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1. Episode Title: Episode 49 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 49)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The essence of Bhagavad Gita as a guide for life, Understanding one's responsibilities and duties, The nature of the soul and its eternal existence, The distinction between the body and the soul, The importance of informed action in life

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, karma, atma (soul), spiritual guidance, responsibilities, life lessons

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is the essence of a deep teaching. Although Arjuna was used as a means, its target is all of us, society as a whole. With Arjuna in front of Him, God delivered Bhagavad Gita to clarify questions about what is one’s responsibility, how and when we must act, etc.

When performing our duties, we may like it at times and disfavor it at other times. It may make us happy at times and sad at other times. When a hangman administers the death sentence for a criminal by hanging him, it can feel heartbreaking. However, it is his responsibility. It is not necessary to hesitate when exercising responsibility.

Making Arjuna duty-oriented, Sri Krishna explains what all humankind must keep in mind when performing their duties. Keeping aside bodily happiness and sorrow, look at the swarupa (nature) of your self – the indweller. It (self) did not originate today, not with the current body. It has eternally been existent. Not knowing our responsibility, we pile up so many karmic records because of the activities we do. Therefore, we are forced to come into this body. It is our responsibility to put an end to this chain of bodies at some point. The loads and loads of karma accrued must be reduced.

How? Perform your duties with an informed mind. An informed mind develops when you listen to the teachings of Elders (ones with scriptural knowledge and associated practice) and walk in the direction shown by them. In chapter 2, God explains how we must take the pleasures and pains experienced by the body as we exercise our duties and how we must know about ourselves when carrying out those duties.

When you refer to yourself, he or she or they, although you are showing the body, you are not referring to the body. When the person leaves the body, you say ‘he is no more’. What it implies is that you are not referring to him as the visible body. He had the body [but he is not the body]. The body is that which he thought of as his and indwelled within. Now, it (body) has become achetanam (non-sentient). The soul has left the body. To where? To his (soul’s) next location in his journey.

What is the qualification that the body needs [after a soul leaves it]? It needs to be united with what it has originated from. It is made of five natural elements. It is done by uniting each of the five elements respectively to its origin through agni samskara (fire purification) or other means. Therefore, in short, it is not necessary to constantly worry about working to please the body because it is temporary. A worthy thought is that which works for what stays permanently. What is permanent? It is the indwelling soul. One who knows this is wise.

He states the qualities of these in chapter 2, verse 19. What does He say?

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SLOKA WORD -

ya e:nam ve:tthi hantha:ram yas chainam manyathe: hatham|

ubhau thau na vija:ni:thaha na:yam hanthi na hanyathe:||

SLOKA MEANING -

Whoever thinks he is killing the soul, and whoever thinks he is being killed, both do not understand. The soul does not kill, nor can it be killed.

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Whoever is thinking he is the doer in the activity of killing… Whoever is thinking he is the karma (object) in the activity of killing… ‘He is going to kill me’ or ‘I am going to be killed by him’... Here, me/I is the karma, the object. He is the kartha (doer). Kill is the kriya (activity).

In the sentence, ‘Ram is eating the fruit’… ‘Ram’ is the kartha, doer, ‘the fruit’ is the karma. It is the word that reveals the karma. ‘Eating’ is the kriya. In the kriya of killing, ‘me’ becomes the karma. In the kriya of eating, ‘fruit’ is acting as the karma. Depending on what is acting as what in the kriya, the nature of the respective word is concluded.

Ram is eating the fruit. In the kriya of eating, Ram is the one who is eating, the kartha. The fruit is what is being eaten by him. Thus, it is karma, and he is kartha. He is killing him. In the kriya of killing, the one who is killing is the kartha. The one being killed is taking part as the karma in the kriya of killing. This is how grammarians, those who conclude the nature of words, declare the components of a sentence.

In the act of killing, does a jiva (soul) become a kartha or karma? No! Sri Krishna proves so. Jiva neither gets killed nor kills anyone. Jiva is not associated with kartha or karma. Both are the body. It is only through the body that a karma is done, and it is only the body that becomes the kartha. The indwelling jiva is none of the two.

ubhau thau (those who think that jiva is the kartha or that jiva is the karma) na vija:ni:thaha (they are both not wise) Why? na:yam hanthi (does not kill) na hanyathe: (does not get killed by anyone) Why? Because he has the most minute form. This was elaborated earlier. He is very minute; he will not do anything. It is the body that acts. The body was already defined as sharira (that which deteriorates). This verse, 2.19, specifically explains atma (soul). Atma cannot die, and no one can kill it.

Hence, when stating someone is an enemy, or a friend, or belongs to a clan, these do not at all refer to atma. These are all related to the body formed due to karma. All these are associated with the non-sentient body. All these exist only until this body exists. Hence, know yourself first. Perform your duty. You need not think/worry about anything else.

Sri Krishna is getting ready to clearly specify the characteristics of an atma in the 20th verse. Vedas have already stated this. I am clearly stating the same that was stated by Vedas. What is it?

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SLOKA WORD -

na ja:yathe: mriyathe: va: kada:chith na:yam bhu:thva: bhavitha: va: na bhu:yaha|

ajo: nithyas sa:svatho:yam pura:no: na hanyathe: hanyama:ne: sari:re:||

SLOKA MEANING -

The soul is never born, nor does it ever die. It is eternal and unchanging. The body may perish, but the soul remains unaffected.

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Bhagavad Gita is revered as the essence of Upanishads. Whatever Upanishads have said, Sri Krishna has said the same in a concise form. He is not making up any of this Himself. You can see certain mantras that are spread across the Vedas in direct forms in Gita. The same is seen in Upanishad.

na ja:yathe: mriyathe: kuthaschith (There is no birth or death for the soul). Slight variation in the wording, but the same meaning. What is said here? It explains the atma, jiva, i.e., you. Whatever body he takes, he gives life to it and hence is termed jiva. He spreads and occupies it, apnoti (he occupies). He spreads to the extent of the body. Hence, he is named atma. If you look at atma from the perspective of sharira, he is named shariri. From the perspective of deham (body), he is called dehi (indweller). This too, we learned earlier.

na ja:yathe: (there is no birth to him) na mriyathe: (no death) na:yam bhu:thva: (No jiva takes one form in the past, another in the future. The form is unchanged.) sada: e:ka ru:pa:ya (always in the same form). It is said ‘sadaika rupa’ when speaking of God. Jiva’s form is also the same (unchanging). Therefore, he is never going to be freshly made.

What is it that gets newly made? The association with bodies is the only thing made. Association with bodies is the only thing that gets broken. He, the soul, exists eternally. Nature manifested into bodies exists eternally. Association, disassociation, association, disassociation… When associated with the body, we call it birth. When disassociated with the body, we call it death.

He said it so easily in simple terms. However, it is difficult for the heart to absorb it. Even then, it is essential to know what we truly are. Because this knowledge is the foundation to leading life. Let’s try to strengthen this foundation. Jai Srimannarayana!

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