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1. Episode Title: Episode 9 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 9)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The transformation of sorrow in a person's life, Arjuna's emotional struggles, The importance of perspective in relationships, Krishna's guidance on duty and action, The consequences of inaction in the face of wrongdoing

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, sorrow, duty, perspective, relationships, dharma, Kauravas, Bhishma, Drona, Draupadi

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), In Bhagavad Gita chapter 2, Vyaasa Bhagavan (sage Vyasa) explained the various ways sorrow transforms a person, using Arjuna as an example. Arjuna felt sorrow. He felt sorrow in chapters 1 and 2. He experienced one kind of sorrow that marked the beginning of the scripture.

There is a difference between the sorrow he felt in chapter 1 and chapter 2. In chapter 1, when he saw his enemy’s army, those who were ready to fight with him, he thought of them as his relatives instead of viewing them as enemies.

A man is a father in his son’s view, a son in his father’s view, a grandson in his grandfather’s view, a husband in his wife’s view, and a brother in his brother’s view. Thus, each person has their viewpoint. The same exists with the Kauravas too. If one can see what needs to be seen in that context and time, only then can it be said that a person has proper vision. If one sees what need not be seen at the wrong time, it implies that the person is deficient in vision, i.e., sick.

If he is going to war and he feels lustful, or at the time of feeling lusty, he feels valorous as if he is in the battlefield, that’s dangerous. A healthy person’s quality is to be able to see and feel the way he is supposed to in a given context and time.

In chapter 1, when Arjuna came to wage war, he referred to those in the opponent’s army as durbuddhi (evil-minded). Arjuna said,

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SLOKA WORD -

Dha:rthara:shtrasya durbuddhe: yuddhe: priya chiki:rshaha

SLOKA MEANING -

"All these people came to give happiness to the wicked-minded Dhrutharashtra, come let's have a look at them."

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But once he saw them, he saw them as his relatives and felt sorrow. That sorrow grew to such an extent that he started thinking unnecessary things, threw down his bow and arrow, and sat down, unable to act. This is the sorrow Arjuna experienced in the first chapter. This continued in the second chapter too. But this wasn’t the sorrow Arjuna felt seeing all his relatives.

Sri Krishna motivated Arjuna by saying,

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SLOKA WORD -

Utthishta Paranthapa

SLOKA MEANING -

"Arjuna, it is not right to stop the war due to unnecessary thoughts out of weakness of heart."

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Arjuna then expressed his sorrowful state in Bhagavad Gita 2:4 verse.

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SLOKA WORD -

Katham bhi:shmam aham sankhye: dro:nam cha madusu:dhana

Yushubhi prathiyo:thsya:mi pu:ja:rhou ari su:dana

SLOKA MEANING -

"How can I fight against Bhishma and Drona, O Krishna? I cannot shoot arrows at my own teachers and relatives."

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Arjuna asked a wonderful question to Sri Krishna. We don’t know if he questioned him out of challenge, demand, or love. It sounds like a request made in a prayerful mood, but we also see a challenging spirit or a kind of taunt meant to pierce the other person’s heart in this question.

Let's analyze it. We can only recognize it based on the words in it. Words are very powerful. They can be used to uplift or to harm. Instead of using our imagination, we need to recognize them based on the impact of the words used.

Let's look at the words Arjuna used, “katham bhi:shmam - Should I strike Bhishma now in war?” He asked that because Bhishma, Drona, and others were in front of him. Dharmaraja (Yudhishthira) didn’t have this doubt. Because he is wise, he doesn’t have any weaknesses in his heart as he is “Yudhishthira,” someone who is firm regarding his duty.

But Arjuna is not like that. He thinks he is firm but is actually a weak person. There is no danger if an ignorant person behaves like an ignorant person and a learned man behaves like a learned man. If an ignorant person behaves like a learned man and a wise one behaves like an ignorant person, all kinds of problems happen.

The danger here is Arjuna is ignorant but posing like a learned man. What does he know and what does he not know? He knows Bhishma and Drona and his relation with them. But does he actually know it? We don’t know. He stood alone and fought against the same Bhishma and Drona during the incident of Uththara Kumara’s Go:grahana (stealing of cows).

Right now, as they are fighting a huge war, Arjuna has an army of 7 Akshauhinis, a battle formation of a huge number of chariots, cavalry, elephants, etc., supporting him. But in the last phase of Ajna:thava:sa (living incognito), when the Kauravas conquered the kingdom of Virat and tried to steal the cows, the same Arjuna fought all of them alone with no army and put everyone to sleep in the opponent’s army.

It is said that not just putting them to sleep, Arjuna cut the edges of turbans of those in the opponent's army and made Uththara Kumara present them to his sister as a gift. Let’s keep that aside for now. But at that time, did Arjuna hesitate to fight against Drona or Bhishma? He didn’t! That’s because he was in the right frame of mind then.

But now, he got into this pitiful state. Sri Krishna was the one orchestrating these changes in Arjuna’s heart. It was necessary to give a great sadupadesa (right teaching) to the world through Arjuna. So to make Arjuna an instrument, Sri Krishna was creating a suitable maturity in his heart.

