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1. Episode Title: Episode 31 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 31)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of preparing a listener for a message, Understanding the prologue and epilogue of the Bhagavad Gita, The nature of the soul (atma) and its eternal existence, The distinction between the body and the soul, The concept of supreme soul (paramatma) and individual soul (jivatma)

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, soul, eternal existence, knowledge, prologue, epilogue, supreme soul, individual soul

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), one must prepare a recipient for readiness to listen before imparting a valuable message. The core part is the message. The preparatory part is the introduction or preface of that message. The preface of the Gita (Bhagavad Gita), the science of Gita, is everything that was detailed in the first chapter and through verse 12 of chapter 2. The upadesa (divine message) of Bhagavad Gita begins from the 12th verse. The core upadesa begins from chapter 2 verse 12 and concludes with chapter 18 verse 66. Everything after the message is an epilogue and everything before the message is a prologue.

Sri Krishna delivers the prologue to Arjuna. To alleviate Arjuna’s sorrow, thatthva jnana (knowledge of eternal entities) is necessary. The point when He begins delivering thatthva jnana marks the beginning of Bhagavad Gita. He is trying to deliver transcendental knowledge. We discussed earlier that good knowledge is called pandita (wise person), and the one who has such knowledge is called pandita (wise person).

How does one identify the body? How does one identify atma (soul)? This knowledge is known as good knowledge. If we attain this knowledge, we will not experience sorrow in any situation. Superficial, self-taught bookish knowledge is not sufficient in this realm. Superficial understanding obtained simply by listening is also insufficient. Real knowledge is essential. When it is firm in the heart, it also manifests into practice. Just as a tap releases water when the overhead tank is full - when knowledge stands firm, it then matures into practice. Only one who practices it will be relieved from sorrow. That person remains unaffected by proximity or distance from an object or person, regardless of situation, because he possesses true knowledge. That person will be duty-oriented and duty-focused. The root for this is to understand swarupa jnana (knowledge of the nature of the entities). Swarupa jnana is referred to as sastra (scripture).

Sri Krishna begins delivering it from chapter 2 verse 12 of Bhagavad Gita. The 12th verse is as follows…

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SLOKA WORD -

na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam na thwam ne:me: jana:dhipa:ha|

na chaiva na bhavishya:maha sarve: vayam athah param||

SLOKA MEANING -

Neither I, nor you, nor all these kings ever did not exist; nor will we ever cease to exist.

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This verse is fascinating. People question why its intent is not stated directly as opposed to the way it is expressed. He said it beautifully, however… na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam (I was never non-existent in the past). He simply could have stated, “I always exist.” However, as they say, double-negatives reinforce strong positives. Thus, using a negating word twice affirms the intended message. Starting with ‘I’, He uses Himself as an example, trying to elaborate on the rest. Who is ‘He’? He is paramatma (supreme soul). Then, what name is used for the rest? They are atmas (souls). I am a soul. You are a soul. He is a soul. She is a soul, etc.

Generally, we see and show bodies while using words like her, him, they, them, me, etc. In fact, these identifications do not refer to the body. Why? After some time, when the situation arises, the one we refer to as ‘he’ is ready to be taken away. We don’t say ‘take him’. We say, ‘take it’. The name, ‘he’, is now gone. ‘It’ is used. When someone strongly objects, asking why is ‘he’ referred to as ‘it’, then we hear an emotional response ‘he is gone! he is gone’! Who is ‘he’? Earlier, you were showing the visible body and referring to it as ‘he’. Why do you now say ‘he is gone’?

