

Chapter XXV

The ten days battle under the Commandership of Bhishma

Twenty fifth chapter describes the events on the battle field on first ten days when Bhishma led Kaurava's army. It begins with a summary of Gitopadesha. It is well known that when Arjuna hesitates to fight on seeing his gurus, relatives and others closely associated with him, Sri Krishna delivered Gitopadesha and made him to realize that everything is under the control of Supreme God and he has to discharge his duty in dedication to him. This message is briefly summarized here. Then follows a detailed description of fighting. An important point of this description is that the role played by Bhima is prominently presented and it is especially pointed out that it is he who was mainly responsible for the victory at all fronts. Another point is that the role played by the younger generation viz, the sons of Draupadi the sons of Virata. Ghatothkacha Abhimanyu is described in greater detail. On the very first day there was confrontation between Drona and Drupada, Satyaki and Krtavarma, Dusyasana and Sahadeva, Vikarnas and the sons of Draupadi. This kind of Dual went on all along. Bhima halted Bhishma, Drona and Bhagadatta. Shalya killed Uttara Kumara the son of Virata. Bhishma killed Sveta. Karna did not participate in the battle so long as Bhishma was the commander as he was humiliated by Bhishma as ardharatha. Dhristadyumna confronted Bhishma on the second day. Bhima and Arjuna did not confront him out of reverence.

Sri Krishna takes Chakrayudha

On the third day when Sri Krishna found that Arjuna is dealing with Bhishma leniently he himself took his Chakrayudha and proceeded towards Bhishma raising his arms. On seeing this both Bhishma and Arjuna appealed to him and Sri Krishna withdrew. According Mahabharatha Sri Krishna took Chakrayudha on the 3rd day and proceeded raising his arms on the 9th day These two are stated together here. Holding chakra was intended to justify Bhishma's statement that he will make Sri Krishna to take his Chakrayudha, Then Bhishma and Arjuna fought bitterly. Bhishma killed ten thousand charioteers and withdrew for the day. On the fourth day Bhima killed twenty five sons of Dhritarashtra. Duryodhana was heavily hit by the arrows of Bhima and was profusely bleeding. Duryodhana expressed his dejection to Bhishma. Bhishma told him that Pandavas are not ordinary men. They are the deities born to remove the burden of evil men on the earth. Duryodhana did not take it seriously. Bhishma gave him certain medicinal plants. He applied the same and resumed the war next day. On the fifth day a fierce battle was again resumed. Dhristadyumna employed Sammohana astra and made the brothers of Duryodhana unconscious. Drona employed Vijnana astra and revived them. Dhristadyumna and Krtavarma bitterly fought against each other. Bhurisrava killed ten sons of Satyaki. On the sixth day Bhishma and Arjuna bitterly fought against each other. On the seventh day Bhima destroyed the chariot of Bhishma. Bhagadatta attacked Bhima. Bhima's son Ghatothkacha intervened. He assumed four forms, entered into four elephants viz., Airavata, Arjuna, Vamana, and Mahapadma and killed the elephant

Supratika and Bhagadatta. On eight day Iravanta son of Ulupi killed six brothers of Sakuni. Duryodhana asked Alambusa to attack Iravanta. Iravanta took the form of a snake and Alambusa took the form of Garuda and killed him. On seeing this Ghatothkacha attacked Alambusa. He ran away. Then Duryodhana himself confronted Ghatothkacha. At this stage Drona, Shalya, Ashvattama, Kripa, Krtavarma arrived. Ghatothkacha threw a large number of arrows from over the sky. Drona became unconscious. Kauravas away. Duryodhana asked Bhishma as to how to defeat Ghatothkacha. Bhagadatta confronted Ghatothkacha. He threw the weapon Sula on him. Bhima also joined the fighting. He stopped Bhagadatta's Supratika elephant. Krishna also arrived with Arjuna to take away his Vaisnava Astra. Bhagadatta ran away. During that night Duryodhana went to Bhishma and told him that he is not doing his best and is lenient to Pandava army. Bhishma said excepting Shikandi he will kill the entire Panchala army. On the 9th day Bhishma started fighting fiercely he killed fourteen thousand soldiers of Panchala, Karusa etc. Abhimanyu proceeded towards Bhishma. Alambusa prevented him. Drona killed Sankha the son of Virata. Finding that Bhishma is furious and there will be large destruction of their army Yudhishtira with his brothers and Sri Krishna approached Bhishma at night and asked him to tell the way in which he could be killed. In a way Pandavas desired to take his permission to kill him. He told them that placing Shikandi before him they can kill him.

Arjuna throws arrows at Bhishma from behind Shikandi

On the tenth day Shikandi stood in front of Bhishma and Arjuna stood behind him. Dushyasana also stood before Bhishma to protect him. Bhima halted Drona, Ashvatthama, Duryodhana, Bhagadatta, and Kripa Shalya. Yudhishtira was halted by Shakuni, Dhristadyumna was halted by Jayadratha. Pushing aside Shakuni and others, Pandavas, Virata, and Drupada went near Bhishma. Protected by Arjuna Shikandi threw arrows at Bhishma. Bhishma did not hit back. Arjuna destroyed the bow of Bhishma. Yudhishtira and all others also threw arrows at him. He fell on the ground. Bhima rushed at Bhishma. Keeping their weapons all others also went near Bhishma. He instructed them to their camp and they returned. Next day they came. Bhishma asked for water. Arjuna employed Varunastra and gave him water; He had already given the pillow of three arrows. Bhishma advised Duryodhana to realize the strength of Pandavas and the support of Sri Krishna to them and make peace with them. However, Duryodhana returned without saying anything. Dhritarashtra who came to know all this through Sanjaya felt very unhappy.