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1. Episode Title: Episode 48 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 48)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of duty and responsibility in leadership, Understanding the consequences of war, Krishna's teachings on the soul and body, The importance of righteous action, The role of emotions in decision-making

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, adharma, responsibility, soul, body, war, emotions

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Sri Krishna Himself delivered the Bhagavad Gita, a supreme scripture to teach responsibility and the ultimate goal to humankind. Arjuna hesitates to wage war. As a responsible ruler from a lineage, he must punish sinners and encourage righteous doers. This is the duty of any ruler. Despite being such an authoritative person and having faced the situation where the stage was set for war between two parties, one standing by dharma (righteousness) and those standing by adharma (unrighteousness), completing 12 years of exile in forests and 1 year of incognito exile, and unsuccessful efforts for peace between the two, ultimately the stage for war is set.

What this means is that the war wasn’t a hasty decision. It wasn’t at all secretive. It became inevitable after having made all essential efforts to avoid it. Only upon concluding that there was no other way to peacefully resolve this, the stage for war was set. Arjuna came prepared for the war along with a 7 akshauhinis (military divisions) army. Duryodhana came prepared for the war with an 11 akshauhinis army. Arjuna wanted to stand between the two armies and observe the foes and allies. However, as he began to look, he started seeing only the physical bond with them and not the sin they committed. He felt pity for them. He thought he should stop the war. He felt that the war could bring many more problems.

In such situations, one must not yield to any resulting pitiable condition, but rather only fulfill a responsibility. Feeling pity is a necessary emotion, but it must be shown at an appropriate time and situation. Showing pity at an inappropriate time leads to trouble. As Sri Krishna began to instruct Arjuna about responsibility, He listed three sins.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:pada:m apahartha:ram da:tha:ram sarva sampada:m

lo:ka:bhi ra:mam sri:ra:mam bhu:yo: bhu:yo: nama:myaham

SLOKA MEANING -

I bow repeatedly to Sri Rama, the one who removes all obstacles and bestows all wealth.

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"Arjuna! You are feeling this emotion at an unsuitable time and situation. This is kasmalam (confusion), a wrongful act. Therefore it is ana:ryajushtam (not accepted by the wise), asvargyam (not leading to heaven), aki:rthikaram (bringing disgrace). A:ryajushtam means that which is accepted by Elders. A:rya jushta is that which is accepted by well-wishers of society. We have learned the definition of a:rya (noble person) earlier. Westerners incorrectly referred to a:ryas as those who hail from a certain location, and the rest from the other side as Dravidians. An a:rya is one who has foresight and accordingly exercises current responsibility, aligning and enabling everything. It is always essential to have their direction. Whatever they happily accept becomes a:ryajushtam. Whatever method they do not accept becomes ana:ryajushtam. Your efforts to avoid this war is ana:ryajushtam. No Elders will accept this."

Sri Krishna thus began. He continues to list two more. "Asvargyam - you think you will reach heaven when you quit this war. However, forget about heaven, you will certainly reach hell. One who quits responsibility will have to experience hell at a later time, after leaving the current body. However, even when in the current body here, society does not appreciate what you are thinking of doing. Hence, it is aki:rthikaram, even while you live in this world."

He listed these three in the beginning of Bhagavad Gita chapter 2. First - what is the method agreed by a:ryas, the wise, the Elders? What philosophy do they preach? Such wise people do not necessarily belong to one caste, one section, or any specific age group. They must be highly eligible, able to prove the Vedic way and attain the best for society. He started explaining what such people accept.

What we are seeing here is the body on the surface and the indwelling soul. He began by saying it’s the case not only for you and me, but also for everyone else seen around. He said so in chapter 2 verse 12.

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SLOKA WORD -

na:ha:nate: de:ha:ni

SLOKA MEANING -

The soul never dies; it is eternal and indestructible.

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He clearly delineated bodies and souls. He stated that souls are different from each other. He proved what He meant by differences: soul is plural, i.e., ane:kathvam (many souls). He proved that He, God, who is giving this Gita upadesa (teaching), is different from the souls. He mentions and explains the difference between Himself and the souls after chapter 6. Until then, He explains the soul, its nature, and the differences between the souls. He explains the characteristics of a body, what happens to it versus to the soul.

