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1. Episode Title: Episode 38 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 38)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of grief and its causes, Understanding the concept of thithiksha (forbearance), Krishna's teachings on the impermanence of the body and soul, The importance of fulfilling one's duty, The relationship between the soul and the body, The inevitability of death and the cycle of life

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, thithiksha, Arjuna, Krishna, grief, duty, impermanence, soul, body, separation from loved ones

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Every person wishes to be free of any grief or sadness, for all sorrows to vanish. Who doesn’t wish for this? Everyone does. However, we dislike doing what is necessary to reach this state. We want the grief to go away, but what must be done for the same?

In chapter 2, sloka 14 of Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna explained a beautiful means for the same. He [Sri Krishna] named it as thithiksha (forbearance), meaning tolerating something. Once we get used to tolerating things, we will not have distress. Because we do not know how to do so, and we are not able to, we face many troubles. In fact, grief occurs not when we face hardships. It is due to impatience.

When do we have patience? When we like something, we have patience. When we dislike something, we lose patience and the result is grief. When we are with friends or someone we like, we even enjoy walking on stones. Don’t the stones hurt? Don’t they cause pain? Aren’t they rough on skin? Yes, they are. But when we like the company we have, the tolerance towards the pain in the foot increases. Since we have tolerance, we end up liking it. Tolerance is known as thithiksha.

The truth is that this thithiksha empowers us to graciously face any external troubles. When do we attain such a state? We attain it when we realize our true nature. The importance of thithiksha is narrated by Sri Krishna in sloka 14.

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SLOKA WORD -

ma:thra:sparsa:s thu kounthe:yasi:tho:shna sukha dukkhada:ha

a:gama:pa:yinaha anithya:ha tha:n thithikshaswa bha:ratha!

SLOKA MEANING -

O son of Kunti (Arjuna), the contact of the senses with their objects gives rise to cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which are temporary. Therefore, O Bharata (Arjuna), endure them.

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Arjuna, the link between this body and you is through the sense organs. The body consists of sense organs, the heart, etc. You are inside the body and they [sense organs] establish the link between you and your body. In reality, Arjuna was sad because he had to fight against his kin standing in front of him. They were committing sins, and they needed to be stopped. He had the right and the capability to rule but incapable people were ruling, and they needed to be stopped. They could neither be stopped through discussion nor through fear. Hence, the last and final call was to punish them by waging war. Now, with war, they should be controlled and sent away. But they are all his kin. He wondered [how is it appropriate] to kill his kin.

He [Sri Krishna] said, These relationships exist because of the body. Whatever you do, it [the body] will not last forever. The person you are crying for is actually the in-dwelling soul. So the root cause of your grief is that in-dwelling soul. The soul is always present somewhere, so why do you cry? He said this in the previous verse.

You said the soul is eternal but the body is not, which sounds good, Swamy! However, I lose the relationship I previously had with that body when the soul leaves, right? The body no longer exists, right? Now when I use my arrows and kill them in the war, the soul is gone as is the body. I will not see the body again anymore, right? I will also lose the relationship with the body, right? You said he will reside in another body, but I will not be able to identify that body, right? We were together all this time, singing, dancing, and sharing moments with these people. All the resulting happiness is no more from today, right? This is what we call dhukham (grief), caused when we are away from the people we like.

The body was with you until now with a certain relation. However, now that is gone. Then how will I not be sad? How will I not grieve? This is Arjuna’s argument. Sri Krishna never said that you will not have any grief. Grieving is normal, but one must know what must be done to tolerate it. The truth is that grief is common due to temporary separation. We will be able to tolerate that pain when we know what its true nature is.

But how? Firstly, one must know that nothing gets destroyed. We see this body and we say that the body is no more. The body loses its form but its components are not destroyed. The body is made of five elements, right? We describe it as pancha bhu:tha:thmakam (made of five elements). These five elements took back their natural form and the soul leaves [the body] on its way. Meaning, the body is no more but the soul is happy and has entered another body.

[It’s commonly thought] When he was in this body, he would have faced many troubles and now he might be happy in another body - we don’t know that! So, what happened now? He is not with you anymore, so you are sad for your own selfish reason. You are not able to think that he might be content there, and be happy for him. You cry that he is not with you anymore. But he has been suffering, right? So you must be happy for his liberation, right? Why are you bothered when he is happy in another body? This is because of the affection you have for him. It is true that your love for him makes you sad due to that separation.

What are you achieving with your grief? When you achieve something out of your grief, it makes sense. When mom makes snacks, the kid asks for them, and she obliges. Then he asks for more, but she does not give. So, the kid starts crying, and she finally gives in. This means crying was fruitful for him. A father brings toys for a kid. When the kid starts playing with them and neglecting his studies, the father hides them. The kid starts crying continuously, asking for the toys. The father gives them again to alleviate the kid’s crankiness. So, his crying was fruitful.

