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1. Episode Title: Episode 76 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 76)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of duty and its fulfillment, Understanding the righteousness of war, Krishna's teachings on moral responsibility, The consequences of inaction, The concept of dharma (righteousness) in warfare

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, dharma, Arjuna, Krishna, righteousness, war, moral responsibility, duty, ahimsa (non-violence), Ana:rya, A:rya

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), It is an arduous task to enlighten one about his duty and guide him towards fulfilling it. Modern society only aims for material pleasures. Enlightening such a society about a:thma (soul), how the human body is a means… what needs to be achieved with the body, and enabling one to achieve it is a difficult task. In fact, unless you understand it… you will not feel that such endeavors are necessary. After you deem it necessary, then you should work for it. While doing it, you may face many hurdles. After a long time, one may achieve the goal. However, he needs to be patient till then. He needs to be determined.

To strengthen Arjuna’s determination, Sri Krishna tries to preach to Arjuna in verse 2.30.

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SLOKA WORD -

de:hi: nithyam avadhyo:yam de:he: sarvasya bha:ratha! |

thasma:th sarva:ni bhu:tha:ni na thvam so:chithum arhasi ||

SLOKA MEANING -

The soul is eternal and cannot be killed, so you should not grieve for any living being.

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Not just for any one body, we need not worry about anyone’s de:ha (body) in this world. This war is a virtuous activity. Fight without hesitation. Why do you think, “Alas! How can I fight and inflict violence on all these people?” We grow crops, right! Once we harvest the crop, we remove the waste and set it on fire. Do we think, “Oh no. How can I burn that which gave us sustenance until this point?” By burning it, the soil becomes clean and serves as fertilizer for the next crop. Sometimes, there are terrible pest infestations. They are also dealt with similarly. If one thinks, “Alas! We are killing pests,” crop loss will occur; the pests will multiply and destroy the entire crop, leaving nothing for humans.

A swarm of locusts came recently. Our people tried to drive them away. If we think, “Poor beings. We have to harm them,” then your crop will be destroyed. Yours and others' lives will be endangered. Is it wrong to fight and send them back? No, it is appropriate. Is it wrong to gather that waste and cleanse the ground? No! The land becomes clean and rich. We know that this waste would spread bad odor in that region [if left on its own]. The Kau:rava:s (Kauravas), who are directly opposite to you, have become like that waste. I am not asking you to shoot arrows indiscriminately. No one accepts such a person. He would be called a mad person, or a terrorist, and be punished. We see it happen in some places. Someone goes crazy and suddenly shoots at everyone around. He acts without discrimination. There is a responsibility to stop such people. The opposing army is invading the country, crossing borders and occupying territories.

“If we confront them, they might cry or feel bad,” can we then say, “come conquer us?” Since your duty is to protect the borders there… if anyone crosses the border and claims even half an inch, he must be restrained and sent back. If they don’t retreat, they need to be eliminated. Do we consider this a good or bad deed? Is it dharma (righteousness) or adharma (unrighteousness)? Right now you are responsible for this [waging war]. I am asking you to stop the miscreants, not to kill anyone and everyone. By doing this activity, you will escape hell. They will also escape hell by losing their lives in this. By being a spectator, you will go to hell. By doing the wrong deeds, they also will experience hell. Therefore, both parties can do the right thing of waging war and avoid hell. Thus I am advising you to do it.

Cops catch hold of those who steal. Once caught, those thieves are punished. If authorities feel, “He might cry if I punish him. Why should we apprehend him?” and simply let him go, we know of the negative outcomes. The Supreme Court announced a death sentence for someone who did a terrible crime. The one who executes the death sentence is thala:ri (executioner). If the convicted person is sent to the executioner and the executioner feels, “Oh poor guy, his friends and relatives will cry. His family will fall into trouble. So I won’t do it...” then the executioner himself needs to be reprimanded. The punishment is given to prevent him from sinning further, and to make sure others don't suffer because of him.

Similarly, Arjuna! You have this opportunity to wage war... With the war you wage, you will have the opportunity to prevent them from sinning. Since it is your responsibility, you have to do it. In that process, bodies will be in pain; you have to be tolerant. Some bodies might perish. However, that stops them from causing pain to more people, hence, it’s a good thing. If a hand is infected by poison and we leave it be, the poison will gradually spread elsewhere, destroying the body. What should we do? You must amputate the hand through where the affliction is spreading because you have the responsibility to protect the rest of the body. Similarly, this is dharma yuddha (righteous war). You don’t have to contemplate or turn back feeling sorry for anyone. It is your responsibility to wage the war.

If a surgeon comes into the operating room and hesitates, claiming, “An incision will hurt the patient,” how can he be called a surgeon? Why would you pay him? If someone takes a knife outside and attacks others without discrimination, that is wrong. If he operates, making an incision where needed, healing the patient… do we consider it wrong? We appreciate him, pay him, and express our gratitude whenever we see him. We nearly treat him like God! Arjuna, today you have the opportunity to wage war for similar reasons. Hence, not just about Bhi:shma (Bhishma) and Dro:na (Drona), as you said earlier…

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SLOKA WORD -

a:cha:rya:ha pitara: putra:ha thathaiva cha pitamaha:ha.

