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1. Episode Title: Episode 21 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 21)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The significance of human life and the tools provided by God for learning, the importance of accepting knowledge from various sources, the philosophy of knowledge over caste, the role of A:lwa:rs in imparting wisdom, the distinction between body consciousness and soul consciousness, the concept of Krupana (one who does not recognize their true self), and the journey of self-realization through knowledge.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, wisdom, knowledge, A:lwa:rs, Krupana, self-realization, Bhagavad Ramanujacharya, teachings, philosophy, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Human life is very precious. Bhagava:n (God) provided this body with great tools that help us in learning good things. He gave us proper buddhi (wisdom), manas (mind), and indriyas (senses) - crafting a neat connection between the three. We must decide whether we want to sustain or spoil this connection. If we desire to make it better, then we are on the right track. However, if we forget and ignore or abuse them, we are most unfortunate and pathetic.

There are always people around to give us good messages. If only there is the intention of knowing good, then there are many tools that Bhagava:n has created for us to realize good. These channels are always open. We should be prepared to receive. It can come via children, Nature, aged people, or through our own life experiences. We should accept good from wherever it appears.

ba:la:dapi subha:shitam ame:dhya:dapi ka:nchanam

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SLOKA WORD -

बालादपि शुभाशितं अमेध्यादपि कञ्चनम्

SLOKA MEANING -

Even if a gold ring falls in dirt, don't we keep it after cleaning it?

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That is, we must accept precious objects from anywhere. Likewise, we should accept precious teachings from anywhere, like Ve:das (source of all knowledge), pura:nas (sacred writings), and ithi:ha:sas (ancient history). Coordinating all these, the foremost a:cha:rya (teacher), Bhagavad Ramanujacharya Swami dedicated his life propagating these through practice.

One should not consider the caste of the person imparting good knowledge. Despite being of the lowest caste, if his teachings are good and experiential (learned through experience), one should accept them with humility and worship such a person. A:lwa:rs are the great saints who incarnated in southern India. A:lwa:r is one who dove deep into the most virtuous and the best well-wishing tha:thvic (philosophical) ocean and has emerged. Put in another way, the experienced people. These experienced people are called a:lwa:rs.

These a:lwa:rs were born into various castes like Brahmins, Kshathriyas, Vaishyas, Su:dras, Harijans, Girijans, and Mle:chhyas. Birth into a particular caste is not important; knowledge is important. A person is respected due to his knowledge, not by birth. This is the philosophy of Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya. A:lwa:rs who propagated such good knowledge are treated equal to Bhagava:n in the temples. Our people recognized a:lwa:rs’ songs to be equivalent to Ve:das and worshiped them equally.

In fact, they worshipped these songs with higher precedence to the Ve:das because they are very pleasant, clean, and simple - like the flowing crystal clear water of a river, unlike the complexities in Ve:das. All the a:charya:s (teachers) and Elders before and after Ra:ma:nuja:charya worshipped a:lwa:rs. Knowledge is essential, not the body. The physical being who is delivering the message is not the key aspect; however, whether the message delivered by the person is apt or not is important.

What kind of message should it be? A message that increases our soul consciousness instead of body consciousness is a good message. What kind of food is considered good? Food that is tasty but harmful - not tasty but nutritious and a long-term immunity booster? Now the whole world understood. What is it? Even if temporarily unpleasant but boosting our immunity and improving our longevity, we should welcome, accept, and respect it. Recently, the entire world learned this fact very well. We should apply this to all circumstances. We should apply this to knowledge as well.

People who impart such knowledge are our well-wishers. Their teaching makes our life worthwhile. It will help us rightly utilize the small opportunity we have. It will shape us in a way that others may not feel sorry for us. It will transform our life from being a krupana (one who does not recognize their true self) to a bra:hmana (one who has obtained essential knowledge properly). Bra:hmana does not refer to a person born in a particular caste and has a thread around his shoulder. He is the brahmave:ttha, one who obtains all essential knowledge properly. He is known as a bra:hmana.

bramha anathi ithi bra:hmanaha

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SLOKA WORD -

ब्रह्म अनन्ति इति ब्रह्मणः

SLOKA MEANING -

Brahman is an eternal truth.

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Bra:hmana is the one who accepts this eternal truth as vital to their existence, unlike the ones who only recite the whole day with the sacred thread around their necks. Also, birth into a particular family doesn't necessarily make a person bra:hmana. Whether the person has the required knowledge or not is the crucial thing. All our previous a:cha:ryas have taught this, and the pu:ranas have also clarified the same.

