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1. Episode Title: Episode 23 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 23)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of knowledge and its distinction from mere information, Understanding the importance of higher intelligence in humans, The role of the Bhagavad Gita in guiding righteous living, The concept of surrender and its significance in spiritual practice

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, knowledge, intelligence, dharma, Arjuna, Krishna, surrender, spiritual guidance, higher consciousness

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), today we explore the essence of knowledge and its significance in our lives. What is jna:na (knowledge)? To know something as a wall, the floor, a stick, a head, the sky, a human, or an animal is not true jna:na. Even ants, mosquitoes, animals, and trees possess a form of intelligence. For instance, if we obstruct a tree's growth, it will find a way around to reach the nourishing sunlight. This instinctive intelligence is not what we consider knowledge.

When we think of humans as superior to other animals, we must recognize that humans should have both general intelligence, like other beings, and unique, specific knowledge. Only with this unique knowledge can one be considered a higher being. Some may question the need for teachings and additional knowledge, believing that living a life that neither hurts nor helps others is sufficient. However, can one truly live without causing any discomfort or loss to others? The answer is no. Every action we take has consequences.

Even a tree, which does not intentionally harm anyone, provides shade, air, and purifies the atmosphere. It offers flowers, fruits, and leaves without reacting negatively when cut down. Should we then say that the life of a tree is better than ours? If the goal is to lead an ordinary life, trees do that too. However, if we aspire for a more evolved life, we must follow the rules and norms of higher beings and strive to stand apart from them.

We must utilize our 'big brain' wisely. Ordinary cognitive abilities exist in all creatures, and we should possess them too. We need to understand our body, environment, and atmosphere without destroying them. If our cognition is limited to these aspects, we are no different from animals. True knowledge goes beyond temporal understanding; it reveals the reality (tathva) within us that sustains life.

As Sage Para:shara states, ajna:nam athah anyado:ktham (ignorance is something else). Chemistry and the science of atoms, while studied extensively, do not constitute true jna:na. Such knowledge only elevates us to the level of animals. If we aim to climb the steps of knowledge, we must seek actual knowledge that leads us higher.

Elders have taught us how to utilize various aspects of life—our body, senses, mind, and wealth. The knowledge that guides us in these areas is true knowledge. The one who imparts this knowledge is our hithaka:nkshi (well-wisher) and sre:yah prada (bestower of well-being). Walking this path leads us to sre:yo ma:rga (righteous path), unlike other paths.

The Bhagavad Gita was given to teach us about sre:yas (the best). Arjuna, unknowingly, asks Sri Krishna, yachchre:yas ya:th nischitham bru:hi thanme: (what is the best for me?). As a disciple (prapanna), he takes refuge in Krishna. Sri Krishna was pleased with such a disciple and began to elaborate on sre:yas. Thus, the wondrous Bhagavad Gita came into being.

What does it teach? It addresses knowledge related not only to the physical body but also to the senses (indriyas) and the mind (manas). Krishna begins by explaining three distinct aspects: the body, the indwelling soul (ji:va), and the Supreme Soul (Bhagava:n) that supports us. Understanding these three allows us to decide on a course of action, leading to desired outcomes and joy.

As the ji:va resides in the body, it operates through the senses. Krishna teaches how to control these senses (indriya-nigraham) and understand the mind. This spans six chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, where He discusses the body, senses, and mind, marking our progress halfway up the stairs of knowledge.

From the 7th to the 12th chapters, Krishna describes Himself. Curious, Arjuna asks to see Krishna's magnificent form, and in the 11th chapter, Krishna reveals Himself. After witnessing this, Arjuna believes everything Krishna has taught him. In the 12th chapter, Krishna explains that understanding Him is not difficult and is accessible to everyone.

To strengthen Arjuna's belief, Krishna recapitulates everything from the 13th to the 18th chapters, providing a comprehensive overview. He emphasizes the importance of turning inward towards the Supreme Bhagava:n and away from the ever-changing prakruti (nature).

Surrender (sarana:gathi) to Bhagava:n is essential. Krishna assures that once we surrender, He will relieve us from all obstacles (pa:pa:s) that hinder our progress. He takes responsibility for eliminating these obstacles, saying, "I will take the responsibility of eliminating all your pa:pa:s."

Arjuna, in his surrender, declares, sa:dhi ma:m thva:m prapannam (I am surrendering to You). Prapanna means one who holds onto the other, and in this case, it refers to holding onto Krishna with the intellect (buddhi) and mind (manas). True holding is not physical but mental, as distance does not matter when one truly desires something.

Thus, we must do prapaththi (surrender) to Bhagava:n and a proper guru. Arjuna acknowledges his surrender, stating, "I am Your disciple. Command me now." He uses the terms ka:panya and sre:yas, which Krishna employs to teach essential knowledge through Arjuna. This teaching is what we now know as the Bhagavad Gita. Chapter 2, verse 7 is crucial in this context, and we will continue our journey of learning from here.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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