He had to explain these two as he was looking at the relatives across from him. They were standing there as a union of the two – body and soul. In the two, the body will not remain no matter what we do. It forms a shape, grows, deteriorates, and disintegrates. Bodies will all disintegrate. They will not remain unchanged eternally no matter what you do. Even if you stop the war now, they will not stay forever. Whose [bodies]? Not only those of the opposing army, but also of two specific people who Arjuna was worried about in chapter 2. He was first worried about everyone, both in his army and the opponents’. He felt that he was waging war so all can relish happiness together. He felt sad that there is no purpose to war if they are going to die. He questioned the purpose of the kingdom and all the riches.

Sometime later, in chapter 2, his worry concentrated on two people in particular.

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SLOKA WORD -

katham bhi:shmam aham sankhye: dro:nam cha ishubhihi prathiyo:thshya:mi

SLOKA MEANING -

How can I shoot arrows at Bhishma and Drona?

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He was sad thinking of Bhishma and Drona. He started with Bhishma, his grandfather, and then Drona, his archery teacher. He expressed - how could he possibly confront his teacher and the family’s elder Bhishma with weapons? Don’t fight with them. Will you be able to protect their bodies forever? Let it be Drona’s, Bhishma’s, or anyone else’s body on the battlefield. Whatever they have done is a sin. They are supporting adharma (unrighteousness). They have already piled up loads of sin. It’s as if they stood there ready to wage war and conclude it so they would not accrue more sin.

In one sense, isn’t it better? Now, you say you will quit the war. You are then leaving them to continue sinning. You say that you are pitying them, and you love them. If so, you should think in such a way that their burden doesn’t get heavier than this. They have already made it heavier for themselves and now have come to the point of relieving some of that stock. It’s now your responsibility to cooperate. It is not right for you to leave them, letting them accrue more sin and deteriorate further. Therefore, fight. The war’s outcome is different altogether. You must exercise your duty. Don’t think about whether you or they will win the war. Why must you think of it?

When a surgeon begins to operate, he begins with the right intent. He wishes that the surgery is successful, and the patient emerges healthy. However, undesirable results sometimes occur because of either of their fates. We cannot say it’s the fault of the surgeon. He must perform his duty properly. The result must however be left with prakruthi (nature) or parama:thma (God). It’s the same with you. When you think it is your duty to wage war, do it. “Who will be victorious? What will happen afterwards?” He has so far been explaining that you need not proceed down the path of such a thought trail.

Now, no matter what you do, you cannot keep your body in the same state forever. Why cry over it? The indwelling soul does not die no matter what you do. Why cry over it? The soul that perhaps leaves a body from this battlefield will attain another body based on its karma (actions). It will be on its way. You are sad that you are going to be away from it. All these 12 years in the forests, haven’t you stayed away from them? The 1 year in incognito exile, haven’t you stayed away from them? Hence, staying away from them is not new. Now that you are working for dharma, it is essential that you exercise your duty effectively.

He said so in 2.18.

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SLOKA WORD -

anthavantha ime: de:ha:ha nithyasyo:ktha:s sari:rinaha

SLOKA MEANING -

The bodies are temporary, while the soul is eternal.

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A:thma (soul) is called sari:ri (one who has a body). What is visible is termed sari:ra (body). Sari:ra means that which is si:rya:the: (deteriorates). It disintegrates as it deteriorates further and further. The indwelling soul is sari:ri. He is ana:si (indestructible), one who is indestructible. He is aprame:yaha (beyond perception), one who cannot be perceived in size and form with the physical eyes. Therefore, you cannot do anything to him. You cannot do anything to stop the body from disintegrating.

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SLOKA WORD -

thasma:d yuddhyasva bha:ratha!

SLOKA MEANING -

Therefore, fight the war with no hesitation.

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He encouraged thus, explaining the characteristics of the body and of the soul to an extent. He continues to explain further what conduct will please a:ryas, the intelligent and knowledgeable. He encourages him to understand that and conduct accordingly. He does so to ultimately teach mankind their responsibility. Let’s move ahead learning it further. Jai Srimannarayana!

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