**HH – BG - 11**

**PREACHINGS -**

**Bhagavad Gita** is the king of all scriptures, uplifting mankind. It was delivered directly by the Supreme Lord Himself. He descended as **Sri Krishna Avatara** and gave us this great boon. Where did He come from? Why did He do this? **Adi** (the first), **Narayana** Himself took the form of **Sri Krishna** to do so. Lordʼs descent is described in detail within **Agama Grandhas** (procedural scriptures). He exists everywhere and within everything, including the smallest of small particles. He exists inside and outside of every entity. This is a unique quality of God. Air exists within and around us. It is inside our body as well as spread around us, sustaining life. **Akasha** (space) exists in our body helping us lead life, and it is spread around us helping us conduct ourselves in this world. We know the nature of these two already, but both have their own limits. Supporting air and space, there exists an unlimited energy, spread inside and outside of them both, ensuring they work appropriately according to their nature. This energy is named **Narayana Thaththvam**. This **Narayana Thaththvam** is the eternal reality that blessed us with **Bhagavad Gita**. Is it not **Sri Krishna** who gave us **Bhagavad Gita**? It is. To uplift the universe, He descends by taking gradual steps. His first step is toward **Palakadaali** (Milky Ocean), where He exists as **Vasudeva**. He exists there not in one form, but in four - **Vasudeva**, **Sankarshana**, **Pradyumna**, and **Aniruddha**. With one form, He manages everything. In another, He creates. In another, He sustains creation. Finally, in another, He dissolves the entire existence back into Himself, ultimately bringing it back out again. Scriptures refer to where **srushti** (creation), **stithi** (support), and **pralayam** (dissolution) occur, as **Vyuhams**. Among **vyuha** forms, **Pradyumna** is meant for support, **Aniruddha** is meant for creation, and **Sankarshana** is meant for dissolution. To perform these tasks, He creates **Brahma**. From **Brahma**, He creates **Rudra** and then all the other **devathas** (administrative forces of the universe). With 330 million **devathas**, He conducts the universal operation. The strength and capability to manage all these **devathas** is given to **Brahma**. Lord resides within **Brahma** to direct creation. This is the **vyuha** process. He uses **Aniruddha** form to introduce each incarnation in accordance with the appropriate time. If we plant a banana, it generates several different sprout-like bulbs. Similarly, He created the Milky Ocean, within which He takes a reclining position. He fulfills the needs of His creation by manifesting various incarnations according to the respective time and need. These forms are called **avatharas** (incarnations).

His greatness is expounded to us through **avatharas**. He came as a fish to protect and rehabilitate beings near extinction. This was the first tsunami. The whole Earth sinks when a tsunami hits. Once, when a huge tsunami was about to occur, all living and non-living species were about to be washed away. At such a time, He created a boat, made **saptha rushis** (the 7 great sages) as sailors, and appointed King **Satyavratha** to collect pairs of all species carefully and protect them for 7 days. He promised the king that He would return to protect everyone. He protected everyone through King **Satyavratha** at the specified time through His first incarnation, known as **Matsya avathara**. When the count of various species started, it is likely to have been calculated as 84 lakh (lakh = hundred thousand) primary species, with many subsets in each. This was a necessity for which there was an incarnation, through which He showed that He is the qualified one to protect anyone in danger. Another time, He incarnated as a tortoise. In this **avatara**, He revealed that He can help anyone unable to overcome obstacles, by teaching necessary problem-solving skills. He incarnated as **Narasimha** to fulfill **Prahlada**ʼs vow, proving He will do anything to uphold promises of His devotees, no matter what the situation. Each of His incarnations showcases His attributes. This ‘wealthʼ is referred to as **vibhavam**. All His incarnations teach us about His **vibhavam**, so they are named **vibhava avatharas**. Of these **avatharas**, the fully manifested incarnation which displayed all His exceptional qualities is **Sri Krishna avathara**. The root is **Narayana**. From there, **Aniruddha** emerged in The Milky Ocean. All **avatharas** emerge from **Aniruddha**. In those incarnations, a primary one revealing all His divine qualities is **Sri Krishna**. This is revealed by **Srimad Bhagavatham**. **Agama** scriptures proved the same. This is the standard accepted by us.

