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Jernail Singh Anand's *Mahabharat: The Battle of Words - A Modern Epic*: Rewriting of Traditional Wisdom

Shaleen Kumar Singh
Associate Professor
Department of English
SS College, Shahjahanpur, U.P.
Email: drshaleen999@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Jernail Singh Anand's Mahabharat: The Conflict of Words - A Modern Epic is a modern epic that rewards the conventional understanding of the conflict and its aftermath. It is the follow-up to the ancient Indian epic, Mahabharata. The author retells the epic from the perspective of Draupadi, the heroine who was treated dishonorably at the Kuru king's court, to bring the Pandavas—the primary protagonists of the War—and their spiritual master, Lord Krishna, to the forefront. The book casts doubt on the legitimacy and relevance of the Bhagavad Gita. This sacred text forms the basis of the Mahabharata, given today's violent, conflict-ridden, and unequal world.

Additionally, the novel draws parallels with other epics that focus on the ideas of honor, devotion, and love, including the Ramayana and Troy. The central theme of Anand's writing is dishonor, particularly in light of Draupadi's humiliation at the hands of King Dhritrashtra. The action of this sequel moves beyond Kurukshetra's real battlefield and into the reader's imagination. In a biased conversation with Lord Krishna, the author expresses worries about the state of modern society and makes an effort to justify its purported deviations from the predestined path of justice.

Keywords: *Mahabharat, classic Indian epics, traditional wisdom, justice, contemporary world.*

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A modern epic that rewrites the traditional wisdom on the battle and its aftermath, Jernail Singh Anand's *Mahabharat: The Battle of Words - A Modern Epic* is a sequel to the classical Indian epic, *Mahabharata*. To bring the Pandavas—the main characters of the War—and their spiritual master, Lord Krishna, to the table, the author retells the epic from the viewpoint of Draupadi, the heroine treated dishonorably in the Kuru king's court. In light of today's violent, conflict-ridden, and unfair society, the book raises doubts about the applicability and legitimacy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This holy text serves as the foundation of the *Mahabharata*. The book also compares to other epics that center on the concepts of duty, honour, and love, such as the *Ramayana* and Troy. The book is an audacious

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and thought-provoking attempt to reevaluate the *Mahabharata* and its relevance to the modern world. The classic Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, which gained popularity in the previous century thanks to television serials, are explored in Jernail Singh Anand's *Mahabharat: The War of Words - A Modern Epic.* The preamble, which explores the intellectual foundations of the story, emphasizes how important the *Bhagavad Gita* is in justifying the battles and recognizes the crucial roles played by Sita and Draupadi.

The concept of dishonor is the main emphasis of Anand's work, especially considering Draupadi's humiliation at the hands of King Dhritrashtra. The action in this sequel is moved into the reader's mind, transcending Kurukshetra's actual battlefield. The writer engages in a biassed discussion with Lord Krishna, raising concerns about the direction of contemporary society and attempting to explain its alleged departures from the predetermined path of righteousness. The goal of the work is to comprehend the intricacies of human conduct. It deftly combines social, political, philosophical, and spiritual inquiry components. Anand's appeal to Lord Krishna to resolve the current situation illustrates a desire to resolve disputes between nationalism and religion while advancing the notion of an ordinary human identity. Therefore*, Mahabharat: The War of Words - A Modern Epic* presents itself as a provocative examination of the ageless epic, relating historical events to modern problems and asking readers to consider "how to be" rather than the existential question of "to be or not to be."

Jernail Singh Anand challenges the common understanding of the *Mahabharat* as only a physical struggle in his poem *Mahabharat: The War of Words*, introducing a fresh viewpoint. Anand expresses concern about the continued existence of wrongdoing in the modern world as he considers the War's aftermath and queries the War's goal. The essay explores the fundamental foolishness of War, emphasizing the injustice and unpredictability experienced by those who fight in it. To highlight the elusive nature of meaning, the poet introduces concepts like "mask" and "face" and examines the interaction of light and shadow in the invocation's chorus. The story's popularity rests in its capacity to draw readers into verbal combat while offering a sophisticated and perceptive analysis of the *Mahabharata.*

The poet poses several queries on the morality, fairness, and intent of the War and the participants in Canto I, "IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (EXPOSITION)." He questions the usual rationale of War to restore Dharma, the cosmic order, and the exaltation of War as a moral obligation. He shows his compassion for the millions of people the War has killed and impacted and his skepticism about the morality and intelligence of the monarchs, soldiers, and sages who have either supported or taken part in the conflict. In addition, he casts doubt on Lord Krishna's involvement in the conflict and his pardoning of the guilty.

The poem uses straightforward language in a conversational style. The poet expresses his doubt and criticism using rhetorical strategies, including contrast, sarcasm, repetition, and irony. He also

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invokes the feelings and situations of the conflict using analogies and pictures. He compares, for instance, Karna, the tragic hero who fought for the wrong side, to a man who lost his proper protection, his identity, and Duryodhana, the head of the Kauravas, the War's adversaries, to a victim of his dishonesty. In addition, he likens the battle to a funhouse, a sin, and a vile theatre.

> 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.
>
> Duryodhana who had won the Kareeda with deception,
>
> Here, himself becomes the victim
>
> Of this divided loyalty of his warlords. (Anand 7)

The poem is an audacious and innovative attempt to reconsider the *Mahabharata* and its meaning for the contemporary world. It pushes readers to consider War, violence, Power, and morality critically and autonomously. In addition, it challenges readers to converse with God and look within for solutions to their problems. In this moving poem, the author considers what might have happened if Arjuna had lost the Mahabharata conflict. The verses explore the Kauravas' explanation for their crimes against Draupadi and cast doubt on "Dharma" and morality. The poet examines the factors that create charismatic bigots and criticizes Duryodhana's harshness, drawing comparisons with historical tyrants such as Adolf Hitler.

