

## 15 GEETA FOR THE COMMON MAN

The Royal family was taking care of the needs of Bhīṣma, by offering patronage. The duty of one who seeks patronage is never to leave the patron high and dry and hence he owes his allegiance to them. A crude translation of one law of Dharma Śāstra could 'be true to your salt.'

The Kaurava king was looking up to Bhīṣma for support and it is the duty of strong and disciplined to provide the needed solace and refuge to the frightened and insecure.

A true warrior is one who does not change his army fatigues on the slightest pretext and that one is prepared to sacrifice one's life for the king or kingdom. Therefore, Bhīṣma had to stand by Duryodhana though his heart was with the Pāṇḍavas, for they were the ones who suffered unjustly at the hands of Duryodhana. They suffered many times on many counts from childhood and were ever on the righteous path.

He sensed that if he did not interfere by blowing the conch and motivating him, anything could have happened to Duryodhana who was on the verge of collapse. Droṇa not responding to Duryodhana's anxiety made Duryodhana press the panic buttons, which one could clearly see on his face. Hence, Bhīṣma had to go to the rescue of the prince.

The eldest in the Kuru lineage (in age, skill, knowledge, respect) for cheering up (Duryodhana) like a lion's roar loudly blew his conch. (Signalling his supremacy in valour, knowledge and authority.)

Bhīṣma's thinking was not totally different from that of Droṇa's. On the other hand, their thinking was almost the same, which was exact opposite of Duryodhana's thinking, hence should have been on the opposite camp. But they still were there with Duryodhana as they were bound by rules of governance of the Kingdom and obeying the commands of the king. Duty was primary to them and they did not hesitate to lay down their lives in the process of execution of their duty, which value the Seer Vyāsa wants to highlight through this verse. Never swerving from duty under any circumstance or at any point of time, is indeed the hallmark of a wise person. Irrespective of the roles one has to play either at home, work, in the society, however unpleasant & hard it may be, one should not swerve from one's duty. On the other hand, one has to perform them cheerfully without conflicts whatsoever. Only then can one gain an effective dynamic frame of mind that can help one accomplish the goal of life.

When Droṇa paid scant attention to Duryodhana's grievances, Bhīṣma knew that if he also were to ignore him, what would be the fate of the prince. Bhīṣma also knew that Duryodhana was looking up to him for protection, which was very clear when the prince commanded, 'therefore, may you all from all directions protect Bhīṣma alone.' Keeping these in mind, Bhīṣma jumped into action, for it is said, any delay can turn even nectar into poison.

The next five verses elaborate on what happened when Bhīṣma blew the conch

13. tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bhéryaśca paṇavānakagomukhāḥ .  
sahasaivābhya hanyanta sa śabdāsa tumulo'bhavat ..

Thereafter conches, kettledrums, double-drums, cymbals and trumpets were sounded together. The sound generated was tumultuous.

Once Bhīṣma, the supreme commander and elder of the Kaurava army roaring like a lion, blew the conch, his immediate juniors, the rank and file of the army blew their conches and sounded various instruments they carried. The sound generated was loud, but not so loud as to call it war cry, as we shall see in the verses to come.

It calls for a mind free from regrets and guilt to work effectively, however proficient one may be. Proficiency gets translated into efficiency only through the mind that is relatively free from conflicts, which cannot be there as long as a person values a life-style not having the backing of righteousness. The Kaurava army was not lacking proficient warriors, but then, they were all full of regrets and guilt, except of course a few wise people who were still there in the Kaurava army like Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpā, Karṇa, etc. Nevertheless, the confidence and state of mind of a handful of people, in the midst of millions of warriors would not make very great difference in the state of affairs. In fact, but for these few stalwarts the sound generated would not have been as it was labelled as tumultuous. It could have been at best just nuisance value, but nothing to be worried, like children blowing their trumpets & making noise.

How can the Kaurava army full of fear in their hearts because of their inner conflicts, face the enemy that is backed by righteousness and having Lord-Śrī Kṛṣṇa on their side? How can they whole-heartedly do justice to any act?

Thereafter what happened is being explained in the next four verses.

14. tataḥ śvetairhayairyukte mahati syandane sthitau .  
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ ..

Thereafter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa & Pāṇḍava (Prince) Arjuna, who were standing in the mighty chariot, yoked with white horses, blew their celestial conches.

The reason why Sañjaya just describes the chariot of Arjuna but not any other is not accidental. This chariot as Sañjaya mentions is not an ordinary one. However, what is so great about a big or mighty chariot being there? Just because a chariot is heavy, does it make any big difference? Well, it is not just heavy because of the material that goes to make it, but the persons seated therein make the difference.

Tradition has made it clear on more than one occasion that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are none other than the two great Seers Nara and Nārāyaṇa. These two seers have performed severe austerities for long time resulting in their becoming very powerful and the Purāṇas reveal that even Indra, king of gods,

ran into problems. To top it, Lord Viṣṇu decided to take the form Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the sole purpose of ending the evil or unbecoming tendencies having raised their ugly heads and started assuming alarming proportions. First, let us see what distinguishing factors make this chariot different from the other chariots.

1. Śrī Kṛṣṇa being seated in the chariot.
2. Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Lord in control of the chariot as the charioteer.
3. Arjuna with all the qualifications seated in the chariot.
4. Hanumān the symbol of power and victory seated on the flag-post.
5. The chariot has four horses.
6. The horses are all white in colour.
7. The chariot being a blessing of the fire God, no one can burn it and it can burn anything and everything around.
8. The blessings of gods and seers were there on Arjuna in the form of weaponry, boons and good wishes.
9. There are four well-known engines of destruction. Of them two engines of destruction, fire and air cannot touch it, being blessed by Vāyu and Agni. The Lord in front takes care of the remaining two engines of destruction waters and weapons. It is an invincible chariot.

Well, behind all these a great truth is being revealed. What it happens to be we shall see in the next issue.