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

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of sorrow and its various forms, Understanding compassion and its implications, Arjuna's emotional turmoil in the battlefield, The difference between beneficial and detrimental sorrow, The significance of duty in the face of compassion

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, compassion, sorrow, dharma, Bhi:shma, Dro:nacha:rya, emotional struggle, Upadesam, grief, human emotions

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Sorrow is a kind of disease that entraps and torments a person. It occurs due to many reasons and can be of different kinds too. Human beings at times experience sorrow caused by feelings of jealousy, envy, hatred, love, or compassion. There can be different levels in the state of sorrow as well – basic level, aggravated level, completely crippling state, and so on.

In Bhagavad Gita, God has given a wonderful message aimed primarily at addressing this sorrow. If sorrow arises out of selfishness, it is detrimental. However, if it arises out of compassion for others, it is said to be beneficial. If sorrow arises in one to benefit or help another, it is good, despite the suffering it may cause for the one trying to help. What is very important is whether the empathy for the other person is for a worthy cause or not.

If you come across a drunkard on the street lamenting for money and you donate some for buying alcohol, even though the action is a result of compassion, we do not consider it to be healthy compassion. It is important to have the underlying compassion and the sorrow for wanting to reform a person.

What does compassion actually mean? In the first chapter of Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna was moved with compassion. It progressively increased. The second chapter begins with it.

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SLOKA WORD -

సంజయ ఉవాచ -

తం తథా కృపయాఽవిష్టమ్, అశ్రుపూర్ణాకులేక్షణమ్ ।

విషీదన్తమిదం వాక్యమ్, ఉవాచ మధుసూదనః ॥

sanjaya uva:cha -

tham thattha: krupaya::vishtam,

asru pu:rna:kule:kshanam ।

vishi:dantham idam va:kyam,

uva:cha madhusu:danaha ॥

SLOKA MEANING -

Sanjaya said:

Seeing Arjuna overwhelmed with compassion and his eyes brimming with tears, Madhusudana (Krishna) spoke these words.

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Compassion has fully enveloped Arjuna. What caliber of Arjuna? Arjuna, who during the first chapter, in the presence of Sri Krishna, the One who descended to protect dharma, followed his dharma, organized the stage [for the war] himself, gathered everyone at the battlefield, sounded his conch too [signaling strong will and readiness], and was all set to unleash his weapons. At this moment, Arjuna was overcome with compassion. This should not have happened at all.

On the operation table, having laid the patient down, having given all the medication necessary, having cut the body open to begin the surgery essential for his health, if the doctor feels compassion and gives up the act, letting go of his ‘weapon’, knife and other instruments off his hand, what do we call such a surgeon? The surgeon would be arrested and put in prison [for risking the patient’s life]. He is not allowed to do that. After preparing the patient for surgery and making all the arrangements, it is imperative that the surgeon remove the defective part, complete the surgery, and do whatever is necessary to restore the patient’s health. After completing that, he can retrospect and feel compassionate but not before that. Whatever is necessary to be done, must be done - mandatorily.

At this point, Arjuna is in the position of that surgeon. The people lined up in front of him had committed different crimes. If an eligible and capable person leaves the guilty free, he will be considered more guilty than the ones who were originally declared guilty. Arjuna right now is in such a state. The ones in the opposing party that day are all those who were unjust and cruel to him. They were Duryo:dhana, Dussa:sana, Karna, and others, and also those like Bhi:shma and Dro:na who took their side, although with pain. All these people, who had wronged Pandavas, knowingly came prepared for war. Now Arjuna is in the middle of this battlefield. However, is compassion well placed here?

Right now, Arjuna is possessed by compassion. Sometimes we see some people are ‘possessed’ by de:vathas (gods) and sometimes by demons. People say so, we can’t see either the de:vathas or demons. The behavior of the ‘possessed’, for example, the way they speak, indicates whether they are possessed by a de:vatha or a demon. In any case, the person does not behave in his natural manner. He loses his own nature and exhibits the mannerisms of the other entity which has taken him over. Similarly, Arjuna is now possessed with ‘compassion’. His true self has disappeared. He has forgotten himself. He is under the influence of the compassion that has possessed him.