Who did you name ‘he’? Not the visible body, but the one with life who left the visible body. The one which has life and was in this body is termed atma (soul). We are referring to the atma as he, she, me, you, us, we, etc. All these names do not refer to the body, but the eternal entity, atma. Why is it named atma? Atma is that which is apnoti (occupying and spreading through whatever it resides within). What does it do as it spreads? Where does it spread to? It spreads within that which it makes as its residence. What does it do as it spreads within? It orders, it drives.

anthah pravishta sastha (that which enters and directs is named atma). If it spreads through only that which it resides, it is named jivatma (individual soul). Because it enables that specific object to function, it is called jivatma. It is termed jiva (soul), atma, or jivatma. These three are synonyms. Jiva or atma, or the two words together, jivatma, give the same meaning. We must realize they are not different. That which limits itself to only one body, resides in it, uses it, and gives the body life as long as it is in there is termed atma. Because it (atma) is utilizing that which it resides in, that residence is named sharira (body).

Atma is known as shariri (the one who resides in the body) because it is using something as its sharira and residing in it. Shariri, sharira. Atma [is shariri] and the body is sharira. It [the resident atma] can make use only of its sharira. It cannot control the body next to it. It can only govern and energize every cell of its current body, but not any other body nearby. Thus, jivatma is limited to one body.

However, there is a thatthva (truth) which is not limited to only one body - it spreads throughout everything in existence, including the jivatma, making the entire universe as its body. Not only all physical bodies, but it also makes the resident jivatma as its body, residing in it as its atma and governs it without its knowledge. Such a thatthva that is within everything and governs everything by itself is named as paramatma (supreme soul). This is jivatma, limited to only one body. That which is related to everybody, governing and ruling everything without any hurdle is named as paramatma.

It always exists. It is not restricted by time. This atma does not start to exist or stop existing due to any specific process. The battle here (Mahaabharata War) does not destroy atma. It may cause changes to the body which is made of the five elements of nature. However, atma does not change. It never changes, so why worry? He begins by taking Himself as an example for this. He says…

na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam (I was never non-existent in the past).

na thwam ne:me: jana:dhipa:ha (nor you, nor all these kings).

First is I, aham (I). Second is You, thwam (you). Third is They [the kings], ime: jana:dhipa:ha (these kings).

Who does ‘I’ refer to? Is it the body? Who does ‘You’ refer to? The body? Who does ‘They’ refer to? The body? No! We went through such elaborate explanations simply to remember this fact. Here, ‘I’ refers to the indweller of all beings. He exists in every being. He uses Himself as an example. Just as the speaker is certain about the example being used, the listener also must be certain.

Let’s say we praise someone. “Ah, you look beautiful and pleasant like the moon!” Just as the speaker knows of the moon’s beauty that was referenced, the listener also must know about it. Only then can it be a meaningful example. Therefore, both must have the knowledge of the example being used. He says aham first.

na thwe: va:ham ja:thu na:sam (I was never non-existent in the past). He started off with, “I was never non-existent in the past…” What this means is that Bhagavan (God), is not Sri Krishna who can be seen at the moment. It is the paramatma thatthva manifested in the form of Sri Krishna. It was in the form of Sri Krishna then. Arjuna also knew this. Not only did he hear it from many sages, elders, and his gurus like Bhishma and Drona, but he also believed it. He therefore says, “Just as you know that I always exist…” He is not referring to the body here.

Because the one named Sri Krishna was born on some day and withdrew that form another day. So, if ‘I’ referred to the body in ‘aham - I always exist’, it becomes a contradiction because there was a time of birth and a time of end to the body. When He said, ‘I was never non-existing…’ He is not referring to the body. He is referring to the atma thatthva. Arjuna and He both have clarity on this aspect. Using this as the example, He says ‘thwam - you were also never non-existing’. However, isn’t there a date of birth for him?

Ime: Jana:dhipaha - He refers to ‘them - all these kings!’ They all have dates of birth, right? They also will die in the war. Then, why does He say that they were never non-existent? Therefore, He is not referring to the bodies. The words aham, thwam, and ime: are referring to the resident atma thatthva. He is elaborating the atma thatthva. He is doing so by using what is already known, Himself, as the example to prove the eternity of the atmas (souls). He explains this in chapter 2, verse 12, beginning to lead us further into the sastra (scripture).

Jai Srimannarayana!

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