**Episode 29 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 29)**

**TOPICS:** The importance of discipline, the difference between the **Pandava** and **Kaurava** armies, the significance of the conch sounds, and the meaning of **Bhagavad Gita** Chapter 1, Verse 14.

**TAGS:** **Bhagavad Gita**, **Discipline**, **Pandavas**, **Kauravas**, **Sri Krishna**, **Arjuna**, **Bhima**, **Dharmaraja**, **Conches**

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya Bhagavadbandhus,

Discipline always makes one victorious. Lack of discipline causes even great personalities to fail. The first chapter of **Bhagavad Gita** clearly exemplifies this aspect. **Kauravas’** army was 11 **akshauhinis**, army consisting of 218,700 warriors in size, while **Pandavas** had only 7 **akshauhinis**. However, **Pandavas’** army operated as an organized, single unit. They all looked upon **Sri Krishna** as their leader and unquestionably followed his lead. **Arjuna** was relatively outgoing, yet humble. Hence, he was given priority after **Sri Krishna**. Then, **Bhima** was next because of his ferocious and impulsive nature. Though **Dharmaraja** was the elder statesman, his inherent quality of encouraging the young to be in front positioned him after **Bhima**. The rest of the army followed. None of them craved fame, nor were they rash. Hence, all **Pandavas** could conduct themselves as a single, collective team. However, **Kauravas** lacked this quality. Each and every one wanted to be at the forefront. They were a flock of indisciplined warriors. We clearly observe this in **Sanjaya’s** words.

In chapter 1 verse 13 of Bhagavad Gita, we see that Kauravas sounded their conches at once, soon after Bhishmacharya sounded his conch.

sa sabdaha thumulo: bhavath

making the whole atmosphere chaotic

The war-initiating sounds from the Kaurava army subsided. The opponents’ (Pandavas) also need to respond, right? Sanjaya describes the captivating response of Pandavas.

In spite of **Dhrishtadyumna** as commander-in-chief and **Dharmaraja** is the eldest amongst **Pandavas**, it was **Sri Krishna** and **Arjuna** who led in the forefront. **Sanjaya** starts with describing their chariot. Chapter 1 **shloka**, verse 14 is wonderful. It is the quintessence of the entire **Bhagavad Gita**.

**SLOKA WORD - thathas sve:thaihi hayair yukthe: mahathi syandane: stthithau | ma:dhavaha Pa:ndava:s chaiva divyau sankhau pradadmathuhu ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - Then, Madhava (Sri Krishna) and the Pandava (Arjuna), seated in a magnificent chariot drawn by white horses, blew their divine conches.**

a nice chariot

a great chariot

with pristine white horses

a well-equipped chariot

Madhava and Arjuna were stationed in this chariot.

their conches were divine

they both sounded their conches as a response to Kauravas

This is the shloka’s superficial meaning, but it summarizes the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita. How?

Let’s understand that later.

First, we can focus on how disciplined Pandavas were.

Responding to Bhishmacharya’s and Kauravas’ conches, these two sounded their conches. Who? First, Sri Krishna and then Arjuna, in sequence. Sri Krishna is addressed with a wonderful name in this shloka. What is it? The name indicates Sri Krishna initiating the sounding of conches…

pa:nchajanyam hrusi:ke:saha

If we want to observe the way these conches sounded, we should understand that each conch had its own signature sound and was named accordingly. Let's examine how.

pa:nchajanyam hrusi:ke:saha

first, Hrishikesha (Sri Krishna) sounded His conch, Panchajanya.

No one spoke until this was complete. As the din of the conch gradually subsided…

de:vadattham dhananjayaha

Dhananjaya (Arjuna) started with his conch, Devadatta.

As soon as the sound was heard, it was identified. “Oh wow, this sound is from Devadatta!”

Devatas, divine souls in God’s administrative force, gifted this conch to Arjuna.

When did they present him this conch?

When Agni Devata, the celestial being controlling fire, devoured Khandava forest, the capable Arjuna protected him.

Arjuna fought against all devatas. None of whom, including the King of devatas, Indra, could defeat him.

Thrilled with Arjuna’s valor, Agni Devata praised and gifted Arjuna with the conch, Devadatta.

Kauravas thought, “Wow, this is not the conch of any common man! It is indeed no ordinary conch!”

As the conch was blown, Kauravas were reminded of its owner’s gallantry.

No one spoke until Devadatta’s resonance diminished.

Earlier, we discussed that Bhima was the ferocious one amongst the brothers. As soon as Arjuna stopped, the mighty Bhima started blaring his conch.

paudram dadmau maha:sankham bhi:ma karma: vruko: daraha

The thunderous sound from this conch reminds one of his qualities, toughness and relentlessness.

Any ordinary conch would have been ground to powder in the hands of Bhima. Hence, handling anything delicate or exquisite by him was out of the question. This conch, Paundra, matches the owner, Bhima, in its ability. Observe its intonation -

POUN-DRAM!

