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1. Episode Title: Episode 56 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 56)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of dharma and its application in life, Understanding the dilemmas faced by Arjuna, Krishna's teachings on duty and righteousness, The significance of performing one's responsibilities, The consequences of inaction in the face of duty

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, adharma, responsibilities, duty, dilemmas, war, righteousness, soul, ji:va

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Human life is a battle, a battle between good and bad. It is a battle between dharma (righteousness) and adharma (unrighteousness). A battle between yuktha (fit) and ayuktha (unfit). In this battle, if one has a genuine desire to improve but encounters a dilemma in the choice of actions, Bhagavad Gita can provide an appropriate answer. This guidance is not limited to nation, race, time period, community, etc. It provides direction for any common person facing ambiguity about recommendations and restrictions, wrong and right ways of executing something. Using Arjuna as a means, Sri Krishna delivered Sri:mad Bhagavad Gita to give right answers to mankind for such ambiguities.

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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, who is the remover of all obstacles and the giver of all wealth.

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Sri Yamuna Muni clarified this. As we perform our duties, we face many dilemmas and encounter many questions about whether it is appropriate to act one way or another or if it will hurt someone in the process, etc. Arjuna has the authority to rule the kingdom. The Pandavas earned the right to rule their kingdom after 13 years of exile and 1 year of living incognito. However, Duryodhana did not want to give it to them. In fact, Dhritarashtra was the king, but he gave all the authority to Duryodhana. Duryodhana made immature decisions, not realizing right versus wrong. However, Dhritarashtra approved all that.

In such a scenario, when a temporary owner is hesitating, not agreeing, and standing against you to give you back what was your right, your belonging, and worthy of your rulership, how should a good person and a well-wisher respond? How should he respond at the physical level, at the mental level? Sri Krishna felt the need to clarify both these aspects and thus delivered Bhagavad Gita.

Firstly, what is the duty of a human being? A step back, who can be called a human being? We must know this first. We must then understand what responsibilities and duties mean, right? A human being has a physical body and an indwelling soul called ji:va (individual soul). This is what a human being is. Ji:va is given a body as a tool to complete his duty properly. Any responsible being would not walk away from his goal carried away by things related to the tool (body).

Arjuna knows his responsibility. What is his responsibility? To rule the kingdom as per dharma and remove any obstacles. What obstacle was he faced with? Out of affection towards ‘relatives’, he felt sorry for them and was in a dilemma if killing them would be a sin. He wondered if killing such people would also negate the state of higher worlds that they would attain otherwise. He questioned that such a state of higher worlds will not only be at stake for them but also for their ancestors. He felt that all of this would be sinful. Why commit a sin by waging this war? Instead, why can’t I give this up and beg for alms while somehow spending the rest of my life in a forest?

Therefore, Sri Krishna had to clarify what one’s responsibility is toward the body and the self. A body is designed and given to a ji:va such that the accrued karma (actions) can be fulfilled. Therefore, one must perform the duties as per the given body. He was born in a dynasty that ruled the kingdom. His dharma was therefore to play his part and rule properly. In the process of exercising his duty in ruling, he must take essential action against those who are committing crimes against people, doing wrongful acts, etc. He must rule in a dharmic (righteous) way.

The Kauravas were those who did not tolerate good people. They poisoned those who encouraged good people, burnt their houses, tortured, and dishonored their families. They are people with such habits. Arjuna was then faced with the responsibility of eliminating such people. When his responsibility is to eliminate them, he was pondering if eliminating such people can be sinful.

You have a crop that is being eaten away by pests and grasshoppers. It is ready to yield in a few days, thus you must gather the harvest and send it home. Just about then, pests began to destroy it. If you feel sorry for the pests’ life, thinking it would be wrong and leave them, the crop that was planned to sustain many lives will be destroyed in a matter of a few minutes. What is his duty in such a situation? He worked hard from the outset to bring the crop to the yielding phase. As a result of the hard work, the crop is about to yield. Right at that moment, the pests attacked the crop. What must you do? Should you feel pity for the pests or should you protect the crop? If you protect the crop, you will meet the hunger needs of thousands of people. If you protect the pests, they would destroy ten other fields. What is your duty in such a situation? If someone is in this dilemma, what would you suggest? What direction will you give? Will you say, “Oh no! Don’t kill them, don’t spray any pesticides, leave them..!” No.

