse me, gentlefolks.
We are presenting an oriental drama.
It is about a great war called Mahabharta.
But I want to make you aware
That the characters who will present the drama,
Are from the modern world,
And if they don’t like any situation,
Might rebel and speak what they think.
King Trashta
Ratna, although I cannot see,
But Idur [chief courtier] tells me,
You have taken off your blindfold.

Ratna
My Lord! Gandhari kept herself blindfolded for the whole life.
And she, like her husband, became blind
To the things that were happening,
Was it Pati-Bhakti, devotion to her husband.
Or some sort of concealed protest,
I cannot understand.
I am not that Gandhari. I am Ratna
And I love my family more than she did
Even without the blindfold.
[Yodhana, and Susashana, look at her in surprise]

Babble
I don’t know how this old world nightmare
Would work out into the modern times.
The blind king, blindfolded wife,
And a young son, blinded by ambition and passion.
A blind show only where vision is a rarity.

King Trashta
Ratna, if you do not blindfold yourself,
Don’t you think we shall be interfering with the divine text?
The text wants us to ignore
And connive at what our sons are doing.
You have to lose sight, or at least act as you have lost it;
We have to ensure Yodhana’s blind and blatant,
Due undue actions which behove a Crown Prince.
Ratna
Aryaputra, you gave me hundred sons.
They are all good for nothing.
And the worst of all is Yodhana
Who does not listen to you,
Nor to me.
I see his foul deeds and curse myself,
Why I chose to bear him for nine months, in my womb.
Was I not better without him?
Even if a son is entirely useless,
At his death, his mother must tear her hair,
And shed tears.
Gandhari wept her eyes out.
I am afraid of that moment arriving fast.
And I will not allow the replay of the event.

Voice
Ratna, blindfold yourself, and turn blind,
Like your husband.
Otherwise, it will not be possible
To proceed the play towards the catastrophe.
And the ends of divine justice will remain unmet.
[On the stage is brought a young woman Mansi. Susashana, brings her, by pulling her by the hair]

Yodhana
You have been lost by your husband,
In the game of dice,
Now, you are my ‘Daasi’.

Mansi
Who has lost me in the game?
Yodhana
The great Samrat.

[She addresses the Samrat]

Is a woman a trophy?
How you dare put me at stake?

Yodhana
He has lost his five brothers also.
They are my servants now.

Mansi
You know I am born of ‘yagya’. [fire ceremony]
And cannot be compromised in any situation.
Do you remember,
When your mother had said,
Without looking at me,
“Share among yourselves, whatever you have got”
I was stunned.
And my answer was No.
I was won by only one person,
The great marksman of the world.
And I belonged to him.
How can I be divided into parts?

You Samrat cannot lose me in the game.
I am your brother’s wife,
But not his property, nor even yours.

Babble
Great. It should have been like this.
After five thousand years,
No young girl can be forced to marry
As per the whims of her elders.
Husbands are just partners, 
Not masters. 
How can a partner lose another in the game?

I think this old breed of men 
Are still haunted by the nightmares of the world 
Which Lord Krishna put to an end. 
He declared there would now be a new world order 
Based on truth, honesty, and goodness.

Have the kings of modern provinces 
Learnt nothing from that great War 
In which millions of people were killed. 
Are they still blind? 
Are young people still blind aspirants of power? 
What has changed, man?

Yodhana
How does it affect the circumstance? 
People say you have been living with all these five men, 
What is wrong if you have one more. 
I have won you, Daasi, 
Sit in my lap here.

Mansi
[Addressing the great warrior and protector of the throne, The Great Mehrbaan]

Maha Muhim Mehrbaan, 
Will you not speak, and keep watching 
The great fall of Aryavrata? 
This blind king doesn’t realize 
What heinous act his sons are committing.
Yodhana
Susashan,
Disrobe this proud woman in front of the court.
Let all here see
What assets she has to lure five men.

Mansi
Maha Muhim! I call upon you.
You are the oldest of all. Most revered.
In the presence of the king,
Who is my husband’s Tatshree,[elder uncle]
Don’t you see how they are violating a woman’s modesty?
Was there ever a woman, who was dishonoured
Like this in the court of a king?

Mehrbaan
Yodhana, withdraw your orders.
Susashana, stop.
Maharaj,[addressing the King]
What is happening in this court.
Can’t you stop this sacrilege?
Mansi is our Kulvadhu\textsuperscript{5}
And cannot be dishonoured like this.

Yodhana
Maha Muhim, you have vowed to protect the
Throne of Hastinapur.
Never think of going against what we say.
Keep shut and sitting in your chair.
As you did in the past.

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{daughter-in-law of the ruling dynasty.}
Babble
Thank Lord!
Maha Muhim has spoken a word.
Had he spoken in that Kreeda Sabha
He could have stopped Daropadi’s Vastar-haran! [Disrobing].

I wonder this great man who represents ‘dharma’
Perhaps still has a vague sense of his duty.
The old, the tradition bound, people,
Still try to give ‘dharma’ their own personal colour.
Whereas, as the Lord had said,
‘Dharma’ must cater to the greater good,
Not to the personal glorification of a man.
A death which does not awaken you
Does not open the path of glory for man,
Nor of salvation.
People who die for themselves
Are never treated as martyrs.

Guru Charya
Yodhana, I will quit your court, if you didn’t stop Susashana.

Yodhana
Guru Charya, your son is on our side.
Ask him if you can desert us.

Thama
Pita shri, [father], you cannot leave this court
Of my friend, Yodhana.
I have committed myself to be on his side.
How can you leave me?
Guru Charya
You are making a great mistake, Thama.
Yodhana is committing a great sin,
And all those who are with him,
Will pay for their crimes.
Remember, what happened in the last war?

[Suṣaṣaṇa is ready to catch hold of Mansi’s garments]
[Enter Sucheti, The mother of the great five Pandavas.]

Sucheti
Susashan, stop here, or I shall kill myself.

Babble
Wow, wonderful.
Where was she in Mahabharta?
Did she have no voice?
Was she born to suffer indignities?

Yodhana
Take her away from the court.
No woman is allowed in the court.
How she dares to be here?

[Some assistants hold her and try to take her away]

Sucheti
Here I hold the sword, Yodhana.
Don’t take it lightly.
Don’t think it will happen as it happened in the past.

[Ratna appears on the stage.]

Ratna
Don’t get agitated, Sucheti.
I will teach Yodhana a lesson today.
If he is my son, Ratna’s son, he will learn
How to honour a woman’s modesty.

[Addresses Yodhana]
Stop, my son, Yodhana.
Susashana, you will not move an inch.
Here your mother orders you.

**Babble**
What a scene! Is it from Mahabharta?
Has Gandhari thrown off her previous inhibitions?
Is she no longer the old blindfolded Gandhari
Meant to please her husband?
And then her bully son?
And weep over their deaths in the War?

**Yodhana**
Mother, why are you here?
This proud lady has insulted her King.
She does not obey me.
I have won her in the game.
Now, she is my Daasi.
And she must behave like a Daasi.

**Babble**
Shame on you, Yodhana.
Don’t you see no woman can be kept a captive?
Have you forgotten what happened to your Jhaangh [loins]?
Even after you were given a stone-coating
By your blindfolded mother?
Why are you inviting the same fate again?

---

**a reminder of the Mahabharta war in which Duryodhana was killed when Bhima hits on his Jaanagh, which remained vulnerable after he became stone-coated by his mother Gandhari’s opening of the blindfold**
**Ratna**
Shame on the day I begot you.
If your father, the King cannot see,
And if he does not see anything at all,
Don’t think your mother too has blindfolded her eyes.
I see every thing.
I see great destruction my son.
And I shall not let it happen.

**Yodhana**
Mother, I order you to go away.
Take away Mata Sucheti also.
Let the court function..

**To Susashan**
Why are you waiting, Sashan.
Disrobe her.

**Babble**
I fear the same things happening again.
History? Are you married to repetition?
Human folly
Have you no date with sense?

**Idur [a courtier]**
O King! Listen to the voice of reason.
Listen to Mansi’s cries.
Stop Yodhana.
Do you want this empire to disintegrate?

**Mehrbaan**
[Takes out his sword]
Yodhana, no doubt I have taken a vow
To protect the throne of Hastinapur,
And your father happens to occupy it.
But remember,
My self-imposed vow is to save Hastinapur
Not only from external aggression,
But also from pests like you.

Voice
Mehrbaan, have a re-look at your vow.
If it is against the general well being of the people
And not in general good,
Break it.

