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1. Episode Title: Episode 28 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 28)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of true knowledge in relieving sorrow, Arjuna's internal conflict about duty, Krishna's teachings on the nature of the soul, Understanding the difference between the body and the soul, The significance of genuine knowledge in overcoming grief.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna’s Vishadam, Upadesham, Shokam, Krupa (Grace), A:thma (soul), Jna:ni (wise person), Pandit (learned person), Bhu:ma Vidhya, Sanath Kuma:ra, Na:rada, Gatha:su (body), Agatha:su (soul), sorrow, duty, knowledge.

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is a scripture that reduces the sorrow of grief-stricken Arjuna. When he is unsure of his duty, it guides him on the right course of action and commands him to do his duty. Sri Krishna gave an upadesa (teaching) to Arjuna on what he needs to know.

Arjuna is in despair and is not sure whether or not to wage war. If he wages this war, he needs to kill all his relatives. He has to oppose his gurus and fight with them, which is a terrible situation. Arjuna feels that it is not right to do so. Based on Sri Krishna’s upadesa, Arjuna felt he knew the right action to be taken, yet he felt that he can’t wage war. He understands what his duty is but is not truly convinced of it. This is termed a:pa:tha prathi:thi (superficial understanding) - one who understands superficially. We need to try to understand with clarity. We should aim to get yathhartha jna:na (genuine knowledge).

Whoever gives such knowledge is called a jna:ni (wise person) or pandit (learned person). The term "panda" refers to someone with knowledge, and in North India, we see pandas. In places like Kashi, Haridwar, Ganga, Prayag, and Bhadri, pandas are those who instruct on what and how religious activities need to be done. They also help us with other necessities or arrangements. Why are they called pandas? They read shastras (scriptures) regarding the activities that need to be done, and they have the knowledge, or panda, about it.

People in our part of the country call them panditha or pandit. They don’t discuss superficial matters; they have actual knowledge and have realized legitimate thathva (truth). They understand the complete supreme truth as it is. Such learned souls do not feel grief or sorrow. Such souls have clarity about their duty. Those without such knowledge get doubts and feel sorrowful. Arjuna is also experiencing deep sorrow. To get rid of that sorrow, knowledge is required.

That knowledge that removes all sorrows is revealed by bhu:ma vidhya (earthly knowledge) in the Chandogya Upanishad. A brief gist - once upon a time, there was a great person, Sanath Kuma:ra, who started a big university. He put out an ad: “All those interested can apply.” He received an application from a respected person who was eligible. So he called him for an interview. The person who came was none other than Na:rada.

Sanath Kuma:ra inquired about Na:rada’s qualifications - since it is a university, he must have some prerequisites? Na:rada began listing his qualifications: “Rug Veda, Bhagavo Dhyevi (I studied Rug Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharvana Veda, and Eka:yana Shastra, known as Pancha Ratha A:gamam).” Sanath Kuma:ra was shocked. He asked, “Did you come here to study, or to lecture others? You seem to be more qualified than I!” Na:rada replied, “No, I came here to study.”

Sanath Kuma:ra said, “But you seem more qualified than I am.” Na:rada responded, “Indeed, I studied the scriptures, but only to the extent of grasping the text. I was unable to realize the inner meanings.” He continued, “manthra vidhe:va:smi na:ham a:thma vith (I was able to learn all the letters of the mantra and their notation, without any fault, in the prescribed manner).” “Hence I know all the mantras properly. However, I am unable to understand the thathva (essential truth) behind it.”

Sanath Kuma:ra asked, “Why do you want to know it?” Na:rada replied, “To get rid of my ignorance.” He added, “na:ham a:thma vith (I was unable to understand a:thma, the self). So I came here wanting to learn it from you. Because to be free from our sorrows, we need a:thma thathva jna:na (knowledge about the self).”

tharathi so:kam a:thma vith (Only those who have true knowledge of the soul are able to be free from sorrows). “Only they can experience bliss. I would like to learn that from you.” That is how Na:rada requested Sanath Kuma:ra to bestow a:thma thathva jna:na. With that in mind, Sanath Kuma:ra delivers an upadesa known as “bhu:ma vidya.”

