

In chapter 2, "Philosophy of Discrimination," of the *Bhagavad Gita*, we are on the battlefield, standing with Arjuna and Krishna, between two great armies. The distraught Pandava warrior-prince Arjuna does not want to go to war against the Kauravas, which among them are many of his relatives and his former teachers. It is here that Lord Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, begins his revelation to Arjuna.

In this chapter, identify and interpret the key arguments for going to war and other insights offered by Krishna. What do these arguments and insights reveal about Hinduism?

Reflect on these arguments and speculate on why Mahatma Gandhi attributed the *Bhagavad Gita* as the major influence on developing his non-violence doctrine.

Arguments and Insights:

1. **Spiritual Primacy.** Killing only affects the material forms, the body, the finite, the maya - illusion and not the Spiritual, the imperishable, the Infinite.

Key: "That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be" **2:16-22** and 2:11-30

And given samsara, "soul passes into another," - killing does not end the soul -

Key: "As a man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new, . . ." **2:13-22**

2. **Accept one's social duty.** It is his Social Dharma, social duty, as a warrior caste member - *kshatriya*, don't be a coward, don't disgrace your family and self – face your responsibility **2:31-36**

3. **Accept one's spiritual duty.** "If killed, gain heaven, if victorious, enjoy the kingdom of earth" "look upon . . . victory or defeat, with an equal eye" **2:37-38**, and "Perform all your actions with mind concentrated on the Divine . . . looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity" **2:48** - your destiny already ordained by Brahman, - your Spiritual Dharma

4. **Pure Intentions.** Don't act on the anticipation of the consequences or rewards of your actions, i.e., don't focus on consequences of killing. **2:47-48** - When focus on the social or spiritual dharma, focus on the pure intentions of one's actions. Act, renouncing the fruits of your actions.

Because when you act on the fruits of one's actions, focusing on:

Don't dwell on objects of the senses, the ego, on desires of *kama* and *artha*

Problems when do 2:49-51, **2:62-64**, 2:66-67

Don't stray in your intellect, can be problems 2:41

Don't trust scriptures 2: 42, "As a man can drink water from any side of a full tank, . . ." 2:46, 2:52-53

Don't dwell on senses. Withdraw your senses 2:55-61, "He who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as a tortoise draws his limbs within his shell . . ." **2:58**, 2:64-65

You cannot reach:

5. **The goal is moksha** **2:67-72** "This is the state of the Self, the Supreme Spirit . . . will become one with the Eternal." "As a drop of water disappears when it reunites with the ocean"