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1. Episode Title: Episode 82 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 82)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of performing one's duty (svadharma), Understanding the concept of dharma in relation to war, The significance of acting without expectation of results, The distinction between svadharma (one's own duty) and paradharma (others' duties), The role of divine intention (sankalpa) in life's events.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, svadharma, paradharma, Krishna, Arjuna, duty, war, dharma, yadruchchika, sankalpa, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), In chapter 2, verse 31 of Bhagavad Gita, while stressing the importance of responsibility to Arjuna, Sri Krishna explained the significance of performing svadharma (one's own duty). That is called dharmyam (righteousness).

The Lord says,

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SLOKA WORD -

svadharmam api cha:ve:kshya navikampithum arhasi

dharmya:ddhii yudha:th sre:yo:nyath kshathriyasya na vidhyathe

SLOKA MEANING -

You should consider your own duty and not waver; for a warrior, there is nothing more honorable than a righteous war.

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We should always do our svadharma. We have discussed this in the past. What is svadharma? We should understand carefully what ‘svam’ means. Svam means ‘I’. Svam gets a deeper meaning as our knowledge improves in the proper way. At one level, svam applies only to the body. At another level, svam relates to one’s occupational duty. If he is a ruler, that activity of ‘ruling’ involves svam. Whatever he needs to do then, becomes his svadharma.

All these levels of svam seem to pertain to the body. However, the word svam does not actually pertain to the body. It refers to a:thma (soul), the body’s indweller. Only if the indweller is there, can he utter the word ‘svam’. If he is not present, the body doesn’t respond when cut or burned or thrown away. Hence, the word ‘svam’ pertains to a:thma (soul). Whatever we need to do when a:thma comes into the body is svadharma.

Sri Krishna wants us to realize this. We didn’t get bodies because we desired them. Someone gave them to us. He must have given it to us for some purpose. If we don’t know the purpose, we should find out from someone wise. Then, we should act accordingly. That’s why our people speak about dharma:charana (following dharma), in three ways. Why should we do dharma:charana? You should do it to know the purpose you came here for. Since that is the purpose He gave us the body, we should work towards attaining it.

If you don’t know it, the wise might have defined it before. There is no need for us to discover something new today. We do not have enough knowledge or time to discover something new. As certain people have already traveled this path, it’s advisable to follow the path of the wise. Hence, there is an injunction that we should perform our svadharma.

While performing svadharma, we shouldn’t expect any specific result - as it is our duty. For example, a clerk is appointed in the office for the purpose of signing certain documents. If someone gets ‘ideas’ that his duty is to verify them… If they are in proper order, he should sanction them, stamp them, and return them. That is his job. If he does his job properly, at the end of the month he will naturally get his salary.

In spite of taking his salary, if he takes bribes for signing or attesting with a stamp... or raises unnecessary queries for the sake of bribes, that is not good. When he is doing his assigned duty, he shouldn’t expect temporary or special rewards for his work. Realizing one’s duty, performing his work without expectation is ‘dharma’ or ‘svadharma’. As a clerk, he should do clerical work and not expect anything. As an officer, he should do that work without any expectation.

It is nice to talk about this ideal way, but whether this is true in practice or not… let’s leave it to one’s own introspection. How to correct it as well - let’s leave it to them. If you do your dharma without expectation, it will yield a great reward for you. Otherwise, it will put you back in this cycle (of birth and death). This is what Sri Krishna said.

Each of us was given a body. With it, one has to accomplish a few tasks. Let’s know what they are and do them. Sri Krishna: “Arjuna, you got this body to wage war and to remove the troubles of others. At least to alleviate the troubles of those who are dependent on you, you should do your duty. Or you should do it for those who are opposing you, to stop them from degrading themselves further… and give them sadgathi (a better state of existence). That is your duty. That is why Sri Krishna called this war ‘dharmya’ (righteous).

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SLOKA WORD -

dharmya:ddhi: yuddha:th

SLOKA MEANING -

This war is righteous because it does not transgress dharma.

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Hence, do it. In this manner, Sri Krishna motivates Arjuna for war. Sri Krishna: “For this, you shouldn’t feel vikampam (trembling hesitation).”

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SLOKA WORD -

ahobatha mahath pa:pam

karthum vyavasithamayam

SLOKA MEANING -

Oh, what a great sin it would be to engage in this!

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You shouldn’t talk like that [as if it's a huge sin to kill them].

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SLOKA WORD -

vepadhushcha sari:reme si:dhanthi mama ga:thra:ni

SLOKA MEANING -

I am losing control of my body parts.

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‘You need not talk like this. Do your duty properly. If we take a step further, Sri Krishna clarifies this in another way in verse 2.32.

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SLOKA WORD -

yadruchchaya: cha upapannam

swarga dwa:ram apa:vrutham

sukhinaha kshathriya:h pa:rttha

labhanthe: yuddham i:drusham

SLOKA MEANING -

This is not an opportunity which everyone gets; only the happy kshatriyas (warriors) attain such a war.

