**Episode 28 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 28)**

**TOPICS:** The importance of worshipping scriptures, Duryodhana's fear and grief, the vows of Bhishma and Bhima, the lack of discipline in the Kaurava army, and the contrast with Arjuna's sorrow.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Duryodhana**, **Bhishma**, **Bhima**, **Dronacharya**, **Vows**, **Discipline**, **Arjuna**, **Sorrow**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya Bhagavad Bandhulara,

The words in Bhagavad Gita may sound simple. However, when learning from Elders, one can understand the intended original tattvam (in-depth nature). Bhagavad Gita is God’s upadesam (divine message). If one desires His grace, one needs to worship its physical form, the scripture, with utmost respect. Such worship allows the devata (celestial being) that embodies the scripture, to respond by revealing the meaning to the seeker. That is why in the olden days, the respective scriptures were also worshipped daily along with worshipping archamurthi, the deity form of the Lord. Scriptures were not looked at as mere books, but were treated as worthy of worship. Why? Because only scripture can explain the meaning of these words, and the corresponding devata embodying the scripture can bless seekers.

Our forefathers thus worshipped scriptures and bestowed their meanings to us. We are trying to understand them, bit-by-bit. Our forefathers put tremendous effort in learning them. We have the opportunity to learn without such immense efforts. We are trying to examine a few aspects of chapter one discussing Duryodhana's grief. Duryodhana was frightened to see Bhishma in his army and Bhima in the rival army. We know the reason. Bhishmacharya says that if Sri Krishna was not part of the rival army, then he could fight very well and destroy the entire army. However, why wouldn’t Sri Krishna be in the army on the other side? This is either Bhishma's weakness or devotion towards Sri Krishna, or love towards his people (Pandavas). It could be any reason, but the bottom line is that he would not harm Pandavas.

saktho:ham dhanushe:ke:na nihanthum sarva pa:ndava:n

I can defeat all Pandavas without even adjusting my bow

saktho:ham dhanusha: e:ke:na - nihanthum sarva pa:ndava:n

...only in the absence of Sri Maha Vishnu, the root cause of the entire existence, now in the form of Sri Krishna. Duryodhana thinks this is the weakness of his chieftain, Bhishma. Seeing Bhima in the rival army... Duryodhana remembers Bhima’s vow after Draupadi was disrespectfully dragged to the assembly.. What was the vow?

madhna:mi kaurava satham samare:na ko:pa:th

dussa:sanasya rudhiram na pibha:mi urastha:ha

sanchu:rnaya:mi gadaya: na suyodhanu:ruhu

sandhim karo:thu bhavatha:m nrupathih pane:na

The elder brother is sending Sri Krishna to mediate, the other brothers are talking about a peaceful resolution - but Bhima says...

sandhim karo:thu nrupathihi – let them try to negotiate

Do you know what I will do?

madhna:mi kaurava satham samare: ko:pa:th

I will crush all Kauravas into powder with my mace

dussa:sanasya rudhiram na pibha:m urastha:th

I will rip open Dussasana’s chest and bathe with his blood

sanchu:rnaya:mi gadaya: suyodhanu:ruhu

I will crush the thigh of Suyodhana who asked Draupadi to sit on it

If I don’t do this, then Sri Krishna can go and negotiate with them. This meant that he intended to definitely do everything he declared. He did not stop there.

Bhima told Draupadi on the same day in the assembly...

chanchatbhujabhramitha chanda gada:bhi ga:tha sanchu:rnitho:yugalasya suyo:dhanasya

I will break the thighs of the evil person with my whirling mace

sthyana:vamushti ghana so:nitha so:na pa:nihi uttam sayishyathi kacha:n tava de:vi bhi:maha

Bhima said to Draupadi that he would massage her hair with the blood of Dussasana’s chest.

Even after 13 years, these words were echoing in Duryodhana’s ears as if they were just uttered.

So, everyone in his army looked like **Bhishma**, who would not fight.

