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1. Episode Title: Episode 84 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 84)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The significance of performing one's duties, Understanding the concept of svarga (heaven), The distinction between temporary and eternal happiness, Krishna's teachings on spiritual aspirations, The conversation between Nachiketas and Yama Dharmaraja

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, svarga, Arjuna, Krishna, Nachiketas, Yama Dharmaraja, eternal happiness, duties, duality

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is the best grandha (scripture), whose primary purpose is to provide direction on performing duties. Sri Krishna is its Upadeshta (teacher), the one who delivered it, through Arjuna, to guide us all about our duties.

Typically, everyone has their own set of duties. Every person in this world is born with a duty to perform. It is good if we recognize our duty, but many people do not. They forget their primary duty, impose new ‘duties’ on themselves, and get into trouble in life. It is critical to perform our own duties, and equally critical to recognize that these duties are given to us by God - if we carry them out accordingly, then we don’t expect a specific result. Since we must perform the duties, we should do them sincerely, which will yield results naturally.

When we perform our job properly, our salary gets deposited into our bank account at the end of the month. Similarly, if we properly perform the duties given by God with this body, we will certainly reap the appropriate result. Which is? This is specified by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita 2.32.

What will happen if we perform our duties properly?

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SLOKA WORD -

svarga dva:ram apa:vrutham

SLOKA MEANING -

“For those who perform duties well, the doors of svarga (heaven) will open for them,” He says.

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Arjuna looked confused. Why? Arjuna had a strange expression while thinking - “I am not aiming for svarga, heaven.” I really don’t have to perform duties to go to svarga… “I have already visited svarga many times, honored by Indra and been received cordially by many others from svarga…” “Moreover, Indra is like my father. So, I don’t have to ‘do’ anything specifically to go to svarga. I can just go on my own.”

Sri Krishna responded to clarify Arjuna’s confusion.

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SLOKA WORD -

svarga dva:ram apa:vrutham

SLOKA MEANING -

“Svarga, the heaven I am referring to is not the one that you are thinking of… where Indra, Rambha, and others live.”

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Then what is svarga? There is a specific definition for that. At the beginning of Srimad Bhagavatam, it is mentioned that thousands of Rushis (sages) like Sounaka performed a dirgha sathra yaga (long sacrificial ritual). Why?

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SLOKA WORD -

svarga:ya lo:ka:ya sahasra samama:satha

SLOKA MEANING -

performed for many years

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How is it performed? Someone preaches an Upadesa (teaching), while others listen to enhance their knowledge. This is named as sathra yaga. Why are they performing dirgha sathra yaga? Svarga:ya lo:ka:ya – To reach the heavenly abode. Who is performing this yaga? Rushis and Seers, those who have renounced all worldly luxuries.

Why will they aspire for sweet nectar, amruth (nectar of immortality), or women like Rambha? They gave a detailed description of the svarga that they aspire for. That’s not the svarga, heaven, they are aspiring for. They aspire for the svarga mentioned by Nachiketas.

In Kato Upanishad, part of Veda, Yama Dharmaraja has a conversation with a child named Nachiketas. Yama Dharmaraja offered Nachiketas a sadhana (means), to achieve svarga. Nachiketas asked, “Which svarga?” Yama Dharmaraja responded: “Which svarga do you want?” Nachiketas said “nathathratvam najaraya:bhibhethi…” “I want the means to attain that svarga.”

Which svarga?

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SLOKA WORD -

nathathrathvam

SLOKA MEANING -

where your influence doesn’t exist

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Whose influence? Yama Dharmaraja’s influence. Where will Yama Dharmaraja’s influence exist? There is no place not under Yama’s influence including Earth, other planets…the entire universe. His influence exists in any corner you go. Yama Dharmaraja’s influence exists on people, kings, devatas (gods), gandharvas (celestial musicians)… or even Brahma, who is the first among devatas.

On average, we are all given 100 years to live. If we use them properly, we live all the 100 years. If we use them even better, we get bonus years. Otherwise, we lose some years. Generally, we all get 100 years, as our elders bless us with sathama:nam bhavathi (Live Long, live 100 years)! This duration is common.

The size of the unit time in the 100 varies. Some animals live only 20 years according to human calculation, but according to the calculation of that animal, it is 100 years. Mosquitos live only 3 or 4, maybe 20 days according to our calculation. According to mosquitos’ time calculation, that is 100 years. Some cells live only 4 hours. For that cell or that prani (one with life force), it is counted as 100 years.

For Brahma, the first of all beings… That Brahma’s one day according to our calculation is 2000 chaturyugas (great ages), 2000 X 4,320,000 human years. Based on that calculation, he also has 365 days and accordingly his 100 years. There is such a vast difference between our time and Brahma’s time. The moon’s half a day is our 15 days. That is why there are 15 days of daytime and 15 days of nighttime on the Moon. Thus, time is relative and changes accordingly.

The highest celestial being is Brahma. His son is Shiva, his son is Shanmukha or Ganapati and so on. Below Brahma are others like Yaksha, Rakshasa, Kinnera, Kimpurusha, Gandharva, etc. Ravana also lived many thousands of years. We hear about some beings living for many lakhs of years. Regardless of how long they live, they are all influenced by Yama. Even Brahma comes under the influence of Yama and must leave his post after his 100 years. Then, his successor will occupy the post.