Now Arjuna is in a sorrowful state. To be freed from that sorrow, he needs to be taught a:thma thathva jna:na. Arjuna usually wouldn’t listen to an upadesa. So Sri Krishna kept waiting until Arjuna came to this pitiful state. “Arjuna, even you do not know what is going to take your sorrow away.”

Arjuna said in the 10th sloka:

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SLOKA WORD -

yachho:kam uchho:shanam indri:yana:m

SLOKA MEANING -

My senses are suffering due to sorrow. I do not know of any means to take this sorrow away.

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Arjuna thought of two means. First, he considered becoming the lord of this whole world:

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SLOKA WORD -

ava:pya bhu:mou asapathna vruddham

SLOKA MEANING -

To win over all his enemies, to have the whole world under his control, to enjoy royal pleasures as an emperor.

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For that to happen, he needs to wage war with his relatives and gurus. The second option:

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SLOKA WORD -

ra:jyam sura:nam cha a:dhipathyam

SLOKA MEANING -

Go to heavenly realms and rule there.

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Arjuna felt that neither of these would relieve him from sorrow. He needed something else, apart from the above two means, to get rid of his sorrows. If he properly understood a:thma thathva jna:na (actual knowledge of the self), only then would his sorrows and fears be gone. That is what was required. To get rid of sorrow, it is very important to acquire a:thma thathva jna:na.

A:thma thathva jna:na is in reference to the body and soul. When referring to other objects, it is the actual knowledge about those objects. A good means to be free of sorrows is to understand anything clearly as it is. We need to realize this. Sri Krishna starts talking about this from verse 2.11.

“Arjuna, you are crying unnecessarily for things which are not worth crying for. You do not understand that for which you are crying. You don’t realize that you shouldn’t speak like this.”

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SLOKA WORD -

asou:chyan anva so:chasthvam

prajna va:dhanscha bha:shase

gathasu:n agathasu:nscha

na:nu so:chanthi panditha:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

Those who have true knowledge never cry for the dead or the living.

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Temporarily, pandits may feel sad if they lose something or someone because of the relationship they have with them, or based on the nature of objects, etc. Sri Krishna used a beautiful word here: na anu so:chanthi (they never cry). If you constantly cry for something lost, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, it is known as anu so:cham.

If one keeps crying for what is not worth crying for, regardless of time or situation, it is not correct. If we lose something and are not able to recover it by any means, we need to console our manas (mind) and stop thinking about it. Once someone passes away, that same person does not return. If you constantly think of them in sorrow for days, months, and years on end, you are forgetting your responsibilities. You are not making proper use of your time.

Because of the affection, love, and the type of relationship you share with them, when you lose that person, anyone with a heart would surely feel sad, temporarily. That is a sign of having manas. However, with the right intelligence, one should stop lamenting when possible and continue with regular duties. Instead, if we cry continuously, that is ‘anu so:chitham’. This should be avoided.

You are speaking like prajna va:dhanscha bha:shase (someone who speaks as if he has true knowledge but is actually lacking it). Why did he become like that? Asou:chyan anva so:chasthvam (crying for something which is not worth crying for). You don’t have the knowledge of that for which you are crying. What is Arjuna crying for? There are only two things:

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SLOKA WORD -

gatha:su:n agatha:su:nscha na:nu so:chanthi

SLOKA MEANING -

No one cries for the dead or the living.

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Sri Krishna used two words very beautifully: gatha:su (something subject to life force leaving it) and agatha:su (something never subject to life force leaving it). No one cries for these two. What is always with life force and what can be separated from life force? One of these is not always with pra:na (life force) - gatha:su refers to the body. The other is always with pra:na - agatha:su refers to a:thma (soul). A:thma is that which never dies.

Why all this dravida pra:na:yama (revealing of concepts in a round-about fashion)? There is a secret to this. Isn’t it enough to just state “bodies and a:thmas?” No, it is not. Sri Krishna is making Arjuna understand these words. Why are bodies known as gatha:su and a:thmas known as agatha:su? We need to know this. Let’s dive into the scripture by trying to understand these words. Jai Srimannarayana!

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