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1. Episode Title: Episode 67 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 67)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of the soul and its elusive qualities, Understanding the rarity of human birth and spiritual inclination, Krishna's teachings on the surprising nature of the soul, The difference between superficial knowledge and true understanding of the soul

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, a:thma (soul), Krishna, Arjuna, spiritual knowledge, jnana (knowledge), tha:tthvika jna:na (true knowledge), Ra:ma, Ra:vana, human birth, pa:pas (bad actions), punyas (virtues), jigna:sa (desire to know)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Many people in our world live by believing only in what’s visible. If we speak of the invisible, they feel somewhat surprised. They don’t put their mind to it. They don’t feel like believing in it. We think probably more than 90% of the world population lives focusing only on the visible. In fact, many live believing that which is not true. Even though they know it’s not true, they respond to it because they like it. How is that?

Many people watch movies these days. They [movies] show one person jumping down the hill or leaping up to the hill-top. They show someone flying up in the sky with some kind of gear. They also show one riding a motorcycle, taking five huge circles, landing exactly on a specific spot and going forward. What is this technology called? Graphics. Everyone knows that anything presented using graphics is not real. However, we spend a lot on it. We enjoy the experience in various ways. Entertainment. One likes to believe it despite knowing that it is not real.

However, despite it being real, despite it running this body, despite it being extremely powerful while being the subtlest, when we try to explain something about a:thma (soul), it is difficult to concentrate, it is difficult to focus on it. It is difficult to have a taste for it. We get tired of listening to it. An example to understand what that is like…

In Ra:ma:yana (the epic Ramayana), in the city of Lanka, everything centers on Ra:vana (the demon king). All you can hear is Ra:vana’s name, and songs in praise of him. All the work done is for him. In such a place, when Mother Si:tha (Sita) sat under the tree in Asho:ka Forest, she heard the name of Ra:ma (Rama).

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SLOKA WORD -

ra:ja: dasaratho: na:ma rathakunjara va:jima:n

SLOKA MEANING -

How surprising would it be to hear Ra:ma’s story in that place?

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She looked to one side, then to the other. She looked up and down, not knowing where it was coming from. She didn’t understand how it is possible to hear sanki:rthana (glory), of Ra:ma in the city of Lanka. She wondered if it was coming from within her because she had been incessantly recollecting the same. They say, she even searched within. How surprising is that [Rama’s name in Lanka]? Similarly, it is surprising if anyone in this world speaks about a:thma (soul). If a cold lotus flower blooms in an extremely blazing fire pot, how surprising will it be? That is how it feels speaking about a:thma in this world. It is difficult to inculcate interest in this topic.

In verse 2.29, Sri Krishna wonderfully explains how difficult it is to analyze, speak of, or recollect the topic related to a:thma.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:nam

a:scharyavath vadathi thatthaiva cha anyaha |

a:scharyavach chainam anyaha sruno:thi

sruthva:py e:nam ve:da na chaiva kaschith ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Some see the soul as amazing, some speak of it as amazing, and others hear of it as amazing, yet no one truly knows it.

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If an object that is never heard of or never seen suddenly appears, how would you feel? You feel amazed. It feels wonderful and unique. Similarly, anyone who wants to see it [soul] will always be amazed. However, not everyone will attain knowledge of it. Only one. As people say, “one in a million.” Attaining knowledge of a:thma itself is very rare. There are so many types of species in the world. There are many births, many living beings. It’s actually surprising to even get a human birth amongst all the others. It’s a great wonder that a ji:vi (soul) gets a human body.

Cha:ndogya Upanishad states how he gets it. After understanding, you will feel it’s practical... [yet], to attain a human body is not at all easy. It’s a great fortune to obtain a human body amongst all types of animal bodies. Among those [with human bodies], having an inclination towards soul and God is even more rare. If one in millions of millions species gets a human birth, only one among such millions of millions people have a chance to develop interest in a:thma (soul). Such a person is quite distinct compared to the others.

In fact, to attain a human birth, many types of pa:pas (bad actions), bad actions and thoughts from the past must be nullified. One must accrue many punyas (virtues). Therefore, the effect of accumulated punya earned in various ways, resulting in nullifying of pa:pas accrued over countless births gives one a human birth. Additionally, attaining human birth requires immense thapas (penance). Attaining human birth is thus not simple. In all those extremely hard-working people, only one would develop jigna:sa (desire to know), the desire to know why he was born.

