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1. Episode Title: Episode 73 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 73)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of the body and soul, Understanding the categories of living beings, The distinction between the visible body and the invisible soul, The impermanence of the body and the permanence of the soul, Krishna's teachings on grief and duty

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, body, soul, dharma, impermanence, grief, living beings

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, Sri Krishna embarked on an initiative to alleviate Arjuna’s sorrow and guide him towards his duty. Arjuna’s sorrow is a result of his inability to perceive the body and the soul as separate entities. Sri Krishna began to clearly explain deha (body) and dehi (soul) to Arjuna.

Deha (body) is formed by the amalgamation of a few elements. The one that utilizes this deha is dehi (soul). They are different. He is demonstrating the difference between the two, deha and dehi. He is also describing their attributes and nature. Among them, ‘What is the nature of the body?’ ‘Why is the soul invisible?’ He [Sri Krishna] has the responsibility to explain these now.

Our Elders categorized the perceivable bodies into four types:

1) deva (celestial beings)

2) manushya (humans)

3) thiryak (animals)

4) stha:vara (immobile/stationary)

It’s one type of categorization at the gross level. We all belong to the manushya category. Different colors, creed, race, groups, different parties, different amounts of wealth, assets, etc. There are differences in various other ways. We see people of different languages, nationality, qualities, and habits. Even though we see various differences due to these factors, our Elders categorized us as manushya based on the common trait of ‘walking upright’. Thus, all manushyas are segregated into one category.

There are other beings that ‘move in a horizontal position’ apart from those who ‘walk upright’. These can move in the water, on the land, on both water and land, in the sky and on land, etc. Several such creatures exist. Because they ‘move in a horizontal position’ they are named as thiryak jathi (horizontal moving beings). This is another category. One category moves in an upright position and another type moves in a horizontal position: manushya and thiryak.

There are others that do not move. They may or may not have life energy in them. They could be trees, plants, thorns, bushes, etc. There is life energy in these. Rocks and stones are others where life energy is not obvious. Whether life energy is visible or not, or exists in them or not, stationary ones are known as stha:varas (stationary beings). It is possible that they could be moved to another place with effort from others. But it is not possible for trees, rocks, or water to move by themselves.

But water flows, right? If there is a slope then it will, otherwise it won’t. They have tides, right? If there is wind, then water moves as tides, otherwise no. Those that cannot move ‘naturally’ are known as stha:varas. Therefore, these are three categories – manushya, thiryak, and stha:vara [from among the four]. There are many extraordinary energies surrounding us that enable stationary movement, traveling, growth, and depreciation of the three groups. The entities that give us the wind, sunshine, heat, cold, etc. are known as deva jathi (celestial beings). Scriptures state that they are also living beings. Thus - deva, thiryak, manushya, and stha:vara.

So basically, the four types are deva, manushya, thiryak, and stha:vara at a high level. All these types have deha (body) and dehi (soul). Deha is externally visible and dehi is within. That is why [firstly] deha must be shown. Its characteristics must be explained. After that, an effort must be made to impart knowledge of atma tattva (reality of the soul). To explain the invisible [soul] entity, one must first explain the [related] visible entity [body].

Our Elders, the wise, state… sthu:la arundhati nya:yam (the principle of showing the visible to understand the invisible). Earlier, couples used to wed at night. They used to be very young as well. The boy would be around 12 and the girl around 8 years old. Very young. They would be so tired and tend to fall asleep at their own wedding! After certain rituals, they would be shown arundhati, a certain star in the eastern sky. Where is arundhati star in the sky? No one knows it. But it must be shown. How?

First, they [the priests] ask the couple to look toward the east. ‘Do you see the stars there?’ ‘Yes’. The priest would make them see it. ‘Do you see the group of four stars that look like legs of a bed?’ Their vision is now gradually zeroed in on a specific location. ‘Yes, we can see those big four stars that resemble the legs of a bed.’ ‘Correct. Now do you see a tail next to this group?’ They look carefully...‘yes, we see a tail as well’. ‘How many [stars] do you see in it?’ ‘1, 2, 3… we see 3 stars.’ ‘Alright! Now, do you see the middle one of those 3 stars?’ ‘Yes we see the middle star’. ‘Do you see anything close to it?’ ‘Yes, we see a small star flickering next to it.’ ‘That’s arundhati.’

Thus, to show the arundhati star, they started with a big constellation, gradually zeroing in on it. In sastra (scripture), this is known as sthu:la arundhati nya:yam. Similarly, one must navigate from visible to invisible. ‘From known to unknown’. This is the injunction. Because one must first discuss known aspects to perceive the unknown… as the sharira (body) is known, its characteristics should be presented first… that they are the result of an unknown hidden entity called shariri (soul).

We can see that bodies are made up of varied colors, ethnicities, professions, names, etc. Therefore, these visible bodies have varied ethnicity, their characteristics… the places they roam, the timeframes they exist in… some are soft that can be pierced such as fruits… while others are hard such as rocks that cannot be easily pierced. A few such bodies are known as subhedhya:lu (easily pierced) while a few others are called as durbhedhya:lu (not easily pierced). With so many variations, all the visible ones are called dehas (bodies).

