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1. Episode Title: Episode 59 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 59)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The distinction between theists and atheists, Understanding the nature of the soul and body, The inevitability of change and its acceptance, Krishna's teachings on grief and duty, The recycling process of life and death

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, soul, body, change, grief, duty, na:sthika (atheist), a:sthika (theist), sathka:rya va:da (theory of transformation)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), today we delve into the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita as presented by HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami. In this episode, we explore the concepts of belief in the Vedas and the nature of existence.

A:sthikas (theists) are those who believe in the Vedas. Those who don’t accept the Vedas are called na:sthikas (atheists), as they claim it is na:sthi (non-existent).

asanne:vasa bhavathi asath bramhe:thi ve:dache:th

asthi bramhe:thiche:th ve:da santhame:nanthatho: vidurithi:

Bramha (Veda) has many meanings, including nature, body, mind, atma (soul), or parama:thma (supreme soul). In this context, Bramha refers to the Veda. Whoever says ‘asath bramha ithi ve:da che:th’ (I don’t believe in the Vedas) becomes asath (non-existent) - asanne:vasa bhavathi.

Those who believe in the Vedas are a:sthikas. Some people stress the sound ‘th’ and call it a:stthikas, which is incorrect as it means someone who has bones. We are all a:stthikas since we have bones, as a:stthi means bones. Whereas asthi means something that exists.

Only those who believe in the Vedas accept the existence of an indwelling and pervading thatthva (principle) and its supporting supreme thatthva as stated in the Vedas. They accept the existence and paths to the worlds beyond this visible world, such as swarga (heaven) and Vaikunta. Those without faith in the Vedas do not believe in their existence as they cannot be seen.

He who only believes in what can be seen is na:sthika. The one who believes in what is based on a prama:na (means of attaining accurate knowledge) despite not having a visual cue is a:sthika.

Arjuna might have become vexed, which is why he scrunched his face as if irritated. Arjuna said, “Since You said there is something called a:thma, you are asking me to accept all these things. I don’t want this chaos. I won’t even accept the existence of a:thma. What will You say now? Whatever is visible - this body is ‘me’. I am not in the body; I am the body. Whatever is visible, I will only accept that. I won’t accept other things. Since whatever I am seeing will perish now, shouldn’t I cry for it?”

It appears as though Arjuna is trying to defend his grief instead of thinking of his duty. That’s the irony. Krishna is the one who knows everything and how to give the right response to everyone.

Krishna asked, “So what are You saying now?” Arjuna replied, “I don’t believe in a:thma; I only believe in the body. Since You are asking me to wage war, I will wage it. But all these bodies will perish then. Or if I become a victim to their arrows, I might perish. They may die or I may die. How can I not cry about it?”

Sri Krishna understood Arjuna's heart and wanted to respond. For that, Krishna chose to explain the answer in three verses: 2.26, 2.27, and 2.28.

Lord Krishna responds to those who don’t believe that the soul and body are separate and who only believe in the visible body. Even for such na:sthikas, if they have to do something like this, there is no need to cry.

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SLOKA WORD -

thadha:pithvam maha:baho naivam so:chithum a:rhasi

SLOKA MEANING -

Therefore, O mighty-armed one, you should not lament.

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Krishna said, “You might ask why a na:sthika wouldn’t feel like crying if he is losing his kin.” Krishna is changing the context here. Until now, He was addressing those who accepted that the soul and body are separate.

The whole Bhagavad Gita is for such people as it is the essence of the Upanishads. Upanishads are part of the Vedas. When He speaks of the essence of those parts of the Vedas, it implies He is speaking of the Vedas.

However, the unique aspect of the Gita is that it also accepts those who don’t believe in the Vedas and responds to them. They (na:sthikas) are also children of God. It is His desire to bring them to the good path. Hence, He tries to clear their doubts too.

That is why the Lord is slightly changing the context here as if He is talking to them. There is beauty in the Sanskrit language; it indicates the change of context through a word.

If they want to change the context, they will separate it with a word. If they start with ‘adha’ - it indicates a new context. Similarly, if the letter ‘thu’ appears after a word, it separates that word from the previous context.

For example, “Ramaha vanam gathava:n, lakshmanasthu…” means Rama went into the forest. Since we said lakshmanasthu, it doesn’t belong to the context of where Rama was going.

