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1. Episode Title: Episode 119 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 119)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The origin and nature of desire (kama) are explored through Krishna's teachings. Krishna explains desire using three analogies: fire and smoke, mirror and dust, and embryo and womb, highlighting both internal and external sources of desire. The discourse details the means to overcome negative desires, emphasizing the importance of teachings from the wise, divine compassion, and adherence to scriptural practices. Desire is characterized as a constant, unfulfillable, and insatiable enemy. The discussion also differentiates between destructive selfish desire and beneficial divine desire (utthama kama), illustrated with examples from Ramanujacharya and Prahlada, and underscores the importance of surrendering actions to God.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 119, Desire, Kama, Origin of desire, Nature of desire, Krishna's teachings, Analogies, Fire and smoke, Mirror and dust, Embryo and womb, Internal desire, External desire, Overcoming desire, Teachings of the Wise, Divine compassion, Scriptural practices, Sasthras, Rajas, Tamas, Karma, Doership, Surrender, Nitya Vairi, Constant enemy, Dushpura, Anala, Unfulfillable desire, Insatiable desire, Manmadha, Dharma, Artha, Moksha, Purusharthas, Utthama Kama, Divine desire, Ramanujacharya, Prahlada, Alwars, Narasimha Swami, Hiranyakasipu, Upliftment, Arjuna, Jnana, Knowledge, Bhavana, Vasana Bija, Viraja, Brahma Loka

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 to Sri Rama, who removes all calamities, bestows all wealth, and delights the world.

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Where is the birthplace of desires? Do they originate in a market? Or in substances? Heart or mind? Where do they originate? Where do they exist? Where is their home? Desires are referred to as kama (desire). Where does this kama (desire) exist? What is its form? What does it do? In verse 3.38, Sri Krishna gives three examples to explain this.

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SLOKA WORD -

dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi

yattha::darso: male:na cha |

yattho:lbe:na:vrutho: garbhaha

thattha: the:ne:dam a:vrutham || 3.38

SLOKA MEANING -

As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dirt, and as an embryo is covered by the womb, so is this (knowledge) covered by desire.

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dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi (fire is covered by smoke). At one point in time, fire burns properly. However, when there is an element of water in the wood - which is the source of fire - smoke begins to emit. When there is smoke, fire won’t be visible. When smoke increases, the fire begins to subside. If we want it to burn properly, what should we do? First, [understand that] the smoke emitting originates from the wood. Or after burning for some time, the resulting ash on the surface also originates from the wood. They do not originate externally. That is because of the effect of water within. It does not let the fire burn and emit heat properly. Similarly, because of the effect of water (rajas) that dwells with us, the naturally existing fire (jnana) gets covered by the smoke (kama). This is what Sri Krishna explains.

We think it [kama] is caused due to external objects such as perceived by sight, smell, or touch of something external. However, the example God gave is dhuma (smoke). dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi (fire is covered by smoke). Let us take both the smoke or the ash that’s formed from the burning wood. He spoke of only smoke, but we must also consider the ash on the surface as well. That also does not originate from outside. Smoke is emitted from within along with fire. Ash is also formed from within. Similarly, within us too. We accumulated vasana bijas (seeds of karmic imprints) from the past. Their effect, when ‘moistened’ by rajasic (passionate) ‘water’, releases ‘smoke’ of kama (desire). The smoke of kama (desire) grows and covers the fire. It gradually also forms ash that surfaces over the fire. So, it is not something that can be cleared by itself. How do we remove them? With wind. There should be an external source, a person or wind. Then, the ash gets cleared or the moisture in the wood slowly dries and the fire starts to burn well.

Similarly, we need two things to take kama (desire) out of us. One is the upadesa (teachings) of the Wise. Second is the compassion of the Lord. They are external sources. When the wind blows, the surface air becomes clear. Due to the effect of the teachings of the Wise, there is a chance of getting rid of kama (desire) that has conquered one. By practicing God’s instructions as defined in Sasthras (scriptures), there is a chance for the moisture of the indwelling rajoguna’s (quality of passion) effect to get dried. In fact, we discussed earlier that these are inevitable as long as you are in Nature. Body is made of Nature. Because we are in the body, rajas (passion) always exist here. The cause for the formation of the body is vasana bijas (seeds of karmic imprints). We have more than enough of these. So, this is a wet wooden log. Thus, smoke is inevitable. Ash formation on the surface is also inevitable. Therefore, if we want the effect of this to be reduced… The ‘breeze’ of teachings from the Wise is essential. Sasthriya acharan (practicing what scriptures say) is also essential. Sasthras (scriptures) are God’s instructions. Obedience and humility towards God are essential. For as long as we are acting with these two, the indwelling fire burns, i.e. knowledge gradually shines. This is the first example. dhu:me:na:vriyathe: vanhihi (fire is covered by smoke). Just as a wooden log cannot be free [from smoke and ash] by itself, we also cannot be free [from inappropriate desire] by ourselves. Teachings and practicing are those which are graced by the Elders. Now for the second example...

