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1. Episode Title: Episode 77 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 77)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The universal relevance of the Bhagavad Gita, Understanding the nature of the soul, The distinction between body and soul, The teachings of Krishna for both theists and atheists, The importance of pure mind in spiritual understanding

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, soul, dharma, atheism, spiritual guidance, perception, prathyaksha, anumana

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is a venerated scripture among Bharatiyas (Indians). Not just for Bharatiyas, Bhagavad Gita is an esteemed spiritual text for the entire human race. In today's world, Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the greatest scripture respected in all languages by the most number of people. Because it is not a scripture aimed solely at asthikas (theists). In this world, some are theists and others are atheists. Some people could be agnostic.

The primary goal of Sri Krishna’s upadesa (teaching), Srimad Bhagavad Gita, is to bestow everyone with teachings that one must know and practice. We can find several such teachings not just in one part but all over the Bhagavad Gita. In those days, there were not many religions. There were some theists, i.e., those who are believers in Vedas. There were some atheists, i.e., those who didn’t believe in Vedas. For those who didn’t believe in Vedas, there were many faiths. Bhagavad Gita provides facts that even they [atheists] need to know.

In the second chapter, we recollected verses 2.28, 2.29, 2.30, and 2.31. In these verses, the Lord preaches…

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SLOKA WORD -

Sanskrit text: a:pada:m apahartha:ram da:tha:ram sarva sampada:m

lo:ka:bhi ra:mam sri:ra:mam bhu:yo: bhu:yo: nama:myaham

SLOKA MEANING -

English translation: I bow repeatedly to the Lord who is the source of all wealth and who is the remover of all obstacles.

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God explains this fact. Bhagavad Gita is for Arjuna. The upadesa aimed at coaching Arjuna to fulfill his duty as he was disinclined to wage war and was stepping back from recommended dharmic (righteous) acts. We recognize one as a theist if he thinks and believes in duty and dharma in such cases. He [theist] will know what body and soul are. He is conscious of the distinction between body and soul, deh-atma vivekam (distinction between body and soul).

However, we cannot perceive the soul through indriyas (physical senses). We cannot perceive it [soul] through inference either. The only way to comprehend it is through shastras (scriptures). We discussed this several times in the past. Because the soul is not an object that can be perceived by the eye or any other indriya, sense organ. It can only be comprehended through shastra. How can we learn about it? We learn it to be something that cannot be perceivable by the senses. This is how we should comprehend it [soul].

There are a few things we comprehend similar to this. If someone asks how high the sky is, and someone else responds by saying that the sky is 100 miles, or 300 miles, or one lakh miles, we will laugh at them. Even if you build some means and travel upwards one lakh miles, it looks the same even from there. The sky is not formed to be a roof. We don’t know how high it is. Nobody does. It is anantham (boundless). Hence, if someone thinks that, “it looks bad if I say I don’t know” and simply provides a random number of miles, then he will be considered a fool.

In fact, how do you define “knowing” [in this context]? If someone says its magnitude is beyond comprehension, then that’s correct! He gets 100 marks! Whatever can be comprehended, if someone comprehends as it is, then we can consider him a wise one. Whatever is incomprehensible needs to be acknowledged as being beyond comprehension. That is considered intelligence. If someone claims that they comprehend something which is incomprehensible, then we consider him a fraud.

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SLOKA WORD -

Sanskrit text: yasya amatham matham thasya matham

matham yasya nave:dasaha

avijna:tham vija:natha:m

vijna:tham avija:natha:m

SLOKA MEANING -

English translation: The one who recognizes that this [soul] is incomprehensible knows it correctly. The one who claims to have comprehended everything about [soul] is mistaken.

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Whoever recognizes that this [soul] is incomprehensible knows it correctly. Whoever claims that he has comprehended everything about [soul], claiming “besides knowing about the soul myself, let me also provide you with some insights… I will enlighten you with knowledge about the soul… with this shakti patam (act of conferring spiritual energy),” that means he is making a big fool of us. It is because the nature of the object [soul] is like that. It is so minute that you cannot perceive it with your naked eye. There is nothing more infinitesimal than that [soul].

Our scientists have gone all the way to the anu (molecule) stage. Later they split that into paramanu (atoms). Then, even that was further split and up to 250 particles were discovered within. They are able to reach such a microscopic state! By leveraging the relevant instruments, they are able to identify them [microscopic particles]. However, it [soul] is even more infinitesimal than that [microscopic particle]. Visuddha manasa: grahyaha (pure mind can grasp it). That means, we can believe and identify it with manas (mind).

How can we recognize it? It is recognized that it cannot be contained within a boundary and measured. That’s fine! Additionally, to comprehend it [soul], the manas needs to be pure. That means if it [manas] is dirty, then it [soul] is invisible to it [manas]. If the eye has a cataract, then the objects in front of you will be seen as either two or three objects. Or only a part of the object is seen. Or it can go invisible. We call it a defect of the eye, right? Similarly, if at all there are any defects within the manas, because of the karma vasana (instincts from past actions), there is no opportunity for one to recognize (the soul).

