**Episode 22 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 22)**

**TOPICS:** The symbolic meaning of the **Bhagavad Gita's** opening with **Dhruthrashtra's** name, the importance of escaping ignorance and selfishness, and the lesson of seeking the love of good people while avoiding the affection of the wicked.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Dhruthrashtra**, **Sanjaya**, **Pandavas**, **Kauravas**, **Dharma** (righteousness), **Krishna**, **Vidura**, **Duryodhana**, **Abhimana** (affection/pride), **Vyuha** (war formation)

**Jai Srimannarayana!**

**Priya bhagavadbandhus,**

**Bhagavad Gita** starts by mentioning a blind man. That’s because the human race should emerge from blindness and approach the light.

thamaso ma jyotirgamaya

We have to emerge from darkness and enter into light. We emerged from our mother’s womb by breaking through the darkness, to see the light in this world. However, after coming onto this earth, we are falling back into “darkness.” Which kind of darkness? We are falling into the darkness of ignorance. We are falling into the darkness of selfishness and the darkness of hypocrisy. We are falling into the darkness of attachment and the darkness of cheating others. We must come to the light from this darkness. “I only care about my happiness, my selfish motives, I don’t care about what happens to others,” this is Dhruthrashtra’s instinct. This instinct should subside within us. “I have to enjoy others’ wealth as well. I should drive away everyone and enjoy everything alone”, this is Dhruthrashtra’s instinct. We should come out of this darkness into light. The purpose of Bhagavad Gita is to take us towards light, to mentor us in such a way that we can happily enjoy being in the light. That is why, as we must rise from our current stage, Bhagavad Gita starts by mentioning Dhruthrashtra. We should introspect what this stage is like. We can understand through the first verse.

In the first verse, **Dhruthrashtra** asks **Sanjaya**...

dharma kshethre kurukshethre samavetha yuyuthsavaha |

mamakah pandavas chaiva kim akurvatha sanjaya! ||

“Hey **Sanjaya**, with the intention of waging war, **Pandu’s** sons, **Pandavas**, and my sons, **Kauravas**, have assembled at **Kurukshetra**.” “It is **dharmakshetra**, a land where righteousness flourishes. Did they behave accordingly?”

kim akurvatha

He asked, “What did they do?” We can understand his selfish nature by the way he segregated the progeny (into his sons vs Pandu’s sons).

Mamakaha

With one word, ‘my’ people, Dhruthrashtra showed favoritism to his 100 sons.

Pandavaschaiva

Others, Pandavas as well, as if not even wanting to consider them.

Actually, he shouldn’t speak like that. They are his brother **Pandu’s** sons. They are also like his sons, right! He should have asked, “What did all our people do?” Saying ‘**mamakaha**’, he hugged his 100 sons with his possessive hands and turned away from the rest (**Pandavas**). It’s clear that he was disassociating himself from **Pandavas**. Saying “**pandavascha**,” he turned his face away and rejected them.

What was the result? From among those that this blind and wicked person hugged, not a single person survived. Everyone perished, alas. What do we learn from this? We should not become recipients of vicious people’s love. Never reach a state where a malicious person thinks of you as their own. If they look at us and say ‘you are also in our team’ – that’s it, we will be finished. If he puts one of his hands on our shoulder, we also will turn into ashes. That’s why, don’t try to earn their favor or love. This is what the first **sloka** tells us.

Mamakaha – not one survived.

Pandavaschaiva – rejected by Dhruthrashtra, at least these five, Pandavas, survived.

Even if bad people spurn us, it’s for our own good. It means we are fortunate to be on this earth for some more time, we will be alive for some more time. That’s why all five **Pandavas** survived happily without excessive danger.

Stay away from evil people. This is what we learn from **Dhruthrashtra’s** example. From a different angle, there is a great man who thought **Pandavas** as **mama pranaha** (my life). That was **Sri Krishna**. When **Sri Krishna** took the role of a peace messenger, **Kauravas** readied their houses, hoping He might visit. Instead, **Sri Krishna** went to **Vidura’s** home, ate banana peels and then went on His way. **Duryodhana** got angry. So, he planned to insult **Sri Krishna**. He ordered that no one should stand in honor of **Sri Krishna**. They asked, “How can we stay like that, disrespecting **Sri Krishna**?” He responded, “Don’t even look at the entrance to the assembly hall. Only look at me, and do whatever I do.” Everyone in the assembly agreed. They stayed focused on **Duryodhana** instead of the doorway through which **Sri Krishna** would enter. As soon as **Sri Krishna** stepped inside, **Duryodhana**, who was sitting on his throne, as if out of reflex, rose upon seeing Lord - with folded hands, he bowed his head. Since **Duryodhana** ordered everyone to copy him, everyone also stood up, expressed ‘**Namaste**’ with folded hands, and bowed their heads. “Hmm, the whole plan was wasted,” thought **Duryodhana**. Thus, he decided to insult **Sri Krishna** at least with his words. With this intention, he asked **Sri Krishna**, “You came with a message. When you come to us with some work, shouldn’t you accept our hospitality? Instead you went elsewhere!”