Why? The first among your duties is to protect the crop that gives food because you worked hard and long. Thus, you will make efforts to somehow eliminate the pests. This is what Sri Krishna tells Arjuna. You have the right to rule. Elders have given a good path to rule it properly. They instructed on the appropriate ways to conduct oneself [at all times]. They tread the same path. You are a descendant. In the earlier course of time, you had to face troubles because of what you and/or your brothers did. That troublesome situation has ended after 13 years, and you have regained the right to rule. However, they are opposing it and are not ready to give it back to you. What is your duty in this case? It is to eliminate those who are hindering you from taking back the kingdom that is lawfully yours. You must hence do what is necessary for that to happen.

Firstly, they were verbally conveyed what is the right thing to do. No, they didn’t seem like ones who would listen. Next, they were warned. No, they didn’t care. The result is war alone! They all prepared for the war knowing that it was the only way. It is now all set. Everyone has come prepared.

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SLOKA WORD -

pravrutthe: sasthra sampa:the:

SLOKA MEANING -

At the time when everyone is ready with their weaponry…

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You begin to feel sorry and pity for ‘relatives’ saying they are ‘your’ acharyas (teachers), father-like figures, child-like ones.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:cha:rya:ha pitharaha puthra:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

This is my grandfather, This is my acharya! How do I kill them?

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What do you mean by how? Don’t you see the ‘pests’ that are destroying the ‘crop’? You should not be seeing the body as one associated with relatives, but as a tool in exercising the atma’s (soul's) duty. You should use it only as a tool, but not be carried away with things that come with it. Your ‘sword’ and the opposing army men’s ‘swords’ are made of the same material. If you stop fighting because the other ‘swords’ are your ‘sword’s relatives, do you think they won’t attack and kill you? It (body) is a tool. Use it as one. The body must be used as a tool alone. You need not compromise on your duty to look after the relations that it brings. The others compromised on their duties. If you also compromise on your duty, you will also accrue a sin. Therefore, you must act on it. The grief you are feeling in taking action on them is not right.

He started explaining this at aso:chya:n anvaso:chaha (you grieve for those who should not be grieved for)…

Perhaps for about 24 verses, he explained the same using various ways and different reasons. No matter what you do, a body will not be the same forever. No matter what you do, you cannot hurt an atma. Why? The body is of ever-changing nature. You have no control over the changes. The atma is so small, there is nothing smaller than that. There is nothing that can penetrate it to bring any change or cause any harm. He clarified the same in the previous two verses.

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SLOKA WORD -

acchedyaha, akle:dyaha, ada:hyaha, aso:shyaha

SLOKA MEANING -

It is not something that can get wet, cut, dried, or burnt.

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Why? Because it is smaller than the other object’s smallest constituent. There is nothing that can penetrate it, forget about destruction. Thus, it is ajaha (unborn), nithyaha (eternal), sa:svathaha (everlasting), pura:naha (ancient). He spelled it out clearly. He spelled out clearly about atma and body. He told Arjuna that he would accrue three sins if he quits the war.

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SLOKA WORD -

ana:rya jushtam, asvargyam, aki:rthikaram

SLOKA MEANING -

First - ana:rya jushtam, Elders will not be happy about the decision of quitting the war.

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Elders will be happy if you follow the path set by them. The path they showed is to perform your duties. Your duty now is to fight the war. Hence they will be happy only if you fight the war now. He concludes the ana:rya jushtam aspect here. Sri Krishna moves ahead in the next three verses with an interesting way to reiterate the argument on why it’s not right to feel bad [for waging the war]. So far, we took simha:valo:kanam (intense overview), in the first instance, we heard it in a normal course. Then, we heard it at the pace of a quick review. We will move ahead with this strong foundation. Jai Srimannarayana!

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