The poem explores the idea of truth, presenting it as a tiresome topic frequently eclipsed by the attraction of a lie-filled life full of happiness and pleasure. The poet questions the wisdom of honoring those who committed great acts of violence, such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. Mark out the following excerpt:

> The world acquires a condescending tone
>
> Like Socrates and Rumi.
>
> When talking of great souls
>
> But, how eagerly, our younger and older people

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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 a mean understanding? (Anand 15-16)

The story examines society's predilection for mediocrity, presenting heart and soul purity as undesirable and frequently disregarded. The poet highlights the historical exaltation of War, expressing unease with the persistence of human misery and carnage throughout human history. The poet's desire to support Karna and mention his predicament demonstrates the widespread impact of societal prejudices, even when they are justified. The criticism also targets the divinely created characters, raising concerns about the creator's involvement in permitting the characters' erroneous viewpoints and behaviors. Here, the poem offers a provocative reflection on the difficulties of human life and the dubious decisions made throughout history by critically examining morality, human nature, and the historical glorification of War.

The poet and Krishna, the all-powerful God and Arjuna's charioteer engage in conversation in the second Canto, "THE DESERT OF REASON." In this poem, the author laments the status of the world and places the blame squarely on the violence and bloodshed that Krishna encouraged and promoted. He challenges Krishna's position and wisdom in the Kurukshetra War, a struggle for succession between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, two families of regal relatives. He also aims for the traits and deeds of the Kauravas, particularly at the chief enemies of the War, Duryodhana, the oldest son of the blind monarch Dhritarashtra, and his brother Dusashana. He questions whether their parents, who called them such horrible names and condoned their immoral actions, ever loved them. In addition, he bemoans the fate of Bhishma, the granduncle of the Pandavas and Kauravas, who, although aware of the injustice and immorality of the Kauravas, fought on their side because he had sworn to the throne.

The poem provides a potent way for the poet to communicate his moral and spiritual Suffering as he wrestles with the contradiction of Krishna's engagement in the conflict. He urges Krishna to defend his deeds, which appear to go against his teachings of Dharma (Hindu morality) and non-violence and explain his divine goal. He also considers the tragedy and folly of War, which devastates nations, families, and lives while leaving a path of misery and corruption. He suggests that the conflict served

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simply to maintain the existing cycle of violence and evil rather than bringing about any good or order in the world. He appeals to Krishna's conscience and compassion while expressing his feelings and points of view using rhetorical questions, analogies, and allusions. To compare and contrast the Kauravas with other Sanskrit epics, such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, he mentions other characters by name and tells their stories. He presents the Kauravas as the embodiment of evil, drawing comparisons between them and the demon king Ravana, who kidnapped Sita, the wife of Rama, the Ramayana's hero, and the tyrannical monarch Kamsa, who attempted to kill Krishna, his nephew, and the God of preservation Vishnu. He also compares them with Yudhishthira, the Pandavas' eldest son, who succeeded his father as king following the War and was revered as the personification of justice and truth. He implies that Dusashana, who stands for the corrupt government that persecutes and abuses the populace, impacted the other kings and bureaucrats and that Yudhishthira was the only one who set things right.

As the poet updates and reinterprets the *Mahabharata* in a contemporary and pertinent setting, one may observe his inventiveness and inventiveness. In addition to conversing with Krishna, the deity and guide, he uses the poem to share his ideas and beliefs on politics, religion, morality, and War. In addition, as he tries to balance his disappointment and disillusionment with the outside world with his dedication to Krishna, he utilizes the poem to investigate and challenge his faith and identity. Instead of providing the reader with simple fixes or answers, he asks them to go with him in search of the meaning and the truth. One can go through the following excerpt:

> Like other gods, were you too obsessed with violence?
>
> Has peace no chance with gods? Keshay?
>
> 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?

Mahabharata too is a revenge drama, Keshav. A melodrama that 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.

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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. (Anand 32)

The third Canto, 'The Umbilical Cord', explores the deep bond between humanity and the planet earth and highlights the role of the mother's womb as a symbol of belonging. An official release into a world of many potentials, both basic and sublime, is signified by the severing of the umbilical cord. The poet shows the grandmother as a watchful spectator who awaits the return of her children—not as lumps of clay, but as persons who are both human and heavenly. The focus switches from materialistic goals like riches and Power to the central query of whether people can rise beyond their baser instincts and make a lasting contribution to humankind.

It is said that the umbilical cord connects man and the universe via the mother. An additional degree of connectivity is added by the notion that man is never alone but rather resides within the framework of dynasties and shared experiences spanning millions of years. The poem explores all people's emotions, including happiness, sorrow, births, funerals, and the complex bonds between fathers, sons, and daughters. The poet writes:

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. (Anand 35)

It emphasizes the fleeting aspect of existence by reflecting on the mysteries of birth, timing, and death. The third Canto of this poem explores the social problems associated with planned weddings, casting doubt on their morality and sincerity. Concerning Duryodhana's brothers and the Dusashanas controlling the globe, the poet highlights the adverse effects of marriage based on petty considerations like social standing, wealth, and nationality. The lyrics emphasize the absence of love

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in unions fuelled by other forces, such as money and public relations goals. The poet bemoans the checklist approach to choosing a companion, which prioritizes physical attributes above emotional fit.

