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1. Episode Title: Episode 96 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 96)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of performing one's duty without hesitation, Understanding the nature of karma and its impact on life, The relationship between the body and the soul, The significance of knowledge and action in spiritual practice, Krishna's teachings on surrender and divine grace

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Karma yoga, Arjuna, Krishna, duty, dharma, surrender, spiritual knowledge, liberation

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita clarifies how a man must channel his pravritti (activity), mentality towards his work. In chapter 2, in the context where Sri Krishna was motivating Arjuna to fulfill his duties, Sri Krishna’s main intention was to make Arjuna wage war. For Arjuna, waging war was a karma (action), an activity that had to be done. He hesitated to perform his duty. Sri Krishna’s objective was to preach that Arjuna must not hesitate to do his duty. Not just for Arjuna, whatever is one’s responsibility, there is no need to hesitate to fulfill his duty. He should do whatever is required to be done.

To do that, he needs to have an understanding of two things, specifically for Arjuna here. Firstly, he felt sad looking at his relatives and those who taught him like Bhishma, Drona, etc. They were all related through the body. However, they are the ones who committed crimes. Since there is a necessity to stop them (Kauravas) from committing more crimes, since they are the ones who instigated this war, since they have committed many crimes against them (Pandavas) in the past, Arjuna has a great opportunity now to stop them from committing more sins by waging this war initiated by them and to make sure no more harm is done to the world. Arjuna is now at the forefront of such a war. “Hence, this war is good for you, so go ahead and do it.” Sri Krishna motivates Arjuna.

This is what he (Arjuna) must do with the body. The body is an instrument. The soul got it without desiring it. Every one of us got our bodies without desiring it. It is an instrument. We should use it properly. Why should we? Karma, the result of our actions, is the reason why one gets a body. We can’t see it (karma). Yet, Shastra (scripture) says that karma drives us, so we believe it. We believe in karma because of many reasons. We see many variations in bodies and thoughts. These (varied bodies) do not result as per our desire. Yet, they are formed. Not just formed, they drive our actions. Unless there is an underlying reason, such variations wouldn’t exist. That reason is known as karma, since it makes us work.

Many significant philosophies came into existence to explain how karma is formed. Whatever samskaras (psychological imprints) are there from the activities of many past lives, will continue to be with the soul as vasanas (instincts). There are certain instruments which are always carried by him (soul). They are manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), and indriyas (senses). He (soul) roams around with these along with samskaras as they are in them. He gets a series of bodies one after another with an allocated subset of these karmas. When he uses the body to do his work, the volume of the assigned karmas will be exhausted. To experience another set of past karmas, he will enter a new body. And so on, the succession of bodies continues.

However, there is a certain greatness and uniqueness of the human body. If in this body, one can understand his past samskaras, if he can realize their origin, who is holding them there, who is turning them into activities i.e., giving him an opportunity to get a body and work accordingly… he can erase all his sanchita (accumulated) karmas. Veda (scripture) reveals for us because of who we get a body. He, who can control our samskaras is only one, Sriman Narayana. He is the One standing in front of Arjuna in the avatar (incarnation) of Sri Krishna. Also, the Lord stated this in Bhagavad Gita that He is the one who is bringing the soul in union with the body. He revealed this in the seventh chapter. He called one as apara prakriti (lower nature) and the other as para prakriti (higher nature). He named the combination of body along with indriyas (senses) as apara prakriti. He named the soul as para prakriti. Both are functioning because of Me, said the Lord.

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SLOKA WORD -

ye: ye:dam dha:ryathe jagath me para: prakruthihi

SLOKA MEANING -

The soul which is called para prakriti is also working because of Me. He makes both of them (body and soul) work, by letting the soul enter it (body).

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Since He is making them function, if we can perform saranagati (surrender) to Him, if we take His shelter and pray to Him, He can clear our entire previous stock of karmas. The opportunity to do that is available only to humans. Hence, when people speak of human birth, they say, “It is very difficult to attain.” The time which we have is also very limited. Don’t waste this opportunity. Use this properly and do saranagati, surrender to the Lord. What happens when we do saranagati? He Himself promised in the past, in many incarnations,

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SLOKA WORD -

yo:ga kshe:mam vaha:myam

SLOKA MEANING -

I will provide them whatever is required.

