

PODCAST 146: IS IT NOT VIOLENCE?

Om Sri Sai Ram

Welcome to Prasanthi Sandesh.

I remember Swami speaking on *Bhagavad Gita*, mentioning one important question that often strikes our minds. We all know that Bhishma, Drona and Krupacharya are stalwarts in the battlefield. All stalwarts are there. They are not only experts in archery, but they are also men of penance and determination.

So the question arises: ***Why did Lord Krishna choose to share and explain the Celestial Song, the Bhagavad Gita, to Arjuna? Why Arjuna alone? Why not the others?*** This has often been a question many people have asked.

I remember very well that in one of His discourses Bhagavan clearly mentioned and spoke about this in an elaborate way. He said that Arjuna heard the *Bhagavad Gita* as he is a representative for the entire humanity. That's why Arjuna won name 'Partha', as Partha means Pruthvi or earth. So Partha heard the Song Celestial, the *Bhagavad Gita*, as the representative of the vast humanity.

Then Swami mentioned another point. Arjuna didn't simply listen and keep quiet. He did exactly what was expected of him, as per the direction of Lord Krishna. Krishna also tells him most lovingly, "Do it, My son, do it, My son," *Kuru nandana, Kuru, do, Nandana, my child. "Please do it, do it," Kuru nandana.*

The third point is that Arjuna is an expert in the battlefield, particularly in archery. It is said that he can fight with both of his hands. So Arjuna is called 'Savyasachi', the one who can fight with both hands.

Then the **fifth** reason is this: Arjuna never lost in battle. He never lost any fight with anybody, so he is also called Vijaya, Victory.

So for all these reasons, Arjuna was worthy to receive the song celestial, the *Bhagavad Gita*, as he is one who practices according to the expectations of the Lord, as he is our representative on earth, and so on as mentioned above.

We should also go a little bit deeper into this subject. Arjuna stands for the *jiva*, the individual soul, while Krishna stands for Deva, the universal soul. So, knowledge is flowing from the cosmic mind to the individual mind.

It is also said that Lord Krishna is an Avatar. So the Lord descended on earth as Sri Krishna while man is here. *Nara* means human being. So, this *nara* or human being is Partha or Arjuna, while Narayana is Krishna Himself. Therefore, Narayana and Nara, Krishna and Arjuna, are a beautiful combination.

And not only that, Krishna also said, *Pandavanam Dhananjaya*. "Among Pandavas, know that I am Arjuna." This shows how close He is, how intimate He is with Arjuna, and how He identified Himself with Arjuna. That's another reason.

Arjuna is a man of deep penance. Having prayed to Lord Shiva, he could obtain the Pashupatastra, a powerful weapon to fight with in the battlefield. He got this Pashupatastra as a reward from Lord Shiva who was very much pleased with his deep penance. So Arjuna had shown all his valour, courage and expertise every time, all over Mahabharat.

Arjuna is also a man of character. Urvashi, who is a divine personality, who is said to be most beautiful, came and was very much attracted by Arjuna, expressing her desire to marry him. Arjuna said, "You are my mother because you are there in Indra loka, the world of the gods. So, you are my mother." Thus he is a man of character.

Then Krishna considered Arjuna as His very, very intimate friend. And that's why we also say, Swami, Bhagavan Baba is also our friend. *Hey bhakta sakha Bhagavan, bhakta sakha Bhagavan*. Bhagavan is our friend. In fact, He is the only true friend.

Arjuna prayed to Lord Krishna, "O Lord! I am your disciple. I surrender to you. Please command me. Let me know what I am supposed to do."

Shisyasteham, Shisyasteham shadhi mam tvam prapannam, I am a disciple, surrendering to you. See that! *Shisyasteham shadi mam tvam prapannam*.

And further Lord Krishna also says, *Bhakto sime sakha cheti*. "You are my friend. You are My devotee. And therefore, *Rahasyam hyetad uttamam*, I am sharing with you the secret of secrets, *Brahmavidya*."

Thus, Lord Krishna Himself certifies the eligibility of Arjuna, selecting him to be the recipient of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Krishna also says, ***Pratijane Priyosime***. And He further says, ***Ishtosime drudhameeti***, "You are very, very close to me. I love you very much."

In this context, I remember two statements made by Bhagavan. He said, "It is not enough if you claim you are a devotee. You should also get the acknowledgement from God, who will confirm, "You are My devotee." This Arjuna got.

I also remember another point mentioned by Bhagavan. Dharmaraja, the eldest of Pandavas, was a man of righteousness. But he was not eligible to receive the *Bhagavad Gita*. Why? Because Dharmaraja repents and regrets having done a wrong action. That regretfulness, that repentance is called *Pashchatapa*, 'to feel sorry about it'. But Arjuna is not like that. Before resorting to war, he prayed to Lord Krishna for His divine guidance. This is *Poorvatapa*. *Poorvatapa* means 'waiting for the guidance'. The spirit of enquiry should come before resorting to action.

So, these are the key points mentioned by Bhagavan which explain to us the reasons why Lord Krishna chose Arjuna.

Now let's take, for example, Dronacharya. Drona is a professor. He taught archery to both the Kauravas and the Pandavas. But his defect is this: he taught them but he did not practice the *dharma*, in the sense that he chose to stand on the side of the

Kauravas. He stood by the side of Kauravas, who were unrighteous. Therefore he is not eligible.

Then how about Bhishma who is the senior most, who represents Shanta Bhakti, the greatest warrior, and a man of great sacrifice? But he too did not deserve *Bhagavad Gita*. Why? Because he also stood by the side of Kauravas. He should have turned against them. But he stood by their side. Therefore, Bhishma was also undeserving.

