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1. Episode Title: Episode 16 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 16)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of following one's heart in decision-making, Understanding the impact of food choices on health, Arjuna's sorrow and moral dilemma in battle, The role of compassion in human actions, The transformation of Arjuna through Krishna's guidance

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, compassion, sorrow, health, food choices, moral compass

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), a person’s heart advises whether his actions are appropriate or not. The antha:h karana pravruthi (inner mental activity) - moral compass - always advises us on our actions. However, we tend to follow some advice from the heart and ignore some. If we think the body will like it, we tend to follow it. Otherwise, we ignore it and try to comfort the body.

In general, one gives priority to bodily comforts over all else. In the case of food, we give more priority to what our tongue likes. Generally, people prefer tastier food over healthy food. These days we see several preparations made outside the home. We’re not sure how they’re made, who makes them, when they are made, and what changes they have gone through. However, our mentalities have become such that we desire foods that look good and taste good. Earlier, we were a bit more careful and consumed food only if it was healthy - we agreed to compromise on appearance.

We have lost this ability to judge based on the quality of the food, as we care for taste alone. Kids like any kind of sweets. A little older like junk foods. Much older ones like fries. We think it’s enough if the food tastes good for the tongue. How do such foods impact health? Outside food, that is preferred, directly leads to cancer. Doctors and health care practitioners warn us not to eat these kinds of food and become vulnerable to such diseases. However, we still see the same foods available. This shows that man has interest in materialistic things that please his senses and body more than what is good for his health.

In addition, man is enticed by external beauty rather than underlying essence. All the while when making these choices, the person’s heart forewarns him. It warns, ‘you are making a mistake, this is wrong, it is not healthy.’ Whether we pay heed to the heart or not is the issue. Approximately 95% of the time, we do not pay heed to the heart. Probably, 5% pay heed to the heart and reform themselves.

Manas (mind) is a wonderful instrument for a human alone. In the case of other creatures, they only eat whatever they should and as much as they should. They eat only as much as they need. A few exceptions exist that show some greed, like monkeys that hide food in their cheek pouches to consume later. However, most animals have proper knowledge regarding their health and heed their conscience of what and how much to eat. Mostly, they don’t save food for later. This is something that only a human being does. That is why man needs to be taught what is correct. Such lessons need not be taught to any animals.

A man has a heart, and hence, it is very important that it is properly taken care of. Scriptures and experience tell us that it guides us [of good and bad]. At the beginning of Bhagavad Gita chapter 2, Arjuna feels sorrow. He felt sorrowful because he found himself at war with his own A:cha:rya (teacher), Dro:na:cha:rya, and grandfather, Bhi:shma. This is the sorrow that Arjuna is experiencing. He is feeling that this is wrong. However, he is standing prepared for war, even if he feels that it is not appropriate.

Based on others’ teachings, he understands his duty [war], but he has ka:runya (compassion) in his heart. Arjuna realizes that there was some change in his situation. He has never experienced this before. In the past, he never spoke with such grief. From a state where he was qualified enough to help others out of their grief, Arjuna has degraded to a pitiable situation. He realizes that he is in such a state. His heart is not warning him about this unnecessary state.

In chapter 1, we learn that Arjuna was also arrogant in a certain way. However, if we seek guidance from a qualified person, he will correct us and position us in the appropriate direction. Dhruthara:shtra took the shelter of Sanjaya, who was not capable enough to change his conduct. Duryo:dhana took shelter of Dro:na:cha:rya, but Dro:na:cha:rya did not get the chance to change his conduct. Fortunately, Arjuna took shelter of Sri Krishna. He is the one transforming Arjuna.

Because Sri Krishna had this capability to transform, He is referred to as Hrushi:ke:sa (the Lord of the senses) by Vedavyasa. Hrushi:kas are senses. He is the i:sa (controller) of these senses. Whose senses? The senses of all beings! The controller is none other than God, Himself. That is how He made Arjuna capable and a means to give what’s essential to humanity. This was the purpose of Sri Krishna’s avatha:ra (incarnation).

Therefore, even if Arjuna was not eligible, Sri Krishna somehow cultivated eligibility within him and used him for the intended purpose. This means that Sri Krishna’s plan is to carve the ‘means’ as well into a suitable state and then begin His work on His task. If one needs to cut something, an iron piece needs to be acquired, sharpened, and properly turned into a knife – and then used. That is, we procure the means and we also transform it into a useful state. Similarly, Sri Krishna decided on Arjuna to be His suitable means and was getting him ready.

That is why He brought Arjuna from a state of supreme arrogance to a sorrowful state. We learned what sorrow is. What is it? It’s analogous to taking rough sand, softening it, crushing it, liquifying it, and allowing it to flow to its intended destination. This is something we do to the soil. However, a human being is relatively ‘wise’ and more ‘capable’, correct? In addition, his heart is a much more powerful instrument. That is why, Sri Krishna used knowledge, teachings, and thoughts to bring about change.

Sri Krishna initially made Arjuna feel pity for the enemies. Because of this pity, the heart that was hard as stone began to soften and melt. Once the heart melted, it could be put into whatever direction necessary. If it doesn’t even melt, that’s a different question. In the case of Duryo:dhana, this was impossible, because his heart never melted. However, Arjuna was warm-hearted. His heart first had to be softened, made ready to flow (take a direction) and then be taught.

So, Sri Krishna brought Arjuna to such a state where his heart was ready to flow. He made his heart feel sorrow, feeling pity for all the warriors on his side and the enemy’s side, as he thought of having to fight with them. He directed all the sorrow to one direction. He made him focus the same pity, a:krosam (empathetic aggression) and compassion onto Bhi:shma and Dro:na alone, and intensified it. He made him wail at the situation, feeling extremely sad and miserable for having to hurt them. This needed to grow to an extent where he would seek shelter from his a:cha:rya, as that’s the intended destination.

To make it reach that destination, He had to first melt his heart so much that it could flow and reach its destination. Now, it has reached its final stage. At this instance, Arjuna himself realized that he had a miserable state he never experienced before, and he wondered why he was feeling so. He began explaining his state to Sri Krishna in the 7th verse as...

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SLOKA WORD -

ka:rpanya do:sho:pahatha svabha:vaha

pruccha:mi thva:m dharma sammu:dda che:tha:ha|

yachchre:yas sya:n nischitham bru:hi thanme:

sishyas the:ham sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam||

SLOKA MEANING -

“Hey Sri Krishna, I am your student, your servant. I am surrendering to you. Please order (sa:dhi) me to do what is appropriate and good for me, what is deserving of me.”

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Alas, he pleaded with him. Sri Krishna wanted Arjuna to be in this state of mind and that’s why He made him ‘see’ everything with a certain perception. Sri Krishna kindled that curiosity and interest to ask and seek out the right path. Sri Krishna can now begin speaking to satiate Arjuna’s thirst. He first had to know that Arjuna had keen interest to know. Now, through this sloka, Arjuna comes out with his interest.

yachchre:yas sya:n nischitam

whatever You think is right for me, command me and make me do it

Arjuna has now declared his interest, is receptive and in a ready state for Sri Krishna. Arjuna used two wonderful words as he spoke. If we carefully observe those two words, we will know why Sri Krishna taught Arjuna the remaining 17 chapters. Let’s make an effort to understand further. Jai Srimannarayana!

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