

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 7: Chapter 1, Verses 29-35

(June 13 –June 19, 2018)

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TRANSLITERATION

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।
गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ॥ २९ ॥

*vepathus' ca śarīre me roma-harṣaś ca jāyate
gāṇḍivam samsate hastāt tvak caiva paridahyate*

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ।
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ॥ ३० ॥

*na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva ca me manaḥ
nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava*

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ।
न काङ्क्षे विजयं कुष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ॥ ३१ ॥

*na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave
na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca*

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ।
येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ॥ ३२ ॥

*kiṁ no rajyena govinda kiṁ bhogair jīvitena va
yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitam no rājyaṁ bhogāḥ sukhāni ca*

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ।
आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ॥ ३३ ॥

*ta ime' vāsthitā yuddhe peāṇāṁs tyaktvā dhanāni ca
ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrās tathāiva ca pitāmahāḥ*

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ।
एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ॥ ३४ ॥

*mātulaḥ śvaśurāḥ pauṭrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā
atān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana*

अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यास्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ।
निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ॥ ३५ ॥

*api trailokya-rājyasya hetoḥ kiṁ nu mahī-kṛte
nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana*

TRANSLATION

- (29)** My whole body is trembling my hair is standing on end, my bow Gāṇḍīva is slipping from my hands and my skin is burning.
- (30)** O Kṛṣṇa I am unable to keep composed, my mind is unsteady and I see dire indications of inauspicious omens.
- (31)** O Kṛṣṇa I do not see any good in slaying kinsman in this battle, nor do I desire victory, nor a kingdom or even happiness.

(32), (33), (34), (35)

O Kṛṣṇa, of what value are kingdoms, what value is living for happiness if they for whom our kingdom, material pleasure and happiness is desired: preceptors, fatherly elders, sons; and grandfatherly elders, maternal uncles, fathers in law, grandsons, brothers in law and relatives are all present on this battle field ready to give up their kingdoms and very lives. O Kṛṣṇa even if they want to take my life I do not wish to take their lives. O Kṛṣṇa what to speak for the sake of the earth, even for the rulership of the three worlds; in exchange for slaying the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra what happiness will be derived by us?

[https://userpages.umbc.edu/~hosmane/BHAJANS/Bhagavadgita/Audio%20Recordings%20of%20Bhagavadgita%20Sung%20By%20Dr%20Ram/Bhagavadgita Chapter1 Verses%2029-35 Sung%20by%20Dr%20Ram 061118.wav](https://userpages.umbc.edu/~hosmane/BHAJANS/Bhagavadgita/Audio%20Recordings%20of%20Bhagavadgita%20Sung%20By%20Dr%20Ram/Bhagavadgita%20Chapter1%20Verses%2029-35%20Sung%20by%20Dr%20Ram%20061118.wav)

Commentary:

Verse 29:

Here Arjuna is vividly illustrating how the shock and horror of the upcoming war is starting to affect him. His physical body is being attacked by weakness of limbs, parchness of throat, horripilation and hair standing on end. Even his famous Gandiva bow slipping from his hand. *Vepathuh* means trembling, *romaharsah* means horripilation, the Gandiva bow slipping from his hand shows impatience and *paridahyate* which is burning of the skin is a burning of the heart also.

Verse 30:

The burning sensation in his skin and tremors in the left side of the body are all indicative of evil forecasting adverse omens of dire consequences. It is as if Arjuna's mind is unsteady. With these words of dejection the weakness of Arjuna is disclosed and it can be understood that he is close to losing consciousness. He says: in in this war I am seeing the consequence of opposing results. This means that even if he were victorious in obtaining the kingdom he would not feel any satisfaction.

To the contrary he would feel just the opposite, he would feel remorse. Here in this sense the word *nimittani* meaning inauspicious omens is not given as a symptom but as a result.

Verse 31:

Here Arjuna exclaims that he cannot foresee any benefit from slaying his own kinsman in battle. In the Vedic scriptures it is revealed that in this world 2 types of living entities are automatically granted entrance to the heavenly planets: one being the renunciate who is disciplined in the practice of yoga and the other is the warrior slain in battle. So Arjunas argument is that although there is provision for the slain, there is no declaration of any merit for the slayer.

Verses 32-35:

So Arjuna feeling great despair contemplating the prospect of immense slaughter as a consequence of war is requesting Lord Krishna to properly direct his senses for his ultimate benefit. Even if Arjuna had no desire for royal luxuries and pleasures, for the sake of his relatives such desires are appropriate. This is neutralized by this verse which stating that all those relatives for whose sake these desires would be appropriate are already on the battlefield ready for war. In this context Arjuna has no need to fight.

It may, however, be argued that even if Arjuna thinks of them as relatives, if he does not slay them, they will certainly slay him. So Arjuna should slay them all and rule over the entire kingdom. To refute this Arjuna states that he never desires to slay them, even if they wish to slay him. Arjuna addressing Lord Krishna with the vocative *Madhusudana* is giving reference to Lord Krishna terminating the existence of a demon name Madhu in a previous time. The name is used to give credence to Arjuna's position by illustrating as an example that demons are to be exterminated and not relatives.

Arjuna exclaims here that even for dominion of all the worlds he would not wish to slay the sons of Dhritarastra, let alone for a kingdom on the earth. By addressing Lord Krishna with the vocative *Janardana* meaning He who destroys the ignorance of His devotees, Arjuna is supplicating Lord Krishna to destroy his ignorance as well.