

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 6: Chapter 1, Verses 22-28

(June 6 –June 12, 2018)

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यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान्
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

तोत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

संजय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान्समवेतान्कुरुनिति ॥ २५ ॥

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखींस्तथा ।
श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ॥ २६ ॥

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ।
कुपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥ २८ ॥

TRANSLITERATION

yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṁ yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇa-samudyame

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'haṁ ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

sañjaya uvāca

evam ukto hṛṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam

bhīṣma- droṇa- pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṁ ca mahīkṣitām
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetān kurūn iti

tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pauṭrān sakhīns tathā
śvaśurān suhṛdaś caiva senayor ubhayor api

tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān
kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo viṣīdann idam abravīt

arjuna uvāca

dṛṣṭvemaṁ svajanam kṛṣṇa yuyutsuṁ samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukham ca pariśuṣyati

TRANSLATION

- (22) Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa please place my chariot between both of the armies so that I may look upon those warriors arrayed for battle with whom I have to fight in preparation for combat.
- (23) Let me see those warriors who have assembled here in this battle as well wishers of the evil minded Duryodhana .
- (24) Sañjaya said, O Dhṛtarāṣṭra , thus being addressed by Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew up that finest of chariots between both of the armies.
- (25) In front of Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the kings of the world and said, behold Arjuna all the assembled members of the Kuru dynasty.
- (26) Thereafter Arjuna situated therein could observe in both armies fatherly elders, grandfatherly elders, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, fathers in law and well wishers.
- (27) After seeing all his kinsman present Arjuna became overwhelmed with compassion and then stricken by grief spoke thus:
- (28) Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa seeing all these kinsman assembled ready for battle the limbs of my body are weakening and my mouth is drying up.

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Commentary:

Verse 22

The reason for placing the chariot as instructed between the two firmly opposing armies is being explained by the verse beginning: *yavad etan*. The Kauravas are only desirous of war not peace and externally appear unmoved by trepidation. One might say that Arjuna is a warrior not a spectator, so what is the necessity of viewing the enemy? The answer to this is that since the battle is taking place between relatives, Arjuna desires to see just what friends have joined the ranks of the enemy that he will have to fight. If it is argued that out of friendship these friends seeing him would want to make a truce, the answer is given by the verse beginning with: *yotsyamanan* meaning they have only come to fight.

Verse 23:

But what was it Arjuna desired to see? He desired to see those of the opposing army gathered there desirous of doing what was agreeable to Duryodhana, this is the construction.

So Arjuna is saying to Lord Krishna let me scrutinize those friends of mine who have chosen to join the ranks of the Kauravas for satisfying the evil minded Duryodhana instead of opposing him for eradicating his evil mindedness, which suggests that Duryodhana does not even know how to protect his own life. But, doesn't Arjuna already know the worth of his opponents on the

battlefield? Certainly Arjuna is fully cognizant of the worthiness of Bhishma and Drona as the case in point as well as so many others. But in this verse this question is clarified by Arjuna's reply that he wishes to see all those who are favoring the evil minded Duryodhana, the son of Dhritarastra.

Verse 24:

After the request to Lord Krishna by Arjuna (who is also called Gudakesha because he had mastered the ability to go without sleep) to place the chariot in between the two armies, Sanjaya answers Dhritarashtra's inquiry about what happened next. In addressing Dhritarashtra as *O descendant of Bharata*, what Sanjaya subtly suggested here is that being born in the exalted lineage of the righteous and noble King Bharata, it would not be appropriate for the blind Dhritarastra to betray his nephews the Pandavas.

Verse 25:

Placing the chariot between the two opposing armies and in front of Bhishma and Drona Lord Krishna said: O Partha, observe all these Kauravas and see those who are favoring them.

Having been addressed by Lord Krishna in this way, Arjuna viewed the enemy soldiers among paternal uncles like Bhurisrava, and godfathers like Bhishma and Somadatta, and acharyas like Drona and Kripa, and maternal uncles like Shalya, Shakuni and others, and friends like Ashvatthama and well wishers like Kritavarma, Bhagadatta and others and also the soldiers fighting on his own side. Thus, Lord Krishna placed that most magnificent of chariots between the two armies in such a way as to give Arjuna an excellent view of both the armies on the battlefield.

Verse 26:

What happened after that? To answer this the verse states: There Arjuna saw fathers, uncles, sons and grandsons; that is to say the sons and grandsons of Duryodhana and others as well as associates, friends, and well wishers who had rendered some favor in the past. Thus, Arjuna saw so many of his friends and associates opposing him in battle. It should be understood that those mentioned as fathers are ones who were from the same generation as his father such as Bhurishrava and those grandfathers are similarly from the same generation as his grandfather such as Bhishma. The teachers referred to are like Drona and Kripa, maternal uncles are like Shalya, brothers are like Bhima and Duryodhana, sons are like the age of his own son Abhimanyu, grandsons are like Lakshmana and friends are like Ashvatthama as well as others.

Verse 27:

After seeing many of his kins, friends, teachers, and associates opposing him on the battle ground, Arjuna was overwhelmed or besieged with grief. The use of the word *Kaunteyah* in addressing Arjuna indicates that since he is the son of Kunti he is affected by the morality and afflictions of the mundane world. The use of the word *kripaya* signifies that Arjuna was naturally compassionate. The use of the word *paraya* implies that not only for his own soldiers was Arjuna compassionate but

also for the enemy soldiers. The word *visheedan* is used to express the symptoms of Arjuna being grief-stricken like shedding tears, being choked up, etc. as he began to speak.

One might wonder how is it possible that just before battle such a mighty warrior as Arjuna is smitten with such feelings of compassion. Arjuna is being referred to as *Kaunteya* the son of Kunti who is the exalted sister of Vasudeva who Lord Krishna accepted as His father. Vasudeva was so magnanimous and compassionate that he forgave Kamsa who was an incurable sinner.

Verse 28:

This verse and all the verses until the end of chapter describe what Arjuna said: O Krishna, seeing these relatives (*svajanam* means relative, friend, comrade, kinsmen, etc) directly in front of me ready to fight, my limbs including hands, arms, legs and feet fail me (become numb) and my mouth is completely parched (the word *parishushyati* means it is drying up).