> 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. (Anand 38)

The criticism goes beyond cultural customs that uphold dowry expectations, posing questions regarding the contentment of those compelled to enter into such agreements. The poet raises moral concerns about a society prioritizing business-like marriages over romantic relationships. Here, the poet questions *Swyambra* and other traditional practices, supporting women's autonomy in selecting life mates and calling for a change in emphasis from physical characteristics to mental compatibility. His appeal for a return to morality and creativity highlights the poet's wish for a more educated society. The epic poem 'The Fall Out', in its CANTO IV, examines the philosophical teachings of Keshav, who may be alluding to Lord Krishna, and makes comparisons with scientific concepts, particularly Newton's rule of action and reaction. It highlights the contradiction between the spiritual and mystical traditions ingrained in Indian philosophy and the scientific worldview of the West. He adds:

> 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. (Anand 47)

The poet expresses skepticism regarding the premise that acts should elicit equal and opposing reactions. Instead, the poem draws upon Gita's teachings to emphasize that although people have

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some control over their acts, they do not always have complete control over the results or reactions. The allusion to fabled figures like Sita, Draupadi, and Gandhari demonstrates how cultural and religious influences frequently influence marriage decisions in addition to individual preferences. The poet uses mythological examples of how outside forces or divine intervention impacted marriages to refute the idea that choosing a life mate is a free-will decision. The topic becomes more complicated when Arjuna and Subhadra's love affair is brought up, with Keshav's interference.

To highlight moral failings, this poem uses figures like Karna and Aswasthama to reflect on the results of ignoring familial connections and knowledge. Karna's disparaging remarks about Panchali are criticized by the poet, who calls them uncharacteristic and likely an interpolation of Karna's own. The poet claims that the main players in the battle appear to be acting on anesthetized wisdom and warped perceptions. Beginning in media's res, the chorus presents a more expansive philosophical view of life as a movie and the ongoing human attempt to make sense of it. The disarray and disorder in the streets represent the general lack of confidence in society. Phrases such as pandemonium allude to a disorderly state ruled by symbolic devils, signifying the political discourse used to preserve the status quo.

The poet carries the idea of uncertainty to the cosmic plane, where existence is unpredictable, and gods roll dice. The metaphor of fleeing for one's life, analogous to ants and mice, emphasizes the uncertainty of who will survive and reflects the universal battle for survival. The metaphor of not knowing which end of the rope connects someone's feet and the head represents fate's enigmatic and capricious aspect.

> 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. (Anand 58)

The Canto V titled 'GROOMING - THE STEPS UP TO CHAOS' starts with the following lines:

> 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,

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While Heaven's Reception has no footfall at all. (Anand 61)

This passage from Anand's epic poem is a sarcastic examination of human nature and the quest for enlightenment. The poet notes the contradictory nature of people's desires in the hereafter through the character of Keshav. The lines draw attention to the irony that most individuals appear more likely to line up for Hell than Heaven, despite the idea that one should seek kindness and virtue. The poet eloquently imagines a scene in which Heaven's Reception is empty, and the gates of Hell are backed up with lengthy lines. There is a humorous and satirical element when saints are shown contacting those lining up to enter Hell and advocating raising the salary threshold for admission to Heaven. The Heaven's Headquarters circular represents a bureaucratic mindset even in the afterlife.

The increase in the pay ceiling from ten to thirty percent parodies the notion that morality can be measured. The poet illustrates how easily humans may distort spiritual standards by implying that even those with minimal qualities can reach Heaven, albeit after spending some time in quarantine. The poem gains depth from the allusion to Faustus, highlighting the universal human need for advantages and rewards—even in the quest for everlasting redemption. The irony is enhanced by the amazement at seeing people kneeling before persons dressed as saints who are in queue for Hell. This illustrates the persistence of false ideas and cultural practices that might not be consistent with spiritual principles. Anand observes the irony of human conduct via humor and sarcasm, highlighting the ridiculousness of putting temporal prosperity ahead of the quest for spiritual knowledge and virtue.

The final section of the Canto combines hopelessness, social criticism, and a request for heavenly intervention. The chorus establishes an air of inevitable decline, pleading with listeners to give up on hope and embrace their inevitable descent down the hill of fate. The poem bemoans the lack of regard that the public has for preachers and educators in the modern era. It calls out individuals who pursue rewards, saying they are only instructors and not real Gurus. Preachers are shown as wealthy monks, emphasizing the idea that spiritual authority is corrupted. The poet wants to momentarily unplug and return to a neutral place where one may comprehend the inaudible and invisible and share in the magnificence of being. The poet confesses feeling awed by Keshav and suggests that humans may only understand their increasing foolishness with heavenly intervention. Even though there might be disastrous outcomes, the poet thinks Keshav's influence can bring humanity back.

'PRESENTING AN ORIENTAL DRAMA,' the sixth Canto, tackles human foolishness, heavenly concern, conceit, and entitlement issues. The chorus presents the notion that human foolishness combined with little acts of incompetence can draw the gods' attention and cause them to take notice of human ingratitude. The poet argues that tragedies frequently cause people to reconsider their choices and question their presumptive righteousness. The way tragedy challenges man's sense of righteousness highlights the conceit and ignorance that are part of every human being. The picture of a man uprooting the tree he is standing on represents the harmful nature of foolish deeds. The poet

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highlights the contradictory propensity of ignorant people to adhere fervently to their false ideas notwithstanding external perspectives.