When we say “however,” it means it is different from the previous action. Similarly, if the word ‘thu’ comes at the end of a word, it separates that word from the previous context.

If ‘adha’ comes at the beginning, it changes the context from there.

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SLOKA WORD -

adha chai:nam nithya ja:tham

SLOKA MEANING -

But you think that this is born and dies.

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Krishna continued, “Hey Arjuna! E:nam nithya ja:tham nithya mrutham manyase: (You think this is born and dies). Nithya ja:tham (something which is always being born) and nithya mrutham (something which always dies) refer to all objects we see. They leave the old form and take a new form.

When they leave the old form, we say it died. If it takes a new form, we say it is born. It is the same definition for birth and death. If the definition is the same, how can we know if they came into the world or left the world? How do we know if it is auspicious (birth) or not?

Krishna said, “You are saying that whatever you are seeing is a:thma; I am talking to those who only believe in what they see - the body. For them, birth and death are one. How? It just means leaving the old form and taking a new form. This definition is the same for birth and death.”

When we say someone is born, he is moving his hands and legs. Here we are not talking about a:thma. Don’t think that a:thma is there. Think that whatever is visible is a:thma - i.e., the body. That is only moving and working.

As a mixture of nature's elements, a chaitanya (consciousness) came into it. For example, in ‘paan’ (betel leaf) - when you eat a betel leaf along with lime and supa:ri (areca nut), you see a red color which was not there before.

We can see the red color, and it is called ‘tha:mbula’. There is no red color in betel leaf, supa:ri, or lime, but something new comes with their combination. Similarly, with the combination of bhu:thas (elements) - there are only four bhu:thas: earth, water, fire, and air. Space is not there as it can’t be seen.

With the combination of these in some proportions, a new chaitanya (consciousness) is formed, which is responsible for eating, working, talking, etc. If there is a change in those proportions, we say it died. If there is another type of change in proportions, we say it got sick. When it gets better, we say it is healthy. If the change is bigger, then the chaitanya goes, and we call it death.

What does it mean by death here? The bhu:thas are still there. Fire, air, water, and earth are there as they were. But there is a change in the proportions of bhu:thas. It is the same for birth also. Even after changing, these elements are still there.

When a plant emerges from a seed, some elements are ‘added in’. When it produces a fruit, some elements are ‘pushed out’. These elements were not visible earlier but became visible now. Those fruits, flowers, and leaves then fall down to the earth.

They change their form and become manure, which in turn goes into the making of plants. If a leaf gets old and falls off, we say the leaf has died. If a new shoot comes out, we say it is born. Nothing new is being born here; nothing old is dying here. Whatever is there has changed into a new form.

The leaf falls down and becomes manure. Manure then becomes part of the plant again. The plant becomes a leaf again. It is a recycling process; they keep changing forms. When they take a new form, it is called birth. When they lose their old form, since we can’t see it, it is named death. This can be applied to everything.

Our elders called this sathka:rya va:da (theory of transformation). Whatever is already existing will take new forms.

Arjuna said, “I will not accept the existence of ji:va (soul); I will only accept the existence of the body. This is changing forms; it is made of only four elements (earth, water, air, and fire). Since it is changing form, won’t I feel sad about it?”

When you see an object in some form and if it changes its form, do we say it’s gone? When a leaf falls, a fruit ripens, or a bud blooms changing its forms, do we cry for it saying that the bud has died and a new flower has been born? No, we feel happy about it.

Then why should we cry if a body changes form? It was formed with a combination of elements. While in that form, you did your duty. After that, there was a change in proportions. This change is natural. If you stop it, this change is not going to stop.

The body didn’t come into existence because of you. Let’s look at our body. No one wants to get old. But can anyone stop it? No. Can you stop a seed from becoming a sapling? Change is inevitable for everything in nature. You can't stop it. So why cry about it? Whatever is happening naturally, just witness it, be happy about it, and do what you need to do. No need to worry.

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SLOKA WORD -

thada:pithvam maha:baho naivam so:chithum a:rhasi

SLOKA MEANING -

Therefore, O mighty-armed one, you should not lament.

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Sri Krishna is saying that even for na:sthikas, there is no need to cry as change is inevitable. He is helping Arjuna understand that there is no need to cry for the changes that will come with the war.

Let’s proceed further. Jai Srimannarayana!

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