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1. Episode Title: Episode 68 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 68)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of amazement and wonder, Understanding the reality of the soul, The distinction between the soul and nature, The limitations of worldly comparisons, The eternal nature of the soul, The teachings of Krishna on the soul's essence

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, A:thma (soul), Prakruthi (nature), A:scharya (wonder), Jna:na (knowledge), Sa:sthra (scriptures), Parama:thma (ultimate reality of God), Kata Upanishad, Spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), today we delve into the concept of a:scharya (wonder or amazement). A:scharya is a feeling of amazement, often experienced when encountering something that has not been seen before, leading to wide-open eyes and dropped jaws—it is truly awe-inspiring!

As Ma:gha says, "kshane: kshane: yannavatha:m upayathi thade:va ru:pam" (at each moment, what is seen appears in a different form). Initially, when we see something, it evokes an "ah!" response. However, over time, what once amazed us can become mundane. This is the nature of worldly things.

For instance, when we first see a large lawn, it feels wonderful. But after spending ten days there, the amazement fades, as we become accustomed to it. This is true for all worldly experiences. At first encounter, everything seems "wow."

Now, the reality of the soul (a:thma) is distinct from the reality of nature (prakruthi). They are different truths (thaththva). It is impossible to compare the soul to anything in nature. For example, can we use clay objects to explain what gold is? No, because they are different substances. Similarly, clay, gold, trees, and sticks are all formations of various elements of nature, collectively referred to as prakruthi.

Sa:sthra (scriptures) identifies nature as a formation of five primary elements: earth, fire, water, air, and space, known as pancha bhu:tha:s (five elements). Our sages have shown that everything we see is made up of these elements in different proportions. In physical sciences, many elements have been identified, but according to Vedic teachings, we only need to consider these five basic building blocks.

The resulting formation of an object depends on the ratios of these five elements. If one element is more prevalent than the others, it creates a different outcome. However, the soul (a:thma) is a different truth altogether and cannot be compared to anything from nature.

\*\*SLOKA WORD -\*\*

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:nam

\*\*SLOKA MEANING -\*\*

Someone sees the soul feeling amazed.

There is no comparison because the soul is a unique concept. All that we see are substances of nature. Therefore, if we are asked to show something from nature to explain the soul, it becomes impossible. However, to aid our understanding, we may choose something from nature that is somewhat similar to explain an aspect of the soul.

When discussing the soul, we say that it is anu swaru:pa (of the subtlest form) and possesses jna:na (knowledge) as its quality. The soul releases knowledge from within and retracts it without undergoing any change. One might wonder, "If it releases and retracts knowledge, won't it diminish?" This thought arises from observing worldly objects, but we cannot apply that understanding entirely to the soul.

To illustrate, consider a di:pa (oil lamp). When lit, it remains stationary, yet its light spreads. We can use this analogy to explain how the soul spreads knowledge. If the soul is in a human body, it can spread knowledge to the extent of that body. In a larger animal, like an elephant, it spreads knowledge to each subtlest part of it.

However, we cannot compare the di:pa's need for oil to the soul, as the soul does not deplete its source of knowledge. The soul can continuously spread knowledge if an appropriate body is formed. This is what sa:sthra teaches us, which is why we seek scripture for understanding the reality of the soul.

Using visible objects to explain the soul is not the best method, but it is the only means we have. As one hears about the soul, there is a chance to learn, but it is impossible to fully comprehend or explain it. This is what Lord Krishna explains in verse 2.29.

\*\*SLOKA WORD -\*\*

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:nam

\*\*SLOKA MEANING -\*\*

Someone fortunate sees the soul as if knowing or seeing something that has never been known or seen before.

The Kata Upanishad states that there could be one among millions who truly understands the soul. This implies that generally, there is no one like that. When one sees the soul, it always seems new, evoking amazement.

When we encounter something new, we often turn to share it with someone nearby. By the time we look back, it feels different than before. This is how the reality of the soul is. The ultimate reality of God (parama:thma) is similarly perceived.

Krishna is now explaining the reality of the soul to Arjuna. Therefore, Arjuna should not cry for the souls within these bodies. To understand why he should not cry, he must first comprehend the nature of the soul, which is challenging.

Let’s consider an example: if someone tries to stop steam with their hand or a cloth, does it stop? No, it finds a way around the obstacle. This is not the fault of the person or the tools used; it is simply the nature of steam. Similarly, it is the natural characteristic of the soul to evoke amazement.

\*\*SLOKA WORD -\*\*

a:scharyavath vadathi thatthaiva cha anyaha

\*\*SLOKA MEANING -\*\*

Similarly, if anyone tries to explain it, it feels new no matter how much they explain.

No one can claim to have fully explained the soul, as it is beyond complete comprehension. This is why sa:sthra brings it to light, as it is distinct from all physical objects and eternally new. Therefore, anything related to it will evoke amazement.

Because complete knowledge of the soul is unattainable, there is no need to cry about it. Krishna's teaching to Arjuna is that there is no need to grieve for the soul. Thus, even after hearing all this, the soul remains a source of amazement.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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