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1. Episode Title: Episode 18 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 18)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of humility and obedience when seeking guidance, Arjuna's state of confusion and surrender, The relationship between a disciple and a teacher, Understanding the concepts of ka:rpanyam (pitiable state) and sre:yas (well-being), The transformation of Arjuna through Krishna's teachings.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, surrender, humility, disciple, teacher, ka:rpanyam, sre:yas, Upanishads, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), One should always be humble and obedient when approaching Elders. Our humility must be recognizable to them. We must also let them know that we have the eligibility to readily seek their guidance. This is an important trait of a progressive, or successful person. Arjuna is proclaiming the same to Sri Krishna at the beginning of chapter 2, saying thus…

O Sri Krishna, I’m ready to listen to what you preach! How should one listen? As a disciple, one should believe in the other person as his guru. One should listen to him with utmost politeness and obedience because it is intended for his well-being. Therefore, we must convey that we are a disciple to our preacher. Arjuna expresses this to Sri Krishna.

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SLOKA WORD -

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

SLOKA MEANING -

Please advise me what is already decided as beneficial and appropriate for those who were in a similar state as me.

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Please instruct me! As I’m currently in a quandary, unable to decide what is right for me, please instruct me. Don’t decide anything now, but please consider what is already established as best and instruct accordingly.

nischitham shre:yah (that which has already been decided) I am not in a state to find out what it is. As I’m disoriented in this gloom, please enlighten me with knowledge to relieve me from this gloom. Arjuna prayed to Sri Krishna saying…

sishyas the:ham (I’m your disciple!) A disciple is somebody who follows the decree of his master. Was he a follower from the past? No!

sakhe:thi mathva: (He believed Sri Krishna as his relative, brother-in-law.) Or he believed Sri Krishna to be a cowherd. He also believed Sri Krishna to be his close friend. The Pandavas’ feelings towards Sri Krishna were in several forms, including reverence and devotion. However, the Pandavas considered Sri Krishna being their brother-in-law as most important. Arjuna felt the same...

“Because of this, I have been taking your word as a suggestion, not as a decree.” I did not consider it as an order of a master to his disciple. I may have not had this interest earlier, probably that is why you did not give me this directive earlier. But now, I have come to You as your sishya (disciple). As a master to a disciple, you have the power to command me.

sa:dhi (instruct me) He goes further to say…

sa:dhi ma:m thva:m (as I have taken refuge under you...) prapannam (I have become Your surrenderer) I’m not only a disciple but also a surrenderer. What does prapanna mean? ‘I know no one beyond You who can protect me.’

thvame:va upa:ya bhu:tho me: bha:vaha idi pra:rthana: mathihi (A prayer recited in sorrow, feeling there is no other way or person who can help other than Him.) I have this feeling in me now. In that way, I’m submitting to you and surrendering to you. As I have surrendered to you, in whatever way you drive me, I’m your possession.

Just because a disciple is someone who lives under the tutelage of a teacher, until something is learned... They do not follow a master’s every word and live under his shadow throughout. They approach a teacher, learn from him, serve him and stay with him when they have some time. This was how a disciple behaved in bygone days. The disciple nowadays is a different person now.

Nowadays, the status of a disciple is such that the teacher is expected to rise up and greet him when he comes to meet the teacher. The teacher is expected to garland the disciple upon visiting. He is expected to be attentive to the student with folded arms… Because if he fails to please the student, he will not get his due rewards and reverence in return. Look at the businessmen, they have the practice to please customers. There is a system called PR, isn't it? With this PR, they live by a phenomenon called “customer is my God.” If you don't look after the customer, he will never return to you. As he has many hundreds of options to choose from. This is why a businessman has to look after his customer like God, serve him with due diligence, and attend to him - only then will business thrive. Hence, a businessman is advised by masters in this field to look after their customers.