**Sri Krishna avathara**, originating from the primordial **Sriman Narayana**, gave us the essence of all reality and knowledge. His other activities like destroying evil are simply incidental. **Sri Krishna**ʼs primary goal was to deliver the ultimate knowledge for mankind, relevant for all times. That ultimate message is given in chapter 18, verse 66. **Bhagavad Gita** is the necessary prerequisite for that ultimate knowledge. If we try to delve into it without understanding the prerequisite we won’t be able to comprehend its essence. Let us also understand that prerequisite before trying to understand the ultimate. It is very significant and profound. Realizing the importance of understanding the vast profundity of that verse, **Bhagavad Ramanujacharya** travelled 18 times to learn its meaning from one of his great gurus, **Sri Ghosti Purna**. **Sri Ghosti Purna** lived 1000 years ago, and was a highly qualified treasure trove of knowledge. “Humbly seek this knowledge from **Sri Ghosti Purna**,” instructed **Sri Mahapurna** (**Periyanambi**) to **Bhagavad Ramanuja**. The humble **Ramanujacharya** immediately obeyed. He had the wonderful quality of following instructions of Elders to perfection, irrespective of apparent difficulties. When **Sri Periyanambi** (**Mahapurna**) instructed **Ramanuja** to visit **Gostipuram** and seek the essence of **Charama Sloka**, **Sri Krishna**'s paramount message, **Ramanujacharya** proceeded enthusiastically. He lived in **Sri Rangam** which is 100 miles from **Thirukoshtiyur**, where **Gostipurna** lived. There were no means of powered transport. Since **sanyasis** (surrendered souls) shouldnʼt use animals for transport, walking was the only option. So, **Sri Ramanuja** walked the entire way. **Sri Gostipurna** noticed **Ramanuja** but did not immediately bless him, as he wanted to test **Ramanuja**ʼs will. He sent **Ramanuja** home, deciding not to bless him with the divine message on his first visit. **Ramanuja** was disappointed. He did not get his guruʼs grace even after a long journey, that too while strictly fasting. Without losing hope, **Ramanuja** kept returning to **Sri Gostipurna** as instructed, sometimes months apart. However, **Gostipurna** kept **Ramanujacharya** waiting each time, fortifying his will. Fasting, **Ramanujacharya** walked 100 miles with hope, waited patiently, and returned disappointed, walking 100 miles back. This happened several times much to the dismay of the people of the villages on his route. People thought, if getting the mantra and knowledge for a great sage like **Ramanujacharya** is so difficult, then what about the common peoples’ fate? A lifetime is not enough! The compassionate **Ramanujacharya** promised, “if by guruʼs grace I receive this ultimate knowledge, I will distribute it to you all without fail - no need to worry.” After 18 attempts, **Sri Gostipurna** graced **Ramanujacharya** with the profound mantra, but only after checking several standards and taking an oath from **Ramanuja** not to reveal it to anyone. Later, as per his promise to the people, **Ramanujacharya** climbed the high temple tower of **Gostipuram** and shared the divine knowledge with all those interested. **Sri Gostipurna** was livid with **Ramanujacharya** – not so much for revealing the **mantra** as for violating his vow. As **Ramanujacharya** was worthy and humble, he bowed unto his guru and from his heart, expressed... “It was not I who revealed the mantra, it was your **padukas** (sandals), who did so. I kept them in front of me and only they uplifted all these people.” “Those who received this knowledge will surely be liberated from this ocean of sorrows with the grace of your **padukas**.” “If you are angered, only I will be banished to hell.” “That’s fine, however, let everyone else be uplifted.” Realizing **Ramanuja**ʼs compassion, **Sri Gostipurna**ʼs heart melted. With love, he embraced **Ramanuja**, and titled him **Emberumanar**. The aim of this historic episode was to obtain the essence of **charama sloka**, the ultimate teaching given by **Sri Krishna**. The fact that **Ramanuja** had to endeavor 18 times for this reveals how vast and profound that essential knowledge is. To realize its importance, one needs to know this historical preface. The supreme Lord Himself appeared to grant this knowledge. That **Narayana Thatthvam** descended as **Sri Krishna avathara** to give the world this ultimate knowledge. Mesmerizing people with His enchanting beauty, and later making **Arjuna** as an instrument, He benefited the entire world. With the grace of the great **Sri Krishna**, let us all learn and benefit in the manner bestowed by our **purvacharyas** (lineage of gurus). Jai **Srimannarayana!**