SLOKA MEANING -

Teachers, fathers, and grandfathers are all included in this.

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Arjuna: “By hurting all these [who are like gurus, fathers, grandsons], and hurting myself, I refuse to enjoy whatever is gained from this.” It is wrong of you to say that. You have to contain this sorrow and wage the war. You have to tolerate the joys and sorrows which you may face while waging war. You have to keep aside the sorrow of them perishing.

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SLOKA WORD -

thasma:th sarva:ni bhu:thani na twam so:chithum arhasi

SLOKA MEANING -

You don’t have to cry for anyone. Do your duty.

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With this, Sri Krishna said in chapter 2 that 3 defects would be acquired if Arjuna refrains from war: ana:rya jushtam (disapproved by the wise), aswargyam (leading to hell), and aki:rthikaram (bringing disgrace).

Ana:rya jushtam - Elders, wise ones, and good people would disapprove. Supporting that, Lord stated so in all these verses through now. If you deny your duty, wise ones will not accept it. They will say whatever you are doing is wrong. The goal of Elders, wise ones, is to guide one towards fulfilling his duties. Their goal is to curb those who are committing crimes. Hence, what you do will be a:rya jushtam (pleasing to wise ones).

As we discussed previously, A:ryas (noble people) doesn't mean A:ryas and Dra:vidians. That is an incorrect notion. Whoever stands for what is good or for the welfare of others, regardless from where… let it be Egypt, Iran, Punjab, South India, Sri Lanka or another country… regardless of species, animal or human… the one who stands for dharma (righteousness) is A:rya. The one who transgresses dharma is Ana:rya. A:ryas are impartial and have no hesitation. They will certainly do whatever is required. You should do the same. Since Elders, wise ones, accept it, waging war becomes a:rya jushtam. If you stop and retreat, it becomes ana:rya jushtam. Hence, he described in detail why it becomes a:rya jushtam.

Jna:nis (those with knowledge) understand de:has (bodies) and a:thmas (souls). They know that bodies always perish and souls are eternal. They know that there will be changes in bodies but souls do not change. They know that the body is an instrument and the soul's goal is to attain ultimate bliss. They know that since the body is an instrument at work, it undergoes favorable and unfavorable situations. They know that a:thma is not concerned about them [favorable or unfavorable]. They know how to tolerate impediments in the path. This path is a:rya jushtam, pleasing to and accepted by wise ones. You were born to follow the path of a:rya jushtam. Since you have to do it, wage the war properly. If you do not wage war, they [A:rya:s] will be unhappy.

So far, he talked about the first reason, a:rya jushtam. In the beginning of chapter 2, he spoke about two more reasons - aswargyam and aki:rthikaram. To support those reasons, Sri Krishna moves further….

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SLOKA WORD -

svadharmam api cha:ve:kshya na vikampithum arhasi |

dharmya:ddhi: yuddha:th sre:yo::nyath

kshathriyasya na vidyathe: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Recognizing your duty, you should not waver; for there is no greater good for a warrior than a righteous war.

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Chapter 2, verse 31. Sri Krishna says “aswargyam.” What do you think will happen when you don't wage war? Arjuna: If I don’t wage war, then I will be a merciful person. However, since they are not merciful, they will attack me. Even though I may not wage war, they will. Since they are attacking me when I am being a ‘good’ person, they will have committed a crime, and since that is transgressing dharma, they will go to hell.

Sri Krishna: This is what you are thinking, isn’t it? However, no, it’s a wrong thought process! Since you are not waging war to stop the miscreants, you would be the one committing adharma (unrighteous act). They don't become unrighteous when they attack you. Therefore, it is your responsibility to perform svadharma (your duty).

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SLOKA WORD -

svadharmam api cha ave:kshya

SLOKA MEANING -

Recognize your duty

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SLOKA WORD -

na vikampithum arhasi

SLOKA MEANING -

You need not be highly affected

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This is a dharmya (righteous) war, where dharma is not transgressed. You have an unsolicited opportunity to do the right thing. i.e. without any effort, if we are simply granted an American visa, how happy would we be? If a soldier is given a chance to fight, not stemming from petty quarrels with others… but with enemies who are at fault… and that soldier has an opportunity to save his nation, how enthusiastic would he be? This war is a similar opportunity for you [Arjuna]. Do not hesitate. You have a righteous task at hand. Get ready for war by realizing that the war is rightfully qualifying you [for a higher purpose]. Rise! It will result in you attaining heaven. Stop doing that which results in aswargya (hell), and do that which gives you swarga (blissful heaven).

Sri Krishna thus motivates Arjuna, taking him further. Jai Srimannarayana!

Jai Srimannarayana!

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