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1. Episode Title: Episode 70 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 70)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The concept of mind reading and its astonishment, The nature of the soul (atma) and its incomparability, The limitations of human understanding regarding the soul, The analogy of the ocean and the well in understanding vastness, The eternal nature of the soul and its characteristics

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, soul (atma), Krishna, Arjuna, knowledge (jnana), incomparability, nature, wisdom, Va:lmiki, Ramayana, reality (tathva)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Some people can tell what others are thinking. It’s known as ‘mind reading’. It astonishes us. We are acquainted with a few such people. If anyone visits them, they give them a pen and paper and say, “Write what you want on it, you don’t have to show anyone, keep it with you.” After talking with them for a while, they disclose the aspect that the other person wrote. It matches exactly with what he had written. How astonished will we be?

Our Ranga Ramanujacharya ji and Ramachandracharya ji went to see Sudharshanacharya ji in Faridabad. They don’t believe in such things. Sudarshanacharya ji said, “If you want to know something, you can write it on paper.” Ranga Ramanujacharya ji replied, “I don’t believe in such things.” Sudarshanacharya ji insisted, “Still, you can write something.” Ranga Ramanujacharya ji wrote something. Sudarshanacharya ji then said, “You are wondering about your son, is that right?” Ranga Ramanujacharya ji never told Sudarshanacharya ji that he had a son or how he is. Sudarshanacharya ji didn’t know anything about him. However, he was able to read the thoughts of other people. Hence, he disclosed it. Ranga Ramanujacharya ji was astonished when he heard it.

Some ask others, “Write the name of your favorite flower, bird, or number.” After conversing for some time, they reveal precisely what was written and tell him to verify! They also tell if what they are wondering about will happen or not, regardless of what it is. However, we get impressed at his intellect and feel, “Wow, he is reading my mind.” But someone who is more proficient than him might understand the mechanism, which we don’t.

A:scharya (wonder) means an aspect that is beyond our intellect. Few people can say, “You have a hole in your heart. You have stones in your body. You had an operation during this time. You lost something in the morning, you put it in this place.” When they say that, we are shocked, right? We feel as if he knows so much about God. In this world, there are many aspects that astonish us. When we hear, know, or see about those aspects, they amaze us.

Sri Krishna enlightens Arjuna in chapter 2 about how a:thma thaththva (the reality of the soul) is amazing. Also, we are familiar with many aspects of Nature; they actually are all amazing. Yet a:thma (soul) is more amazing than all these. We cannot compare it with anything. Hence, knowing about it entirely is not possible for anyone.

Va:lmiki Bhagava:n, in Yuddha Ka:nda (Sri Ra:mayanam), when Ra:ma and Ra:vana are fighting, wanted to compare it with something. However, what do we compare it with? What can match it? Maybe such an extensive war might not have happened in history until that time. Ra:kshasa:s (demonic beings) were around earlier as well, but they were not used to such massive wars. They would terrorize people, forcing them to do what they wished. However, standing against and fighting on a gigantic scale might have started from Rama’s time period. Skirmishes might have taken place here and there. He [Va:lmiki] thought about what he should compare this with.

Normally we say, “It is happening like the first world war or second world war. It is like the Kargil war.” He [Va:lmiki] looked for something to compare and felt nothing could come close to it. Finally, he said…

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SLOKA WORD -

ra:ma Ra:va:na yo:ruddham

ra:ma Ra:va:na yo: riva

SLOKA MEANING -

The battle between Rama and Ravana is incomparable to anything else.

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Finally, he could compare the war between Ra:ma and Ra:vana with the war between Ra:ma and Ra:vana itself. There is no comparison with anything else. You can’t compare it with anything [other than itself]. He [Va:lmiki] wanted to say how incomparable it is.

gaganam gagana:ka:ra:m (space is as vast as space) Can anyone say space is as wide as my backyard? This is not an appropriate comparison - as clearly nothing is as vast as space. However big something may be, it fits in a small corner in space. Be it the earth, solar system, Milky Way, or the entire universe… all of them fit within space but cannot be larger than it. Hence, we can’t compare space with anything. If someone asks, “How vast is space?”, one can only reply “as vast as space.” That means he understood very well, 100 marks for him!

“How vast is the ocean?” If someone asks how big a village’s lake is, we can say it's as big as the ocean. Or the Pulikat river, we can say it's as big as the ocean. Yet, if someone asks how vast the ocean is, and someone responds it’s as big as the lake behind, people mock him.