When he cries, he is able to get something out of it. However, when you transition into old age from youth, and you cry saying I want my youth back, will you get it? No. Similarly, once the soul leaves the body and enters another, and you say I want him back, will you get him back? No. Because he entered another body for his purpose. Whatever form the body was in, it loses it and unites with nature. That is, mud [portion of the body] combines with mud. Water [portion of the body] combines with water. Air [portion of the body] combines with air. Fire [portion of the body] combines with fire. Space [portion of the body] combines with space. They all take their natural form. They all reach the original place from where they came from to form the body.

Once the purpose of the body is achieved, they all return back to their natural state. The elements of the body took their natural form and the soul took its own path. He was with you until now because of his karma (the effect of past actions). Now that the karma was experienced, he left [the current body]. Why should you cry? Did you bring him back? Or can you stop him? Will he stop for you if you cry? No. Your grief does not stop anything. Will he come back to the same body? No, he will not, for goodness sake! [sarcastically], In case he came back, it would be scary.

After death, if the deceased pities your grieving state, and comes back to the same body, once everything is ready for last rites and this person sits up, everyone will be terrified and run off. No one will remain there. As soon as the person gets up, people will check if he is human or a ghost and see what he is up to, but he will not be treated the same. A boy named Nachiketas went to Yama Dharma Raja (the God of Death) for some reason. His father sent him in anger. Yama Dharma Raja gave him a boon and sent him back. Then the boy prayed to Yama Dharma Raja - “I will go back but my father should not think of me as a ghost.”

sukhagam seitha: he should sleep beside me and stay happy with me like always. He should not think about who I am and what I was up to. Give me a boon that once I return, he should not be scared of me. Usually after death, no one comes back. Rarely, someone declared dead early will ‘return’, that’s a different story. Normally, it does not happen. True. Then why don’t we stop people from dying? You are asking me to wage war. You are asking me to send them [the souls] into other bodies. Instead, why don’t we stop doing all this? Arjuna asked, intending to stop this war somehow and escape from his duty.

Sri Krishna answered Arjuna that even if he does not send them, they will not stop. Even if you do not fight this war, or leave them like this, they will not stay in these bodies permanently.

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SLOKA WORD -

ma:ndha:tha: samahi:pathi krutha yuga: lanka:ra bhu:taha gathaha:

SLOKA MEANING -

One King ruled for thousands of years - another for crores of years! Neither of them exist now.

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You are talking about Kauravas, right? They also must die. Why? Because the day they abducted Draupadi, the day they tried to insult her, that day itself I decided…

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SLOKA WORD -

dhwastha: bhavanthu: dharthara:straha:

SLOKA MEANING -

Let the sons of Dhritarashtra (the Kauravas) be destroyed.

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He said this after reaching the 2nd shatkam (set of 6 chapters).

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SLOKA WORD -

maye: vaithe: nyahatha:ha: purvameva:

SLOKA MEANING -

I already sent them on their way that day itself.

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But they are here now, right? They are like dhagdhapatams (folded burnt clothes), folded burnt clothes. When you see a folded burnt cloth, it looks exactly like a new cloth with the same folding. However, when you touch it, it simply disintegrates. The entire army standing here is dhagdhapatalas (folded burnt clothes). Because you are my kin and so that you can earn some respect, I want you to earn some respect and thus making you fight, Arjuna. Otherwise, they were destroyed the same day by Me. Do not think that not fighting this war will save them. They all will turn into ashes simply with a light breeze. Before that happens, fight this war so that you fulfill your duty. This way, you will achieve dhushta sikshana (punishing evil) and sishta rakshana (protecting good). By fulfilling your duty, you will prove to others how to perform that duty [despite many challenges]. You will gain great fame. I will be happy if you become famous because you are My person. That is the reason I chose you, says Swamy (Sri Krishna).

That is why we need to inculcate thithiksha (forbearance), for we should not think that grief is avoidable. Yes! We grieve due to ishtajana viyoagam (separation from loved ones). Even for ishtavasthu viyogam (losing some object we like a lot), we grieve. Yet, we tolerate and bear this pain. Sri Krishna named this forbearance as thithiksha. In 14th sloka, Sri Krishna says:

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SLOKA WORD -

tha:n thithikshaswa bha:ratha

SLOKA MEANING -

Therefore, O Bharata (Arjuna), endure them.

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To achieve thithiksha, He describes our relationship with the sense organs called ma:thra:sparsas (contact of the senses). We will learn this further in detail. Jai Srimannarayana!

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