The saint Ya:jnyavalka has explained this in Bhruda:ranyaka Upanishad. He points out Krupana. Krupana is the one who does not recognize his true self, the aim of life, and duty in his limited life in this body. Everyone who enters this body has to leave it, just like a person traveling by vehicle must get off when reaching his destination. A person boarding the flight has to deboard at some point. A person traveling by train has to exit when reaching the destination. Time spent traveling is temporary, not permanent - the work at the destination is everlasting. The journey only takes one to a destination.

Likewise, we should remember that this body is a tool or time-limit to reach our destination. Instead, we think that this body is permanent and tend to waste the little time we have. Such a person who does not utilize time in this body wisely is a Kru:pana. We should pity such a person since he missed out on an excellent opportunity. The subsequent birth of such a person may or may not help him realize the good things; hence, pity such a person's wasted life, explains Saint Ya:jnyavalka to a great lady named Ga:rgi.

At the beginning of the second chapter, Arjuna admits that he is a Kru:pana, unsure whether it’s by knowledge or ignorance – and pleads with Sri Krishna to eradicate it. Arjuna used such beautiful words,

ka:rpanya do:sho:pahatha svabha:vaha.

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SLOKA WORD -

कर्पण्य दोषोपहत स्वभावः

SLOKA MEANING -

Arjuna knew that being a kru:pana was a weakness.

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We, too, need this realization. Some people think that this body and soul are the same, and self-identify with the bodies. They do not want to listen to anything further and work accordingly. We should, in fact, take pity on such people - but if the person does not want to learn, there is nothing we can do for him. The first step is to realize that such a state is flawed. Arjuna realized this. Hence, he said ka:rpanya do:sha, admitting that he is suffering from being a Ka:rpanya.

Sri Krishna sighed with relief, ready to help him. Arjuna seeks Sri Krishna's shelter to emerge from his state of ka:rpanya. Now that he expressed it, Sri Krishna is ready to help him to get out of this state. This is achieved through buddhi (intellect). When there is a defect or gap in understanding, it can only be fixed by cleansing the relevant knowledge. If the hand gets dirty, the dirt goes away only if you clean the hand - not the leg or anywhere else. Similarly, when there is a fault in knowledge, it can be rectified when knowledge is cleansed.

Cleansing of knowledge is achieved only through attaining the proper knowledge. i:shwara jna:na:th

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SLOKA WORD -

ईश्वर ज्ञानात्

SLOKA MEANING -

When related to Bhagava:n and thatthva (truth), one’s knowledge gets purified.

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It is parama:matha: (the greater than the greatest knowledge). All the sages accepted it. Unintentionally, Arjuna asked Sri Krishna to help purify/rectify his knowledge. Bhagava:n Sri Krishna grabbed this opportunity to explain Akshara-thatthva (the eternal truth).

Akshara-thatthva is of two kinds. The ji:va (soul) is akshara, as is Bhagava:n. Prakruthi (nature) is also akshara, but this akshara exists eternally while changing continuously. The ji:va is akshara, which eternally exists with change only in knowledge. Bhagava:n is akshara, existing eternally without any change in his form or knowledge. All three are akshara thatthvas, but one must realize that there are three such thatthvas. One should know that prakruthi, ji:va, and Bhagava:n are different but are always together. Why are they together? This is the tough part!

To explain all three, it took even Sri Krishna a seventeen-chapter long scripture containing all the required knowledge, even with concise statements. However, He explained so clearly and simply that Arjuna could understand very quickly back then. Our Elders urged us to at least read the original scripture, hoping that we, too, would benefit like Arjuna. A word used unintentionally by Arjuna, Ka:rpanya, deeply rooted in Upanishad, provided Sri Krishna with an opportunity to teach the vast scripture. He revealed Bhagavad Gi:tha to Arjuna.

Arjuna inadvertently made another request, yachchre:yas sya:n nischitham -

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SLOKA WORD -

यच्छ्रेयस्यां निश्चितम्

SLOKA MEANING -

Explain to me what was already decided as being beneficial.

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Sri Krishna was delighted to have Arjuna on a proper path. ’Sre:yas’ is a profound word. Doesn't sre:yas mean that which is good and aids well-being? It usually means well-being, but kato:panishad wonderfully explains what that well-being really implies. Let's move forward in understanding this. Jai Srimannarayana!

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