The teachers too are travelling in the same boat as businessmen. If a teacher advises a student to reform his ways… the student may end up annoyed at the constant rebuking for whatever action. He may even want to get rid of the teacher and look for a better teacher who pleases him more. He may approach a person who is more pleasing, receptive, and agreeable to him. A customer chooses a place to get whatever product he wants. Similarly, a student too approaches a teacher, who pleases him the most. What must a teacher do now so the student doesn’t go elsewhere? He goes about being extra courteous to the student by greeting him, seating him and serving him with beverages like coffee and snacks. This is the kind of state the teacher has to go through. So the system is changing.

Sishya (disciple) is not expected to live with a master anymore. Even in the days of Upanishads, some disciples had a lengthy stay at a teacher’s abode. While others travelled to and fro, not staying for an extended period. This often worried students (who stayed longer) that they were not learning anything even after such a prolonged stay. They were worried that the students with shorter stays learned more than them. The Upanishads teach us that those worried students received their share gracefully by the same teacher or through other means eventually. That’s how a student is expected to be, that’s the law.

Now I’m your disciple. I am not that kind of disciple who leaves the teacher once he acquires the required knowledge.

sishyas the:ham sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam (I’m a surrenderer to You) Arjuna reached the state of surrender and then sought advice. Therefore, Bhagavad Gita has become the great yo:go:pade:sam (the highest form of knowledge).

Bhagavad Gita is a yo:gam (yoga) and Arjuna is learning it from Sri Krishna. Arjuna lets Sri Krishna know that he is in a surrendered state (prapannam). Arjuna’s sorrow struck, breaking him down to a miserable state… transformed his arrogance filled state of ‘only I can..’, and questioning ‘who wins’ to… a state of complete servitude and surrender.

thava da:so:ham (I’m your servant) It transformed and matured him to a state of da:so:ham.

Arjuna’s state transformed to such a ripened form. Sri Krishna, in order to preach what He wanted to, bestowed grace that brought about this transformation in Arjuna. As we discussed earlier, in order to teach somebody something new, one needs to create a situation so it is sought after. If the question doesn’t come naturally, one should create a situation so the other person asks for instruction - then advice can be shared. This is exactly what Sri Krishna is doing at the beginning of the 2nd chapter.

What is He doing? We talked about the outline of Arjuna’s prayer…

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SLOKA WORD -

ka:rpanya do:sho:pahatha svabha:vaha

SLOKA MEANING -

I’m impounded by a miserable state worthy of pity. I have lost myself in this deplorable state.

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pruccha:mi thva:m dharma sammu:dda che:tha:ha| (I’m beseeching you for enlightenment as I cannot differentiate between good and evil.)

yachchre:yas sya:n nischitham bru:hi thanme: (please enlighten me about what had already been decided as good by the Elders)

sishyas the:ham sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam|| (I am in a state that I will listen to You. I am Your disciple and have surrendered to You.) There is a rule in sa:stra (scripture)

bru:yuhu: sishyasya, snigdhasya guravo: guhyamuttha:mam (If a disciple seeks it, an acharya (teacher) can certainly reveal inner knowledge…) However, it cannot be taught to every disciple who wishes for it.

Then to whom?

bruyuhu: sishyasya, snigdhasya (the disciple who has the most devotion…)

guravaha guhyam utththamam bru:yuhu (must be taught good knowledge even if not asked for; such a rule exists) However, Sri Krishna prepared and taught Arjuna to ask questions and then preached… two important words! One is ka:rpanyam (pitiable state) and the other is sre:yas (well-being).

What else is there? Veda na:dam uses these two words in Upanishads to demonstrate an extremely profound meaning. Ka:rpanyam means it is not the state of empathy as one expects. Krupanudu does not only mean a person worthy of sympathy. Who is considered worthy of sympathy? What is sre:yas (well-being) and what is considered sre:yas? Does sre:yas mean a consistent state of material well-being of food, servants, money, riches and comforts? It is important to know the actual essence of sre:yas. Therefore, Sri Krishna used His hrishi:ke:shathvam (ability to control one’s senses) and made Arjuna question about these two words. Arjuna uttered these two words.

Now with a reason to explain to Arjuna about these two words, Sri Krishna embarks further. As these two words have been found mainly in Upanishads… let’s further deep-dive in finding out how and where they have been used. Jai Srimannarayana!

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