

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 3: Chapter 1, Verses 1-7

(May16 –May 22, 2018)

Please Note: Click Anywhere On The Two Figures Below to Listen to The Above Verses

ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

*dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya*

सञ्जय उवाच

sānjaya uvāca

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसंगम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

*dṛṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānikam vyūḍham duryodhanas tadā
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā rājā vacanam abravīt*

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

*paśyaitāṁ pāṇḍu-putrāṇām ācārya mahatīm camūm
vyūḍhām drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā*

अत्र शूरामहेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः॥४॥

*atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭas ca drupadaś ca mahā-rathah*

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित् कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरुपंगवः ॥ ५ ॥

*dhr̥ṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ kāśirājaś ca vīryavān
purujit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ*

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

*yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta uttamaujāś ca vīryavān
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ*

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७ ॥

*asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvijottama
nāyakā mama sainyasya sañjārtham tān bravīmi te*

TRANSLATION

- (1) Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya what did my sons desirous of battle and the sons of Pāṇḍu do after assembling at the holy land of righteousness Kurukṣetra ?
- (2) Sañjaya said: At that time King Duryodhana after seeing the army of the Pāṇḍavas arranged in military phalanx approaching near his respected preceptor Dronācārya spoke these words.
- (3) O respected preceptor, please behold the mighty army of the Pāṇḍavas arranged in military phalanx by your intelligent disciple, Dhṛṣṭadyumna the son of Drupada.
In these military divisions are great bowmen equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle such as
- (4) Sātyaki, King Virāṭa and the mighty chariot warrior Drupada.
- (5) Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna, the powerful King of Kāṣī, Purujit, Kuntibhoja and King Śaibya are the noblest of men.
- (6) The valiant Yudhāmanyu, the courageous Uttamaujā, Abhimanyu the son of Subhadṛā, and the sons of Draupadi; certainly are all mighty chariot warriors.
- (7) O best of the twice born brāhmaṇas please note those who are especially qualified amongst us to lead my military forces, for your information I am naming them.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1JujB-HPpHCr1SpkxaCEhtflbk6FEECWn>

Commentary:

Verse 1: Srimad Bhagavad-Gita begins with Dhritarastra asking Sanjaya: What did my sons and the sons of Pandu, assembled at the righteous land of Kuruksetra, do? Now the question that arises is what was the necessity for Dhritarastra to ask Sanjaya, his minister, as to what did they do; when he himself in the same verse says: they are assembled desirous of battle. The reason he is asking is because Kuruksetra is the land of righteousness.

Dhritarastra was thinking: Kuruksetra is famous as the land of sacrifice for the demigods and also the abode of *brahma-jnana*, knowledge of the Ultimate Truth for all living entities. He was worried that under the potent influence of Kuruksetra's righteous land, his sons would have decided to return half of the kingdom back unto the sons of Pandu. Or is it that the sons of Pandu fearing that the destruction of a dynasty is an unrighteous act in a holy place like Kuruksetra and have decided that it's best to retire to the forest and live as renunciates for the rest of their lives?

Usage of the word *mamakah* and *pandavah* in referring to his sons and the sons of Pandu indicates disparity and shows that Dhritarastra did not really accept the sons of his deceased brother Pandu as he did his own sons and this reveals his enmity towards them.

Verse 2: Dhritarastra, although blind at birth, was born with an inner eye of knowledge; but due to being overly affectionate and attached to his sons he lost the knowledge of righteousness and thus he was worrying that his sons might return half of the kingdom to the Pandavas who were the rightful heirs. The initiative taken by Duryodhana in approaching his preceptor in archery, the master bowman Drona, shows that internally he was feeling fearful at the sight of the Pandavas' might. So with the pretence of going to offer respect, he approached Drona to conceal this fear.

Verse 3: Duryodhana is thinking that Drona might decline to fight in the battle, out of affection for the Pandavas who had been his best disciples. So trying to create some anger in Drona towards them, Duryodhana sneered and exclaimed: Behold these!, implying that the Pandavas are despicable because they are blatantly disrespecting the acharya by choosing to fight against their own preceptor.

Then to incite Drona further Duryodhana says that the military formation of the Pandava army has been arrayed by another one of his disciples, the intelligent son of Drupada. Duryodhana could have called the son of Drupada by his name Dhristadyumna; but he purposely used *drupada-putra* because it would remind Drona of his bitter enemy, King Drupada, who performed a sacrifice specifically to get a son who would be the slayer of Drona. This son was Dhristadyumna.

Duryodhana is calling Dhristadyumna intelligent because he had learned the science of warfare from the very person he was born to kill. Furthermore Duryodhana is implying that it was imprudent of Drona to teach the science of archery to the very person who was destined to kill him and who was known to be his enemy. Duryodhana's intention in expressing these things is that it is because of Drona's indifference to things that he was aware of and in educating the enemy anyway will be the cause of all the problems they will face in the battle.

Verse 4: Duryodhana's use of the words *atra shurah* in addressing Drona is an innuendo meaning: If you are thinking that because the Pandavas' army commanded by Dhristadyumna are less than ours, and so can be easily defeated and that there is nothing to worry about, you are mistaken. These warriors are all mighty bowmen, the arrows from whose bows can never be thwarted by any enemy. Besides, their expertise in the art of warfare is equal to that of Bhima and Arjuna. Yuyudhana who is also known as Satyaki, Virata and Drupada are distinguished as *maha-ratha* meaning the mightiest of chariot warriors.

Verse 5: The adjective *viryavan* meaning very powerful applies to Dhristiketu the son of Sisupala, Chekitana and the famous King of Kashi. *Purujit* meaning winner of many battles refers to Kuntibhoga while *narapungava* meaning noblest among men qualifies King Saibya.

Verse 6: The adjective *vikranta* meaning valiant qualifies Yudhamanyu and the adjective *viryavan* meaning very powerful qualifies Uttamauja. Saubhadra refers to Abhimanyu the son of Saubhadra by Arjuna. Draupadeya refers to the five sons of Draupadi being Prativindhya, Sutasoma, Srutakirti, Sutanika and Srutasena. The particle *cha* refers to Ghatotkacha the son of Hidimba by Bhima. All these are also certainly *maharathas*. Arjuna and his brothers are not mentioned because it is well known by all that they are all unrivalled *maharathas*. The

characteristics of a *maharatha* are that they can fight single-handedly against 10,000 bow wielding archers and are expert in the science and practice of warfare. An *atiratha* can fight with innumerable warriors up to 10,000. A *ratha* can fight alone against one opponent and a *ardharatha* cannot defeat even a single opponent

Verse 7: It could be postulated that if Duryodhana truly believes that the army of the Pandavas is invincible, then why is he so persistent to fight with them, rather than making peace and agreeing to a truce? Even possessing a doubt in his mind Duryodhana dauntlessly states to the contrary. With the use of particle *tu* inferring contrariness he is affirming his superiority over the Pandava army due to the fact that Drona the instructor of the leaders of both armies in the art of archery and the master of the science of weaponry is in his army fighting against the Pandavas, so under his protection how can there be any question of their army being invincible? You may now hear about the excellence of our warriors, exalted in knowledge, valorous, who have our fullest confidence as they are fighting for us of their own free will. I shall name for you those excellent warriors so you will know who they are and so that you will understand our position. The word *dvijottama* meaning best of the twice born, Brahmins, this being stated indicates a concealed meaning implying that if Dronacharya will not fight then he is merely a Brahmin who is only interested in eating fine food.