Mehrbaan
Maharaj, I am bound to your kingship.
Stop Yuvraj Yodhana
Or I will have to call it quits.

King Trashta
Yodhan is not doing anything wrong.
Maha Muhim.
He has won Mansi in the game of dice.
Samrat lost her in full view of the court,
And he was in his absolute senses.

How can you call it averse to court morality?
And if a Daasi does not listen
To the command of her Master,
She has to be punished.

Mehrbaan
O King! You are blind multifold.
Don’t you know how fate works.
Did you learn nothing from your foolish obsession
With your son?
Chorus
You don't need black ink
To write a black fate
Thoughts are enough
To colour the black white and vice versa.

What shines in angels is their goodness,
And what is so dense and dark
In demons? Evil.

Man is drawing and redrawing
And withdrawing himself
With each action
Bred in each subsequent thought.

Fate is man's selection
Based on his preferences
Actions have a reaction
Which reverberates through his reincarnations.

Men define themselves with their actions,
Only thoughts possess
The power to help them transcend
Habits of mind, beyond all mend.
Thoughts are reflexes
A result of appropriate stimulus.
With evil masquerading as your best friend,
How can man himself transcend?

Babble
While in a fix, trust the advice of a senior,
So that, if the things go wrong,
You can say: I trusted him.
But, if you act on your own,
And things go astray,
Now, you cannot hold anyone else responsible.
You are the maker of your undoing.
Meharbaan [Prays]
O Govind, I am caught in a strange paradox
Help me.
I cannot keep my vow any longer.
I am deeply disturbed at what is happening.
Yet, these people want me to be a helpless watcher
Of this sordid drama.

Voice
Take your decision, Mehrbaan.
See on which side is Dharma.
Realize what is ‘Dharma’ for you.
It is your personal decision.
But it must be for Hastinapur.
The general good of its people.
Not the good of a particular person.
Nor even for yourself.
[Mehrbaan draws his sword and challenges Yodhana]

Babble
The true men of ‘Dharma’ who guide the rulers
Must not be after positions in the kingdom.
Nor should they feel helpless
If they have made any commitments.
‘Dharma’ lies in doing what leads to greater good.
I think, this definition was now well understood.
[Yodhana tries to browbeat him]

Yodhana
You cannot fight me, Maha Muhim.
*Enter Shanuki* [Yodhana’s maternal uncle intervenes]
Shanuki  [in Yodhana's ear]

Yodhana, my son, you will lose everything.  
Don’t fight this man, nor let him go.

Yodhana

Maha Muhim,  
If you are upset, you can go for a pilgrimage,  
For six months.  
[It enrages Maha Muhim]

Mehrbaan

I will stay only if you return everything that Samrat  
Has lost in the game.  
Stop Susashan and seek forgiveness  
From our Kulvadhu Mansi.

Yodhana

Nothing doing. Maha Muhim.  
They will not be given any reprieve.  
They will go for 12 years of exile.  
And one year of anonymity.

Babble

History is no object lesson for die-hards.  
People like Yodhana, or even Duryodhana,  
Are not born to listen.  
And, thus, bring the things to a dangerous fling.

Guru Charya

Yodhana, if you don’t behave,  
And listen to Maha Muhim,  
I will also leave the court.
Yodhana
You cannot leave the court Guru Charya,
Will you not take Thama with you?

Thama
Stop dear father.
I am committed here with Yodhana.
And you cannot decide yourself to leave me.

Voice
Guru Charya, it is the moment of your test.
Why this attachment?
Attachment will lead to loss of your Heaven.
The greatness that attaches to your name
Will be soiled.
Your son does not know the boundaries
Of 'Dharma' and 'Adharma'.
You have given him everything, as you say,
Where is the knowledge of Samskara?
That is why, he is defying you.
It is time for you to get out of 'Moh' [attachment]
And decide for yourself atleast once in your life.
[Guru Charya reflects. He moves forward and gives a strong slap on Thama's face.]

Thama
Pita ji, [father], what is this?

Guru Charya
Don’t you know I am your father?
When I say staying with Yodhana is wrong,
It is wrong.
I am going and if you wish,
You can stay with him.
But remember, you are siding with ‘Adharma’,
And all of youwill meet your end soon.
[Guru Charya tries to leave the court, among jeers from Shanuki and Yodhana and his hundred brothers.]
Mehrbaan
Gurucharya, don’t leave the court.
Stay a bit longer.

Yodhana
Susashana, who told you to stop? Disrobe this Daasi.

Ratna
Why are you digging your own grave, Yodhana?
I can see the bloody destruction of our clan.
Please son, don’t be this atrocious bully
Restore them to their powers gracefully.

Yodhana
Mother,
Are you my mother, or of some other?
If you persisted,
I shall forget I am dealing with my mother.

Mehrbaan
Don’t forget Yodhana, I am still here.
And you will have to step over my dead body,
If you persist with your non-sense.

Yodhana
Who can stop me? These Daasases?[slaves]
Or you, Maha Muhim?

Mehrbaan
Yes, I will stop you.

Shanuki
My son, don’t fight Maha Muhim.
Karin [another great warrior]
Maha Muhim, if you challenge Yodhana,
You will have to fight me first.

Yodhana
Karin is my friend, Maha Muhim.
My shield. My protection.
If you are a great victor,
Karin too has vanquished chakravarti kings.[Emperors].

Mehrbaan
He is not a king’s son.
And I shall not fight with him.

Yodhana, I will not leave this court,
Without teaching you a lesson for life.
[Yodhana also draws his sword, and a duel takes place. Karin wants to get into the fight,
trying to protect his friend. Karin is wounded in the fight, and soon succumbs to his wounds
and Maha Muhim takes Yodhana prisoner. Susashana tries to fight, he too gets severely
wounded.]

Mehrbaan
Samrat
I am sorry all this happened before my eyes.
You should not have put your brothers at stake.
And your move on Mansi, our Kulvadhu,
Was most indefensible.

Your love for ‘dharma’ and truthfulness
Is understandable, but see,
If you are not blessed with insight,
And power to resist,
What is the result of your passive greatness?

I am with you,
The victory is yours.
Guru Charya, help them
Take over the Kingdom of Hastinapur.

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The King cries.
Yodhan fumes.

Shanuki
It will have disastrous consequences.
Maha Muhim.
How can you imprison us?
Yodhana has grown up with a dream
To fight a duel with great Cheena
You cannot deny us the moment
To fight it out in the battlefield,
And decide who is the best acer.

Mehrbaan
Samrat, Putri Mansi, [daughter]
In my previous incarnation,
I was caught with my inhibitions.
And it led to a great war in which millions of heads were rolled.
I too was killed in that great battle.
But only when Lord himself spoke to me,
And made me realize my foolish commitments to myself.

I thank God.
Govind came to my help in time.
He told me it was my duty to fight for social good.
Not for the good of a particular king.
Or even for myself.

And here is the result.
All the evil mongers are behind the bars,
And Samrat,
You deserve the great Crown.

Rajana [the greatest warrior of all times and the one who had won Mansi in the Swaymbra]:

We were befooled again by the sweet talk of Yodhana.
We thought after his great defeat in Mahabharata,
He must have been a changed man.  
But, he deviated not an inch  
From his devious ways.

_**Babble**_

Run an empire with Truth as your trademark.  
Here is the result.
Samrat loses everything.  
The best of the fighters like Rajana and Cheena  
Were frozen in the name of ‘dharma’
Is ‘dharma’ a football,  
Anyone can kick in any direction?

Even today, people talk in the name of ‘dharma’
But walk in the service of ‘adharma’
Truth alone is impracticable.
Samrat in the past lost his kingdom
His brothers and their wife, Daropadi too.
And suffered 12 years in exile,
Why?
It was a very severe test of their goodness.
At last, if they had used only goodness and honesty,
The result of the Mahabharta war would have been different.

*Even Lord Krishna said:* ‘chhal’ will be used
By both sides,
And it worked for the Pandvas too.

Of course, the war was uneven,
With Lord Krishna on the side of the Pandvas.
But, now, from subsequent generations
Of kings and queens,
Even the Lord expects greater wisdom.

_**Ratna**_[To Sucheta]_

This throne rightly belongs to you Samrat.
And I always fought the King
For supporting Yodhana blindly.
You are our Kulvadhu, Mansi.
In that great war,
I had to lose my hundred sons.
Thanks Maha Muhim,
Your initiative has saved Hastinapur
From bloodshed and all out destruction.

[Addresses Cheena],

You are not guilty of killing my hundred sons
Who have now been imprisoned,
Yet alive.
And, I shall appeal to you my son,
To be soft on them.
Even to Yodhana and Susashana,
Keep them imprisoned for a hundred years,
But give them a chance to reform.

