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1. Episode Title: Episode 51 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 51)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Understanding the nature of the self (atma), the importance of introspection, the concept of dharma (righteous duty), the role of military personnel in society, the relationship between body and soul, and the eternal nature of the soul.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, dharma, atma (soul), Krishna, Arjuna, introspection, military duty, eternal existence, self-knowledge

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), a human being needs to understand himself through a:thma:valo:kanam (self-reflection), which is very essential. It is not possible for other beings because they work only in view of the physical body while in that body. Therefore, there is no possibility for introspection in them. However, a human being has the ability to think beyond the body, about the inner mechanism, and respond accordingly. Humans are given such intellectual ability. Therefore, Sri Krishna teaches the Bhagavad Gita, the thought process a human intellect should practice. He graces us with a:thma thatthva jna:na (knowledge of self).

If one must perform one’s duties, she or he must be able to put aside the pleasures and pains during the process. Military personnel are required to walk along the borders of a nation. It could be walking in the snow, dirt, rough terrains, hiking through the mountains, or going down the valleys. Their vehicles may not be useful in all conditions. Even then, they must be cautious while on guard. They must be able to control the enemy and restrict its movements to its own boundaries. Sometimes, they will face challenging situations. In fact, they almost always face challenging situations. 24/7! They must be alert all the time, to the point of being sleep-deprived. When they think of their duty, physical comfort becomes secondary to work. One who craves bodily comforts will not take up such a job. Only those not worrying about self or body, and who are solely focused on protecting their country can get into such bold activities.

From the soul’s perspective, the body that it entered is a country. The society surrounding him is this country’s (i.e. ‘his’ body) boundary. What must he know here? Essentially, he must know how to conduct himself. One who is at the border, knowing who he is, tolerates any pain to the body or any pleasure such as a sumptuous meal. He does not respond in the extreme either for pleasure or for pain. The temporary feeling of a ‘favorable’ or ‘unfavorable’ experience is natural to an extent. However, one must not dwell over it forever.

We have heard of some incidents such as the Kargil war. We have heard of great soldiers in mountainous terrains tolerating pain from a nearly broken leg for days together while trying to reach the base for treatment. Can a normal person tolerate that? Even for slightly peeled skin when cutting nails, we see people shouting loud in pain as if his house was burnt down. Even for a lightly affected finger, we see people crying so loud as if the Earth and Sky came together! We even see people having a hard time getting up from a chair or sitting down after standing. However, others do not mind any painful conditions and orient themselves towards carrying out their duties.

Arjuna! Similarly, a human being must only move forward in conducting their responsibilities. He must neither think about the favorability of his body, nor his family. He must not worry about family approval. One must not let such thoughts arise. Why? All those watching you are going to change. Why worry about them? You see it raining now, and after some time, it stops. After a cloud precipitates its contents, it will not rain further. Therefore, you need not get excited or worried about a rain cloud. You need not think of it as an impediment for your journey or your work. If you tolerate it for some time, it will stop by itself.

Bodies are also the same way. You now have the opportunity to do dharma yuddham (righteous war), to fight for a righteous cause, and it’s your duty to take your part. Nothing happens to the a:thma (soul). Those you are worried about hurting, all of them (a:thmas) will be fine because it is dharma yuddham. Whoever leaves the body in dharma yuddham will certainly attain a better state such as swarga (heaven) or something similar. Therefore, why worry about them? It was already concluded that whoever loses body in dharma yuddham will attain vi:ra swargam (heavenly planes). When all of them are ready for dharma yuddham, shouldn’t you get ready too? Why are you thinking about something happening to them? Therefore, be prepared to wage war. It is not at all a sinful act. Sri Krishna teaches thus and encourages him to move forward. He says, ‘Firstly, learn who you are!’