The story gains a personal touch with the arrival of Oblivius, the Crown Prince of Retalia. Oblivius laments his lack of wisdom and his blessing of sight. His observations on the natural beauty of rivers, cliffs, and the surrounding area show a deep confusion and a need for direction. Oblivius's request to the Lord for a direction or address so that he may explore uncharted territory illustrates a need for meaning beyond the universe's surface beauty. Aviation czars are a metaphor for material distractions that obstruct spiritual awareness. Oblivius admits in Canto's epilogue that he was entitled in the past and took everything for granted. The contempt directed towards the components of nature functions as a symbol of the indifference humans frequently exhibit regarding all living beings.

Canto VII delves into the nature-human relationship, highlighting the constraints of human influence when confronted with natural forces. It starts with the metaphor of being in a river, implying that life's direction cannot be readily changed or disputed, much like waves. The idea is expanded to include the introduction of evil into one's surroundings, highlighting the influence of outside forces on personal existence.

The chorus challenges human-centric viewpoints and the idea that the purpose of the natural world is to support and nurture humans. It asks if cosmic forces—that is, celestial bodies—are intentionally supportive of human activity or neutral. By juxtaposing the commonplace events of life and death with the many ways people respond to them, the poem explores whether human birth and death have cosmic importance.

Earthina's voice rises, expressing that the earth is the wellspring of all life. Within her realm, Earthina displays a kind and unbiased affection for all elements—living and non-living. The poet explores the difference between the complexity that arises among humans, the simplicity of nature's relationships in this Canto, the lack of conflict resolution processes in nature, and the fact that animals do not seek heavenly justice for their deeds. It acknowledges that people tend to fight and promote obligations, rights, and the rights of animals. The poet highlights the singularity of human awareness, implying that no other species participates in intricate social systems outside of their local surroundings.

The poem explores humanity's duality: when treated with kindness, it nurtures life like a fairy, but when greed and dishonesty take hold, it turns into a devil. The chorus addresses the contradiction of human life, saying that although man created the world, man's deeds are ultimately what brings it to an end. The story examines the detrimental effects of man's heedless chase of happiness, encroaching on the hallowed domains of nature and leading some to wonder about humanity's voracious appetites. The poet admits that nature contains devils in this passage. However, it also claims that man is the most unmanageable demon because of his great brain, which calls for more

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sophisticated methods to keep it in check. Deviating from the natural order has disastrous results, such as bewilderment. The poet argues that man and his intelligence are irrelevant since robots now replicate what they did to nature. The chorus highlights how the multiplicity of mouths causes more hunger and lust, distorting elemental beauty for false delight, in the case of more—a representation of humans. While the naive brains of man fight, suffer, and rot, the more astute animals, such as birds, flee the world's chaos. In the poem's epilogue, an entire town is seen to be becoming insane, and the sages—who stand for wisdom—choose to leave, leaving the village to face its destiny.

The book's eighth chapter discusses Govind's insignificance in the vast scheme of things. It highlights the decisions people make about how they treat both themselves and other people. It is said that life is like a relay race, with man running on a course set by his forebears. There are questions regarding why certain things happen and why some people succeed in their endeavors while others can only dream.

> 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. (Anand 111)

The idea that life is like an iceberg implies that most of it is hidden in the deep, dark parts of existence, with only a small portion exposed. Time is said to be man's limiting force, influencing the sequence in which individuals come to and go from the continent of existence. The sky represents boundless possibility, but it also reminds us that, much like a kite, one's link to origin is essential. Once that connection is broken, no one is interested in the autumn. The chorus emphasizes how difficult it is to go back in time and how difficult it is to stop time from passing. The forehead furrows are said to be the result of gods chiseling faces with time bars. The verse delves into the bittersweet nature of

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the past, its sweet taste, and the tendency to spend time reminiscing, even during moments of despair.

The poet compares mythological figures by mentioning Duryodhana, who scripted his destiny with the help of parents drenched in darkness. We talk about Gandhari's charge that the gods have brought about a catastrophic future, highlighting how easily anger is turned against higher forces when things go wrong. The poem ends in addressing the difficulties of an unfulfilled future and the solace that comes from surviving despite adversity and loss.

The Canto's last section highlights how uncommon enlightened deeds and comprehension are among people. It implies that a select group of people with this kind of insight choose the world's direction. Evil is presented as a vast phenomenon that affects even ordinary people. The gods' disasters are viewed as divine retribution against mankind.

> 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. (Anand 116)

Characters such as Samragi Daropadi, Kunti, and Gandhari are among the millions impacted by the catastrophic effects of the pain borne by people like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna. The story highlights how the mighty Pandavas gained the kingdom, but not before sacrificing essential characters like Abhimanyu and other soldiers, raising concerns about the contradictory nature of success and loss. The poem highlights the idea that even the most remarkable people perished in the fighting. Therefore, those who survived the catastrophic events were not always the greatest.

The chorus points out how humans are dualistic and capable of both terrible and noble things. It implies that while having a self-centered viewpoint—such as being a man, parent, or king—may breed meanness, expanding one's views and establishing a connection with the universe may maximize one's potential. In general, the poem examines human nature's intricacies, pain's effects, and the profoundly transformational potential of events.

The book's CANTO IX addresses the repercussions of people putting their interests ahead of the greater good. It is critical of people who, out of vanity, deny the existence of higher forces and credit themselves alone for their accomplishments. The poem warns that these self-centered people,

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despite their tremendous knowledge and skills, are imbued with a harmful power known as Adharma. The lyrics emphasize that those endowed with unique abilities, like Drona or Karna, sometimes abuse them for their gain rather than for the good of humanity. The poem implies that evil tends to rule the world since it is organized in human awareness. The statement underscores the cyclical pattern of history, in which esteemed prophets institute 'dharma,' only for succeeding generations to stray from justice.