Devadatta is Arjuna’s conch, Panchajanya is Sri Krishna’s; but Bhima’s is PAUNDRAM. The word itself exemplifies the Bhima’s ability.

What is his greatness?

bhi:makarma: vruko:daraha

one who has a huge appetite like vrukam, fire

For instance, when the brothers were in exile, begging for alms while living in **Ekachakrapuram**, a village half was set aside for **Bhima** and the other half was split amongst the rest.

Not giving him even half felt like injustice to Bhima’s ferocious appetite. The name, Paundra, illustrated his capabilities.

As soon as the sound from Bhima’s conch waned, Dharmaraja started blowing his conch. Listening to its victorious sound, everyone identified that it originated from Ananta Vijayam conch. One who owns this conch will always be victorious. There is no scope for defeat.

anantha vijayo:ra:ja kunthi:puthro: yuddhishttiraha

this is Yudhishthira

Whenever he stood in the battlefield, he never took a step back until victory was his. Hence, initially named Dharmaraja, he was titled with the name Yudhishthira.

While his conch sounded, no one came forward. As soon as he stopped...

nakula sahade:vascha

both Nakula and Sahadeva, who were elegant and beautiful, began sounding their conches

The sound from Nakula’s conch, sugho:sham, was highly sonorous. Sahadeva, an admirer of beauty, had a conch named manipushpaka. His conch had a cluster of precious gems dangling from it. Whenever he sounded it, the dancing glittering radiance of those gems reflected on his cheeks like a light show. Everyone who listened to its sound was reminded of that beautiful spectacle.

**SLOKA WORD - ka:syas cha parame:shwa:saha sikhandi: cha maha:ratthaha drushtadyumno: vira:tas cha sa:thyakis cha: para:jithaha drupado: draupade:ya:scha sarvathah prutthivi:pathe: | saubhadras cha maha:ba:huhu sankha:n dadhmuhu prutthak prutthak ||**

**SLOKA MEANING - The great archer king of Kashi, the great warrior Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, the unconquerable Satyaki, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and the mighty-armed son of Subhadra (Abhimanyu) all blew their respective conches, oh King!**

The words “**prutthak prutthak**” are crucial. All the warriors from **Pandavas** army sounded their conches but no two sounded simultaneously. This demonstrated their discipline. After one stopped, the next started. After he stopped, the third warrior started. The fourth started only after the third, and so on. Thus, they all exhibited their discipline. Doing so, what message did they convey to the opposing army?

“Beware! We are all following a well-planned, systematic approach. Watch out!”

“Thus, Oh King! Saghosha, the Pandavas conches resonated for a long time.

If they all had sounded their conches simultaneously, the entire process would have been completed within 3 to 4 minutes. Then a sudden silence would have descended on the whole atmosphere. However, the sound of Pandavas conches kept echoing in sequence, perhaps lasting a few hours. How scared would the other side have been, listening to all these conches’ sounds!

sagosha

What happened?

dha:rthara:shtra:na:m hrudaya:ni vyada:rayath |

it shattered the hearts of all your sons (Kauravas)

Do you know why?

nabhas cha prutthivi:m chaiva thumulo:pyanuna:dayan

sounds from their conches resonated and reverberated around earth and into the skies!

This is an act of the wise. Previously, during Dipavali festivities, elders would buy different types of firecrackers and distribute them equally to the kids. A few foolish, impulsive kids would group all of their firecrackers together and light them. All would burn at once. Within 10 minutes, all their firecrackers would be exhausted. Those children would then sit idle with folded hands. However, an astute kid would just watch and enjoy the show. After everyone else finished bursting their crackers, he would then start. That too, one-by-one - a sparkler, then flower pot, a rocket, twinkling stars, etc. It would take almost two days to exhaust his stock! The other kids would cry, claiming they received less. However, actually, the fire crackers were equally distributed. Because one kid was wise, he would simply watch when others were exhausting their quota and then would start lighting his, one after another. This is the attitude of the astute. Pandavas were clever, wise. Hence, they followed a protocol. This dwindled the Kaurava army morale.

“Hey king, this is the difference between your sons and those children. Even now, it’s not too late!”

However, Dhruthrashtra was not in a position to heed Sanjaya’s advice.

Earlier, we briefly mentioned the importance of chapter 1 shloka 14. It’s wonderful.

It gives the essence of the complete Bhagavad Gita. What is that shloka?

thathas sve:thair hayair yukthe:

mahathi syandane: stthithau |

ma:dhavah Pa:ndava:s chaiva

divyau sankhau pradadmathuhu ||

It is the quintessence of Bhagavad Gita. It encapsulates the entirety of knowledge essential to our understanding.

How? Let’s understand gradually.

Jai Srimannarayana!