Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 8: Chapter 1, Verses 36-42

(June 20 –June 26, 2018)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT	TRANSLITERATION
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः । तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् सबान्धवान् । स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३६ ॥	*pāpam evāśrayed asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ* *tasmān nārhā vayam hantuṁ dhārtarāṣṭrān sa-bāndhavān* *sva-janaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādhava*
यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः । कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३७ ॥	*yadyapy ete na paśyanti lobhopahata-cetasaḥ* *kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ mitra-drohe ca pātakam*
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् । कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३८ ॥	*kathaṁ na jṇeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivartitum* *kula-kśaya-krtaṁ doṣaṁ prapaśyadbhir janārdana*
कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः । धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ३९ ॥	*kula-kśaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ* *dharme naṣṭe kulaṁ kṛtsnam adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta*
अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः । स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥ ४० ॥	*adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ* *strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ*
संकरो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च । पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४१ ॥	*saṅkaro narakāyaiva kula-ghnānāṁ kulasya ca* *patanti pitaro hy eṣām lupta-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ*
दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसंकरकारकैः । उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४२ ॥	*doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānāṁ varṇa-saṇkara-kārakaiḥ* *utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ*

TRANSLATION

(36) O Kṛṣṇa by killing these aggressors sin will surely come upon us; therefore it is not proper of us to slay the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra along with our family members; since how by slaying our own kinsmen will we be happy.

(37) O Kṛṣṇa although these men their hearts afflicted by greed do not see the sinful reaction in quarreling with friends and the crime of destroying family members; why should we not refrain from this sinful act understanding this grevious crime of destroying family members.

(38)

(39) With the destruction of the family the spiritual traditions of the family perish forever; when spiritual values are destroyed then unrighteousness predominates the entire society.

(40) O Kṛṣṇa, when unrighteousness is predominant then women in the family become degraded and from the degradation of womanhood O Kṛṣṇa; undesirable progeny comes into existence.

(41) Such undesirable population certainly creates a hellish situation for both the family and the destroyers of the family. Their anscestors certainly fall down due to the cessation of performing offerings of food and water.

(42) Such heinous deeds by all those destroyers of the family gives rise to a population of undesirable progency completely eradicating the time honored spiritual tradtions of the family and nobilty of lineage.

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Commentary:

Verse 36:

It could possibly be accepted what Arjuna has stated regarding others on the battlefield; but for the wicked sons of Dhritarastra led by Duryodhana who have tried to harm the Pandavas in various ways should be slain immediately. In Vedic scriptures six aggressors may be rightfully slain at anytime. One who administers poison, one who commits arson, one who attacks with deadly weapons, one who steals wealth, one who usurps property and one who kidnaps a wife. The sons of Dhritarastra have committed these heinous acts of aggression against the Pandavas. The word *atatayinah* meaning aggressors can also be applied as criminals and such criminals committing any of the six aggressions can be rightfully slain. So the sons of Dhritarastra should be slain without any hesitation or compunction; but in rebuttal Arjuna is saying that sin would be accrued and hell would be the punishment as a result of slaying one's relatives. There is no reward in this world or the next for such an action; therefore it would be improper to execute this. The word *hi* means certainly and this augments this assertion. By addressing Lord Krishna with the

vocative *Madhava* meaning the husband of the goddess of fortune indicates that as the husband He is the progenitor of the family not the destroyer of the family and that Arjuna should also not act contrarily to this.

