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1. Episode Title: Episode 10 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 10)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of protecting women in society, Understanding dharma in different situations, Arjuna's moral dilemma regarding his family, The significance of serving elders for wisdom, The distinction between common and specific dharma

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, women, Draupadi, Bhi:shma, Dro:na, Elders, wisdom, moral duty

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Women are the foundation of human society. Hence, it is everyone's duty to protect women. Protecting women means everyone responsibly safeguards well-mannered women, building a system that enforces good manners in them. This is essential for human society to thrive and should be taken care of. Hence, if you protect women properly, you will be blessed with all good fortune and comforts in life. The land where a woman sheds tears becomes home for all misfortunes. This has to be carefully noted. Hence, our Elders teach us to make sure such a situation doesn’t arise. That's why when the girl is young, parents should take extra care. During middle age, the husband should take care and protect her carefully. And in old age, children should take care of her attentively. This is an important moral given by our Elders. If not implemented, it is said that punishment is deserved.

In the beginning of the second chapter, when Arjuna looked at the opponent’s commander-in-chief Bhi:shma (grandfather), he saw him as his great grandfather. Arjuna felt, ‘oh, how can I fight with my grandfather?’

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SLOKA WORD -

katham bhi:shmam sankhye: yushubhi prathiyo:thsa:ni dro:nam cha

SLOKA MEANING -

How can I fight Dro:na and Bhi:shma with arrows?

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He saw Bhi:shma as his grandfather. Instead, he should have seen him as the person who was watching Draupadi’s humiliation in the assembly hall and tolerating it. Dharmara:j (Yudhishthira) made the same mistake, whereas the other brothers didn’t make this mistake. Bhi:ma was very upset and wanted to do something about it, but since his brother stopped him, he couldn’t do anything. Arjuna was also enraged and wanted to do something in retaliation, but since his brother asked him to stop, he stopped. Nakula and Sahadeva were enraged and wanted to protect her (Draupadi), but since their brother stopped them, they had to stop. Why did Dharmara:j not react? Because they had already lost the dice-game and become the slaves of Kauravas. He followed sa:ma:nya dharma (common etiquette), of not standing against those who are now their ‘owners’ (the Kauravas) and thus remained quiet.

Ideally, dharma is of two types - sa:ma:nya dharma (common dharma) and vise:sha dharma (specific dharma). Sa:ma:nya dharma:s are norms which are to be followed by everyone in general. But, in some special situations, sa:ma:nya dharma needs to be replaced with specific needs at that time, vise:sha dharma. Dharmara:j was in an unfortunate situation, losing himself and his brothers to Kauravas in a dice game. Dharmara:j felt he shouldn’t retaliate against them as they had become slaves of Kauravas. Still, as a common man, if you see a woman getting humiliated, it is your primary duty to stop it. Dharmara:j forgot that he can do that. He did not know that. If you serve Elders, you will understand vise:sha dharmas like this. You will also realize sa:ma:nya dharmas.

In the past, Elders and gurus clearly explained when to follow sa:ma:nya dharmas vs vise:sha dharmas. In the past, we had Elders' support - in vague situations they would explain what was to be followed. Now, we don’t have such a situation. Only houses which have a husband, wife, and two children are considered ideal households. All other members are considered unnecessary. This concept was fed into the hearts of everyone and thus, the situation has changed. If Dharmara:j felt protecting Draupadi was his duty after seeing the difficulties she was put through, then the situation would have been different. In addition, she is Sri Krishna’s sister, a devotee. To remove the difficulties of a devotee and to protect her is anyone’s primary duty. Dharmara:j couldn’t even realize this vise:sha dharma. To properly realize it, you need to serve Elders. That’s why he had to be sent 12 years to the forest and 1 year in ajna:tha va:sa (living incognito).

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SLOKA WORD -

abhiva:dana seelasya nityam vrudda:opa sevina:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

Whoever serves and bows down to Elders, with humility, their longevity grows…

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…they gain prajna (good knowledge). Poor Dharmara:j didn’t have the prajna to recognize vise:sha dharma. That’s why he had to be left to roam in the forest for 12 years. Whoever serves Elders, their yashas (fame) grows and then bala (strength) grows. Physical, mental, and intellectual strength - this all improves when serving Elders. Without serving Elders, or studying texts, one doesn’t achieve this. “I will simply learn just from my own life experiences.” This is not enough.

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SLOKA WORD -

anadhi:thyacha sha:stra:ni vru:ddha:n anupase:vyacha

SLOKA MEANING -

Firstly, one has to learn scriptures from a qualified guru.

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“Books are available in the market, we can read them ourselves…” “…Google can get me any info I want. So, that’s enough - we don’t need to seek others” - this thought process is flawed. It is essential to seek and attain knowledge from Elders in the appropriate way. One has to learn scriptures from a qualified guru. Only then, one will know right vs wrong; responsible for vs not responsible for; allowed versus prohibited. This [reading scriptures] gives knowledge of only one part. The rest of the parts can only be gradually learnt by serving Elders. The marma (hidden essence) of the scriptures you read can only be understood by doing upa:sana (worship) of Elders. If you stay with Elders, you get to learn from their teachings in different types of situations.

