**1. Episode Title: Episode 53 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 1, Episode 53)**

**2. Topics & Tags:**

* **TOPICS:** Arjuna's sorrow (Vishada), the role of a guru, the nature of greed (lobha), the consequences of war, the destruction of a dynasty (kula), dharma vs. adharma, the role of women in society.
* **TAGS:** Arjuna, Krishna, Janardana, Kauravas, Pandavas, Duryodhana, Dhrutarasthra, Drona, Bhishma, Karna, Sakuni, Bhagavad Gita, Veda, Sanatana Dharma, Kulam, Varna.

**3. Main Content:**

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavad Bandhus (Dear Devotees of God).

Bhagavad Gita's first chapter is Arjuna Vishada Yoga (the yoga of Arjuna's dejection). This chapter reveals the intense sorrow experienced by Arjuna. With a heavy heart, Arjuna approached Krishna. Whenever grief-struck, it is recommended to approach a guru.

sa: gurume:va:bhigachche:th

Arjuna approached his guru, Krishna, and expressed his grief. When we approach a Guru, we simply need to explain our state of sorrow. We should not propose a solution ourselves or impose our ideas. We should not reference guidelines from scriptures to our gurus. We approach them for advice. Why should we convey our views / ideas? However, Arjuna does exactly this. This is unexpected from Arjuna. Krishna desired that Arjuna should seek advice before He gave His message.

Let us see how Arjuna expresses his grief, in the 38th and 39th verses of the first chapter.

**SLOKA WORD - yadyapye:the: na pasyanthi, lo:bho:pahatha che:thasaha kulakshaya krutham do:sham, mithra dro:he cha pa:thakam SLOKA MEANING - (On our side are) yourself, and Bhishma, and Karna, and Kripa (who is) ever-victorious in battle, and also Ashwatthama, Vikarna, and Saumadatti.**

katham na nge:yamasma:bhihi, pa:pa:d asma:n nivarthithum kulakshaya krutham do:sham, prapasyadbhir jana:rdana !

Arjuna is addressing the Lord – “Oh, Janardana...”

“Kauravas are not able to comprehend the losses of this war. They are all set to wage the war and are confident of their victory.”

“They don’t know that they are not going to win the war.”

“Hence, they are acting as such. Is it not our duty to tell them?”, says Arjuna

yadyapye:the: na pasyanthi If they are unable to see the consequences, what will they do? Kauruvas will lose ultimately, like a moth loses its life over a candle flame. Alas! They are unable to understand. Because their minds are shrouded. With what? Shrouded with soot. What type of soot? lo:bha with greed. Everything is for me, extremely covetous!

Veda (a type of scripture) states that greed is undesirable. Veda teaches, ‘ma: grudhaha’. Never be covetous. Give generously all that is graced to you by God.

However, the greed in us is apahatha (striking), hitting our che:thas (mind). Mind, manas, on its own, is good. In fact, Manas is an instrument that belongs to God. However, our own flaws, greed makes people more and more covetous. “My wealth is not enough. I need to usurp all my neighbors’ wealth as well.”

We may wonder, are Kauravas like that? Who is Arjuna referring to? It is said that his gurus and a:cha:rya:s (spiritual teachers) are also in the army. Are all of them greedy? Was Dronacharya greedy? Or Bhishmacharya? In reality, it is only people like Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana who were greedy. They have a che:thasaha (mind) that is badly hathaha (affected) by lo:bha (greed). However, poor Bhishma and others also acquired this flaw from them without their knowledge. Why? The ones affected by greed are Duryodhana and Dhrutarashtra. Bhishma, Drona and others are well-wishing Elders. They are expected to rectify the greedy ones. If a person is not listening, they have the authority to dole out punishment and correct the person. However, what are they doing? They have taken the duty of protecting the greedy Duryodhana and his army. This is their mistake.

Protecting the complete cohort of greedy people, including Dhruthrashtra, Duryodhana, Sakuni, and Karna, and the kingdom.

lo:bho:pahathaha duryo:dhanaha the one hit by greedy nature is Duryodhana. These Elders have their che:thas on Duryodhana. Hence Bhishma, Drona, et al are also ‘lo:bho:pahatha che:thas’, struck with greed. Thus, Arjuna was correct in referring to them as such in this verse. lo:bho:pahatha chethasaha how do we kill such people now, oh Lord Even more, “Oh Krishna! If we fight this war now...”

kulakshaya krutham do:sham, mithra dro:he cha pa:thakam

we will become responsible for destroying our own kulam (family/dynasty).