The poet advises Arjuna to act wisely and not worry about the future, stressing the need to live in the now. A remark is made on the dual tradition of Dharma and how easily temptations might sway people from following it. The poem bemoans the shallow nature of goodness in modern culture when real, sincere deeds have been supplanted with symbolic ones. Dharma's externalization of abstract symbols cut off from the mind's existence, and the soul's sustenance is criticized. The last few sentences emphasize that to interact with genuine wisdom and Dharma; one must rise above the symbolic and material facets of existence. The concepts of life, death, Dharma, and the transformation of evil are all thoroughly examined in this poetry. It raises concerns about the meaninglessness of existence. It argues that only people going through terrible things can genuinely understand the liberating Power of a brave death. The poet writes:

> 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. (Anand 122)

The poems convey skepticism over enforced allegiance during strife and forced conversions. The poem makes a case against equating Dharma with nationalism, stressing Dharma as an individual dedication to moral behavior instead of a political doctrine shared by all. A cautionary tale on manipulating reason as sophistry is presented, emphasizing the dangers of doing so. The poet argues that conclusions are frequently made selectively and given to a small group of people, exposing a feeling of manipulation in cultural narratives.

The portrayal of modern times is pessimistic, showing humans as intelligent yet ethically dubious. The difference between classic dacoits and contemporary wrongdoers who camouflage themselves with wealth, smiles, and social acceptability represents the evolution of evil. The poem also aims at those who seem ethically pure on the outside but have an unhealthy obsession with Dharma. It implies that these people may become narrow-minded, uncaring, and ignorant and might eventually be tricked into acting as revenge tools while seeming morally upright.

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All prophets talked with reason.

Convinced people,

And only then, millions got after them.

But today, the people who have drunk deep Believe only in themselves,

Pride themselves on their ancestry, on religion,

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. (Anand 123)

The poem laments the widespread violence and terror that strike innocent people in many places, critically addressing current situations. It compares the present scenario, when people, drunk with their ideas, display a hazardous loyalty to exclusive ideologies, willing to die for religion they may not entirely know, with the method of past prophets who used reason to persuade followers. The poet refers to the traditional meaning of "dharma" and invokes Govind (Lord Krishna) to emphasize how things have changed since then and that people are less inclined to obey orders without question. The poem argues that conventional methods are less successful in today's more critical, educated, and intelligent society.

Mahabharata characters Duryodhana, Dusashana, and Shakuni are mentioned to serve as a parallel for modern wrongdoers. The poet draws a comparison between the more confrontations of the past and the difficulties in dealing with the dispersed and elusive evildoers of today.

The allusion to Lord Krishna's Sudarshan Chakra suggests that strong involvement is required to deal with the complexity of the issues facing the modern world. To counter evil's dispersed and elusive powers, the poem considers how difficulties change with time and the possible need for a more sophisticated and effective response. Pain is a complicated and multidimensional component of human existence covered in the CANTO X, "THE DYNMICS OF HUMAN SUFFERING." At first, it portrays pain as a stand-in for love between people and as a kind of divine retribution for transgressions, making one wonder if there is ever a world completely free from 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. (Anand 127)

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The Mahabharata's astounding depiction of universal Suffering preceding and following the great battle is highlighted. The poet takes issue with the prevalent emphasis on the exciting parts of the Mahabharata, including battles and love stories, while ignoring the essential teachings that are taught in Lord Krishna's dialogues with figures like Karna, Dronacharya, and Bhishma. The poem highlights the often-overlooked occasions when Lord Krishna imparted knowledge to Karna and shaped Drona and Bhishma's viewpoints. It implies that these figures, for all their grandeur, were happy to die because they understood how irrelevant they were in a changing world. They accepted their approaching death to let go of their misdirected feeling of obligation after realizing that their life goals were incorrect.

Bhishma's epiphany regarding the meaning of 'dharma' occurs much later in life and is a tragic illustration of the pain resulting from a lifetime of following the wrong road. The poem contemplates the costs associated with clinging to false ideas, even for prominent and powerful people, and how it affects a person's feeling of completion and purpose in life.

The poet delves deeper into pain and the healing potential of acknowledging truth. It considers the pain that Guru Dronacharya endured while keeping his word, standing by dishonourable people, and bearing a setback to his knowledge. He supports the bad side because he is unable to discipline his son Ashwatthama, whom he raised with pride and affection but without moral instruction ('Samskara').

The repercussions of making poor decisions are shown by Guru Dronacharya's realization in his final moments that his deeds had not benefited society and that his love for Aswasthama was morally illogical. His acceptance of his mistakes is symbolized by his quiet and willingness to die. The story continues with Karna, who, like Dronacharya, becomes mute when his confusions are resolved. His existence is described as a "rotten tale," and he is ready for Arjuna to take his life. The extract implies that these individuals undergo significant self-realization and transformation upon encountering Lord Krishna, a symbol of direct contact with reality. The poem highlights that interactions with Lord Krishna, both in life and death, may lead to transforming times when people face the truth. The contemplation of the misery resulting from incorrect acts and the possibility of constructive modification underscores the need to confront reality to foster human development and positively impact the cosmic order.