If he can attain pure manas, free from faults through practice, only that manas will be able to believe in what is stated in shastra (scripture). This is for the soul. There could be some people in the world who do not believe in atma tattva (the reality of the soul) as it is invisible. There may be some people who only work for something which is visible. Whatever is visible is called pratyaksha (perception).

We discussed earlier that all indriyas are called aksham (senses). Whatever is in front of each of the indriyas, it is called pratyaksha. Pratyaksha is a very beautiful word. We can use it for three things. Let’s take the example of an eye. The eye, the object that is seen by the eye, and the link between the eye and the object called the ability to see. Only if we have the link, we can comprehend that there is an object. You can call the eye pratyaksha. You can call the visible object pratyaksha. There is a link between the eye and the object, right? The relationship, the knowledge of that relationship can also be called pratyaksha. This is interesting!

Just to easily understand, we took an example of an eye. This applies to all physical senses. Many people think that it is called pratyaksha only if it is visible to the eye. That’s not true. The ear has the ability to hear. In that case, the ear is called pratyaksha, the sound, which can be heard is called pratyaksha, and the knowledge which recognizes the sound is also called pratyaksha.

Coming to the nose, we call it ghra:na indriya (sense of smell). It smells the fragrance of an object. We recognize the fragrance of a sampangi pushpa (Michelia champaka). The fragrance of the sampangi pushpa is called pratyaksha, the nose is called pratyaksha, and the knowledge attained through the nose [is called pratyaksha]. It is we who perceive the knowledge of fragrance. This is indriya (sense), that is the object, we are getting the knowledge of it. Hence, knowledge is called pratyaksha. The object is called pratyaksha, and even the indriya which is comprehending it is called pratyaksha.

Similarly, our skin, tvak indriyam (sense of touch). What is the skin doing? It is touching an object. It is hard, it is soft, it is hot, and it is cold. You can comprehend it, right? The heat, coolness, hardness, and softness are all called pratyaksha. The skin which grasps/feels it is called pratyaksha. The knowledge from the touch is also called pratyaksha. Same for the tongue as well. The tongue eats jaggery. We say wow, so sweet! These days, one may not just like jaggery. Nowadays, items that are made with jaggery are preferred instead of plain jaggery. The object has taste. The tongue needs to sense it [taste] and we need to comprehend it. Since this indriya tastes, it is called rasana indriyam (sense of taste). Even rasana indriya is called pratyaksha. The object which gives the knowledge of taste, such as Gulab Jamun (Indian sweet dishes) or Baadushah or Boondi or Jilebi, or dhoodh peda or burfi or it can be anything else. The object which has a taste is called pratyaksha. When we put that [tasty] object in our mouth, “Ah”, we got that knowledge, right? That is also called pratyaksha. Hence, the word pratyaksha is applicable for three things.

Now [in the case of the soul], we have indriyas. We have the knowledge, which we attain through indriyas. However, the object [soul] in front of these indriyas is significantly infinitesimal, making it ineligible for being called an object of knowledge. So, it is not possible to observe the soul. So, some people say “We are not going to accept the existence of the soul. We will stop at whatever we can observe [with the indriyas]. We will accept only what we can recognize.” In reality, some people only believe in what they can recognize with physical senses, but they are gullible. They are not just believing in the pratyaksha. Along with pratyaksha, they are believing in oha/anumana (inference) as well.

What is anumana? Based on the knowledge of the physical object in front of us, we recognize the knowledge of something else, right? That’s what it is. The process of gaining knowledge that way is called anumana. Smoke indicates a fire, so we assume/infer that there is one. Based on the fragrance, we infer a flower. Based on the sound, we infer either an object or person or something else. Oha is also called anumana. Some people say they don’t believe in anything else except pratyaksha. They are also innocent. Because they also believe in anumana.

He says he is talking to you. He thinks you are there. He believes that you are there. There is the sound that is heard. There is a thought behind the sound. There is a decision that is behind the thought. If he is able to experience all this, he is not just stopping at the recognition of the indriya. Based on this, he is able to go above and beyond (the knowledge of indriya). This means he believes in anumana. Because of anumana, he is getting knowledge. This is called anumiti.

Out of ignorance, they say, “We are prathyakshavadas (those who only believe in perception), the one who only believes in pratyaksha.” Regardless of what they call themselves, prathyakshavadas or anumanavadas (those who believe in inference), the soul is visible to neither one of them. So, we cannot limit ourselves to that. Shastra gives us knowledge about that [soul]. What it is, how, how much, what does it do, it [shastra] provides all these insights. Based on that, we should recognize the soul. Based on the soul which is [now] recognized, he should do what he is supposed to do.

There are people who do not recognize the soul and limit themselves to believing in inference and consider themselves atheists. Even these people have some necessary facts they need to know. Even those are taught by Bhagavad Gita. This is the fascinating part. That’s why Sri Krishna didn’t expound Bhagavad Gita just for one person; it is for anyone in general, who thinks of himself as a human being, regardless of which path he is in or which belief he follows. This is the greatness of Bhagavad Gita. That Bhagavad Gita is for Arjuna, and also for someone who considers himself an atheist. Sri Krishna advises why he [Arjuna] shouldn’t take a step back and shouldn’t feel sad about the war now. Thus, Sri Krishna takes Arjuna forward. Let’s try to understand it clearly. Jai Srimannarayana!

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