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Lord has declared this many times. In Bhagavad Gita also He clarifies this as we go a little further. Hence, while we are in this body, if we can surrender to the Lord, the stocked up ‘mountain-sized’ loads of karmas of many past lives,

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SLOKA WORD -

yattha: agnihi utthatha shikhaha kaksham dahathi sa:nalaha

SLOKA MEANING -

just as fire burns piles of dried sticks with the cooperation of wind,

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…similarly, God’s grace upon surrendering to Him will burn the piles of various kinds of all past karmas. What is the result? The connection which the soul has with the prakriti (nature) will be gone. One need not enter these miserable bodies again. However, one should work with the body. The jnana (knowledge) required to do the work is with jiva (soul). Jiva can’t work just with jnana by himself. He needs an instrument. That instrument is the body. A battery has power, but the battery can’t consume the power by itself. We have to connect it with something, a torchlight. If that external interface is connected, the power in the battery flows through and the instrument lights up. Similarly, jiva’s jnana functions through an instrument called body when he gets it.

Hence, while work must get done through the body, jnana must support the understanding of… “why am I doing this work, how am I doing it, and who am I doing it for?” There are two aspects in the activity which we do with the body. One is the physical activity done through the body. The second is the underlying nischayathmaka jnana (decisive knowledge) that directs it. Both knowledge and the activity need to be perfect [in their functioning]. It is essential for us to know both these aspects. Lord named the perfection in knowledge as Sankhya. The perfection related to the body is called Yoga. One is Sankhya and the other is Yoga. However, these two are not different. We have to remember this. We have to live coordinating both of them, making sure the respective naischalyam (steadiness) is intact, focusing on a single goal. That which enables us to live this way is called buddhi (intellect).

Hence, we need one kind of buddhi in Sankhya and one kind of buddhi in Yoga. This buddhi should cooperate with both. Lord stated this previously,

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SLOKA WORD -

e:sha the abhihitha sa:nkhye buddhihi

SLOKA MEANING -

This is the buddhi (intellect) that has been described in Sankhya.

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SLOKA WORD -

yo:ge thu ima:m buddhim twam srunu:

SLOKA MEANING -

Now, let’s discuss how buddhi cooperates with it when turning into activities.

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Until now, we discussed how buddhi should support Sankhya. Now, let’s discuss how buddhi cooperates with it when turning into activities. Sri Krishna conveyed to us in the past that these two are essential for us. Generally, activities done by the body are varied because the body is composed of Nature. There are many objects in Nature and also many experiences. There are people, objects, the related ruchi (interest), and vasanas (instincts) in Nature. When we work with these, we also get some temporary results. However, without focusing on temporary results, one should think of the body as an instrument to experience karmas, and should know that through experiencing karmas, release from the karmic cycle can be achieved. “I have to attain my natural state by experiencing karmas and thus becoming free from them.” This is the only determination he should have.

Once developed, whatever joys or sorrows one experiences with the activities he does with the body, should not get over-stressed. If one focuses on them, one will get attached to them. If he continues to do his work, irrespective of what he encounters, he will be freed from karmic bondage and will attain jiva’s natural state. This is in brief, the aspect we have to know. He (Sri Krishna) must explain this to Arjuna. That day, Arjuna had the karma of waging war, so he had to complete that karma. While performing that karma of waging war, he saw his guru, grandfather, maternal uncles, nephews, brothers, and others. He felt sad wondering how he could wage war with them? Irrespective of who he faces, he should do his duty. Though addressing Arjuna, Sri Krishna is teaching this to all of mankind. Whatever tasks one does should be done with this understanding. We should have a goal. We should remember that we have to be released from karmic bondage and do activities with the body.

Buddhi is of two types. One is to know that getting released from karmic bondage is the primary goal. This buddhi is needed in Sankhya. The second is that we shouldn’t hold onto whatever joys or sorrows we get when carrying out responsibilities. This determination is needed. Explaining this buddhi which encompasses both, Sri Krishna goes further explaining to us along with Arjuna. If he can perform an activity properly like this, it is called karma yoga. It is a difficult and profound word. Since we are listening to Bhagavad Gita, it is essential and beneficial to learn about such terms. Let’s learn! Jai Srimannarayana!

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