In the 20th verse…

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SLOKA WORD -

ajaha nithyaha sa:svathaha pura:naha

na hanyathe: hanyama:ne: sari:re:||

SLOKA MEANING -

Whatever is being cut or killed is the body, not you! Even while indwelling in such a changing body, you are not one who undergoes any change. You just need to realize it.

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You are not the one changing, He says beautifully. ajaha (no birth), you are not being added as a new being; nithyaha (exists eternally), then now and later. If one is born today, it means he wasn’t around yesterday. If one is gone today, it means he won’t be around tomorrow. Ji:va (living being) is not that way. He will exist tomorrow, exists today, and existed yesterday. Hence, he is nithyaha (exists forever with no change at all the three time spaces).

thraika:lika abadhyaha nithya (unchanging eternal existence at all the three time spaces) sa:svathaha (no change in form despite the journey). There are two words, nithya and sa:svatha. They seem like synonyms. However, they are not synonymous. There is a difference. Nithya means that he stays the same with no change at all the three time spaces. Sa:svathaha means that which does not change in form, such as getting fatter, thinner, shorter, wider, or sliced up etc. Does ji:va change forms that way and still exist at all three time spaces? No! sasvath bhavathi (exists in the same form always).

Use of the word nithya indicates only eternal existence but does not indicate whether he goes through any change. In that way, even matti (clay) can be described as nithya. Why? Because when mixed with water, it becomes a pot. When a pot is broken to pieces and crushed, it becomes powder. The powder can simply become clay. We know of these changes. Clay/soil always exists [in different shapes]. mrutthike:aiva sathyam (clay/soil does not change). However, it takes various shapes. It exists in various shapes. So, does a:thma (soul) also take various shapes? sa:svathaha (same form yesterday, today and tomorrow). There is no change in its shape.

Two describing words, nithyaha and sa:svathaha. There is a hairline difference between the two. We need to understand. pura:naha (does not get soiled despite its eternally existing nature) pura:pi navam (he is the same now as he was; he will be the same tomorrow as he is today). He never ages, despite existing forever. He does not get ‘dirty’. We see some battery-operated diyas (lamps). In the beginning, their glow is very bright. After a few days, the glow declines gradually. Finally, it keeps going on and off. Does a:thma have such a state? Diya exists, but the volume, intensity of its glow is changing. A:thma does not have this [change in intensity…]. It's always filled with light. It never requires anyone external to prove its existence.

This is what He is saying…

ajaha nithyaha sa:svathaha

pura: naha, pura:pi nava pura:naha

always illuminating like that which has just been made. Any object gets old after some time, right? Even the words we speak get old. People say, “why these old statements like ‘old tamarind pickle’!?” They wouldn’t say so if they knew its health benefits. A:thma does not get old. Generally, when something [edible] gets old, the shape or color changes. A red one will turn white, white into some other, another into some other. However, the qualities of a:thma do not age in any manner.

na hanyathe: (it does not get killed). It does not get killed even when the body it resides in is killed. hanyama:ne: sari:re:sathi na hanyathe: (The body will disintegrate for sure. No matter what one does, ultimately it must disintegrate). Even though you cry, it will still need to disintegrate [at some point in time]. If you try to protect your body by freezing yourself, you will lose it even faster. na hanyathe: (ji:va can never get killed). hanyama:ne: sari:re: (This body is made of elements of nature). Knives are also made of elements of nature. Substances made of nature can be used to handle other substances made of nature. However, it's impossible to handle a:thma with substances made of nature. It can be handled only via knowledge. This is what you must know.

Upanishads stated the same. Our A:nda:l said the same. Lord Sri Krishna declares the same. Our rushis (sages) and a:lwa:rs (saints) have stated the same. Our A:cha:ryas (teachers) said the same. “Understand the nature of a:thma.” Hence, why cry and worry about having to kill Bhi:shma, Dro:na etc. There is no need to cry. Step forward to perform your duty happily. Sri Krishna thus encourages [Arjuna] to prepare himself to perform his duty. Let’s listen further to what He says. Jai Srimannarayana!

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