It would be analogous to axing the branch of the tree that we are sitting on. I am going to destroy my own family, my own dynasty through this war. Not just that. Many of these kings are my close friends. Due to the war, I will be forced to kill them. If I do that, am I not deceiving my own friends? I will be called mithra-dro:hi (a man who cheats his friends). There is no atonement for the man who betrays his friends. Should I commit such a sin? Such a big sin! Isn’t this common sense?

katham na nge:yamasma:bhihi, pa:pa:d asma:th nivarthithum kulakshaya krutham do:sham, prapasyadbhihi

Kauravas don’t have the sense that they will be destroying their own caste and dynasty. Leave them aside. However, I have that knowledge. We Pandavas have that knowledge. We all, including yourself, have that knowledge. If they are ready for war because they lack this sense, at least we, who have that knowledge, should prevent this war and pursue other activities. Why should we make the same mistake of destroying our own caste, destroying lives with war? It’s fine if they are ready for war out of ignorance. What is the excuse for us, despite knowing everything? It is very wrong! What happens when the dynasty is destroyed? What will be the result of this war? We must know this.

**SLOKA WORD - kula kshaye: pranasyanthi, kula dharma:s sana:thana:ha dharme: nashte: kulam kruthsnam, adharmo: ’bhibhavathyutha SLOKA MEANING - (When the kula, or dynasty, is destroyed, its sanatana, or eternal, practices are lost. When dharma is lost, the whole clan is overcome by unrighteousness.)**

Arjuna thinks he is revealing an ‘important aspect’ in this 40th verse to Krishna. Arjuna is ‘teaching’ the Lord, the personification of dharma (righteous duty) itself. He is ‘teaching’ the Lord whose actions themselves are dharma. What message is he teaching?

kula kshaye: pranasyanthi kula dharma:ha

Each caste has a set of its own dharmas (righteous practices). If these warriors die, what will happen to those practices? Dharmas will all be uprooted. What type of dharmas are these?

sana:thana:ha those that never change.

Some ignorant people say “Castes are man-made, we set our own caste-specific practices.” Arjuna is not saying so in this verse.

kula dharma:ha sana:thana:ha caste-based differences in practices are all eternal. These people know the practices to the core, mastered them, knowing the ins and outs.

If they lose lives in warfare, what is the result? This caste and associated practices will be lost. If dharma (righteous practices) perish, what will happen?

dharme: nashte: kulam kruthsnam, adharmo: ’bhibhavathyutha

If the people knowing dharma and practice perish in the war, then we are left only with people who are not aware of dharma. What is the use of such people living?

dharme: nashte if dharma, righteousness is lost, the entire caste system will be gone.

Adharma (unrighteousness) prevails. adharmo: bhibhavathyutha. When adharma becomes dominant, then what is the purpose of castes even if they remain?

The war we are about to indulge in, brings all these bad consequences. Oh Krishna! Is this apt for us? Should we get ready to do such a negative thing? Should I gear up to do such a bad thing? Alas! Why are You making me perform such an evil act? When adharma becomes prominent, when inappropriate activities find their way into the clans, then…

**SLOKA WORD - adharma:bhibhava:th krushna, pradushyanthi kula sthriyaha SLOKA MEANING - (When unrighteousness prevails, the women of the family become unchaste and corrupt.)**

When the man of the house is no more, the woman has to take care of the household. If due to ignorance, forbidden activities make way into the household. Women might be forced to support households themselves without an earning spouse. Thus, chances of compromising their principles increase. Circumstances might force them to become corrupted. They may stray away from righteousness.

**SLOKA WORD - stri:shu dushta:su va:rshne:ya !, ja:yathe: varna sankaraha SLOKA MEANING - (When women become unchaste, it leads to the intermixing of races.)**

stri:shu dushta:su when women give up principles and indulge in malpractices ja:yathe: varna sankaraha the system of races will get badly mixed up.

In this verse, by Arjuna’s words, we know that the kula (dynasty/family) and varna (social classification) are distinct from each other. We will know about these in detail, sometime later. What are castes? What are races? What is the origin of a caste? What is the origin of a race? Are there separate activities assigned for these castes, races? What are they termed? They are dharmas or a:charas (practices). Who upholds dharmas? It is up to the women to uphold these practices. In essence, a woman is the protector of dharma. As long as we protect her carefully, dharmas will be firmly established. If a woman is unprincipled, dharmas get uprooted. What an important role the woman plays in society! Our Indian society recognizes the woman as the protector of dharma. Hence it is imperative that society takes care of women very well. It is not just for her sake that we need to take care of a woman. It is for the sustenance of society.

Chapter one of Bhagavad Gita reveals this insight. Let us further understand this in greater detail.

Jai Srimannarayana!