**Episode 23 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 23)**

**TOPICS:** Sanjaya's narration to **Dhruthrashtra**, the contrast between the **Kaurava** and **Pandava** armies, the analysis of **Duryodhana's** disrespectful approach to his guru, **Dronacharya**, and the meaning behind not naming **Duryodhana** in the **Bhagavad Gita**.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Sanjaya**, **Dhruthrashtra**, **Duryodhana**, **Pandavas**, **Kauravas**, **Dronacharya**, **Dhrishtadyumna**, **Vyuha** (war formation), **Sanskrit**, **Guru**, **Puranas**

**Jai Srimannarayana!**

**Priya bhagavad bandhus,**

**Bhagavad Gita** starts with **Sanjaya’s** narration. The second verse of the first chapter, **Arjuna Vishada Yoga**, describes what **Sanjaya** is narrating to King **Dhruthrashtra**.

**Sanjaya uvacha, Sanjaya** says...

drushtva: thu pa:ndava:ni:kam vyu:ddam duryo:dha:nas thada: |

a:cha:ryam-upasangamya ra:ja: vachanam-abravi:th ||

**Sanjaya** narrates to **Dhruthrashtra**: The war formations of both **Pandavas** (sons of king **Pandu**) and **Kauravas** (sons of **Dhruthrashtra**) are in readiness.

The **Pandavas'** army is well-disciplined and intelligent. They can foresee things. However, the **Kauravas'** army lacks discipline because it is a conglomeration of kings and their troops from different regions. Therefore, each unit has individuality and ego, its own standards, and acts independently. No matter how many diverse battalions join forces, there should be only one unanimous commander systematically leading the entire army. All others should listen to him. However, in the **Kauravas'** army, no one seemed to conform to such discipline. They generally exercised free will.

However, **Pandavas'** army is different. The commander of the **Pandavas'** army is **Dhrishtadyumna**, who always followed instructions given by **Sri Krishna**. Hence, all members of his army strictly obey his orders. The commander of the **Kauravas'** army is the great grandsire, **Bhishma**, an eligible, intelligent, disciplined, capable, grand, and invincible warrior... but his instructions should be obeyed by all the army members, isn’t it? The **Kauravas'** army was 11 **akshauhini** in size, while the **Pandavas'** was only 7 **akshauhini**. Despite this, the **Kauravas** felt that the **Pandavas'** army was much larger because of the **vyuhas** (tactical army formations) they deployed.

We are mostly familiar with **Padma Vyuham**, used for capturing **Abhimanyu**. There are many more **vyuhas** like **Garuda Vyuham**, an army formation resembling an eagle ready to fly with outspread wings, and **Suchi Vyuham**, an army formation resembling a swiftly piercing needle. Therefore, **vyuhas** are indications of an army’s strike strategy. The **Pandavas**, with their intelligence, followed a clever strategy in army formations such that their army appears larger than it actually is. It seems the **Kauravas'** strategy was not effective. This is true. The **Kauravas'** army was struck with fear as soon as they saw the **Pandavas'** army.

This is expressed clearly from **Sanjaya’s** description. That is the beauty of **Sanskrit**. Each letter delivers a specific emotion. People often discount the importance of language. No! The beauty of the language comes from each letter of the language. For example, ‘**thu**’ is a beautiful letter. **Amara Kosam** clearly explains how the preceding word changes following the word that ends with ‘**thu**’.

thu antha; adha adi

adha indicates the beginning of a new scene.

‘**Thu**’ at the end of a word indicates the beginning of a new scene, disconnecting the word from the previous scene. **Sanjaya** narrated ‘**Drushtva: thu**’, meaning “as soon as he saw,” implying “it’s already over.” As soon as he saw it, **Duryodhana** got scared! What did he see?

pandavani:kam

the war formations of Pandavas.