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“This war is happening because of yadruchchikam (opportunity). We have to remember this word yadruchchikam. “If you fulfill this duty which came through yadruchchikam… it is very easy for you to enter swarga (heaven). With this, you can easily attain swarga without any obstacles. That is why not everyone gets this opportunity. Only those who are worthy and good get this opportunity.”

The Lord used two words here, ‘yadruchcha’ and ‘swarga’. Just as we learned about svadharma, we need to learn these two words as well. Many people use these words, ‘svadharma’ and ‘paradharma’ (others' duties). Let’s ignore whether they talk about them knowingly or unknowingly... it is good for all of us to understand these words.

Svadharma is the activity we must do recognizing the position we are in. Paradharma is the activity that is not right for us. A small example... We must have read this story in our childhood about a dog and a donkey. The dog was protecting the washerman's house while the donkey was carrying his clothes. Once a thief came into his house. The dog did not bark. But the donkey, out of good heart, brayed. We have heard the story. The poor washerman woke up, scolded the donkey for disturbing his sleep, and beat it black and blue.

Paradharma - forgetting one’s duty, following others’ duty which is unwarranted… and doing unwanted activities. If one recognizes one’s own duty and does it, that is svadharma. Generally, our people talk about religions when they talk about svadharma and paradharma. Religions are not svadharma and paradharma at all. These words refer to ‘activities.’

Let’s say one person has the responsibility of boiling milk. And another person has the responsibility of sealing the bottles. Each person has to do his duty. They need not perform another’s tasks when their own duties are separately assigned. Similarly, as long as we are in the body, we have to do duties pertaining to the body. If we understand who gave us this body and for what purpose, and then do the activity, it becomes svadharma.

Forgetting this, if one says “I will not do any physical responsibilities… I will attain a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul), and stay engaged in dhya:nam (meditation)” That means, whilst in the body, he is trying to follow [only] the dharma of a:thma (soul), reality distinct from the body. If you try to follow a:thma dharma after leaving the karmic body, that is ‘fine’. However, if you try to follow [only] a:thma dharma in this body, that is not recommended.

If you are sitting in the car, you shouldn’t walk because the wheels are doing their job. If he is sitting in the car and feels “No, I want to run”… and opens the top of the car, gets out, and starts running, he will lose his life. That is paradharma. When sitting in the car, you should behave accordingly. While in the body, if you do activities recognizing the purpose for which it is given, that is svadharma.

Karthavya pa:lana (performing your duty) is svadharma. Karthavya vismarana (forgetting your duty) is paradharma. For Arjuna, waging war is svadharma, his duty. Begging for alms is paradharma. “Arjuna, know your svadharma and work accordingly. This came out of yadruchha.”

Referring to yadruchchikam, generally people think it came out of its own accord. No! Someone gave Arjuna this opportunity. Who gave it? Yadruchchaya - whatever comes out of the iccha (desire) of someone named yath is yadruchchikam. Who is that yath? In Vishnu Sahasranama (a sacred text), and other puranas (ancient texts) and itihasas (epic histories), yath refers to Bhagavan (the Lord).

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SLOKA WORD -

e:ko naika sava kah kim yath thath padam anutthamam

SLOKA MEANING -

He is the one who protects those who take shelter in Him.

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All these are His names in Vishnu Sahasranama. Yath is also one of His names. What does it mean? Whoever always strives to protect those who take his shelter - that person is yath.

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SLOKA WORD -

yathathe: ithi yath

SLOKA MEANING -

He strives to protect His devotees.

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For what is He yathathe, striving? To protect his devotees. Gajendra (the elephant) was in trouble. The Lord came running from somewhere and protected him. Draupadi (the princess) was in trouble. The Lord protected her.

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SLOKA WORD -

aham smara:mi madhbhaktham naya:mi parama:m gathi:m

SLOKA MEANING -

I always remember my devotees and guide them to the ultimate goal.

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He always remembers the one who takes His shelter even once. The purana tells us that He never forgets those who take His shelter. Aham smara:mi (I remember). Even if we forget Him, He will hold us without forgetting. His name is Yath. His sankalpa (intention) is yadruchcha.

Sri Krishna says, “For you… this war happened with the Lord’s sankalpa, intention. Nothing happens in this world on its own or by coincidence. Whatever happens, happens with someone’s sankalpa. If some activity is occurring in a structured way, someone is executing it behind the scenes. Whatever it is, whether small or big. This [war] was also ‘organized’ by someone. Since this war is happening by the sankalpa of the one whose name is Yath… you do not have the right to say that you don’t want to wage this war.

The Lord is the one who is within you and directing you... He is also within all these people and directing them... so you have to behave according to His sankalpa, there is no other way. This is something which you ought to do. Fortunately, you got this opportunity, so just do it. In this way, Sri Krishna encourages Arjuna for the Bharata Sangramam (the war of the Bharatas).

Jai Srimannarayana!

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