

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 4: Chapter 1, Verses 8-14

(May 23 –May 29, 2018)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कुपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८ ॥

*bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇas ca kṛpaś ca samitiñjayaḥ
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca saumadattir jayadrathaḥ*

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

*anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā mad-arthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ
nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ*

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

*aparyāptaṁ tad asmākaṁ balaṁ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
paryāptaṁ tv idam eteṣāṁ balaṁ bhīmābhirakṣitam*

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

*ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā- bhāgam avasthitāḥ
bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi*

तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्ध पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्यच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

*tasya sañjanayan harṣaṁ kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
siṁha-nādaṁ vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkhaṁ dadhmau pratāpavān*

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

*tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇavānaka- gomukhāḥ
sahasaiṣvābhyahanyanta sa śabdastumulo 'bhavat*

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥

*tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś caiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ*

TRANSLATION

- (8) Your respected self and Bhīṣma and Karnā and the always victorious in battle Kṛpa and Aśvatthāmā and Vikarna, Bhūriśravā and Jayadratha the king of Sindhu.
- (9) All of them equipped with many weapons, expert in military science are prepared to risk their lives for my sake as well as a great many other heroes.
- (10) Our army protected by the strength of Bhīṣma is unlimited; but the army of the Pāṇḍavas being protected by the strength of Bhīma is limited.
- (11) All of you must certainly fully protect Bhīṣma foremost at all strategic points situated respectively in your various formations.
- (12) Then Bhīṣma, the valiant grandsire of the Kuru dynasty roaring like a lion, blew his conch shell very loudly for increasing Duryodhana's cheerfulness.
- (13) Thereafter conchshells, bugles, trumpets, kettledrums and cow horns suddenly were all simultaneously sounded and that combined sound became tumultuous.
- (14) Thereafter both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna stationed on a magnificent chariot harnessed by white horses resounded their transcendental conchshells.

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Commentary:

Verse 8: (Duryodhana continue to tell Dronacharya):The most powerful commanders are being named now. Samitinayah (meaning always victorious in battle), which applies to Drona (yourself), Bhishma, Karna, and Kripa, along with other warriors who are just as powerful, including Ashvatthama, (the son of Drona), Vikarna (the younger brother of Duryodhana), and Saumadatti (the son of Somadatta, also known as Bhurishrava).

Verse 9: Duryodhana pushes his point further by stating that many other powerful heroes (such as Jayadratha, Kritavarma, Shalya) as well are determined to lay down their lives for his sake and due to their sincere affection for him, and that with their extraordinary strength and their unsurpassed skill in military science his victory is assured.

Verse 10: Here Duryodhana claims that his army, protected by the unconquerable Bhishma, is unlimited, whereas the army of the Pandavas, protected by Bhima, is limited. This is why the Kauravas' victory is assured.

So it may also be argued, however, that if Duryodhana is so convinced of his superiority, then why does he need to assure himself? In this verse, although he states his army is unlimited, the tone of

Duryodhana's voice suggests that he feels somewhat insecure about his army, despite being led by Bhishma, whereas the army of the Pandavas led by Bhima seems adequate to him.

Verse 11: Duryodhana is factually telling Dronacarya that the victory of Kauravas is solely dependent upon the vigilant protection of Bhishma. So he must be protected from all sides in such a way that he cannot be slain from any direction. In other words, the Kaurava army depends solely on the might and protection of Bhishma. Therefore, you all being divisioned at strategic points in your various military formations should not leave your positions as you must carefully protect Bhishma from both sides and behind. Since Bhishma will be so engaged in the overall battle, he may not be aware of his immediate surroundings. If he is protected properly, then our victory is assured.

Verse 12: Bhishma become elated hearing the praises given him by Duryodhana. Thus to eliminate the fear he knew Duryodhana was concealing in his heart he roared like a lion, and then blew a thunderous blast on his conchshell. By only sounding a blast on his conch shell without speaking, Bhishma signified that true to warrior (*kshatriya*) code of warfare, he would fight until death.

Verse 13: Bhishma blowing his conch shell at this moment showed to Duryodhana that he had factually assumed his position as commander and chief of the Kaurava army. Immediately after his thunderous blast, the sounds of conchshells, horns and kettledrums from the soldiers of the Kaurava army followed suit, causing a great uproar resulting from the combined tumultuous sounds.

Verse 14: In order to ignite exaltation of the Pandava army and in response to the tumultuous sounds resonating from the Kaurava army, the Supreme Lord Krishna and Arjuna seated on a magnificent chariot, pulled by white horses, intrepidly blew their conch shells, exhibiting the eagerness of the Pandavas as well for the battle.