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SLOKA WORD -

vru:ddha:n anupase:vya:cha

SLOKA MEANING -

Unless you take shelter of the wise and listen to their instructions, you won’t be able to know the good that needs to be learnt.

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Because Hanuma:n served sages very well, he was able to speak beautifully. That's what Sri Ra:ma said about Hanuma:n. Sri Ra:ma also did the same, that’s why He was able to recognize Hanuma:n. Jna:na vruddha (knowledge gained), vayo: vruddha (age gained), si:la vruddha (character gained) and bahavaha paryupa:sithaha (many served). Wherever possible and whenever He had time, Sri Ra:ma would take shelter of jna:nis (wise people) and gain whatever knowledge possible from their experiences. Sri Ra:ma always took effort to do that. The people who were living in Ayo:dhya talk about Sri Ra:ma…

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SLOKA WORD -

asthra yo:gya anthare:shwapi

SLOKA MEANING -

Ra:ma was learning archery from a teacher, who took a break after 1-1.5 hours of teaching to recharge.

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During that break, Ra:ma would serve the Elders who were present and learn more topics of interest from them instead of resting. Ra:ma always did that. Even during the days in his exile, close to 10.5 years, Ra:ma kept visiting a:shramas (hermitages) for 10.5 years. Starting with A:thri and Anasu:ya a:shram, he went to Sarabangha a:shram, then to Agasthya a:shram in the end - and visited all other sages’ ashrams in between. He would stay for approx ½, 1, 2, 3, or 5 days in each a:shram. If a large a:shram, he would stay for up to 15 days. Imagine how many a:shramas were there in Dandaka:ranya to visit for a period of 10.5 years in this manner! What was He doing in those ashramas? He didn’t go to see the natural scenery or take thi:rtha prasa:da (sanctified offerings), or even to rest. He went for vrudda upasevanam (to take shelter of Elders), to learn topics of interest from them and to teach others.

Once He went to Panchavati and built a hut to live in… many saints came and started complaining about the troubles given to them by Khara and Dhu:shana. He would associate with those saints, listen to their troubles, give them solace, and promise to take care of their troubles. Only by serving Elders regularly can we gain the supreme knowledge. When Dharmara:j did not take action to protect Draupadi, it indicates that he was deficient in such knowledge from seeking Elders’ shelter. That’s why he was sent to forests for 12 years. He roamed the forests and took shelter of many sages like Na:rada, Ma:rkandeya, and Galavya. He had to enhance his experience by learning from all their teachings. That's why he was able to stand firm in the war today.

Were the younger Pa:ndavas present where their elder brother Dharmara:j associated with the saints? We don’t know if all the 5 Pa:ndavas heard it. However, Dharmara:j would have humbly inquired and learnt from them. That's why Arjuna now has questions as to how he could kill his grandfather Bhi:shma. He used two words, madhu-su:dana (killer of the Madhu demon) and ari:-su:dana (killer of enemies). He used these two words sarcastically. Why? It is true that these are Sri Krishna's names. However, Arjuna was reminding Sri Krishna that He is madhu su:dana not bandhu (relatives) su:dana. “Sri Krishna, you killed a demon Madhu but did you kill your relatives? However, you are asking me to kill my grandfather!”

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SLOKA WORD -

madhusu:dana! katham prathi yo:thsya:mi

SLOKA MEANING -

How can I fight, O killer of the Madhu demon?

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We need to carefully observe the actual intent of the words. “You are satru nira:saka (enemy destroyer) not bandhu nira:saka (relative destroyer), right? You killed your enemies, not your relatives.” “But you are asking me to do the opposite! Is that fair?”

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SLOKA WORD -

katham prathi yo:thsya:mi, madhusu:dana!

SLOKA MEANING -

How can I fight, O killer of the Madhu demon!

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The second term is ari su:dana. Ari means enemy, Hari means Vishnu. “Sri Krishna, are you ari su:dana or mithra (friend) su:dana? You always killed your enemies, but not your friends.” “You are asking me to kill my relatives and friends, is this right on your part?” Even if we have well-wishers who try to teach us good things, the sorrow caused by our ignorance might make us reject them as well. Forget about trying to learn from them, we might even dishearten those who came to teach us. Sorrow has that kind of power. We have to carefully observe it. If we want to progress, we have to make efforts to keep that sorrow aside. We have to always serve Elders and walk in the path shown by them. Vya:sa bhagava:n (sage Vya:sa) clearly depicts this in this verse. What else does Arjuna’s question bring to light about others, including Dro:na? Let’s learn as we move ahead. Jai Srimannarayana!

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