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1. Episode Title: Episode 1 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 1)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Understanding the Bhagavad Gita as a sacred scripture and its core teachings. Exploring the significance of Chapter 2 as the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita. Discussing the lineage of acharyas, particularly Yamunacharya Swami and Ramanujacharya Swami, and their contributions to understanding the Bhagavad Gita. Delving into the concept of Narayana as the ultimate truth and the path to attaining Him through sadhya bhakti, svadharma, jnana, and vairagyam. Analyzing the two types of bhakti: sadhana bhakti and sadhya bhakti, and the role of divine grace in attaining the latter.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 1, Upanishads, sastra, Yamunacharya Swami, Ramanujacharya Swami, Goshtipurna, Thirukko:ttiyur Nambi, Mahapurna, Periya Nambi, Pancha Samskara, Thirumala Nambi, Sri Sailapurna, Maladhararya, Thirumalai Andan, Nammalwar, Thiruvaimozhi, Divya Prabandhas, Githartha Sangraha, Narayana, tattva, svarupa, bhakti, sadhya bhakti, sadhana bhakti, svadharma, jnana, vairagyam, detachment, divine grace, moksha, ultimate freedom, Krishna, Arjuna, spiritual guidance, dharma, Chapter 2, essence of Gita, acharya lineage, devotion, knowledge, renunciation, refuge, liberation, Chapter 18, verse 18.66.

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord),

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SLOKA WORD -

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 -

I repeatedly bow down to Sri Rama, who removes all calamities, bestows all prosperity, and delights the entire world.

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Bhagavad Gita is eulogized as the essence of Upanishads. Bhagavad Gita is called sastra (authoritative scripture). The pushpika (concluding words) of each chapter states:

ithi sri:mad bhagavad gi:tha:su upanishathsu bramha vidya:ya:m yo:ga sa:sthre: (Thus, in the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishad, the science of Brahman, the scripture of yoga)

Sastra (authoritative scripture) is that which enjoins, revealing the knowledge that is beyond what one can learn through senses or through imagination. That is called sastra (authoritative scripture). Bhagavad Gita is also a sastra (authoritative scripture).

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SLOKA WORD -

gi:tha: sa:sthram idam punyam yah patte:th prayathah puma:n

SLOKA MEANING -

Whoever diligently studies this sacred scripture of the Gita, that person... (This is an incomplete phrase from the original text, implying a positive outcome for such a person).

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The Wise have all respected and worshiped Bhagavad Gita as a sastra (authoritative scripture). Bhagavad Gita elucidates the essence of all Upanishadic teachings. Bhagavad Gita is an upadesa (edification/teaching) given to Arjuna by Sri Krishna. Relieving Arjuna from the queries/questions he had, Sri Krishna bestowed the teaching in a way that it became a means for uplifting all humankind.

It is said that Chapter 2 is its essence, holistically. Bhagavad Gita has 18 chapters. Chapter 1 is the preface that reveals Arjuna’s sorrow. Chapter 2 is where Sri Krishna’s upadesa (teaching) begins. Chapter 2 is the root of the entire Bhagavad Gita. If one understands Chapter 2, it can be assumed that one understood the entire Bhagavad Gita holistically. As discussed earlier, the remaining 16 chapters of the scripture elaborate on certain aspects of Chapter 2.

It is said that the great Yamunacharya Swami himself is the acharya (spiritual teacher) of Ramanujacharya Swami. He graced the world in the 10th century and the early part of the 11th century. Yamunacharya Swami directed five of his disciples to bestow Ramanujacharya Swami with knowledge of five different topics. During Ramanujacharya’s lifetime, each one of them blessed him with the knowledge of each topic. Among them, there is a world-famous historic episode where Ramanujacharya gave away the mantra from a monumental temple tower top. Before doing that, he approached a guru named Goshtipurna to seek the meaning of charama sloka (the ultimate verse from Bhagavad Gita). That guru is also called Thirukko:ttiyur Nambi. In fact, Mahapurna, also known as Periya Nambi, is the one who introduced Ramanuja to Goshtipurna. Mahapurna is the one who gave pancha samskara (the five qualifications at initiation) to Ramanujacharya. He was the great one who taught him the mantra. He was the one who gave him a proper understanding of sampradaya (set of recommended Vedic practices). Sri Mahapurna gave his entire life for Ramanujacharya. He was the second acharya (spiritual teacher).

When Ramanujacharya visited Thirumala, a great acharya (spiritual teacher) named Thirumala Nambi, or Sri Sailapurna, taught him many secrets of Sri Ramayana in a series of 18 discourses. There is another acharya (spiritual teacher) named Maladhararya. He is also known by a sampradayic (traditional) name, Thirumalai Andan. He was the great acharya (spiritual teacher) who taught the summary of Nammalwar’s Thiruvaimozhi. Along with him there, an Arayar Swami taught him Divya Prabandhas. These are the five acharyas (spiritual teachers).

However, the great Yamunacharya is the one above all the five acharyas (spiritual teachers). He saw Ramanujacharya only from a distance as there was no opportunity to come face to face. Ramanujacharya’s desire to pay obeisances to Yamunacharya Swami took shape. He then traveled to Sri Rangam from Kanchipuram, but by then Yamunacharya Swami had shed the physical body. Thus, they didn’t meet in person. However, as per his instructions and intention, Ramanujacharya learned the five topics from the five acharyas (spiritual teachers). Later, he was able to widen the horizons of the sampradaya (set of recommended Vedic practices). Ramanujacharya felt that he could rise to the level he did only because of the impact of the upadesas (teachings) by Yamunacharya Swami. All the Wise also accepted the same.