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SLOKA WORD -

sa:ga:ra sa:garo:pama

SLOKA MEANING -

The ocean is as big as the ocean - we can’t compare it with anything.

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Hence Va:lmiki said,

ra:ma Ra:va:na yo:ruddham

ra:ma Ra:va:na yo: riva

Va:lmiki gave this example to state that it is incomparable. What do we compare a:thma thaththva (the reality of the soul) with? Only when we compare it with something do we get some jna:na (knowledge) about it. Otherwise, however much we hear about it, it remains incomprehensible. We can’t say, “Aha, we understood it.” Do we have an example to compare it with [a:thma]?

A:thma is the one with knowledge. In Nature, no objects have knowledge. If we can witness knowledge in anything, it is because of the indwelling soul (ji:va) within. For example, if we put an obstacle in front of a growing plant, it bends to the side where there is sunlight and continues to grow from there. That means it has intelligence, right? Where is this knowledge coming from? It is the knowledge of the soul inside the visible plant, not the plant’s. If the ji:va (soul) comes out of it, then it is simply the [form of a] plant. Then it doesn't bend to the side or grow new leaves.

We see this in an example of a plant. It is the same with everything. There is a certain “touch-me-not” plant. It is called lajjavathi in Sanskrit. If we touch it, it shrinks all its leaves, bends down, and becomes slender. The plant which was wide earlier has shrunk now. Even if we touch one leaf, the whole plant becomes slender. It means that it has knowledge. It knows to shrink when someone touches it. Hence, it shrank. That is as long as the ji:va is inside it. Once the ji:va goes out of it, the leaves won’t shrink or expand.

Jna:na (knowledge) is an intrinsic characteristic of the soul. Scriptures have told us this. There is no need to ask if you have seen this. We know knowledge is the soul's characteristic. If there is something like it, we can compare it with the soul. However, if there is any thaththva (reality) which has knowledge, it is only parama:thma (supreme soul), thaththva. Hence, we can compare it with parama:thma. We can say it is like parama:thma and has consciousness like it. However, parama:thma is called vibhu (incomparably large), thaththva.

Whatever we compare with, we should have knowledge of that first. If we say someone’s face is like the moon, we should know how the moon is. Only then can we compare and see if it is like the moon or not. Hence, if we have knowledge about the parama:thma thaththva, then we can compare a:thma thaththva with it. However, if we don’t know about a:thma thaththva itself, then how can we know about parama:thma thaththva? Hence, in however many ways you hear about or discuss a:thma, it cannot be known.

If it can’t be known, then why make efforts to know it? What it implies is that it is something that can’t be known completely or in its entirety. The essence is that however much you know about it, there is a lot that needs to be known. It is called a:scharya (wonder).

Once a frog from the ocean came to a frog who was in a well. The frog which used to be in the ocean became friends with the frog in the well. The frog in the well asked, “Where are you coming from, my friend?” The frog from the ocean replied, “I am coming from the ocean.” The frog in the well asked, “What is there in the ocean?” The frog from the ocean said, “It has water.” The frog in the well asked, “Water, is it like water in the well?” The frog from the ocean replied, “Something like that.” The frog in the well asked, “How much water is there?” The frog from the ocean said, “Lots.” The frog in the well asked, “Is it this much [while swimming from one side of the well to the other]?” The frog in the ocean replied, “No.” The frog in the well asked, “Or is it from here to there [while swimming from one end to the other end]?”

The frog in the well only knows the well and can only swim within the boundaries of the well. How can it understand the length, width, or depth of the ocean even if explained extensively? Just as it can’t know the ocean’s entirety in spite of being explained repeatedly, deciding about the reality of a:thma [in its entirety] is not possible for anyone. However many times you talk about it, there is a lot more. However many times you listen about it, yet there is a lot more. However much you know about it, there is still a lot more. Hence, whatever you heard or understood about it is very limited. A:thma is always amazing.

All great jna:nis (wise ones), the wise ones like rushis (sages), munis (saints), and tha:thvikas (ultimate realities) like Sri Krishna, call it amazing too. If someone claims, “We have seen a:thma. We can enable you to see it in five minutes,” …what should we think of such a person? That is also ‘amazing’. If someone says they have seen a:thma and know all about it, we have to realize he is making a fool of us. We have to be amazed at their brazenness. Hence, Arjuna, thinking that you know something about a:thmas, there is no need to cry about Bhi:shma’s and Dro:na’s a:thmas, the soul is ajara:maram (eternally indestructible). Motivating Arjuna to wage war, Sri Krishna continues Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2.

Jai Srimannarayana! Jai Srimannarayana!

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