Verses 37 and 38:

The Vedic scriptures declare that those who commit the following six types of crimes: arson, poisoning, assaulting with weapons, stealing one's wealth, usurping one's land or kidnapping one's wife, are aggressors. Duryodhana and the Kauravas were definitely aggressors having committed all six offences against the Pandavas beginning with arson. The slaying of aggressors is justifiable and the Vedic scriptures state that one should slay an aggressor coming with the intention of committing a criminal act without hesitation and that the slayer of such an aggressor incurs no sin whatsoever. This is being answered by the verse and a half beginning with: *sin alone etc.* The text which states *one should kill* belongs to what is called an *Artha Shastra* which is a scripture dealing with the rules and laws regarding wealth. *Artha Shastra* is considered less authoritative than *Dharma Shastra* which are scriptures dealing with righteousness. *Dharma Shastra* is superior to *Artha Shastra.* As it is stated by the sage Yajnavalkya: *when two scriptures differ the one whose conclusion is the most reasonable and most logical is to be considered superior.* This is the understanding. Therefore by the slaying of preceptors etc., although they are aggressors, Arjuna states that sin shall be incurred because such slaying is unwarranted and unrighteous according to *Dharma Shastra*. There can be no happiness from this. This is being given by: How can we adopt this course of action?

Arjuna argues that although Duryodhana and the Kauravas, being deprived of all discrimination, are determined to fight; why should we who are wise and prudent become degraded as well by such sinfulness? We should resolve not to engage in this battle.

Here Arjuna addresses Krishna by the vocative *Janardana* meaning the remover of ignorance of His devotees. In that context, why should they not refrain themselves from such ignorance especially being cognizant of the implications of such unrighteousness?

Verse 39:

When the spiritual traditions and spiritual values are destroyed in society, unrighteousness predominates and the surviving family members become degraded. The women and children not being properly protected are thus overcome by the realities of basic survival and become victims of unrighteousness.

The evil consequences of war are described in detail with this verse beginning *kula-kshaye pranasyanti.* The compound word *kula-dharmah* meaning the righteous family traditions prescribed in Vedic rites such as the fire ceremony *agnihotra* and others of this nature due to the destruction of the dynasty causes a lack of qualified family members knowledgeable enough to have them performed. When *dharma* or righteousness is absent then *adharma* unrighteousness appears

apprehending the remaining dependants along with the whole family destroying the foundations of society.

Verse 40:

The sinfulness alluded to in the previous verse leads to the degradation of the females in the family is being described here. When *adharma* or unrighteousness controls the decorum of a dynasty, the females in the family unavoidably become unchaste and their wombs subsequently become contaminated. Because their husbands have violated the injunctions of the scriptures and engaged themselves in committing sinful activities by the destruction of the dynasty, the females of the family without proper guidance and adequate protection will become depraved and wanton disregarding the etiquette of morality and decorum and thus females of the family will soon become degraded. From this polluted and degraded position arises undesirable progeny. The purpose of Arjuna addressing Lord Krishna by the vocative *Varshneya* is to remind Him that He took birth in the exalted royal Vrsni dynasty and as such should be fully aware of all these things.

Verse 41:

The undesirable progeny leads to intermingling of castes and the ancestors of these destroyers of the family fall from heaven as they are deprived of their periodic ritual offerings of food and water. The anscestors suffer because there is no descendant qualified to perform the propitiatory rites prescribed in Vedic scriptures such as *shraddha* and *tarpana.* . Being deprived of these oblations due to the absence of qualified progeny as a result of destruction of the family structure the ancestors fall down from heaven and go directly to the hellish abodes.

Verse 42:

The sinfulness referred to in the previous verse is being concluded in this verse. *Jati-dharma* refers to the duties of the *kshatriyas* and others. *Kula-dharma* refers to the traditional practices observed by a particular family. *Utsadayate* means when these are eradicated. The use of the word *cha* meaning 'also' indicates that *ashrama-dharma* which is the rules of righteousness governing the relationship between *brahmana* the spiritual order*, ksatriya* the warrior order*, vaishya* the mercantile order *and shudra* the worker class, are included here as well.

Arjuna describes the misery experienced for those who are responsible for causing this intermixture of castes. Due to these evils the essential duties prescribed in the Vedic scriptures for the four castes which are the authorized and proven means for leading humanity to the highest good and which are faithfully instructed by holy sages and spiritual masters are all forsaken.