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1. Episode Title: Episode 94 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 94)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of effort in spiritual practice, Understanding the consequences of incomplete actions, Krishna's teachings on the value of every effort, The significance of commitment in spiritual endeavors, The role of a Guru in sharing knowledge

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, effort, commitment, spiritual practice, Guru, nishkama karma, consequences

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Normally, we all are opportunists. This means that if there is any opportunity for us to reap a benefit, we feel like making the most of it. If there is no benefit for us, then we feel like escaping. For everything, we expect a benefit. For every work we perform, we will certainly always receive a result. If it is a good activity, we reap good results. If it is a bad activity, we reap a bad result. There is never a case where there is no result to any work performed. Whether we want it or not, there are hundreds, thousands, and lakhs of activities being performed in our body every second. How do we carry out these activities in the correct manner? What are the few good activities which when performed maximize benefit? We must be taught about this. It should not be in such a way that you are physically toiling away with only minimum benefit. Even with minimum effort, we should reap good results. They should be permanent and profitable. If that’s the case, then we become committed to performing the work.

Sri Krishna clarifies that what He preaches in verse 2.40 is going to yield us such profit.

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SLOKA WORD -

ne:ha:bhi:krama na:so:sthi

SLOKA MEANING -

There is no loss of effort here.

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When we discover something new for the first time, it is called upajnam (acquisition of knowledge). Based on that newly acquired knowledge, if we begin work, it is called upakrama (initiation of work). If we execute the work properly, progressing it forward, it is called abhikrama (progress in work). Upakrama or abhikrama have nearly the same meaning. If we begin the activity, make some progress, and then due to our inability, it stops… Certain activities result in a loss, some result in destruction, and others yield no profit. However, the upade:sa (teaching) given by Sri Krishna gives us benefits equivalent to the effort.

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SLOKA WORD -

abhikrama na:saha na:sthi

SLOKA MEANING -

After beginning [the effort], even if you quit in the middle, there is no loss.

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Assume there is a spring which needs to be stretched from one end and hooked to another end. If you stretch it all the way and stop, it reverts back to the starting position. So, all the effort made so far was in vain. If you pull it to anywhere in the middle, it is still in vain. It is successful only if hooked at the end.

A:njane:ya Swamy (Hanuman) listened to all the previous lamentations of other monkeys. However, he didn’t say a word until Ja:mbavan spoke. The other monkeys said, “I can cross 10 yo:jana:s (a unit of distance) in this ocean, but not sure after that.” It is an ocean of 100 yo:janas. If someone is capable of only jumping 10 yo:jana:s, he will simply fall into the ocean. Someone else can jump 50, another 70, another 80, another 90, another 99. Whether someone crosses 1 yo:jana or 99 yo:jana:s, it’s the same result. What is it? Falling into the ocean and drowning. When is it considered successful? It’s successful only after having crossed 99 yo:jana:s, one crosses the 100th yo:jana ultimately reaching Lanka (the kingdom of Ravana). What’s the benefit even after reaching Lanka? The work still needs to be accomplished. After reaching, if one gets tired and sleeps, then people there will simply devour him like a snack. Just reaching there is not important. Getting the work done is important. Just getting the work done is not paramount. Returning home is also important. Only after these steps, whatever abhikrama he has done is considered successful. Otherwise, that abhikrama gets nullified. It becomes abhikrama na:saha (loss of progress). It shouldn’t happen like that, right?

Let’s say that we want to learn about God or we want to learn about karma yo:ga (the yoga of action). First of all, we learned about sa:nkya (the philosophy of knowledge). Then we are interested in learning about yo:ga. Let’s say we started learning about this yo:ga and we die, or something happened to our Guru, or there was a hurdle for completing the lesson, or time was not enough or maybe everything was halted because of COVID. Then what happens? All the effort we spent goes in vain, right? Arjuna’s question is why should we even bother putting in the effort? Why should we even put in that much effort? We can just sit idle, right?

My boy, even that effort is not going to go in vain. The benefit you reap will be equivalent to the amount of effort you put in. This needs to be conveyed to Arjuna. There are some types of work where if you don’t complete, then you will face negative consequences. With certain yajna:s (sacrifices) and ya:ga:s (rituals), if the manthra:s (sacred chants) are not chanted correctly, or incorrect material has been used, or one didn’t perform the activity correctly, or if there are mistakes in the pronunciation of the manthras… forget about achieving a positive result, there will be negative consequences and the doer will face trouble.

Once Indra performed a ya:ga, where instead of killing Indra’s enemy, Indra himself was about to be killed. So, there will be negative consequences like this. We can also recall the story of Vruthra:sura (the demon). Vruthra:sura performed penance where he wished for the birth of Indra’s enemy. However, because of incorrect pronunciation, although someone was born, he was not born as Indra’s enemy. Instead, he was born as someone who would kill Indra’s enemy, Vruthra:sura. This is a historic story mentioned in the Ve:da (sacred texts). Manthras give negative consequences when pronounced incorrectly. The same goes if the activities or material used is flawed. If something is incorrect, it is known as prathyava:ya (negative consequence).