What is deha? One that is formed by the combination of a few elements. We alluded to the differences between sharira and deha earlier. They both refer to the same [body]. It is named differently because the underlying process is different. Names are derived based on it [underlying process]. diha upachaye is a [Sanskrit] root. This root indicates that it, the body, is formed by incorporating a few entities with itself. That is known as deha.

After forming, it begins to gradually disintegrate. That is known as sharira. It is called sharira as it disintegrates. It is called deha as it grows after the formation. A baby from birth to approximately 25 years old will have a growing body. With the food he consumes and the water he takes in, he gradually adds to himself and grows. The stage during which the body grows by accumulation is called deha. After a certain age, the body’s abilities diminish slowly. He has wrinkled skin, a bent body, and needs a stick to walk. It means his body has begun to deplete in a way. When such depletion starts, it is then called sharira. When it grows it is called deha. When it depletes it is called sharira. Both refer to the same visible material, the body.

There must be something indwelling without which these changes cannot be supported. That [indweller] who is the cause for all these changes is known as dehi (soul), one that has deha. Or known as shariri (soul), one that has sharira. The body shape goes through changes constantly. So we wonder whether the indweller (soul) goes through similar changes. The soul does not experience any changes. So, what does it experience? It can only experience happiness or sorrow. The body, despite being made up of many visible entities, does not laugh, cry, feel happy, or sorrow.

If it were to have these feelings, then even upon its death that dead body should have the feelings of laughter or sadness. It should also cry along with others. It should also pacify others, ‘Don’t cry, don’t cry [for me]’. But it doesn’t. If others are fanning the body, then it should feel good too. But it doesn’t. It means, happiness or sadness is not for any visible body. It is meant for what is inside i.e. dehi (soul). His experiences are different from that of the body - nationality, timezone, race, ethnicity, gender are all applicable to the visible external entity, the body. They do not apply to what is within the soul.

However, what he [soul] has, is to feel favorable or unfavorable experiences. If he feels favorable [about something], he feels that as happiness. If he feels the opposite/unfavorable [about something], he feels that as sadness. These are what the soul has. We are referring to him as a human. In fact, we do not refer that [human] to the external visible body. The name is for the indwelling soul visible in that form [human body]. We are naming the one who has manushyathvam (human traits), a man’s traits. We are naming the one who has pashuthvam (animal traits). We are naming the one who has pakshithvam (bird traits). All the names must therefore be applied to the souls within.

Atma paryantham (to the soul), the changes happen only due to the presence of atma (soul), otherwise they are all the same. They all become pancha bhutas (five cosmic elements). When they are cremated or buried or left idle, they will return to their original state. They get names only due to the presence of souls. There is a chance that one might wonder that since the externally visible bodies are anithya (impermanent), could the souls within be anithya as well?

In the earlier instance, there is a chance one might question whether the souls also have a color, a shape like the bodies do. But the indwelling one does not have them. That is why these souls can exist in a human’s body, a bird’s body, an animal’s body, a tree’s body, or a rock’s body. He can transmigrate into any body. Irrespective of the body he takes, he will not imbibe that body’s nature. But due to ignorance, he thinks that they [body’s nature] are his… and he ends up experiencing happiness or sadness attained through the body.

We might wonder whether the indweller’s (soul’s) shape also changes similarly to the external body. If it does, then we have to mourn for the soul. As bodily changes cannot be stopped, there is no need to mourn for it. “Since the body is changing, the soul might be changing too. Should I not mourn for it?” “Bhisma and Drona are going through changes too. Why should I not mourn for them?” In chapter 2 verse 30, Sri Krishna recognized such a feeling in Arjuna and began to answer.

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SLOKA WORD -

dehi nithyam avadhyo:yam

SLOKA MEANING -

The one that indwells in the body is called dehi (soul). He is nithyam (eternal), exists in past, present, and future. Avadhyaha (he cannot be killed by anyone).

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Where? For whom? … de:he: sarvasya bha:ratha! (Not just in this body, he will not die in any body). What that implies is… thasma:th sarva:ni bhu:tha:ni na thvam so:chithum arhasi || BG 2.30 (Therefore, you need not cry for any being - not Bhisma or Drona or any relatives... thinking about possible changes or the resulting outcomes that might occur because of what you do).

Why? You think you are crying for Bhisma or Drona. What about the elephants, horses, and other animals over there? What about the ants or other organisms that might die as your chariot moves about [in the war field]? Why do you not cry for them? There is no need to mourn for anyone. You cannot stop the changes in the body. Shariri (soul) or dehi (soul), the soul within the body is … nithyam avadhyaha (eternal and cannot ever be killed), no need to mourn for it as well.

Thasma:th (therefore) na thvam so:chithum arhasi (you need not cry). Sri Krishna is elevating us a step higher. He is also enlightening us about all the other visible beings around us. First, Sri Krishna explained it about one specific person (Bhisma/Drona) that Arjuna knew. Later in chapter 2, Sri Krishna generalized the particular instance and clarified that there is no need to mourn for anyone. Let's continue to learn about this. Jai Srimannarayana!

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