Voice
I thought a war was required,
If you had not taken a decision of your own,
Maha Muhim.and Guru Charya.
I am happy, you listened to me
In your reflections, and were able
To get over your attachment.
The grit shown by Sucheti, and Ratna also deserves praise.
I am sorry over the death of Karin, who has been wasted.
He was a true warrior.
Sucheta aunti,
Tell your valiant sons that this valiant man
Was their eldest brother.

Maha Muhim, you have saved this empire from ruin.
I am glad wisdom returned to your head in time.
And Guru Charya,
Your slap on the face of Thama
Was well deserved and richly delivered.
And Mansi, my Sakhi,  
If Yodhana had succeeded in his plan,  
I would have saved you again.  
But, it would have laid the foundation of another Mahabharat.  
And another Mahabharat would have meant  
Our previous intervention did not prove efficacious.  
Evil again raised its head, and multiplied in reach and dread.

**THE VOICE SHAPES INTO LORD KRISHNA**

How happy I am! All the great warriors are saved.  
Mansi, all your five sons are alive.  
And Abhimanyu too is alive.  
It is time for celebration.  
No pyres to be lit.  
Except of course in case of Karin.  
Which but shows his extreme goodness.  
He fell from grace in his devout passion for his friend,  
But overall, he was a great son, a great brother, and a great archer.

Samrat, make preparations for your coronation tomorrow.  
After this, we shall all join at Dwarka.  
Ma Ratna, I hope you have not cursed me this time  
That Yadva Vansh will be finished and Dwarka will be flooded?

RATNA embraces the Lord.  
All smile.
CANTO VII

THE GRAND SPECTACLE
[VIRAAT RUPA] OF EVIL
Babble
Whether you want it or not,
When in a river,
You cannot argue with the waves.
Nor can you jump out of a turbulent river.
You cannot claim to be a different fish,
If the waters you thrive on
Are contaminated with Evil.

Chorus
Man thinks only he is in the active assertive tense,
All other objects of nature,
Waters, Winds, Mountains, Birds,
Are just a receptacle,
And charged to help man sustain himself.

The entire universe in which
The sun, the moon
And a million heavenly bodies move
In a mapped motion,
Are they moving aimless,
Or have no other vocation more serious
Than being a help to man in performing
His good and bad activities?

Is man the central concern of the cosmic forces?
Is his birth a very big issue for nature
And his death, a cataclysm?
It is an everyday phenomenon
Men are born and dead,
And a few people rejoice at arrival
And few are left to moan the departure.
Earthina
Every thing springs up from my womb.
While alive, upside,
Or within my body lies their tomb.
I love them all, support them all,
The living and the non-living.

I look at my fields, my forests,
My waters,
Animals, birds, and the wilds,
Even when they sometimes appear to fight,
Nobody can be blamed,
Nor there is any law to quarantine them.

If a lion kills a lamb,
Lamb’s parents do not move any court divine.
I have never seen vegetation coming up with petitions
Against animals who feed on their fresh leaves and fruit.
Hundreds of monkeys eat away thousands of mangoes.
Trees never get together to stage a ‘dharna’
Or lead a march against injustice.

Only among men, where consciousness has grown higher,
Do I find a penchant for fighting,
They talk of rights, duties, and don’t tire of
Talking about animal rights too.
Either my first world does not know anything,
Or this second world is too smart.
A home, a village, a city, a state, and a country
Is not enough for them.
Untethered they move through continents,
Talk of great things happening there,
Feed their families in their home countries,
And buy lands.
This second world I am afraid of.  
What do you think, Aerina?

**Aerina**  
You are right, Sis.  
What the trees and green vegetation supplies  
In doses fresh,  
Is returned to them in dense carbondioxide.  
Animals never went beyond the needs of the body,  
So, they never found themselves obliged  
To research on industries,  
Which could produce objects of pleasure.  
Birds find their luxury in cool winds overcast by clouds.  
And look at Peacocks.  
They dance in gay abandon,  
Expecting rain from the thundering clouds.  
Birds, animals, have their moments of joy.  
But they cost nothing to mine or your essentials.  
But Man’s joys have their breeding ground,  
Not in their hearts, but in the fast food factories,  
Or in the temptation  
To run over to continents in search of thrills,  
That is the cause of real worry.

**Earthina**  
Actually, you have lost your sheen, Aerina.  
At first, I could not recognize you.  
Where is your bright face?  
I see a strange soot  
Encircling your eyes?  
Are you suffering from some chronic deficiency?
Aerina
Yes, dearie. You are right to believe that.
I am sick at heart.
Wherever I go, I meet smouldering smoke
From the heart of cities,
And chimneys bulging out carbon.
I find the people dancing and enjoying,
Eating and drinking,
Never worrying that they are inhaling poison

If you kill an animal and throw it on the roadside,
Willing unwilling, I have to carry that smell away.
Millions of bakeries, and tens of thousands of tanneries.
Man is a killer by nature, and I bear all the stink.
I am bogged down, Earthina.
How insensitive and cruel is this son of man.

Watrex
Sis Aerina, I pity your condition,
Your lungs have failed,
So are mine.
Look at me! I have developed immunity from dirt.
Moon and sun no longer get reflected in me.
You are sick, I am mad.
I can’t help, from where the anger piles up,
Though I keep my head cool,
But it forms into tempests,
And sometimes flood Indian Ocean,
And sometimes USA.

Earthina, I have seen birds animals
Also drink on my shores,
But together they do not spoil my self,
As these men have done.
At Ganga Maya, people knew what happened to me. Millions of factories ease themselves out into the watery streams. All the dirt of the humanity is washed into my stomach. I sometimes feel like a whorehouse where people come to calm their evil passions. All evil passions of men are emptied in my arteries. And together they all flow into the heart of the oceans. Which are crying of suffocation.

Not only this, Aerina, They sink the nuclear debris in my heart. Sometimes, when it leaks, It brings devastation on my marine life. I see my limbs cracking.

Babble
The elements come together to discuss Their present condition, And hold man responsible for Their undoing. Where is fire! She might be coming.

Fiery
My cousins, I am fire. I am fire, even when I lie dormant In the muscles of this civilization. I am the power which moves The wheels of this society, And I am the power, Which keeps the stomach working. And the ultimate power, Which extinguishes all lamps. And causes darkness in the life of man.
I am a fairy when I nourish life,
And a fiend, when men
Turn upon me
In greed and deceit.

Chorus
This world was created for man,
And it will be undone
By man himself.
There is a hole in the story of life
Through which all meaning leaks out.
The forward march of man
Breaks into the sacred regions of nature.
Blind pursuit of joy
Makes elements wonder at man’s insatiable lust.

Although nature has its own demons.
Yet, the most uncontrollable demon
Nature has evolved is man whose developed brain
Calls for superior means to keep it on rails.
Once off, it causes
Confusion and destruction.
What men did to nature, is now being done to man,
By machines:
Making him and his intelligence irrelevant.
Smartness is out of place.

Chorus
Only the foolish fight over crumbs.
Evil has a passion to multiply.
More and more is the emblem of human race.
The mouths are multiplying,
With it, their hunger,
And lusts,
Which make them pervert the elemental beauty
And create a thousand ways catering to
Spurious joy.

While the shallow minds, men, fight, curse,
Suffer and decay,
The wiser of the stuff, the birds,
Have retired from this fighting-foul earth.

When a whole village goes mad,
And the cremation ground swells to the living rooms,
The sages must crash out of the gate.
Leaving the village to its fate.
CANTO VIII

THE GRAND SPECTACLE
[VIRAAT RUPA] OF MAN
Govind, although a particle of insignificance,
Yet man is not without a viraat rupa
[his grand spectacle].
Although it depends upon him
How he chooses to treat himself.
Though we give ourselves the best,
And keep for others as far less as possible.

I is the beginning of the formal journey,
In a particular form,
Which, is but a relay race,
For man has been here or there beforehand too.

Why A is here? And B is there?
And why men traverse the globe?
Some reach a cherished place so easily,
While others just dream and cannot.

Like the tip of an iceberg, man’s life too,
Is like a tip of the life-berg.
Only the one we can see we call it life,
And three fourths of it remains submerged
In the dark recesses of Being.

There is only one limiting factor for man,
It is time.
If you are elder to your brother,
It cannot be reversed.
Although those who arrive early,
Need to leave this continent earlier.