Now I'd also like to bring your attention to another question, a short answer question. It was Krishna who asked Arjuna to fight. Initially, Arjuna was not ready. He was frustrated and depressed as he never wanted to fight because he didn't want to see all his near and dear killed in the war. So, he hesitated. He never wanted to kill them at any stage. But Krishna wanted him to fight. He directed him to fight under any circumstances.

Now, the question is, is Krishna then a promoter of violence? Has He been promoting violence? Has He advocated violence Himself? That is the question.

Mind you, my friends, Krishna is not in favour of violence. Swami gave some examples. All kinds of medicines are given, but when the patient is not responding, surgery has to be done. As the medication failed, surgery is the only next alternative.

Then a second example is given by Bhagavan Baba: When there is a thorn in your leg which is giving you pain, the way to remove the thorn is to make use of another thorn to remove it. You cannot apply ghee or butter on that. This is exactly what Swami said. By applying butter on that, the thorn won't come out. Therefore, another thorn must be used to remove the first thorn.

Another example He gave is this: A diamond has to be cut by another diamond. It cannot be cut in any other way. Further, Swami said, when a thief enters through the back door, you have to go through the back door only to find out how to catch him. You cannot say, "This is my house. I'll go through the main door, not the back door." You should only pass through that door which the thief has entered and passed through. Therefore, in warfare, you should do similarly.

Take India, Bharat as an example, a country which stands for non-violence. When there is war there on the borders like Ladakh, you cannot just do some *bhajans* there or meditate there. It is time to fight, using all the tankers, all the rifles and guns you have. Therefore, at the right time, one must be prepared to fight, or even die, if that is an ultimate thing. Pandavas were not prepared to fight in the beginning. No. But then having made all kinds of bargains, having employed all methods of compromise, there was no alternative left for them, so they had to fight.

So when we ask, has Krishna advocated violence? No. You have to understand why it is said, to whom it is said, and under what circumstances it is told. Moreover a soldier or a major there in the war field is supposed to fight in a similar way. Arjuna belongs to the warrior caste, and as a *kshatriya*, it is his duty to fight. Plus he is also

a king, the one who has to uphold righteousness. So as a king, he should save the pious and punish the wicked. Therefore, he had to resort to this violence.

So how should he resort to that violence? Without any sense of doer-ship, without any ego, selflessly, and with a spirit of surrender. Then it cannot be called violence any longer. Then that is the observance of one's own *dharma*.

Otherwise here's what happens: When all kinds of horrible, injurious insects like worms or whatever it may be are there, if all these insects are not killed by insecticides when they attack a tree, we lose the whole crop and the tree also for that matter. Therefore, unless the Kauravas are removed or killed or totally annihilated, *dharma* cannot be upheld. Then in this case you cannot call it is *himsa* or violence.

Swami gives another example: When there is some kind of ulcer or some kind of problem within, an operation is the only solution. When the doctor operates, you cannot say the doctor believes in violence. No. The doctor uses the knife for surgery to save the life of a patient. That is important. How could you say that doctor is violent? No.

So when you take the Kauravas into consideration, you must realize that they were the most wicked people. The Pandavas deserved half of the kingdom. But those fellows refused to give them even an inch, despite all kinds of attempts which were made for a compromise. Many such efforts were sent to them. Even Lord Krishna went there also as an emissary. But Duryodhana refused to pay heed to Him. Therefore, as a last resort, violence was the only ultimate alternative. Therefore, Krishna had to order and command Arjuna to fight.

In fact, for your reference, I mention *Bhagavad Gita*, the thirteenth chapter, eighth *sloka*:

amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣhāntir ārjavam |

āchāryopāsanam śhaucham sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ ||

ahimsā kṣhāntir ārjavam,

There Krishna taught non-violence, *ahimsa*. Please understand that in the thirteenth chapter, eighth *sloka*, He speaks about *ahimsa*, non-violence.

Again here's the sixteenth chapter, the second *sloka*:

ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah shantir apaishunam |

daya bhuteshv aloluptvam mardavam hrir achapalam ||

ahimsa satyam akrodhas, ahimsa satyam akrodhas,

In *Daivasura Sampat Vibhag Yoga*, there again He speaks of *ahimsa*, non-violence.

Then tenth chapter, fifth *sloka*, in *Vibhuti Yoga*:

ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśho 'yaśhaḥ |
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ ||
ahimsā samatā tuṣṭis,

He refers to *ahimsa* again.

Then in seventeenth chapter, the fourteenth *sloka*, *Shraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga*:

deva-dvija-guru-prājña- pūjanaṁ śhaucham ārjavam |
brahmacharyam ahimsā cha śhārīraṁ tapa uchyate ||

There He says, *brahmacharyam ahimsā, brahmacharyam ahimsā cha*, there He again mentions of *ahimsa*.

Also in the twelfth chapter, the thirteenth *sloka*, in *Bhakti Yoga*:

adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha |
nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣhamī ||

He says, *adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṁ*, what more do you want?

And then also in the fourth chapter, the eighth *sloka*:

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnāṁ vināśhāya cha duṣhkṛtām |
dharma-samsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge ||
paritrāṇāya sādḥūnāṁ vināśhāya cha duṣhkṛtām,

“To save the pious and to punish the wicked, war is necessary. A fight is necessary.”

So, Arjuna had to fight in obedience to the command of Krishna for all of these reasons.

Thank you. We'll meet again.

Sai Ram.