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1. Episode Title: Episode 87 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 87)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of Bhagavad Gita in current times, Understanding grief and loss, The distinction between body and soul, The role of dharma in difficult situations, Building mental strength and resilience

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, grief, Krishna, dharma, body, soul, mental strength, Covid-19, resilience, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is a wonderful teaching. The second chapter is especially a very valuable teaching for the current times. Why? Many people are suffering from Covid-19 in various ways. We also see people losing their family members. People have lost their loved ones and relatives, and are experiencing grief in many ways. It is an unbearable situation. In such situations, chapter 2 is very useful in building mental strength and resilience.

Bhagavan (Lord), Sri Krishna, clarified the reality of the body (sari:ra) and soul (atma). Each person has to do his duty. Your dharma (duty) is to perform your responsibilities. What obstructs one from performing duty is lack of clarity about what should and shouldn’t be done. The reason for this is tamas guna (ignorance).

What is atma and what is not atma? It is called atma-nonatma viveka (knowledge of the differences between the soul and that which is not the soul). If we understand this, we will attain a satvik shakti (strength born out of virtues) to continue our dharma. It allows one to see things distinctly. Because of that, one understands his duty and acts accordingly.

Generally, when we lose our loved ones, sorrow ensues. “Does God exist? If He is there, why would He do this? What is all this? Why did He give us this trouble?” These thoughts arise in one’s mind. This kind of thinking is not necessary. We see many species in nature. They also experience joys and sorrows. They face their troubles and move forward. However, they do not stop their activities.

Yet, when a human faces trouble or ill health or an unfavorable situation, he thinks, “Why should I continue my activities? Why should I behave in a favorable way with everyone? Why help others? Why should I have satvik food? Do japa (chanting) or tapa (austerity)? Or meditate? Why should I believe in God?” Then we usually see that he feels reluctant towards those activities. As long as everything is favorable, he feels he is able to ‘do’ everything. However, when things don’t go our way, these thoughts manifest.

A man needs counsel in such times. Sri Krishna did not deliver Bhagavad Gita only for Bharatiyas (Indians) or Vaidiks (those who believe in Vedas). In fact, this is needed for every prani (being), mainly for human beings, it is very essential. Religions, castes, skin tones, and languages may be different. Still, life is the same for everyone. Taking birth, growing up, necessity of food, favorable or unfavorable situations are all common for everyone. Facing troubles is common for everyone. There is no difference.

Hence, when such things [Covid-19] happen, we need to understand what and how to think. This is something we all have experienced. As long as there is prani (soul) in the body, we love and care for it in many ways. We try to handle the body carefully. We don’t mind spending any amount of money for it. We don’t mind taking loans to care for it. We are currently witnessing people being hastily admitted into hospitals even on the slightest deterioration in health. We have to accept the reason for that behavior.

These days, when something terrible happens to someone, it does not occur gradually. Like a fruit which ripens gradually, it’s not like that nowadays. Infections in current times [like Covid-19] are not like that. Once infected, it reaches its peak in a day or two - sometimes in half a day. Then comes the horrible situation of shortness of breath - soon the person is no more. Such are the situations. It’s difficult to believe that hospitals may be able to protect us. It is a fact that they are doing what they can to some extent.

Despite lakhs of rupees per day spent, are hospitals providing patients oxygen or good medicines? We rarely hear positive comments about that. We cannot underestimate anyone. There are capable doctors who do their job. There are others who don’t care about the patients, focusing only on making money. However, in the news, most of the time we hear stories of tremendous suffering. After using ‘influence’ and spending so much money, if they are lucky, they return home. Otherwise, they are directly sent to ‘Swarga Dham’ (what many cemeteries are named). The family simply returns home. This is, in fact, a heartbreaking situation.

We should remember two things in times like these.

1. To keep ourselves healthy, we need immunity, a protective shield, for our body. How do we keep physically strong? Proper food, ventilation, yoga, exercise, pranayama (breath control), or by eating specific, recommended foods… instead of going to the doctors and troubling them for everything. There are many people who are showing us alternatives. If we can use preventive measures and pick something that suits us from among those, we may be able to preserve our health to some extent. We have to do this as far as the body is concerned. Keeping a distance from people, sanitizing our hands - whenever and however necessary, following sanitization protocols, and avoiding unnecessary crowds in addition to other measures. All these pertain to the body level.

2. Activities which you have to do to strengthen your mind. Why do we love this body? Because there is something indwelling in it, otherwise we wouldn’t love it. Not just us, no one will love it. Not just any particular religion. No one from any religion would love the body without an indwelling soul. They don’t keep the body after the soul leaves. Even if they do, the body won’t stay. Slowly it will start to disintegrate, then stink and appear horrendous. That’s why it’s necessary to immediately do some procedures so we don’t have to see the body.

Since the one that is visible outside (body) cannot stay without this qualification, it becomes known as sari:ra (body). The one making it stay in proper condition is atma (soul). What others call it, we can leave it to them, but we call it atma. The reason is we don’t know where it is or how big it is. But it is present in everything, wherever it is, giving everything life. Hence it is called atma. Thus, the body and soul are different. The soul always exists but the body can’t exist forever no matter what. The body exists now because the soul is along with it. They are placed together carefully in such a way that they cannot be separated.

There is a beautiful name for this relation…

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SLOKA WORD -

apruthak siddha sambandham

SLOKA MEANING -

Which means the relationship is such that they cannot exist in isolation.

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They are together. As long as they are together, we respect them in many ways. We respect both body and soul. Regarding the soul, we say he is a great person. Looking at the body we may say “she is related to us, she is beautiful” or other statements. The one that is visible outside (body) is existing because of the indwelling soul. So we must recognize the soul inside. And know that they are together, but not one.

What are they like? The one inside (soul) is called de:hi (the one who dwells). The outside one (body) is called de:ha (the physical body). De:hi is eternal - whatever you do, it won’t go. The one outside (body) will be there as long as the soul is with it; after that, it won’t exist no matter what you do. The one inside (soul) is avadhyaha (immortal), with no death. However, for the body, whatever you do, there is no e:ka ru:patha (same form). This is not just for humans. The same applies for animals or any prani (being) with life. Hence, we should think of all these.

For as long as it belongs to us and is favorable to us, we should use it for righteous activities. We should make sure time is not wasted. We should utilize every single minute. Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 distinguishes between both - atma and anathma (non-soul), de:ha and de:hi. Chapter 2 holds a special role in giving us this knowledge. In present times, it is essential for everyone to read and understand it. We are somewhat content to be able to put some effort towards it. Let’s try to do so every day. Jai Srimannarayana!

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