Sky is the limit, Govind.
Yet, no kite can go on flying if it snaps its links
With the point of its origin.
Nor can it go on flying forever.  
The moment the kite is prepared,  
It starts is downward sling  
A part of it among the shopkeeper’s wares  
And most of it in the greedy vision of a lover.  
The love for the kite goes on till the string is not cut,  
Once it is released, or cut off,  
No one is interested in its fall.  
Men who challenge gods and fight wars  
When cut, fall like Icarus, molten into the seas.

Chorus  
However sweet, no one wants to return  
To the days of early abandon,  
Who wants to undo  
What time has taken years to perform?

The furrows on your forehead  
Are the handiwork of gods,  
They chisel our faces with the bars of time.

One wonders, here, a flower is born,  
And in the same stroke,  
And a great career is laid to rest.

Whatever is gone, is like a valley,  
Falling into which,  
Seems to be an extreme luxury.

While the unaccomplished future  
Remains a daunting challenge,  
Thoughts sweat thinking of the unknown.
So easy to relax into the past,
But past has no existence beyond yesterday.
Once gone, it has no future.

Why past, good or bad, has a sweet taste.
People spend hours
Remembering the times of despair,

Perhaps thanking their stars,
For, the evil time is no more
While they still survive.

The harder the times,
The greater is the consolation at survival.
One remembers the sisters who died
And brothers lost, in the cataclysm,
But all because he is himself alive, and thankful.

Govind,
Duryodhana wrote his own fate black
Supported by parents
Who were bathed in darkness,
Some natural, the rest acquired.

Gandhara, in her unrestrained outburst,
Accused Thee,
Of making them puppets,
Headless and heedless of a devastating future.
You could have avoided war.

She was a mother.
And she cursed you so grievously.
It is so easy to fire your rage and accuse gods
When things take a wrong turn.
No doubt Govind,
Decisions a family takes,
Actions they initiate, all affect
The material and spiritual life of the family,

Yet the field of fate is the creation
Of man’s personal faith,
And reward too is graded and highly calibrated.
If Duryodhana pays for his crimes with his death,
Those who are not killed in the war,
His father, his mother, too get a severer punishment,
Keeping alive, but dying every moment,
Remembering their hundred sons and their massacre.

Govind, Guru Dron subscribed to your wisdom,
And got salvation, but his son, Aswasthama,
Received your curse.
To remain alive, and never to die.

How catastrophic! And how ironic!
A man who uses Brahm Astra [A divine-powered weapon]
To kill a child, in the womb of Uttra, ††
The wife of slain Abhimanyu
Finds death eluding him..

What irks me is
Why these people did not catch warning signals.
Why was Dhritrashtra blind to his son’s overtures?
Why Gandhari did not protest Daropadi’s dishonour?
Was it meet and becoming of Pitamah Bhishma to keep shut?
Dron threatens to leave but is cowed down by his son?

These acts of these men convince me of one thing.
They were out of their wits.

†† daughter in law of Arjuna and Subhadhra

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Duryodhana was a terror.
And even his father was afraid
Of his diatribes against Pandvas.
Bhishma should have stopped
Yudhishtra’s duping in the Kareeda.
He was in a position to do so.
But he does not assert.
Was the option of war not clear to him?
Was it all not boiling down to devastation?

**Chorus**

Man is his own making.
So much is in his own hands.
Is he a helpless puppet in the hands of destiny?
Are gods evilly disposed towards men?

We are insignificant before our fate,
Yet, it is only man who can alter it.

Man is great in his suffering,
And greater still in fighting the odds
With an affirmative faith
In the goodness of elements.
Man loses stature when he runs
Counter to his own nature.
When he distrusts gods, and starts loving the
Immediate over his ultimate destiny.

He is a small speck of time, but it contains eternity.
It is his action which speaks of his internal powers.
Being is not just eating and drinking,
And going away.
Millions lead this life of animalistic joy.
Keep gathering luxuries,
Divesting others of their legitimate share,
And gather dirt-heaps of pleasure.
Very few act in an enlightened manner.
Very few know what is what and who is where.
The world is given a direction by the actions of these men.
Evil is a grand phenomenon, of which
Even ordinary men serve to be a great part.
Whatever is done to men by gods,
In the form of calamities, is God’s way
Of getting back at mankind.
And, in his suffering, has man risen to great heights.
Bhishma suffered. So did Drona.
And Karna’s suffering capped them all.
This transformative experience,
Brought a cataclysm for millions,
In addition to Samragi Daropadi, Kunti and Gandhari.

It is strange, the great Pandvas
Were able to reach the throne,
But not without losing Abhimanyu,
And other great warriors.
Together, they were all the ornaments of the earth.
They all appeared at a particular moment.
Who survived the apocalypse?
Not the best, because the best also perished in the fight.

Chorus
Man is capable of great deeds,
And he is also capable of grave misdeeds.
He is mean when he looks at himself
Like a man, a father, a king,
But he acquires heights
When he moves out of himself,
And connect himself to the cosmos
And on horizons sets his sights.
CANTO IX

THE GRAND SPECTACLE
[VIRAAT RUPA] OF ADHARMA
Dr. Jernail Singh Anand
Chorus
When a man disconnects himself from the general good,
And thinks only of himself and his nearest kin,
When his attachment, born out of his pride,
Clogs his vision of reality,
And instead of giving the credit of his prosperity
To gods,
Arrogates to himself the role of the great God,
Such men, though they acquire godly powers
With their knowledge and supersense,
Are actually carriers of a deadly virus:
Adharma.
And, convinced of their ‘righteousness’,
Spell doom for mankind.’

Gods sometimes err in judging men who
Supplicate for special powers,
Which are granted
For goodness of mankind.
But invariably, whether it was Karna or Drona,
Used, not for good, but for the opportune.

Evil is the most organized sector of human consciousness.
That is why, it is evil that rules the world.
To put an end to evil, great prophets arrive.
And go, establishing the reign of ‘dharma’.
But, as soon as they disappear,
The very men whom they had trusted,
Take a U-turn,
And return to inglorious ways.

Govind, you tell Arjuna not to think
Of the fall out of his actions,
Rather act in the most appropriate manner.
Dharma has a great tradition, of course,
But lack of it too has even a greater one.
How easy it is to lure a man
Away from the path of dharma,
And how his path is littered with millions of temptations.

Goodness is not one act.
It is the name of a particular way of responding to life.
It is a series of actions which men do,
One upon the other,
A thousand things create an atmosphere in which
A man’s soul can rest assured of a place in the Heaven.

Only when you step into the spiritual arena,
Does the question of good and evil arise,
Otherwise, while leading this life,
We are not confronted with these choices.
We have only one choice and one passion.
The immediate gain.
As a businessman, you must sell your wares.
How? We have Shakunis around to tell
How to sell the worst wrapped in the best,
For, your Dharma is: Your gain.

Is just sticking to formalities Dharma?
Men are living not like men, but only as symbols.
Goodness has been reduced to symbolic acts.
We plant trees on facebook.
We celebrate Mothers Day, Fathers Day on facebook.
Real life is a fakebook for most of our activities.
Wisdom too is only for showing, not for acting.
Dharma has been entirely externalized
To visible symbols,
Nothing to do with the life of the mind,
And the nourishment of the soul.
Nationalism has now given a new orientation to religion.
When we look back, we see all the religions
Were spread on the point of the sword,
Or by giving false promises.
Force and religion, conversions and political power,
Have always joined hands to force people
To change their convictions.

How Moghul Raj was established in India,
And how the English came flaunting their culture,
India lost to external invaders because
It lacked the feeling of oneness among its people
Its kingships who played foul with each other,
Invited foreign invaders like Abdali.

Dharma is being defined now in terms of nationalism,
And to a pluralistic society, it is a bitter dose.
Dharma is not spreading your religion to people
Who think otherwise,
It is to play your cards so well,
That people of other creeds marvel at you in amazement.
It is not about force, nor about fear,
It is about a code of righteousness which
Distinguishes you from other creeds.

Look at the Sikhs when the Mughals were spreading terror
And forcibly converting people,
The society adopted Sikhism, thousands got baptized
And then, these very people fought
The forces of tyrants like Abdali and drove them out of India.

*Only those fight well, who understand well,*
*The dynamics of their Dharma.*
*Only those live well who know well,*

--
What it means to be alive.
And only those embrace a gallant death,
Who know death as an instrument of deliverance,
When man finds himself in an incongruent situation.

Will those people whom you convert with force,
Fight for your cause?