In our history, we hear many such stories. Someone became a bramha ra:kshasi (a type of demon), a monster, for not performing ya:ga properly. In Ra:ma:nuja’s life story, Ya:davapraka:sa visited a princess who was possessed by a ra:kshasa (demon). The demon told Ya:davapraka:sa, “You don’t know who you are. You don’t know who I am, what can you do? Go, get your disciple Ra:ma:nuja.” Ya:davapraka:sa asks, “Who are you?” The ra:kshasa says, “I am a wonderful scholar who learned all the four ve:da:s. I used to perform nithya agnihothram (daily fire offerings) to the Lord via ho:ma kunda (sacred fire pit). However, because of errors in some of my rituals, I have become a monster. You don’t know who I am, and you want to chase me away! You don’t know who you are, and you are here to chase me away! How do we make you leave?” The ra:kshasa says, “Bring your disciple Ra:ma:nuja. If his feet touch me, I will leave.”

If the activities are done out of sequence, then prathyava:yam will occur. In the scripture written by Krishna D:va Ra:yalu called a:muktha ma:lyadha, there is someone named Ma:la da:sari. He was resting under a tree on his way toward Thirukkurungudi. There was a bramha ra:kshasi on the tree who came to eat him. Upon his return, that bramha ra:kshasi says, “I am an accomplished Ve:dicscholar, well-versed in all the four Ve:da:s. Because of mistakes in some of my activities during ya:ga, I have become a monster. Because I have talked to you, a great devotee, my faults are being eliminated and I am being elevated.” This is written by Krishna D:va Ra:yalu. Thus, there is a possibility for prathyava:yam to occur.

“Sri Krishna, if there are mistakes committed while conducting your activities… and in addition, we don’t know how long they will take, or how long I will live, or how long I will be able to perform, nor how long this body supports me... Henceforth, why such headaches? We can comfortably avoid performing activities or hear anything.” So, considering all that, tell me exactly what to do or I might as well just go and beg for alms,” says Arjuna.

Sri Krishna answers,

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SLOKA WORD -

ne:ha:bhi: krama na:so:sthi

SLOKA MEANING -

Once begun, as much effort as you put in, you will reap the equivalent benefit.

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[Arjuna says] “What if it is stopped halfway or what if the work is completed but the result has not yet materialized?”

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SLOKA WORD -

prathyava:yo: na vidyathe:

SLOKA MEANING -

This doesn’t result in any negative consequences.

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This knowledge which I am giving to you right now. [Arjuna says] “But I have put in minimal effort. What result do I get? Isn’t it wasted?”

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SLOKA WORD -

svalpam apyasya dharmasya thra:yathe: mahatho: bhaya:th

SLOKA MEANING -

All the activities which you perform, no matter how small or big, as much as you have accomplished, you will reap the benefit of that amount of effort.

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In the case of a spring, unless you have hooked it to the other end, there is no result. However, let’s say you need to travel one kilometer. You have taken 10 steps and you get tired. You have collapsed. The distance you traveled thus far is not wasted, right? When you want to continue, you will start from the 11th step. Let’s say you have traveled half a kilometer, lost your stamina, it got dark, and slept there itself. Will the half a kilometer distance you traveled go waste? No. When you restart your journey, you will only have half a kilometer to travel. Whatever you have already walked is neither wasted nor will you face any negative consequences. You also receive a benefit [of having traveled halfway]. For example, however much someone works, he will earn that much compensation. Additionally, the effort you have put in now will ease the path for future effort. Hence it is thra:yathe:, mahatho: bhaya:th (it will eliminate potential future flaws and reveal a good path).

Thus, Sri Krishna is motivating well. That’s why we call him a great a:charya (teacher). In general, a:cha:rya:s believe that since the Guru has given them this knowledge, they must pass it on to others, otherwise they would be committing an injustice to their own Guru.

Anilji - can you fix this? Let’s combine these two please? There is a rule in Ve:da -

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SLOKA WORD -

praya:thanthum ma: vyavachchye:thsi:hi

SLOKA MEANING -

The Wise have given to you. After that, you need to share with others.

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They [Elders] recommend choosing a capable person. So just search for someone and spread the upade:sa (teaching) because it’s necessary! There is another type of Guru. Since a person is asking them so many times and might feel bad if not given, and unable to stand his difficulties, they share [the knowledge]. There is another type, where the other person is incapable of asking. Yet pitying his miserable situation, they [Gurus] teach. Another type of Guru shares even when seekers don’t ask. Once that knowledge is with the Guru, he cannot restrain himself from sharing it. Like cows who are unable to stop themselves from giving the milk to their calves. Gurus are unable to not share their knowledge with others. They create some kind of curiosity in the other person and enlighten them. These are very generous a:charya:s. These are called krupa: ma:thra prasanna acha:ryas (teachers who are merciful). There is no other reason [for their mercy]. The recipient’s difficulty is not the reason, his asking is not the reason. It’s not because their own Gurus have instructed them to do so. How can he survive without sharing the wisdom he possesses with other people?

ji:rnamange: subha:sitam (old wisdom) This [wisdom] cannot end within him. It certainly needs to be given to someone or the other. “Sonna:l viro:damidu a:hilum solluvan ke:nmin”, says the great Namma:lawar (a saint). If I say it, you may not like it. You may face inconvenience. Nevertheless, I will surely tell you and you should surely listen. Thus, forcibly they give the knowledge for the benefit of the people. Similarly, Sri Krishna also preaches to Arjuna since this is for Arjuna’s benefit. As this is needed for humanity, which is in a similar situation as Arjuna… this knowledge is required for everyone who needs to follow their duty, the buddhi (intellect) which needs to be applied to yo:ga, the means to attain a goal, by performing nishka:ma karma (selfless action) - activities not driven by selfish desires. Since this is required by everyone, and everyone has a responsibility to know this… whether they ask or not, whether they are aware of it or not, because He knows about it, driven by the urge to share, out of profound kindness, Lord is preaching Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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