That’s why it is said that the current Brahma is also not permanent. When we recite a sankalpa (oath), we say “adya brahmanaha” and tell the time-space. It mentions that we are in the current Brahma’s time, in which… 51 years, 1st day, 1st jhamu (part of a day), 1st ghadiya (hour) and 1st vighadiya (minute) have passed. According to our calculation, it is 200 crore years! There will be a variation of time.

Despite the magnitude of his lifetime, Brahma is also under the influence of Yama Dharmaraja. So, you can imagine the greatness of Yama Dharmaraja. Nachiketas asked Yama Dharmaraja for that svarga which is nathathrathvam, not under the influence of Yama. “Likewise, najaraya:bhibhe:thi, there should not be any threat of old age, that’s the svarga I am interested in.” “It looks like only you know the means for it, so please tell me,” Nachiketas asked Yama Dharmaraja.

There is an amazing Upadesa about this in the Shanti Parva of Bharata.

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SLOKA WORD -

yasmin o:shnam, na si:tham cha

SLOKA MEANING -

In svarga, there is no exhaustion from a heat wave or suffering from a cold wave.

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It is a place above and beyond the influence of dvandas (duality) of heat or cold.

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SLOKA WORD -

yenna dukhe:na sambhinnam

SLOKA MEANING -

Although we may experience temporary pleasure, it gets ‘pushed off’ by something sad soon.

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Sad times begin then. Again, there may be an occasion where we are happy for a split second, like the duration of lightning, but it gets overshadowed by sorrow. Happiness and sorrow are constantly fluctuating like waves. “I want the svarga which is not impacted by the waves of happiness and sorrow,” says Nachiketas.

Additionally…

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SLOKA WORD -

nachagrastham anantharam

SLOKA MEANING -

happiness shouldn’t be temporary or depletable

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There is a practical example that demonstrates Indra’s svarga, heaven. Someone checks into a five-star hotel and pays a hefty deposit upfront for 24 hours. Right from the entrance, he is greeted by the staff “Good Morning, Sir!” He experiences luxuries, respect from the concierge, valet parking attendant, room service staff, etc. The staff inquires, “What can I do for you, sir?”

HH used the English word ‘deposit’ | How long will the respect last? Only until the deposit amount lasts. As the deposit amount gets ‘used’ for his stay, the countdown starts for the balance of his stay, 24, 23, 22, 21, 20, 19, etc. Once it is at 0, if he doesn’t leave, he will be escorted forcibly. The luxuries in what is commonly referred to as [Indra’s] svarga, heaven, look like this.

We earn punya (virtues), accrued from hundreds of difficult lives with diligence and hard work. All this punya will be enough to experience the luxuries of heaven, maybe for a day. Upon entry into heaven, there is a board with the name of the person, and the amount of time allocated for him to stay, and the countdown starts immediately. Despite having all luxuries around him, he can’t enjoy them, as he is anxiously watching the timer. “The time is running out,” he cries and never enjoys the luxuries. Once the timer is out, he is thrown out.

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SLOKA WORD -

kshi:ne: punye: madhya lo:kam visanthi

SLOKA MEANING -

punya is exhausted and he is sent back to Earth

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“I don’t want happiness that gets depleted like this!” [Says Nachiketas]

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SLOKA WORD -

nachagrastham anantharam abhila:sho:pani:tham thath

SLOKA MEANING -

That happiness, which is greatly desired by everyone…

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and for which great souls such as Brahma perform severe penance to attain, is what I want.

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SLOKA WORD -

thath sukham svarga pada:spadam

SLOKA MEANING -

What can it be? - One and only, Sri Maha Vishnu’s abode, paramapadam (supreme abode)!

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SLOKA WORD -

thad vishno: paramam padhagam sada: pasyanthi su:rayaha

SLOKA MEANING -

The one place named Paramapadam, which is the divine abode of Vishnu,

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that is the one place unaffected by dvandas (duality). Rajas (passion) and tamas (ignorance) do not exist there. Veda says “rajasah para:keth, tamasah parasta:th.” That is svarga, Paramapadam!

Sri Krishna says, “Arjuna! Whoever performs their duty properly will achieve that svarga, Paramapadam… which gives eternal happiness, not the svarga which gives temporary small pleasures.” All the great souls who know tathva (truth), talk about this svarga, Paramapadam!

Sri Krishna is saying

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SLOKA WORD -

Yadruchchaya:cha upapannam svarga dva:ram apa:vrutham

SLOKA MEANING -

“This is a responsibility I assigned to you, to wage this war.”

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For Arjuna, it is waging war. For us, it is the responsibility of family or business, or any other duty given. If we fulfill this responsibility properly, without being carried away by happiness or sorrows, or aspiring for results, or succumbing to temporary happiness,

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SLOKA WORD -

svarga dva:ram apa:vrutham

SLOKA MEANING -

we will attain the place which bestows eternal happiness, Paramapadam

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This is not attainable by everyone. You, Arjuna, are fortunate to have this opportunity, so perform your duty! Sri Krishna thus encourages Arjuna and explains the second dosham (fault), called asvargyam (not attaining heaven). Jai Srimannarayana!

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