Dharma has nothing to do with nationalism.
Dharma is a personal fixation with human conduct.
If you are aware,
You will act according to the right canons,
And if you are unaware, and fed on spurious inputs,
Your actions will be the actions of demons,
Lacking rhythm.
Reason is often used as sophistry.
Conclusions are drawn on the basis of a few facts
Which are shown to a fixed number of people.

Man today is very smart.
Evil has got revolutionized.
In the past,
Dacoits would often wear black clothes.
And they could be recognized from a distance.
But now, the greatest dacoits who decamp with millions
Wear best smiles, best clothes, and best company.

Even people who sound good, have
A strange fixation with Dharma.
It makes them unlistening.
Unlearning.
Shuts their minds, and opens their mouths.
Hands them grenades.
And turns them into souldiers of a vengeful god.
Out to kill, massacre people at innocent gatherings.
At railway stations. At hospitals.

All prophets talked with reason.
Convinced people,
And only then, millions got after them.
But today, the people who have drunk deep on religion,
Believe only in themselves,
Pride themselves on their ancestry,
Believe in a world which is exclusive, and not inclusive,
And think it their duty to die for a faith,
They do not at all understand.

Govind,
Now if you come, and define ‘dharma’
As you did in the past,
You will soon realize the people here
Are not the innocent breed like Arujuna and Yudhishtra,
Who would listen to your commands.
Our world today is wrought in a different fashion.
They know good words.
They know better phrases than you could use.
And they will make you feel irrelevant
If you talk and act as you did.

Duryodhana, Dusashana and Shakuni were innocent offenders,
They were brought down in eighteen days of war.
In as many days, you will not be able to ascertain
Where Duryodhan is hiding, and Shakuni abiding.
They are dispersed now Keshav,
Though I know, for you, it won’t be a Herculean task
Yet, the evil of this world will pose a real challenge to you too.
And you may have to use Sudarshan Chakra
To hound them in their hideouts,
From where they would be operating
Their automatic weapons of destruction, like hatred,
Falsehood, and fake news.

Keshav, their numbers are staggering.
Forget about the millions that perished in Kurukshetra.
Here, the whole world is inter-connected and corrupted.
Aryavrat is not a small world it used to be.
It is now a big idea,
Spreading from everywhere to everywhere.
And you will be anything but happy to see India
Growing in the world arena
But constantly losing its spiritual sheen.

Age, wisdom, and youth – all the three facets of life
Where one can expect grains of goodness,
Have been hijacked.
Surprising, Lord, they will talk in your language,
But mean entirely opposite.
I wonder if you can win them over again,
Or you decide to wage another war,
To start afresh.

But now, Keshav, who will replace Yudhishtra?
Arjuna, and Bhima?
This world is entirely lost in terms of Shourya [bravery]
And brilliance of thought.

They were never given a chance to reflect upon
The cosmos, the world, and the people,
And what they are doing to them, and to themselves.
It is a rotten world, Keshav,
Desperately in need of you.
CANTO X

THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN SUFFERING
Suffering is a surrogate of human love. 
Suffering is also the ‘dand’ that people receive
For their misdeeds.
Which world, the first or the second,
Is free from suffering?
And what is most spectacular about Mahabharta is
Its widespread suffering, before the war,
And after it.

You were late in your lessons to Karna.
And even to Dronacharya.
Even today, Govind,
Those who listen to your life stories,
Focus mainly on the great thriller called Mahabharta,
Or your stories of youthful romances.

Nobody has ever even once given ear to what
You said to Karna and how
Drona and Bhishma became ‘Saj’ [ready] for their deaths.
They welcomed their deaths,
Because they had realized
That they had become
Irrelevant to the world that was shaping up.
And, they had realized too
That their innings uptill that moment
Had been shots at a wrong target.

It causes a great deal of suffering Keshav,
When after several life times,
The great warrior Bhishma came to realize
That the definition of ‘dharma’
He had been holding on to,
Was amiss,
And his entire life,
In which he clung to his vow,
And supported worthless people,
To his wisdom was a blow.
He turned silent,
And prayed for the victory of the Pandvas.

Was this suffering any the less for Guru Dron?
Who could not handle Aswasthama,
A son whom he groomed on attachment and pride,
And gave him everything except a feeling of ‘Samskara’
To be able to judge for himself,
And that is why, he was supporting the evil side.

He realized in the last moments of his life,
That his actions [of rearing up a son]
Had done no good to society,
And his love for Aswasthama lacked moral justification,
He too turned silent, ‘Saj’ for dying.

Same thing happens to Karna, Keshav.
He too turns silent,
All his confusions gone,
His life appears to be a rotten tale,
And he too is ready to die at the stroke of Arujuna.

These people were imparted a vision of reality
Because, at a point of time,
They found themselves face to face with you,
And with their death too.
It is only in these circumstances that men learn
And sometimes change for the better.
Otherwise, what had they been doing
Except causing suffering to the cosmic order?
How much violence can a Duryodhana enact?
How many people can be killed in a war?  
It is direct suffering.  
Keshav, come with me,  
See the rising injustice in society.  
The haves who roll in millions,  
And millions who roll in nothingness.  
Can you measure the pain, suffering and deprivation  
Of millions who work hard to keep the wolf away,  
Whose kids are also condemned to a life of economic slavery.

This world has three layers of existence.  
One, the elite, who command the servitude.  
Two, the officers who ensure nobody goes astray.  
Third, the multitudes who suffer yet give the above two  
A sense of being supreme, and more blessed.  
The upper two layers can change and exchange,  
But the lower going up, is a rare phenomenon.

Suffering too is a very strange bug which infects  
Not only those who don’t have anything,  
But also those who possess everything;  
Abundance too is in most cases a ‘dand’ [punishment]  
Because from its disabling effects,  
People never recover.  
While on the other hand, adversity teaches men  
Arts which help them rise in life.

Women like Daropadi still suffer  
Marginalization in this society  
Which calls itself highly liberated  
And are looked upon as a prize  
By co-workers.
Is it not suffering Keshav,
They are not allowed
To marry the men of their choice?
They cannot join the service they want.
And, overall it is servitute,
Attended by variations here and there,
But with multitudes of women, still struggling, starving,
And selling themselves for survival.

Can you imagine the suffering of kids,
Who lose their parents,
Not in wars, but in divorces?
Millions suffer in the world from the ignominy of an anonymous parenthood.
Poverty is an added vice.
Keshav, look into the eyes of the growing young men,
In chawls, where labourers slug it out.
And, you can easily connect them to crime.
All of them harbour dreams
Fuelled by TV serials and films,
And in order to have it big, join the underworld.

In the lure of ill-gotten wealth, Govind,
More and more of our people are going the Faustusian way,
And signing contracts with the devils,
For a few years of absolute joy, power and wealth.

Knowledge is for sale. Teacher is for sale.
Parents have no time for kids.
Families have no senior parents.
There are no kitchens, only Swiggy.
Do you know what is Swiggy? Keshav.
Better.
It is a poor kitchen,
In which the woman is not obliged to cook,
Or even serve.
They have bartered away their hometime to IT companies,
And come home broken at 8 pm.
Husbands arrive at 9 p.m.
Who can cook at this time, Keshav.
And no thought of having a family.
They will lose promotions.
Are these people enjoying their youth in any way?
Or is it a ‘dand’ for some misdeeds done in past lives?

The suffering of Daropadi, the Pandvas, are apocalyptic.
Such happenings trigger a series of circumstances
Which cannot be controlled by human will.
The Mahabharta war was orchestrated by you
In order to start life afresh with Pandvas at the helm.
Men who had a proper idea of the right and the wrong.

But it seems, things did not go well beyond a certain point.
If you look at managing systems,
There are serious problems,
Which date back to thousands of years.
We are a great nation of course,
But not without our phantoms.

From where to begin?
How to reduce the suffering of the masses?
You have to start with the Kings.
Another Mahabharta?
But Keshav, now you don’t have Pandvas
For whom, you could wage a war.
Now you are surrounded by Kaurvas.
You will find yourself in the same situation
In which Abhimanyu found himself.
All the stalwarts losing their sense of justice
And falling upon a single warrior
Who was not only so young, but also related to them.

That is the situation in which you will find yourself.
All good people will have their tongue and teeth lost.
Gurus like Dron fallen to the evil dictates of their sons,
And Shakunis having a field day,
With the forces of morality fled.

Still a beginning can be made, Govind.
You will have to fight for the sake of good.
You will have to blot out the evil people from this earth.
Take away all suffering from the poor innocent people
And establish Justice.
We all have suffered long.
I promise to stand by you,
But you will promise to protect me too.
For, I have my fears. I cannot open my mouth.
Dron wept at the death of Abhimayu,
But could not utter a word.
He too was a part of the evil system.
Karna too would have let the young man go,
But here, how else could he please his Mephistopheles?

