

Geeta for the Common Man -VII

Sanjaya the word is much more meaningful and useful to us only when we take the meaning in the implied sense. This is because there is a mythological account that states Sanjaya was the student of Vyaasa. Any number of Sanjayas may be born and gone, but we should understand that the teaching that Vyaasa unfolded through the Geeta still remains as a valid means of knowledge. Only if one were to be a Sanjaya can one appreciate the teaching. Our life should be such that we become or are like Sanjaya. Many more hidden issues are there and readers can spend time enquiring into the possibilities.

So, Dhritaraashtra the blind monarch asks the wise person Sanjaya a question and in the second verse we shall see the answer that Sanjaya gives.

Sanjaya says:

सञ्जय उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसंगम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

drushtvaa tu paandavaaniikam vyuudham duryodhanastadaa .
aacaryamupa sangamya raajaa vacanam abraviit ..2..

Seeing the Paandava army very well arrayed in the broad formation, King Duryodhana going close to the teacher (Drona) spoke these words.

What actually happened in the battlefield, Sanjaya reports to Dhritaraashtra. Well, the few verses that follow clearly highlight the nature of Duryodhana. There is a saying that one generally hears that is, as the cause so the effect. The children of the blind King

Dhritaraashtra, have the qualities and traits of the parents. All of them have the prefix DU, meaning bad or unbecoming, “dur” to their names like Duryodhana, Dusshasana. There seems to be an infectious disease that is prevailing in the Dhritaraashtra family, spreading like an epidemic. This disease is not just a physical disease, which one can take precautionary measures and be away from it.

The disease of arrogance, anger, lust, etc., is like an epidemic carrying the seeds -- the potential to generate them wherever they go and whomsoever they touch. We have already seen the disease of anger being revealed in the very word Dhritaraashtra. We need not mention the Dhritaraashtra, when we are talking about a King, for the King is one who has and rules the kingdom. Despite this, if there is a mention, then it becomes important as to what kingdom is he holding or bearing. He is holding not the actual kingdom or the Kingdom that actually belongs to him, but a kingdom that has befallen his lot, governed by various factors.

Well, here in this verse, we have to take note of certain important issues. It will not surprise anyone if polluted water flows through the tap, when the waters in the reservoir are being polluted. Just as there can be a mixture of things in pollution, or mixture of symptoms in a disease, there can be a mixture of qualities and attributives in an individual. It is not just the person who has these unbecoming qualities becomes afflicted, but then, the whole community with which he identifies. The hallmark or power of this disease is that it affects anyone who is exposed to it. If the head of the family, community, state or nation happens to become afflicted by this disease, definitely the whole lot will suffer. The shining example is that of the family of Dhritaraashtra. The head of the family -the father was born blind, even though endowed with eyes, the mother, blindfolded herself. The progeny born to these people were also blind, and revealed through the prefix “DU.” Thus, the whole lineage of the family is a blind one.

In the Geeta, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says:

yadyadaacarati sreshthah tattadevetaro janah .
sa yat pramaanam kurute, lokastadanuvartate. ..3rd Ch. 21..

“Whatsoever, the leader or head of a family or group does, that alone every one of the followers will do.” “What principle or goal that is set by that person, that will be followed by the rest in the world.”

The first verse pictures for us, transactions of blind Dhritaraashtra, whereas the second narrates the reactions of the King Duryodhana, on seeing the battle array of Paandavas. In the second sloka, the ignorance-lack of discrimination of Duryodhana is being highlighted. Duryodhana, the King of Kings becomes frightened, seeing the disciplined, well-equipped, calm, composed and well-planned battle array of the Paandavas. As the King of Kings, he could have taken a view of the whole situation from the very place he is standing, but that did not happen. He could only see the army standing by the side of Drona. The heart of the sinner becomes ever wrapped in fear and conflict. The moment they see one who is righteous, disciplined, and firmly seated in a healthy value system, they become all the more shaken. Just as fearlessness is the hallmark of a person enjoying a healthy value system, fear is the prime characteristic of a person enjoying false-value-system or an unbecoming value system. We will have to understand the words ‘fear’ and ‘fearlessness’ properly, else instead of being a blessing, the appreciation will turn out to be a curse. Crossing the expressway during busy hours, paying scant care for the signals, with the understanding that nothing will happen as one has always lived a healthy value system, would only be foolhardiness. Not having the heart to do so, is not fear, but simple common sense.

To be continued..