How was it?

vyu:dam

with a variety of different formations.

duryodhanas thada:

Sanjaya asked, “Do you know what Duryodhana did then?”

acharyam-upasangamya

he dismounted from his chariot and raced to his guru. (What a visual Sanjaya created with words!)

It is good to approach a **Guru**, but how should one do it?

vinitha vesho praveshtavyaha

vinitha veshena praveshtavyaha asrama padaninama

praveshtavyaniha asrama padaninama

(from the great poet, Kalidasa)

When visiting Elders, wise ones, we should be humble, without pride and false ego. “However, your son (**Duryodhana**) was not that way.”

raja vacanam-abravith

he referred to himself as Raja (King), not mentioning his own name. He simply introduced himself as what he wanted to be addressed as. How does he want to be addressed? Duryodhana likes to be called “raraju” (king of kings). Even more, the current king, Dhruthrashtra, likes to call his son raraju! Dhruthrashtra was still the king. Duryodhana was not crowned as King yet. However, he declared himself King and started acting as one! He announced Karna as King for Anga Desam despite lacking any declarative authority. Just as a baby is covered in amniotic fluid, Dhruthrashtra’s eyes, mind, and brain were masked by love for his son. Thus, he accepted everything Duryodhana did, without question. Otherwise, Duryodhana would threaten Dhruthrashtra with suicide. Because of the fear resulting from immense affection towards his son, Dhruthrashtra would yield to his son.

**Dhruthrashtra** also wanted his son, **Duryodhana**, to become King and so, kept calling him “**raraju**.” **Sanjaya** warned **Dhruthrashtra**, “Your son, **Duryodhana**, whom you think of as ‘**raraju**’, is full of pride because he was fed by your intention of seeing him as king.”

acharyam-upasangamyaha

Duryodhana approached Guru Dronacharya.

**Dronacharya** is Guru for both **Pandavas** and **Kauravas**, training them in weaponry.

Whenever a human experiences sorrow, fear, or predicament, he or she must visit a **Guru’s** abode. This is a fundamental principle. However, there is a process for approaching a **Guru**. **Vedas** define that process.

sa guru mevadhi gaccheth

we should visit a Guru with inquisitiveness, as a seeker with humility, without hidden expectations.

raja vacanam-abravith

however, Duryodhana visited with pride thinking himself as a king.

What did he do after reaching? **Duryodhana** started speaking. However, we will never find **Duryodhana uvacha** (said by **Duryodhana**, aka **Suyodhana**) in **Bhagavad Gita**. Why? It is not good to even think or utter certain names! Some people, we do not call by name out of respect. Others, we do not call by name out of fear. Still others, we do not call by name because we might become attached to their sins. Thus, **Duryodhana** is not mentioned by name anywhere in **Bhagavad Gita**, so that the tongue does not get influenced by bad instincts. Starting from the 3rd verse, “**pasyaitam pandu puthranam**” was actually said by **Duryodhana**.

**Duryodhana** approached his **Guru**, bowed unto him and said...

pasya etha:n pa:ndu puthra:na:m a:cha:rya mahathi:m chamu:m |

vyu:dda:m drupada puthre:na thava sishye:na dhi:matha:

The surface level meaning of this verse is different from what is hidden within. Each word **Duryodhana** used in this verse is to find faults in his **Guru**. Instead of serving his **Guru** or expressing his doubt, **Duryodhana** started pinpointing faults of his **Guru**. First, he says...

pasya...ethan chamum acharya mahathim pasya

Oh Guruji, look at that great army!

vyu:ddam drupada puthre:na

how awesome, the strategy planned by Drupada’s son, Dhrishtadyumna, is.

Who is he?

thava sishye:na

he is also your sishya (student).

dhimatha:

he is highly intelligent, see how well he has planned.

This is what we understand at the surface. However, he did not stop there. He began provoking his **Guru** with sarcastic words. Rather than taking blessings from his **Guru** at this point, **Duryodhana** humiliated and abused him, causing sorrow. How? We will learn that in the next sessions.

**Jai Srimannarayana!**