If there are millions of those desirous to know the reason behind birth, only one would make an effort in that direction. If there are millions of those making an effort, only a small percentage will develop interest and dedication to research it. In fact, even for those people, a:thma thaththva (reality of soul) will continue to be a:scharyavath (surprising) no matter how much they learn about it. It will continue to be new. Because it is not something that can get old. Something getting old implies it losing its novelty, or fading. That happens only when something is formed through the union of some subtle particles… When those separate, the substance fades or loses [its charm].

In the early morning, a blossoming flower looks fresh and gives a pleasant fragrance. After some time, it gradually releases the tiniest whiffs of fragrance in all directions. After it has released it all, if there is a chance to add new ones, i.e., if it remains attached to the tree, it will replenish from the soil, making up for whatever was dispelled. However, when it is separated from the tree and it has released the fragrance in all directions, the blossomed flower of the morning withers gradually by the evening hours. It will gradually lose its existence because its constituent parts have separated from it.

However, a:thma does not have parts, and thus there is nothing that gets separated from it. Thus, it never gets old. It always looks new. No matter how long we look at it, we don’t feel as if we know it… or have seen it… or feel bored of seeing it. It [soul] does not have that kind of quality. However, it takes many births of thapas to get this state in him. He gets that eligibility only when he performs long and severe penance focusing in that direction.

There is something different known as a:thma (soul). The body now is moving. When a body doesn’t function, we call it a dead body. It was moving earlier. Hence, there is something that is making it move. If such sense develops, and one researches it, [knowing that] it should dwell within and spread throughout - thus, it is known as a:thma. If this is the case, knowing a:thma as it must be known is termed as thaththva jna:na (knowledge of reality).

Jna:na (knowledge) is of two types. One is the general knowledge. Second is tha:tthvika jna:na (true knowledge). Tha:tthvika jna:na is understanding something comprehensively as it is in every way. A:thma (soul) probably exists somewhere within. It must be something distinct. It must be something small. We can guess all these.

\*\*HH used scale and check | However, we do not have any ‘scale’ to ‘check’ if all that is true. Only sa:sthra (scriptures) must explain this a:thma thaththva. One must dig into sa:sthra, learn and understand it as it is meant to be understood. This generally does not happen. That is why, a:scharyavath pasyathi (some see it as amazing)…

He understands bits of it such as: There is something that is different from the body. That itself is a wonder. What is its size? Where is it located? How does it look? Does it spread throughout the body? Or… Is it located in a corner and controlling the rest of it? If it is controlling all parts, does it spread throughout? Does it spread or does it spread its knowledge? If a part is broken, the broken part’s memory stays with the whole. We are witnessing that in the world. What is it that is realizing all of them [body parts] that way? It is very difficult to understand it.

We can recognize that something like that exists with our imagination. It [part] is not moving now, but moved before. Hence, whatever had enabled it to move before is there behind it. Even if it loses a [body] part, it can recollect the memories with regards to the part. If it loses another part, it can recollect the respective memories too. It is spreading through all the parts. What that probably implies is… like a di:pam (lamp), that spreads around in the form of its light… ji:va (soul) also exists and spreads in the form of knowledge throughout the body situated in some area of the body. We can imagine this to a certain level.

How does he look? Where does he come from? How does he come? When does he come? Exactly, how do we know the time of birth for naming that? All these are questionable if we want to learn only by observation. However, if we learn through the scriptures given by Elders, the wise, all these details are available. They mention how to perceive it. They mention its size. They mention what it does. What we then attain is known as tha:ththvika jna:na.

\*\*HH used superficial knowledge | Normally, what we attain is superficial knowledge. However, understanding something as it is, is called tha:tthvika jna:na, knowledge of underlying principles. It is very difficult to attain tha:tthvika jna:na about soul. If anyone attains it, we will be surprised to see him. Even if he attained clarity to that level, he only believes it because he heard it. It is not possible to ‘see’ the soul even for him. However much you hear about it, it will still feel that much new.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:nam

SLOKA MEANING -

Whenever he sees it, speaks about it, has a darshan (vision) via knowledge of it… it will always feel new.

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Things in the world will get monotonous after some time, we get bored. Does one get bored about a:thma? No. Because it is always new, it does not get attached to anything. Sri Krishna explains this to Arjuna.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:nam

SLOKA MEANING -

How about the one teaching about a:thma? Does he have complete knowledge of it?

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It surprises the one who is speaking about it. It is surprising for the listener and for the speaker. Any mention of a:thma thaththva (reality of soul) is always surprising. Just like one will want to see and know more about something that which is surprising to them, a:thma thaththva is also eternally new that way. Summarizing this, Sri Krishna is moving ahead. Let’s try to learn with more clarity about that verse [verse 2.9]. Jai Srimannarayana!

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