This passage examines the difficulties people today, especially women, confront in a culture where hard labour and long hours are upending established roles. The poet suggests an apocalyptic sadness brought on by events outside human control by comparing the current situation and the Suffering of figures in the *Mahabharata*, such as Draupadi and the Pandavas. The reference to IT firms and the giving up free time for work-related obligations is a criticism of contemporary living. The poet wonders if the problems facing today's young are a direct result of previous transgressions or if they are a genuine delight of youth.

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According to the *Mahabharata*, it was a fundamental event that Lord Krishna, the God, planned to reset life with the Pandava's guidance. The poet reminds us that things do not go well after a while and that systemic issues endure, making it difficult to manage social systems. The poem calls for changing the leadership to alleviate Suffering, especially that of the masses. It also conveys a yearning for change. In the present context, the absence of the Pandavas is likened to being encircled by Kauravas, denoting a dearth of morally upright leaders. It is an appeal for a fresh start, imploring Lord Krishna to battle evil, defend the defenceless, and uphold justice. Drawing comparisons to figures from the Mahabharata who opposed a fundamentally wrong system, such as Drona and Karna, the poet acknowledges the difficulties and anxieties involved in fighting such a battle. There's a need for assurances that righteous individuals won't suffer retaliation and that their families will be safeguarded while justice is served. The last line of the Canto begs not to delay Lord Krishna's involvement, highlighting how urgent it is to deal with the current social problems.

> 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. (Anand 132)

The relationship between mortals and gods is explained in Canto XI, which highlights the influence of human action on the creation of the universe. The chorus emphasizes that while gods step in when needed, mortals can still act morally and pray.

The lines emphasize that when things go wrong, humanity who misunderstand the nature of time and wage war on one another rather than on evil should be held accountable rather than the gods. The individuals who wrote the screenplay for the world's future are responsible for the current situation; if things go wrong, they are incapable of crafting a compelling story. One of the poem's most memorable passages is "Mortals, you have in your powers, Not only to pray, But also to act righteously." The poem's essence is summed up in one sentence, highlighting the significance of moral behaviour and human agency in shaping the path of events. The poem also warns against dealing with divine forces by depending on cunning. It implies that while cunning may be useful in human battles, it is insufficient when dealing with heavenly forces since gods can discern the genuine intentions and signals from people's souls.

The speaker of this Canto considers the world's status and compares contemporary society and the characters in the Mahabharata. The poet Keshav's departure is described as a turning point, with the world taking a U-turn and redefining the narrative of 'Dharma.' The speaker highlights Duryodhana's

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conceit, pride, bias, desire for material gain, Power, and sensual pleasure by comparing him with a representative of contemporary society. This figure is shown to be ahead of his time, foreseeing the unrestrained ambition of the modern world. Shakuni is compared to the ancestors of contemporary politicians, stressing the preference for political Power over morality.

The poem examines the different qualities of the Pandavas, who are viewed as more idealistic, divine, and less able to fit in with a corrupt and competitive society. In the light of modern sensitivities, Duryodhana's deeds—such as his deceit in Kareeda and his capture of Draupadi as a slave girl—are seen as less surprising.

> 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. (Anand 137)

It is said that the passing of Pitamah Bhishma signifies the end of a fine tradition that was forgotten over time. It is said that Bhishma's devotion to his own "dharma" is problematic since it prevents him from making the wise choice to cease aiding evil. The poem highlights the issue of misdirected devotion to tradition, which results in a blindness to the difference between 'dharma' and 'Adharma.' Bhishma's death is shown as dignified, recognizing his grandeur in life and the way he passed away. In one place, the poet writes:

> 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. (Anand 138)

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The passage considers what constitutes a "decent death" and what is required to reach Mukti or release. It highlights the significance of having a conscious knowledge of one's acts and comprehending the dynamics of good and evil, distinguishing between deaths resulting in shame and those deemed respectable. The parallel is made between the disgraceful deaths of Shakuni and Duryodhana and the dignified death of Karna. Karna's desire to live up to his reputation and be known as Daan Veer Karna—the great man of charity—is pointed out as why he died dignifiedly. The poet refutes the widely accepted notion that liberation (Mukti) follows death, claiming that only those who merit a dignified death are worthy of such release. The skepticism is demonstrated by the doubt that those with manipulative tendencies and self-serving intentions like Shakuni can hope for a dignified demise.

Shakuni's business philosophy, which prioritizes personal gain, is highlighted by his portrayal as a forerunner of the corporate world. The poet acknowledges Shakuni's importance in the modern world, saying that to write him off as just nasty or a con artist is to minimize his impact. Shakuni is portrayed as having unmatched villainy, mainly about past era's most infamous bad guys like Ravana and Kamsa.

The poem explores the complicated relationships between principles and motives and the personalities of Guru Dron, Karna, and Kanti in the *Mahabharata*. The internal turmoil of Guru Dron, who is depicted as a brilliant guru, is investigated. Aswasthama, his kid, has a blind predilection, which puts him in a difficult predicament. He wants to escape the Kauravas, but his duty to his son compels him to fight a war he does not want to, representing a soul bitter about its human fate. Known as a post-modern figure, Karna experiences estrangement because of his lowly origins but eventually climbs to become a kind, giving person. The heartbreaking realization that he is Arjuna's older brother conflicts with his desire to beat Arjuna. Karna emphasizes the complexity of human destiny and the necessity of battling against one's wants in his commitment to keep the Pandavas alive, even if it is an inherent contradiction that seals his fate.