Hence, Arjuna developed this weakness in his heart. In today's world, most common people are suffering from these weaknesses. We are also like him. In some situations, we also experience this weakness of heart. We need to be given some means to overcome this weakness or to gradually suppress it.

Keeping in mind the upcoming Kaliyuga (age of darkness), knowing that a lot of people would experience such weaknesses in different ways and in different situations, Jagadacharya (teacher of the world), guru to the world Sri Krishna, thinking of all the people as his own, wanted to give a subtle but very powerful instrument to counteract it.

He was therefore creating the right kind of situation and was making Arjuna an excuse for it. The calf is an excuse for the cow to give us milk. Thinking of himself as a cowherd and Arjuna as the calf who drinks the milk, Lord Sri Krishna was making efforts to give the nectar of Bhagavad Gita to us.

Arjuna was saying, “katham Bhishmam - how can I fight against Bhishma?” “Yushubhi prathiyo:thsya:mi - you want me to attack him with arrows and wage war against him?” So what? An enemy is an enemy, right? How does it matter who he is?

Arjuna: “Actually, when Bhishmacharya was very young, to keep up the vow which he gave to his father, Bhishma has been taking care of us (those in Kuru dynasty) for three generations. He has been a protector of the throne of the Kaurava kingdom since then. When Bhishma’s father King Shantanu wanted to marry Satyavati, the young Bhishma made a vow to protect whoever is sitting on the throne of the Kaurava kingdom and mentor them in ruling the Kaurava kingdom properly.

Bhishma remained faithful to his vow. Since childhood, he has brought us up carefully, carrying us in his lap. That generous Bhishma who did such great favors to us and brought us up. Yo:thsya:mi - should I wage war with him and strike him? “Prathi yo:thsya:mi - should I stand against him as his opponent in war?”

“This is a terrible thing to do. Yushubhi prathi yo:thsya:mi - that too, attacking him with arrows?” Sometimes, a father or grandfather might stand like an opponent and encourage someone to shoot arrows at them, and they also shoot arrows at him, but that is only for the sake of teaching them.

But this war where they are standing on opposite sides, yushubhi prathi yo:thsya:mi, is not for teaching or training or testing. “Sankhye: yushubhihi prathi yo:thsya:mi - this is a real war to take their lives, not an act of training or testing. How can I do this to him?”

But actually, Arjuna shouldn’t be saying that. Because the mistake which Bhishma committed was not a minor one. For that mistake, Sri Krishna should have punished him right then. For the sin of viewing a woman being humiliated in front of the assembly, for giving support to those who wanted to disrobe and mistreat a woman, for seeing it and tolerating it, Bhishma should have lost his life right then.

He needs to be punished sometime. He might be your grandfather, given you shelter, protected the throne, and brought you up lovingly by carrying you in his lap, but the sin he committed was not an ordinary sin. It is a big sin to just watch a lady get humiliated.

There are two ways to respond. If one has the strength, he should immediately go and try to stop it, to protect her and punish those who humiliated her. This should be done. Bhishma had that power to do it but he didn’t use it. Or if for some reason one is unable to protect that lady or punish the one insulting her, one shouldn’t sit like a statue watching it; one should leave the place immediately. Why should one sit and watch it?

That day Bhishma, Drona, and others just sat there watching the atrocities being committed against Draupadi in front of the whole assembly. This was a grave sin they committed. It deserved punishment by the ruler. But the ruler wasn’t qualified enough to award punishment then.

“Now it became necessary for us to award them the right punishment.” Hence, you should do that now. How can you say katham bhi:shma yushibhih prathi yo:thsya:mi…!? “This MUST be done. It is improper for you to say that you don’t want to wage war with Bhishma.”

Weren’t there a lot of others on that day in the assembly including Dharmaraja, this very Arjuna, and the Pandavas? Yes, they were there. Actually, all of them should be killed too for sitting idle and tolerating the insult of a lady.

However, the same Draupadi who must be made happy by punishing her offenders will lose her mangalasutra (nuptial thread) if the Pandavas are harmed. The great acharya, Pillai Lokacharya said,

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SLOKA WORD -

avaludaya mangala su:thrathakka:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

"they are her nuptial thread."

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Actually, the situation was such that both Pandavas and Kauravas should have been harshly punished. Sri Krishna left the five Pandavas alive because they are Draupadi's husbands. Sri Krishna was planning to punish Draupadi’s offenders to make her happy.

That Draupadi would feel sorrow if he caused any harm to Pandavas. He left them alive only because he didn’t want to cause pain to Draupadi. Otherwise, along with Kauravas and an army of 18 Akshauhinis, he would have killed the 5 Pandavas too.

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SLOKA WORD -

ivaludaya mangala su:thratthukka:ha avargalai vaithttha:n

SLOKA MEANING -

"That God left them alive for Draupadi's sake," says Pillai Lokacharya.

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“Hence Arjuna, whatever you are saying about not wanting to kill Bhishma is not right.” Arjuna is first expressing his ignorance here about Bhishma and talks about Drona further. Let us proceed in Bhagavad Gita chapter 2 understanding further about his expression of sorrow. Jai Srimannarayana!

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