What is his condition now?

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SLOKA WORD -

అశ్రుపూర్ణాకులేక్షణమ్

asru pu:rna a:kule:kshanam

SLOKA MEANING -

His eyes are distraught and filled with tears.

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We can determine from his appearance that he is a dhi:ro:da:ththa na:yakudu (noble hero). Such a noble hero should not wail helplessly. There is a rule in our texts that a hero should not wail helplessly. Does that mean that there are rules for the emotions flowing from within? Well, a hero should not wail helplessly, but should be more restrained. He may feel sorrow, but to what extent? To the extent that his eyes fill with tears, but the tears do not flow down! Right now, he is in that situation.

His eyes are welled up, and he is therefore indeed a noble hero. He is in a state of commotion, very disturbed. He has vision, but is not able to see. Why so? Because of the tears welled up in his eyes, he is not able to see that which he should see. He is not able to understand what he should understand. That is because sadly his manas (mind) is hurt and clouded.

In the sloka, they speak of his eyes as a representative of all senses (indriyas). However, it is not only his eyes, but even other senses are not functioning at their best. As a result of the overwhelming compassion, his other senses are also partially clouded. He is listening to what he should through his ears, but is not following it in the way it should be. That is the effect of compassion. Senses, body, and mind were all weakened. There are three karana:s (instruments) for a human being, right? All three failed for him [Arjuna] at this point. Why? Because of the effect of the wave of emotions. He is speaking that which he ought not to and not which he ought to. He is unable to differentiate between what he should do and what he should refrain from.

In fact, what is krupa (compassion)? Scriptures give three kinds of definitions for this. When scriptures say something, it is based on the states experienced [by people] in this world. So, what are those?

- para duhkha asahishnutha (unable to bear the pain or sorrow of others)

- para duhkha nira:chiki:rsha (not stopping at the intolerable pain of seeing others’ sorrow, he desires to take away the pain)

However, does everyone really work towards this desire? Just because one is not able to tolerate something, does one work on relieving it? Many times, we too encounter disturbing events and feel agonized that it should not happen like that. However, do we respond to it? We strongly wish to eliminate it. Do we respond? No! One may not necessarily need to respond to someone’s pain although it is intolerable to see it. One may not get a chance to alleviate someone’s pain, even when desirous of doing so. That could be for various reasons, like one’s inability or magnitude of pain.

Our elders tell us there is a third quality to define krupa, compassion.

- para duhkha duhkhithvam (a state of experiencing another’s pain as his own). He should feel that the pain is caused to himself. And so, he immediately feels that he does not want the pain. He spontaneously reacts to eliminate the pain; cannot keep quiet in that case. Thus, although para duhkha asahishnutha or para duhkha nira:chiki:rsha refer to krupa, our people define krupa to be para duhkha duhkhithvam.

Lord Rama had that quality in Him. If ever He saw anyone crying or suffering, He would experience the same agony as the other person. When one cries for another as if he is experiencing the pain himself, then spontaneously he will not want it. He will necessarily strive to eliminate it. To get rid of his own pain, he needs to address the pain of the other person. Hence, he will act on doing so. Subsequently, he will succeed in it. That is called krupa, compassion.

Arjuna is feeling this compassion now. We are discussing for whom this compassion should be felt. He had felt compassion in the first chapter, and up to some extent in the second chapter as well. In the first chapter, Arjuna felt compassion towards the entire army in general, that soldiers may get hurt. He wanted to remove the pain that would be caused to all of them. That was in chapter one. But later, in the second chapter, that compassion got gradually focused towards two individuals primarily. Who are the two? One person is his grandfather Bhi:shma. The other is guru Dro:nacha:rya, who taught him to use weapons and brought him up. Now his compassion is centered on them.

So the compassion and the resulting sorrow that Arjuna feels in the second chapter is primarily for the two great people - Bhi:shma and Dro:na. How did he feel this compassion? And what did it do to Arjuna? How was that answered? We will get to know in the second chapter, as we go along. Jai Srimannarayana!

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