Everyone in the rival army looked like Bhima, as if they were ready to take his life..

Thus, Duryodhana, out of fear, approached Dronacharya and expressed himself in many ways. Finally, he says in the 11th verse...

**SLOKA WORD - ayane:shu: cha sarve:shu yattha: bha:gam avastthitha:ha | bhi:shmam e:va:bhi rakshanthu bhavanthas sarva e:va hi ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - (Therefore) let all of you, positioned in your respective divisions, protect Bhishma alone.**

**Duryodhana** feels if **Bhishma** alone can be protected, that’s enough. He tells **Dronacharya** to keep aside other thoughts and tasks, and simply protect **Bhishma** from all directions. Is he the one to tell **Drona**? **Dronacharya** is the one who taught **Duryodhana** the basics of everything, including how to hold a bow and arrow. However, **Duryodhana** is commanding **Drona** on what to do and how to protect **Bhishma**. What could **Drona** do? It wasn’t the right time to correct him in the battlefield. It’s not the time to demotivate or depress anyone in this war. Therefore, poor **Dronacharya** did not speak up, feeling despondent at the stupidity of **Duryodhana**. A series of verses from the first chapter depict the cowardly state of **Duryodhana**. This carried through for almost 9 verses in the first chapter where he displayed cowardice while expressing fear to **Dronacharya**. **Bhishma** was also listening to this, and observing the state of **Dronacharya** and **Duryodhana**. What could he do? **Bhishma** felt that if the leader is demotivated then the whole army will be demotivated as well. So he felt the responsibility of rejuvenating and building **Duryodhana’s** confidence. We can observe this in **Sanjaya’s** words in the 12th verse.

**SLOKA WORD - thasya sanjanayan harsham kuru vruddhah pitha:mahaha | simha na:dam vinadyo:chchaihi sankham dadhmau pratha:pava:n ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - In order to cheer him, the oldest among the Kurus, the magnificent patriarch Bhishma, roared like a lion and sounded his conch loudly.**

He sounded the conch at a very high pitch. Why?

thasya duryo:dhanasya sanjanayan harsham

there is no happiness on his face or enthusiasm in him; if I don’t energize him, things will spiral out of control

sanjanayan harsham

there was a need to inspire and energize him

This is what he did. Thus, we understand that Duryodhana, symbolic of a highly rajasic personality, was undergoing grief. When one experiences grief, one must approach Elders. He approached Drona. One must express his current state. He did. One must listen to advice given. However, he didn’t like it or follow it. This is a sign of his immense pride and ego. That is why Elders did not name the first chapter after the grief of Dhrtarastra or or Duryodhana. It was not named Suyodhana Vishada Yogaha or Duryodhana Vishada Yogaha Prathamodhyayaha. Instead, they named it, Arjuna Vishada Yogaha.

Now, let’s examine the state of Kauravas and the discipline in Pandavas. When Bhishma sounded his conch, the rest of Kauravas had no clue of what was happening in their army. One may question how we can claim this. Let’s listen to 13th verse -

thathaha

as Bhishma sounded the conch

**SLOKA WORD - thathas sankha:s cha bhe:ryas cha panava:naka go:mukha:ha | sahasaiva:bhya-hanyantha sa sabdas thumulo::bhavath ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - Then, conches, drums, kettle-drums, and horns suddenly blared forth, and that sound was a great tumult.**

Everyone randomly sounded their conches, causing chaos, no one knew where everyone was or what was happening.

thumula abhavath

This indicates a lack of discipline in Kauravas. 11 akshauhinis of army, but there was no discipline. Though Bhishma was on their side to rejuvenate them, they were not qualified to receive that encouragement.

Thus, we don’t consider their sorrow as an example. Chapter 1 depicts this. However, Arjuna’s sorrow is worth learning from. To know why, we must observe Pandavas’ disciplined conduct. Let’s try to understand.

Jai Srimannarayana!