It is said that Kanti, the character who chooses to live with Gandhari during the conflict, has a perplexed moral compass. Her acts, justified by the fact that she could not stop the War, show how many individuals in the epic feel the same way and highlight how unwelcome the fight is. The excerpt's philosophical analysis contends that the Duryodhana and Shakuni axis, which stands for a cunningly selfish goal, embodies the fundamental nature of the world. The endorsement of anonymous entities like the hundred Kuru brothers and several monarchs indicates the more comprehensive social inclination to condone deeds covered in Dharma that ultimately serve more sinister purposes. The poet discusses the attraction of evil and claims that the Duryodhana and Shakuni pair is the most alluring ever. This text contrasts the mundane character of virtue with the spectacular feature of evil. It compares this allure to that. The comparison to the movie "Sholay" gives a touch of cinema and highlights how exciting and differentiating an enemy like Gabbar is.

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Thus, the poem expresses a criticism of modern ideals as well as a call for a return to fundamental qualities. In the poem, the speaker considers how faith is wasted and eventually turns to dust as a metaphor for forgetting sacred trust and pledges. The picture of perpetually clipped wings represents a persistent constraint on human potential. The poet prays to the divine in this Canto, asking for love and trust to return to the earth. People want to live in harmony and give up prejudice and arrogance. The idea of planning another battle makes people wary of the lethal Power of contemporary weapons and reluctant to see a return to more archaic implements like bows and arrows.

> 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. (Anand 147)

Questions are raised concerning the rationality of society systems, especially the towers of knowledge and the chambers of business that feed on doublespeak. Ad-driven companies are criticized for being repositories of misinformation. The poem alludes to a civilization in which the pursuit of pleasure is valued over more noble emotions, and great individuals are seen to be false.

The passage expresses sadness for the disappearance of true principles and a call for a return to a more moral and peaceful way of life. There is a yearning for a change in society's values towards love, faith, and honesty, as well as a cynical view of modern institutions.

The speaker of the epic poem considers spiritual healing in the face of impending mortality in CANTO XII, drawing comparisons between a combatant and a patient who is near death. A major subject is the metaphorical depiction of evil as producing a spiritual healer before its destruction. This spiritual physician, symbolized by the poet Keshav, has the Power to purge people's eyes of dust so they can perceive their actual circumstances before passing away.

The emphasis now moves to the crucial scene in which Bhishma, a respected character in the Mahabharata, is persuaded by Keshav of the ridiculousness of his circumstances. The poet assists Bhishma in realizing the fallacies of the "dharma" he spent his entire life adhering to. This insight

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demonstrates a terrible irony in Bhishma's wish to preserve his empire, which ultimately resulted in the deaths of millions of people and is connected to the fall of Hastinapur.

The poem emphasizes how Keshav's spiritual counsel transformed Bhishma's dying hours. Keshav convinces Bhishma that the world can only be secure in his hands and Hastinapur can only be rescued in his death. This makes Bhishma decide to guarantee Yudhishtra's royal succession before he transitions into the afterlife.

It is suggested that Bhishma's dying was calm due to Keshav's instruction, emphasizing the idea of spiritual physics. Despite realizing his mistakes, Bhishma takes comfort in his forgiveness of sins and reinstatement in Heaven's good graces. The poem delves into themes of acceptance of one's fate in the face of mortality, metamorphosis, and salvation. In this section, the poet considers the two protagonists, Guru Daron and Karna, and their life-changing experiences with the spiritual healer, who is most likely Lord Krishna (Keshav). The main themes are the subtle differences between love and attachment, owning up to one's mistakes, and the transformational potential of spiritual revelation.

When Guru Daron meets the spiritual healer, his entire outlook is reset. He learns the vital distinction between attachment and love. Love, said to have been bestowed by the gods, is seen as freeing. Conversely, attachment unites humans and stems from pride, especially in serving others. Daron understands that his attachment—particularly to his kid Aswasthama—serves as a mental prison and that he has to free himself from it. Furthermore, he understands that teaching is only good when done voluntarily, asking for Guru Dakshina (giving to the teacher) but not asking for payment for the information, as this turns one from a Guru into a simple Shikshak (teacher). The spiritual physician's guidance prepares Guru Daron for a peaceful death.

The most delicate situation is Karna's, in which Lord Krishna accepts him after he admits his mistakes. Karna is criticized for disparaging remarks about Draupadi and his quest for mastery of archery. The poem says that proper knowledge is acquired for nobler goals and the betterment of society. Acquired knowledge with a selfish goal unrelated to the well-being of humanity is called a bad quality that is easily forgotten under challenging circumstances.

Here, the poet emphasizes how spiritual realization had a profoundly altering effect on both Guru Daron and Karna. The themes of love, attachment, the unselfish sharing of information, and the results of pursuing knowledge with an eye toward personal empowerment are all highlighted. In this section, the poet critically examines Kama and Karna's characteristics, highlighting their poor decisions to back Duryodhana in the *Mahabharata.* The main topic is the repercussions of disobeying one's moral obligations, or Dharma, which resulted in a catastrophic war.

The poet berates Kama for not using his abilities to help the downtrodden in society but rather for pursuing prowess to establish his supremacy over Arjuna. It is denounced as a collaboration in moral

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crimes that Kama's choice to side with Duryodhana, which included endorsing dubious deeds like the effort to strip Panchali in the Kaurava court, was made. In the same vein, the poet emphasizes Karna's epiphany of his folly and his final, composed acceptance of death. The inference is that the conflict and the mass murders may have been averted if these individuals had recognized and adhered to their Dharma, especially by refusing to help Duryodhana.