The good are surrounded by horrors, Keshav.
You will have to assure them there will be no reprisals.
Their families will be protected.
And they will not be on the roads to fend for themselves.
It will be a very bad day for all the good people,
If, disturbed by all that I have said,
You decided to postpone your visit.
CANTO XI

THE WAR OF WORDS
Chorus
Gods know when to intervene
And tear through the darkness.
Mortals, you have in your powers,
Not only to pray,
But also to act in the righteous way.

When things go amiss
It is not the gods who can be called into question,
It is men, who fail to understand
The dynamics of time
And fight themselves out in a war,
Which they must have waged against the evil
Instead of against and among themselves.

The text for what happens to the world,
Is scripted by the people.
And if it is bad,
The fault lies with the men who wrote it,
For they lacked the skill.

Even if the wise guys act smart,
And exhibit complete control of
Their words and their meanings,
Gods cannot be put off,
For they have powers to decipher coded signals
Emanating from souls, which like the body,
Have a language too.

The buildup does not bode well
For the smarties too,
For, shrewdness works well,
When men are to fight men,
Not when the encounter is with forces divine.
The Poet
Keshav!
The world has been a cesspool of suffering.
Your coming relieved the gloom.
But now the world you left behind,
Has taken a U-turn,
And changed the entire narrative of ‘Dharma’.

Duryodhana is the true representative of modern civilization,
He is exactly as we are,
Full of arrogance, pride, prejudice, and passion
For power, wealth, and physical joy,
He was thousands of years ahead of his times
And looked forward to these times of unbridled ambition.
Shakuni was great grand forefather of vile modern day politicians,
For whom political power is a greater prize
Than any dharma or righteousness.

He was only too human,
While Pandvas were a little more divine,
More idealistic, and hence, a model less workable in society,
Which is bred on competition, and corruption of mind and soul.

Duryodhana’s deception in Kareeda
Does not look shocking or odd to modern sensibility
And his winning Daropadi as a Daasi,[slave girl]
Shocked neither then, nor it does, now,
When men and women have divided loyalties.

In his love for beauty and ambitious pandering to craft,
For the sake of wealth and sustaining in power,
Duryodhana looks forward to Dr. Faustus.
A tradition loving society finds such passions
On the wrong side of morality,
And he has to pay with his life, attended by loss of
A hundred brothers and millions of legions.
Pitamah Bhishma’s death represents
The death of a tradition,
Which is beyond transformation.
He represents an order which believed in goodness,
Stood for goodness, but lost its direction
In the course of time,
And all the tall talk of goodness
Went to help the unscrupulous politicians.
He is serving in the court of a king who is blind,
Physically, as well as metaphorically,
And his inertia as a man of principle wreaks havoc,
The society is faced with a tragic ending.
It was Bhishma who was responsible for the great War
Which wiped out great kings and warriors and millions of men,
Turning as many women widows and kids, roofless.

He is a symbol of blind ‘dharmatmaism’,
Men rooted in tradition and morality,
Fail to see where the real ‘dharma’ ends,
And ‘adharma’ begins.
Keshav, you were right.
His misplaced love for his own ‘dharma’
Became a stumbling block
In histaking a judicious decision to stop supporting the evil.

In fact, arrogance and pride, had cast a pall of dust
Between him and his awakened self,
Which had to be lifted
In the battle field,
After which, he realized, it was meet [Sajj] for him
To embrace death at the hands of the Pandvas.
The way both the sides mourn his death,
Brings tears in the eyes
Of his lovers and critics alike,
He was great in his life,
And greater in his death which was a decent death.
A death is decent when it is consciously earned.  
When the subject is not unaware  
When he knows all about the dynamics of good and evil,  
And what he supports.  
Some deaths lead to ignominy.  
Count Shakuni’s among them along with Duryodhana’s.  
But Karna’s death was a decent one.  
He died craving for a good name after him  
Which he did earn.  
He is remembered as Daan Veer Karna.  
[The great man of charity]  

Death is often said to lead to Mukti.  
Liberation.  
But it is not true.  
Only those who earn decent death  
Deserve Mukti.  

How can a man like Shakuni  
Think of dying a decent death?  
Looking at him, and his tantrums to win,  
And how he tries to hoodwink the Lord,  
One wonders we are moving into a world  
Five thousand years back.  
Shakuni is very much a man of our business world.  
He himself says:  
For me, Dharma is where my gain rests.  
Such a man and such a business philosophy  
Never become obsolete.  
He is actually a precursor of the corporate world  
Which is all about our civilization today.  
Dismissing him as a vile man, as one who  
Hijacked Duryodhan’s mind is undertreating him.  
His villainy cannot be compared with any other villain  
Of this or the previous world.  
Villains like Ravana and Kamsa personified evil,
Which had higher proclivities.
But Shakuni is down to earth villain of a thriller,
Who masterminds a plot to deprive his opponents of their
Best possessions, and who is capable of
Playing on their weaknesses
And drawing the best bargain for his sister’s son, Duryodhana.

He is, therefore, the most enterprising character,
With second rate tools, he fights a first rate battle.
He is all evil, from head to foot,
Yet fits the bill,
And in every way, is a modern entrepreneur
All out to sell his wares and control an ever increasing market.

What adds to the post-modern appeal of this epical story
Are the complex characters of Bhishma,
Dron and Karna, and Kunti
Who are, like Hamlet, divided against themselves.
*Be or not to be, is not the only question*
*The real question is how to be.*

Bhishma who holds on to a particular line of thought,
At last finds himself confronted with a
Great logician of the world,
Who catches him on the wrong foot,
And, may be in the last moment of his life,
Brings him to the realization that
His pursuit of truth and dharma has been misplaced.
His fighting on the side of Duryodhana
And wishing Vijayshree [victory] to the Pandvas signifies
A divided mind, a broken loyalty,
And a disintegrating individual perception.
Another such grand character,
Who breaks apart in the great war,
Is Guru Dron, the great guru,
Whose blind preference for his son Aswasthama
Puts him in a tight spot.
He wants to leave the Kaurvas,
But his son forces him to fight the Pandvas.
He is dragged into a battle which he does not want to fight,
Much less win for the Kaurvas,
Whom he does not trust with absolute loyalty.

*He is symbolic of a soul*

*Cast in a human destiny*

*It resents.*

The most post-modern character is Karna
Who suffers alienation,
Due to his mean birth, yet grows up into a great Daan Veer,
[A man who gives charity as a principle]
And finds his great wish to defeat Arjuna
Ranged against his most devastating discovery
That he is Arjuna’s eldest brother.
His vow that all the five Pandvas will remain alive
To his mother Kunti, seals his fate.
He is wasted in this fight in the name of grandeur.
His death in the arms of his mother Kunti
Shows how man has to fight against his wishes.
This is ultimate in human destiny.
To be pushed into a state of war against people
One wishes ultimate peace and prosperity.

Yet, what stopped him from dissociating with Duryodhana
After the truth of his birth comes to light?
The simple fact that Duryodhana had given him honour.
It was too weak a ploy to stand against his own family.
It makes his entire crusade lose its fundamental push. One wonders how a man can go on fighting in the name of military grandeur if he is ultimately to fell his own brothers?

Kunti, who decides to live with Gandhari during the war, too, is a character who has a confused sense of values. Her actions can be justified on the basis of her helplessness in war, which she never wanted. And shared this feeling with so many, small warts and stalwarts of the war. The Pandavas too did not want war. They were forcelanded into it.

Looked from a distance, too, the most working philosophy of this world appears to be epitomized in the Duryodhana and Shakuni axis. And behind this double-face of inhuman ambition were the faceless hundred Kuru brothers and so many kings, who supported them. Our world too supports all those who work under the veil of dharma, and undertake all actions that serve the devil.

Both of them are most tempting duo of all times, for evil has a spectacular aspect which the truth lacks. Good is prosaic, and our senses need excitement, which comes from Evil. All those who have seen Sholay can easily imagine the fate of the film, if there were Basanti and Dharmendra only, and no Gabbar.
Ramayana and Mahabharta have gods in the form of Lord Rama and Lord Krishana
Simply because the adversaries are not human,
They are divinely inspired inhuman specimens of life.
Ravana was too much for a man’s might,
He is said to have the intelligence of ten people.
So was Kamsa, less human and more demonic.
The evil which Duryodhana and Shakuni represent
Has a political genesis.
While Ravana and Kamsa are raised on moral irregularities,
Duryodhana has a different appeal.
They are rooted in imperialism,
And hence, they appeal to our colonialized nerves.