Kimardham vrushala bhojanam?

“I thought you had big eyes. Your name is Pundarikaksha (one with wide, lotus-like eyes). Did you become blind?” “We are all standing in front of our houses to welcome you with purnakumbhas (welcoming pots of water).” “You ignored all of us and went to that Vrushala’s (Vidura’s) house. Why did you go and dine there?”

If He was really on a peace mission, **Sri Krishna** should have simply said, “He is a friend. I was here anyway. So, I thought I would visit him too. He pleaded with me to eat, so I ate there.” If He had said this, it would have been fine. However, **Sri Krishna** didn’t say that. He told **Duryodhana** “Don’t you know at least this much about politics? You call yourself a king?! Only in name! Don’t you even know this simple rule?” “In an enemy’s house, we shouldn’t even drink water, do you know why?” “While offering milk to your enemy with love and good intention, if he dies for some unrelated reason, people will blame you, thinking you poisoned him. Thus, you should never be hospitable to your enemy.” “Don’t you even know this standard? That’s why I didn’t come to your house. I went to **Vidura’s** home, ate there and came here.”

**Duryodhana** became very angry. **Duryodhana** asked, “Are we your enemies?”

pandavan dvishase rajan

Sri Krishna asked “Hey Duryodhana, do you hate Pandavas?”

**Duryodhana** responded, ”Yes. **Pandavas** are my cousins. There is property commonly inherited by us, about which we may have some differences. Such fights are common between brothers.” “However, what is the enmity between You and us? Why are you calling us your enemies?”

dvishadannam na bhokthavyam dvisham chaiva na bhojayeth

Sri Krishna told Duryodhana, “You should not go to the enemy’s house or eat there. You shouldn’t offer food to the enemy.” Duryodhana said “What is the enmity between us?” Sri Krishna responds...

pandavan dvishase rajan

you hate Pandavas.

Duryodhana says, “So! What’s wrong? We already told you why.”

Sri Krishna replies...

mama pranahi pandava

the 5 Pandavas are my pancha pranas, five life forces.

“If one says he loves a person but hates his **pranas**, that’s considered madness. **Pandavas** are my **pranas**.” Saying so, **Sri Krishna** included all five **Pandavas** as his own. That’s why, **Pandavas** are regarded as...

krushna nadhascha pandavaha

owned by Sri Krishna.

krushna pranaha

they are His life.

For **Pandavas**, **Sri Krishna** is everything. He is their life. He is their master. They comply by His orders. **Pandavas** thought, “We know nothing other than **Sri Krishna**.” They were great, blessed, to think like that. They were recipients of **Sri Krishna’s** love.

Thus, if you become a recipient of a good person’s love, you will be uplifted. Even if it requires great effort, behave in a way that a good person can think of you as his own. Don’t conduct yourself in a way that a good person thinks of you to be different from him. **Sri Krishna** told **Kauravas**, “You are my enemies.” Not one of them survived. That’s why, don’t conduct yourself in a way that good people talk to you harshly. Behave in a way that they love you. Their love should become our home. This is termed, ‘**abhimana vasathi**.’ If their love becomes our home and we live in it, it becomes a safe haven for us.

We learn this from **Dhruthrashtra’s** attitude in the first **sloka**, ‘**mamakaha pandavaha**’. **Dhruthrashtra** embraced his 100 sons and became the reason for their end. He rejected **Pandavas**, and hence, they lived happily. Try to earn the love of good people. If bad people reject you, consider it a blessing and live happily. This is what’s conveyed by the first **sloka**, verse of **Bhagavad Gita**. **Dhruthrashtra’s** selfish nature becomes obvious with this **sloka**. **Dhruthrashtra** thus questioned **Sanjaya**. Whatever **Sanjaya** responds, is the rest of **Bhagavad Gita’s** instruction.

**Sanjaya** said, “O king, your question - how did everyone react? **Bhishma** fell injured? Did they just stand there? Doing nothing at all?” “No one imagined **Bhishma** being vanquished on the battlefield! You want to know what they were doing, right? Well, let me tell you.” “Where do I begin? Since you’re enquiring, let me narrate from the outset of the war..” “Everyone, **Pandavas** and **Kauravas**, came to the battlefield with their armies. Both **Pandavas** and **Kauravas** planned their **vyuhas** (war formations).” “When your son, **Duryodhana**, saw **Pandavas’** tactical maneuvers, he became petrified. Let me tell you what he did then.” Saying so, **Sanjaya** starts recounting from the first day. Let’s listen to what **Sanjaya** said.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**