Yamunacharya Swami is a great jnani (knowledgeable one). He gave an upadesa (teaching) on the summary of Bhagavad Gita in a very beautiful and lucid manner. It is called Githartha Sangraha (Summary of the Bhagavad Gita's meaning). In that, he explains the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita through single verses. There are 3 shatkas (sets of 6 chapters) in Bhagavad Gita, a total of 18 chapters. What is the essence of the first shatka (set of 6 chapters)? What is the essence of the second shatka (set of 6 chapters)? What is the essence of the third shatka (set of 6 chapters)? He explains in one verse each. Later, he explains the essence of each chapter in one verse each, i.e., 18 verses. He adds a few more verses to clarify certain aspects. This scripture is called Githardha Sangraham. This is also one of the primary scriptures composed by Yamunacharya Swami.

In it, when explaining the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita, that all-pervading tattva (truth/principle) which keeps all the universes within it is called Narayana as stated by the Vedas. He declared the goal of Bhagavad Gita is to glorify His svarupa (form/nature).

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SLOKA WORD -

na:ra:yanaha parambramha gi:tha sa:sthre: sami:rithaha

SLOKA MEANING -

Narayana, the Supreme Brahman, is declared in the scripture of the Gita.

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How can one attain that Narayana? This is the question we generally have. He answered it beautifully in one line.

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SLOKA WORD -

swadharma jna:na vaira:gya sa:dhya bhakthyai:ka go:charaha

SLOKA MEANING -

He is attainable only through sadhya bhakti (devotion attained through grace), which is achieved through svadharma (one's own duty), jnana (knowledge), and vairagyam (detachment).

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If one wants to perceive Narayana, it is possible only through bhakti (devotion). The love one has towards God is called bhakti (devotion). He can be attained only through bhakti (devotion). How is bhakti (devotion) attained? What kind of bhakti (devotion) is it? It is called sadhya bhakti (devotion attained through grace). Bhakti (devotion) is of two types. One is that which is obtained through different kinds of effort. Another is that which is graced by God Himself because of causeless mercy. The love for the Lord given by Him alone is called sadhya bhakti (devotion attained through grace). That which one attains through various kinds of means and efforts is called sadhana bhakti (devotion attained through effort).

Love for the Lord is not something we can earn or attain to bring God to us. It is something that can be attained only when He gives it to us. The Sun does not appear for us when we want. When he wants to appear for us, no one can stop him. When we want to see him, we can only see him when he appears for us. Similarly for God. Whomever He chooses to grace, He will be attained only by them.

sa:dhya bhakthi e:ka go:charaha (He is attainable only through sadhya bhakti)

Who does God grace that sadhya bhakti (devotion attained through grace) to? Can He not grace that to everyone if it is anyway causeless? If it is being graced without any reasons, can He not bless everyone with it all at once?

e:k dam karishye (all at once)

Yes, He can. However, He doesn’t do that. Why? Because there is naturally existing knowledge in each of the souls. One begins to put that knowledge into work. What work? The work is to not block [the grace of God]. That is enough. Only to state that he is not blocking [God’s grace], he needs to qualify whatever activities he does. What all are they?

First one is svadharma (one's own duty). Whatever is assigned to him, doing those activities with a feeling that they are assigned by Veda, not being arrogant thinking that he is the doer, and doing them as a service to God, then the same activities we do become dharma (righteous conduct/duty). Svadharma (one's own duty)! If one can lead life this way, the result is knowledge relating to God. As much as that knowledge grows, the interest towards everything other than God decreases by the same amount.

parama:thmani yo:rakthaha virakthaha aparama:thmani (one who is attached to the Supreme Soul is detached from others)

When a longer line is drawn next to an already existing line, it automatically ‘becomes’ shorter. Similarly, as the knowledge of God grows, the knowledge and interest levels of others go down. When the interest towards other things goes down, it is viraga (detachment), known as vairagyam (detachment). Whoever has these, i.e., whoever has put in effort to cross hurdles to get there, as He said:

pre:kshye: kancthith kada:chana (whenever I wish, I will grace someone among them)

Whomever He graces thus, sadhya bhakti (devotion attained through grace) rises in that one. That enables one to realize the tattva (truth/principle).

na:ra:yanaha param bramha (Narayana is the Supreme Brahman)

This is the comprehensive essence of Bhagavad Gita. This is what is revealed in verse 18.66. Whoever seeks my refuge...

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SLOKA WORD -

aham thva: sarva pa:pe:bhyo: mo:ksha ishya:mi

SLOKA MEANING -

I shall liberate you from all sins.

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He clarified and declared this. This is the essential core of Bhagavad Gita. One [Sri Krishna] is the giver. The other [Arjuna] is the recipient. There is an underlying process for it. To elaborate these, Bhagavad Gita has come to light in the form of these three grand shatkas (sets of 6 chapters). Let’s move ahead understanding what the three shatkas (sets of 6 chapters) are.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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