Duryodhana can be seen as the ultimate expression
Of the philosophy of ‘laissez faire’,
Unbridled freedom, unbridled ambition,
Use any means to achieve your ends.
He is a philosophy representing no holds barred.
Spiritedly supported by Shakunism.
Shakunism is a concomitant philosophy
Which goes beyond Shub Labh. [The good gain]
My dharma is my gain, Shakunis proclaim.
And this philosophy of Only gain,
Devoid of Morality
Is modern life’s reigning refrain.
Both of them represent a world view very much
Preponderant in modern times.
Hence, they look insiders,
Whereas Samrat Yudhister, and Arjuna,
Who believe in principles, goodness, honesty,
And integrity, loyalty and commitment to values,
Appear to be outsiders,
A philosophy which this world does not accept.
That is why they suffer losses and Daropadi’s humiliation.
This is the world view which the gods support,
And Lord Krishana has to throw
His lot on the side of the Pandvas,
In order to uproot the evil tree of Duryodhana and Shakuni,
And help the Pandvas to establish their own Kingdom,
And give to Bharat Rashtra a model of governance
Based on honesty, and morality.

Good intentions apart, Keshav,
You came five thousand years earlier,
Do your find any difference in the people today?
They are more like Duryodhana and Shakuni
And nowhere like Yudhishtira.
Which king now practises Goodness?
It is a one way ticket to the prison house.
If you happen to visit your Bharat Rashtra during elections,
You will come to know how they elect their kings.
How people sell their votes for a bottle of liquor.
Or for just a five hundred rupee note.
And once in power, no King ever looks back at the
People and their conditions.
They are not the servants of your Bharta,
They are servants of their own Self.

If you can look back, it is not difficult to visualize,
How helpless, how poorly organized,
And how jittery good is.
You had to stand tough with Arujuna and Pandvas,
Only then, they could liquidate evil.
In the fight between Duryodhana and Bheema,
You were forced by Balrama to remain neutral.
You can see how difficult it was for Bheema to realize
Where to strike the evil.
Below the belt.
That is the philosophy of this world.
Hit below the belt.
All those you find successful in this world
Are people who have one time or the other,
Hit below the belt.

Govind, don’t you feel men are helpless before Evil.
Good does not tempt them, as Evil does.
Eve was tempted by Satan.
And men are now in the grip of Evil like never before.
Don’t you think good people
Are always looking upto the
Divine forces for help?
We need to fortify good.
Make it strong enough, and highly organized,
So that Evil cannot strike its roots.

The main problem with people is that they
Lack the power to judge.
Bhishma lacked it sorely. Drona too.
All powerful people are arrogant also.
Proud of their wisdom.
For wisdom and power go together.
Kings are half mad.
Or I can say: All kings are Kims.
Keshav, the major issue is:
What is right and what is wrong.
What is universally good, and what is universally indecent.
People must develop this independent wisdom.
Only then they can know whom to support.
The need of the hour is to fortify Good,
Make it so organized and powerful
That instead of looking upto the gods,
People are awakened enough to fight evil
Rather than succumb to it.
They should be able to vanquish evil
And be victorious
Even if gods do not descend
To extend them divine help.

I tend to look at the victory of the Pandvas
As your victory,
And it does not do any credit to their fire power.
In spite of the fact that Good was with them,
They were poorly organized.
And I am sure, if you had substracted yourself
Duryodhana would have won,
And been ruling Bharat Rashtra with aplomb.
Yet, Keshav, as I said earlier, Duryodhana is a philosophy.
Laissez faire gone to the head of mankind.
Unbridled ambition. Unbridled means.
And do you think Duryodhana can be vanquished?
Today, from this world, from your world,
From this world of sages and Prophets,
What Pandvas stand for is absolutely gone.
Good has left the portals of this land.
Deception, duplicity, double talk,
Shakunism are ruling the roost.

Do you think we need another War
To obliterate Evil?
Was Covid a mild stroke?
This world which is lost in luxurious living,
And wild thinking, needed a break.
The kings who rise to power with deception,
Stay in power with deception.
To end this state of preponderant evil,
Do we need another War?
In those good times, Lord,
You had Pandvas, whom you supported,
And they fought evil with all their might.
But today, you will have a tough time to find
Five people who believe in goodness, and righteousness.
Who believe in principles and morality.
You will find them scattered here and there.
They are a lost race now.
The weather of this planet does not support such consciousness.

Lord! This world needs repair.
Nature sends its thunderbolts like Covid to
Settle the account with human excesses.
But it seems it is not enough.
Neither is Ravana dead, nor Kamsa.
Now, people have become fiends,
And one fiend out of them garners votes and
Becomes the king.
It is Duryodhana and Shakuni all the way.

**Chorus**
Life is full of struggle, and pains,
Noble ignoble,
Yet the all transcending wish to stay alive
Confounds human wisdom.

Given are the days,
Given the date of the pyre,
Mortalized with the drink of desire.

Beyond every cloud we see
Dreams so fair,
Though beyond every breath we meet despair.
We never remember the vows
Nor the sacred trust,
Squander the faith and finally come to dust.

Meet for skies,
We choose the downy earth.
Our wings remain clipped birth after birth.

The Poet
Lord, return faith to this world.
Love to human veins.
Let people live in harmony
And shun pride and prejudice.

Do you contemplate another War?
It would be too hard for man
To get his rockets reduced to rubble,
Brought back to bow and arrow
And forced to start afresh.

We really doubt our towers of wisdom,
And chambers of commerce,
Which thrive on double talk,
Our business which spurs on ads
Is the store house of false wisdom.

Fake are our great men, false our cause.
Our best men are those who tell us
Of our highest passions,
Pleasure is the top agenda
And its rightless pursuit the secret of success.
Don’t you see the inverted order of this world?
What you thought wrong,
And organized that great war,
To reset the applecart,
Has taken the centre stage,
And has become the final arbiter of good and bad?

Keshav, people visit the temples
Where your images are placed, sing the hymns
And think they have pleased you.
Going to temple is all right.
But is that enough?

If they sing your praises,
But their conduct as human beings
Is deficient,
And they exploit the earth of its boons,
The waters of their fertility,
And the winds of their chastity,
And never think they are doing any wrong,
Is it enough that they sing your praises
And you are appeased?

Tell me, how many people follow you?
Also, is it possible to follow you?
You were the arbiter of your world,
And you changed things which stood in your way.
An ordinary man is full of half ignorance and half stupidity,
And very little is left for common intelligence.
They are told by the saints:
Shut your mouth. Shut your minds.
Only open your ears and listen to the commands.
Do you approve of such tactics by practitioners of ‘dharma’?
Do you think it is good to have followers
Who do not think at all?
Who have no reasoning faculties?
Who just do, as the priests are doing?
Are your priests the most loved people, Govind?
Can you tell me if ever a priest was allocated Heaven Simply because he was a priest?’
Cast a look around, Govind,
And tell me if any person
Ever was allowed into Heaven simply because of his vocation?

It is all based on actions as human beings.
If their actions are good,
They will be in,
And if their actions are amiss,
They will suffer like other human beings.

Don’t mind Govind,
If I say,
There is no peace in this world.
There is no joy in this world.
There are only spurious joys Based on excess,
And, men are living on contrived pleasures.

Your kings have forgotten all of the lessons of The great scriptures including the Mahabharta.
You were with the Pandavs because they were in the right, And it led to their victory in that great war.
Now, Govind, all those who love the principles of ‘Dharma’, - the poor, the hapless,
The right thinking people,
Your poets, your philosophers, your thinkers -
Are the people on the margins of this society,
And this world is being run by half-impaired minds
Of Shakunis and Duryodhanas.

There are thousands who are divided like Bhishma,
And eroded in conscience like Guru Dron,
And millions who suffer the Fate of Karna,
The dealers of death and non-sense are too organized.
They are doled out kingdoms, fiefs in parliaments
And forced to keep shut,
While Abhimanyus are made scapegoats.

This world needs you again My Lord.
In that Yuga, you had Arujuna
To whom you recited the great Gita,
And who promised to act accordingly.
And he fought the great Masters of Mischief.
Govind, I am afraid this world has lost its fertility for the good,
It is a wasteland, suffering a moral drought.
The good are damned from the very beginning.
You will find it a Herculean task to find out an Arjuna
Who could wage a war against this evil system.

You will be surprised people, who are drugged
With spurious ideologies,
Will find in you too a great subverter,
For they love their lives, whatever the cost,
And nobody would come forward,
Even if you give out a clarion call for joining
The Crusade for a better world.
People are so afraid, so emasculated Govind,
I fear anyone will take your call now.