> 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. (Anand 157)

While Arjuna is given the important lesson about the fall of justice in the modern world, Lord Krishna (Keshav) is summoned. The poet claims that the wickedness of today's society is the same as it was five thousand years ago when Lord Krishna descended. People bemoan the lack of moral clarity and the general muddle surrounding right and evil. The poem's tragic conclusion—that purchasing power has evolved into the ultimate form of Power in our world—reflects a critical perspective on materialism and how it affects moral principles.

The final Canto of "Epilogue" considers the results of ambition, forethought, and the destiny of Mahabharata figures such as Duryodhana and Shakuni. The main themes include the persistence of evil, the capriciousness of fate, and the difficulties of creating a new world. The poet uses Shakuni's scheme as an example to illustrate the pointlessness of ambition and clever planning in the first lines of his poem. The term "Vidhi," which stands for fate, is said to have a distinct constitution, implying that it is an unexpected and uncontrolled force. The necessity of accepting one's death is emphasized, and life's breaths are figuratively shown as a prison and a lure to stay imprisoned.

It is said that creating a new planet is a more complex undertaking than the epic struggles that figures like Bhima, Arjuna, and the Pandavas must endure. The difficulties of finding Duryodhana in the current environment are compared with the objectives they had before them, namely the sons of Dhritrashtra and Karna. Evil is characterized as becoming amphibious, and Shakuni is given a new title, implying that it is versatile and all-pervasive. The scene changes to the modern day when it is impossible to find Duryodhana's hiding place, and there seems to be no end to the conflict. Corpses

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and fires stand for agony and devastation, signifying the ongoing effects of wickedness. The eighteen-day Kurukshetra War is compared to the current conflict's constant and never-ending character.

The passage ends by emphasizing how evil exists everywhere. It implies that everyone is subject to the repercussions of deeds that provoke divine anger. The sombre tone highlights the everlasting and intricate nature of humanity's struggles as it deals with the fallout from ambition and the existence of evil. Within this section, the poet explores the complicated issues of gender, caste, and the value of doing what is right, as shown in the Bhagavad Gita and the Mahabharata. The critical overview explores the argument for a more just and equitable society and the complex perspectives on these societal challenges.

The poet begins by highlighting the concerns brought forth by the epic's Karna, Sikhandini, and Draupadi characters. The caste structure is brought to light by Karna's story, Sikhandini's story brings up women's rights, and Draupadi is still at the core of the turmoil surrounding great warriors. These individuals serve as a metaphor for the social ills and injustices throughout the *Mahabharata.*

The *Bhagavad Gita* is then cited as a moral code, stressing the significance of understanding the intention and reasoning behind one's acts before taking decisive action. The Gita acts as a moral compass, keeping figures like Arjuna from falling into the abyss of attachment and choosing the wrong path, such as giving up the fight. The poet adds:

> 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. (Anand 162)

On behalf of all, the Lord is prayed for equitable distribution of earth's resources, peace, the overthrow of tyrants, justice for impostor victims, and elimination of prejudice based on gender, caste, or faith. The poet rejects the idea that "the world is one family," *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, as an abstraction that is not given much weight in everyday life and instead advocates for its actual fulfilment. In the last few words, the people's collective identity is contrasted, with them being positioned as being less than Arjuna, greater than Duryodhana, and superior to Shakuni. This

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comparison presents a complicated picture of the intricacies present in both societal dynamics and human nature.

The text essentially highlights the moral advice offered by the Bhagavad Gita, critically evaluates the social challenges shown in the Mahabharata, and urges for a radical reorganization of the global order towards equality and justice. The poet deftly handles the complexities of these subjects while providing a thoughtful analysis of the enduring significance of moral and ethical issues.

In this section, the poet considers the harsh facts of current life and compares them and the struggles portrayed in the *Mahabharata*. The themes of mortality, human foolishness, social corruption, and the complexity of the world are all explored in the critical overview. The poet starts by saying that the current generation is unable to comprehend the scope of the carnage caused by wars, and if they did, they could reevaluate the significance of the Mahabharata War. The parallel draws attention to how terrible War has always been.

A pessimistic assessment of humanity is put out, characterizing men as foolish, incapable of learning, and mortal. The poet foresees a dearth of people who resemble Karna and the appearance of highly twisted replicas of Bhishma and Guru Drona, which reflects the moral decline in modern society.

It emphasizes the world's animosity, which goes beyond the events of the Kareeda (a Mahabharata tragedy) and the mutilation of women. The horrific reality of gender-based violence is illustrated by the slaughter of female children in the womb and the lingering death inflicted on others. The poet argues that the Bhagavad Gita, written with simpler souls like Arjuna in mind, is inadequate for the complexity of today's world. A plea is made for implementing Lord Krishna's teachings to a merciless and unfeeling mankind that is harsher and more merciless.

It stresses how society has changed since the *Mahabharata*, demonstrating a mistrust of despotic rulers. Democracy is offered as a better option, but locating autocratic leaders capable of subverting democratic structures is challenging. The suppression of dissent through media censorship is criticized. It is said that the world is neither entirely good nor entirely awful but rather a combination of the two, where identities mingle, and it becomes harder to tell what is good from evil. The poet expresses a sense of powerlessness and admits the difficulties of the undertaking, waiting for Lord Krishna to bring order and reaffirm the *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* credo (the world is one family). Thus, the text critically examines the intricacies and difficulties of the contemporary world, making comparisons with the moral quandaries and conflicts portrayed in the *Mahabharata*. The poet muses on the necessity of knowledge and action to confront the moral rot and bring about a sense of order in the current state of the world.

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