And, instead of any war like Mahabharta,
You may have to go back, 
Defeated. 
Because, there is no one Duryodhana 
No one Shakuni. 
You will find these Masters of Evil 
Dwelling in millions of men. 
Duryodhana does not have hundred brothers, 
He has millions, 
And, Govind, you will not be able to identify them, 
Killing them is a far off dream. 
And Shakuni, 
The great day dreamer, 
The grand precursor of modern Management, 
Shows how things which do not happen by themselves 
Can be made to happen by themselves. 
His engagement with the impossible 
And never say die spirit has its uplifting elements, 
So long as we love the die-hard and life-fast character of Macbeth.

Govind. 
I have seen goodness going to the wall, 
I have seen the best quarantined in the prison walls, 
I have seen the worst enjoying the best of facilities in the world. 
This is a world where ‘dharma’ has evaporated. 
No meaning is attached to goodness. 
Human faculties of love, kindness, empathy, goodness, 
Honesty, Integrity – 
All the people who believed in these things 
Are either rotting in jails, or in fear, 
Stick not out their heads. 
People sing your praises, 
Because they know they cannot be faulted 
If they are doing so. 
It is passe. 
But when it comes to ‘dharma’, 

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The righteous action,
The moment one has to raise his voice
Or his head against injustice, and evil,
They slink away.
Evil is now fortified like a great war machine.
The good still lack conviction.
CANTO XII

THE DOCTOR COMETH
When a patient is on the last legs,
He is brought to the doctor.
In the battle field also,
The Evil, before its death,
Needs a spiritual doctor, who throws
The dust off their eyeballs,
And makes them see their true situation,
So that while dying, they are at peace,
And do not consider their death as untimely and undue.

Keshav, you were able to convince the great Bhishma
Of the absurdity of his situation,
And making him realize the fake ‘dharma’
To which he remained attached all his life,
And how it brought about the downfall of Hastinapur.
It is tragic irony that he wanted to save Hastinapur,
And it brought about the killing of millions
Including those who had forced him to stand by them.

Before his death, Govind,
You made him realize it was only in his death
That Hastinapur could be saved.
That the world could be given over to safe hands.
And before he disappears into the ethereal realms,
He makes sure Yudhishtira is on his way to ride the throne.

Your spiritual physic made his death a peaceful affair.
And he slinks away from his world,
Satisfied,
That though he made wrong choices,
Finally he was absolved of the sins,
And restored to Heaven’s good books.
Guru Daron too, Keshav,
Has an encounter with the Spiritual Doctor
And he too gets his applecart reset.
He realizes it was no use confusing Love and Attachment,
Which were two different entities.
Love gave freedom, and all credit to the gods,
While attachment bound man,
And was rooted in his pride
That he is doing so much for others.

Daron at last realized
His attachment for his son Aswasthama
Was a prison for his soul,
From which it must be liberated.
He too realized that giving knowledge
To others was a job of Punya
Only if you ask for Guru Dakshina, not its price.
Which reduces you from a Guru to a mere Shikshak [teacher].
The doctor’s word finally prepares him for a peaceful death.

Karna’s was the most sensitive case, Keshav
Where you finally hugged him,
After he realized where he had erred.
Apart from calling Daropadi a whore,
His entire pursuit of
Knowledge of Archery was amiss.
Knowledge, which is attained, for its higher pursuit,
And used for the goodness of the society,
Is real knowledge.
But if you gain knowledge with a purpose,
Which is personally empowered,
And has nothing to do with society,
It is a negative virtue,
Which you tend to miss, in times of need.
Karna wanted prowess only for proving
His one-upmanship with Arjuna,
And even if he was Sut Putra,
He should have used his powers
To uplifting the people of lower category,
Who were not treated well by the society.
On the other hand,
He decides to hold on to Duryodhana,
And his Adharmi mamashri, [unprincipled Maternal Uncle-Shakuni]
And he becomes a partner in the moral crime
[Of trying to strip Panchali in the Kaurva court].

Karna too realizes his foolishnesses,
And finally cools down
To receive his death with a soul in great poise.

Keshav, if these three people had known their ‘Dharma’,
And they had not supported Duryodhana,
There would have been no war.
No large scale killings.

Govind, this world is as evil as its was
When you decided to land on this earth
Five thousand years ago,
And delivered the great Message to Arjuna.
Now, every Arjuna has relinquished the desire to fight.
There is a great confusion
What is right and what is not right.
Purchasing Power is the ultimate Power in this world.
I feel you are needed here far more
Than you were needed at that time.
I implore you Lord,
To come and save this world
From further disintegration.
Not only body, even mind is bogged down
In crime and sin.
So much that we identify ourselves
More with Duryodhana than any of the Pandavas.
CANTO XIII

EPILOGUE
See what happened to ambition.
See what happened to smart ‘prayojans’
And plannings of ‘Mamshri’ Shakuni,
Vidhi has a different Vidhaan
[Fate has a different constitution]
Dusashana had his day,
And the day of his dark night too was not far away.
Which man who called himself great,
Did not meet his end?
The greatest prison for man are his breaths.
And the greatest temptation is to stay imprisoned.

You are to build a new world.
The task is tougher.
Bhima had before him as his target,
A hundred sons of Dhritrashtra.
Arjun had Karna before him.
And the five Pandvas had Duryodhana before them.
Accompanied of course by Shakuni.

But today, you will not be able to locate Duryodhana.
Shakuni has acquired a new denomination.
Evil has become amphibious.
Now, no one knows the hideout of Duryodhana.
But you can see fires raging from every hut,
See corpses burning and stink spreading around.

Kurukshetra was a war of eighteen days.
Now neither you can locate Duryodhan,
Nor will this war come to an end.
Duryodhana, Dusashana and millions of their brothers,
Are moving adrift in the world,
Not a single person in this world is
Without the Evil that invited divine wrath.
In Karna, was raised the issue of caste,
And in Sikhandini, the issue of women,
Daropadi remains at the centre of the cataclysm,
Which swallows great warriors.

The Gita shows before man enters decisive action
He must know where he is striking,
And why he is striking.
Knowledge of what man is fighting for is must.
Keshav, you say the fall out is not in the hands of man.
Man, therefore, must concentrate on right action,
According to his dharma.

Arjuna would have been in the cesspool of attachment
In the absence of the Gita.
And committed follies like withdrawing from the fight.
Adding more oil to the lamp of darkness.

Lord,
We want a better distribution of resources of the earth.
We want peace.
We want all dictators out of this world.
We want imposters put to death.
Redistribute the wealth of the nations.
Let there be no discrimination
On the basis of gender, caste or creed.

Vasudhaeva Kuttambham is an abstraction my Lord,
No one takes it seriously.
It is Luttum Khasuttum only.
Reorder the entire magnitude of the world, Keshav.

We are less than Arjuna
But more than Duryodhan.
And far superior to Shakuni.
They cannot even dream of what we can perform.
If you had seen our World Wars,
You would start rethinking of Mahabharta War.

Men are not only mortal, but fools too.
They are never in the learning mode.
You will meet highly perverted versions
Of Bhishma and Guru Daron.
Karnas are out of stock.

This is our world Keshav.
A bitter world,
Which goes far beyond the Kareeda
And even the stripping of women.
They kill girls in the womb
Or they are made to die by inches.

Gita was for simple souls like Arjuna.
We need a stronger dose of your Wisdom.
Applied more ruthlessly on unlistening
And remorseless nerves of mankind.

Keshav,
This world is distrustful of his highnesses, the Kings.
They find greater merit in democracies
Where men are given more weight
Than rule by divine right.
Your problem will be to find autocratic kings
Who have mastered democracy into a manipulable art.

In Mahabharta, we found Bidur
And even Bhishma who spoke their minds
Against the highhandedness of the King.
But now that voice of despairing protest
Stands charmed.
No media men are allowed to wag their tongues
Because speech is considered treason
And, [you know the Kings], punishable with death.

You will have to force democracy down
The unwilling throats of autocrats
And take away with you
The remnants of Mussolinis and Hitlers.

This is a world which is not either good or bad,
It is good and bad world of ours,
Worse than both,
Where identities merge
And one cannot be told from the other.

It is not a black and white world.
The good hoard evil too
And evil people have behind them
Stories which melt tears in the eyes.

A tall order indeed, for the likes of me.
We fall upon the thorns of life and bleed.
And wait for you to restore the order
And reassert Vasudheva Kuttambham creed.