yattha::darso: male:na cha (just as a mirror by dirt). We clean a mirror neatly. After some time, dust settles on it. We can see it on the surface of the wipe. This is the case even on a very neatly cleaned mirror. “I have shut all the doors and windows in an AC room.” “There is no way for dust to enter. We have done antibacterial procedures, etc.” “Room is pretty much clean.” Even in such places, dust will settle on the surface of the mirror. In the case of fire, smoke and ash formed from within the wood. They have come from within and over-powered the fire. However, the dust settling on the mirror is not created by the mirror. It will settle and cover the mirror. It will also gradually layer up. This is from an external source. Meaning, firstly, there is the chance of doshas (flaws) of desire developing from within. If one practices somehow and is indulged in cleaning those mistakes emerging from within… We are living in Nature, we are amidst Nature wherever we are. Any place prior to reaching river Viraja (celestial river) is all part of Nature, including Brahma Loka (the realm of Brahma). Nature too is made of rajas (passion) and tamas (ignorance). No matter what kind of a person one is, the desire rising externally will also overtake him.

A mirror must show our face properly. Meaning, knowledge must reveal the nature of all objects fully and properly. However, that is not always the case. Why is knowledge not able to make us realize that? Because there is a chance that one gets affected by the doshas (flaws) of kama (desire) from external objects as well. When? That happens only when one feels that one can control them. When one thinks that he is working for himself… When one thinks that he is the ultimate doer, and he is doing this for his own sake… This must change. A mirror cannot clear the dust that settles on it. The dust will remain there for as long as you leave it there. If it needs to be cleared, then there is a need for an external person’s effort. That’s when it can be cleaned. Similarly, if a soul is to be unaffected by the external influences of kama (desire), he will need the same two means. What are the two? One is the teachings of the Wise. Second is the sasthriya acharan (practices as instructed by scriptures). If those two are with him… yattha::darso: male:na cha (just as a mirror by dirt). The dust on the mirror gets cleaned by external means. Similarly, you can get cleansed. “The One who can cleanse is I.” In the same chapter, verse 3.30, He says… mayi sarva:ni karma:ni sannyasya adhya:thma che:thasa: (Mentally, leave the burden of your work on Me). You need not stop doing your karma (activities). He did not ask you to stop doing your work. He did not ask you to stop experiencing things. However, the doership of those experiences must not go along the lines of… “This is all my effort. This is all because of me. This is all for me.” It is this bhavana (feeling) that destroys people. Leave it on Him. Then, He can make sure the ‘mirror’ is clean. The next one…

yattho:lbe:na:vrutho: garbhaha (just as an embryo is covered by the womb). We talked about how a mirror needs an external source to be cleaned. However, the placenta or womb the baby is attached to or is in, is neither created from within nor formed by an external source. It is a natural formation. The baby cannot break it. It’s not a situation where someone can create a hole in it from outside and get the baby out. Time must bring it to a stage allowing the baby to gradually emerge. This is the case for the womb. Similarly, kama (desire) envelops the soul. We cannot expect it to be removed from within or from someone externally. It requires practice. That should be done by Me. It is a primary enemy. He says this in the next verse.

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SLOKA WORD -

a:vrutham jna:nam e:the:na

jna:ninaha nithyavairina: |

ka:ma ru:pe:na kaunthe:ya!

dushpu:re:na anale:na cha || 3.39

SLOKA MEANING -

O son of Kunti (Arjuna), knowledge is covered by this eternal enemy of the wise, in the form of desire, which is insatiable and like a fire.

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avrutham jnanam (knowledge is covered). Despite thinking that you are a very great person… ethena jnanam avrutham (knowledge is covered by this). ethena (because of this)… We see in Gita Bhashyas (commentaries on Gita), that many ‘great’ people also were confused on how to describe ethena (this). The great Ramanujacharya Swami shows wonderful scriptural agreement in Gita Bhashyam (commentary on Gita). nithya vairina: kama rupe:na (in the form of desire, the eternal enemy). Kama (desire) is nithya vairi (a constant enemy). It is not enough to think that you handled it once today and can therefore not worry about it. We cannot be assured that everything is okay because we took care of it once. It is a nithya sathru (constant enemy). When does death leave us? When does a shadow leave us? Will shadow ever leave us? No. Just like a shadow is an eternal companion, kama (desire) never leaves us. What does it do? jnanam avruthya thistathi (it covers knowledge). It attacks our jnana (knowledge). What should we do with it? It is dushpura (unfulfillable) and anala (insatiable). He gave two names to it. dushpura (unfulfillable) - it is not something that can be fulfilled. There are certain things we can give to some people and satisfy them. However, there is no way that anything can satisfy this. It is eternally [seeking more]. Kama (desire) is given another name, manmadha (one who agitates the mind). mam madhnathi (it constantly keeps pounding one like a hammer). It dwells within and makes one act. One is dushpura (unfulfillable), not fillable. It is anala (insatiable). ala (enough) means enough. anala (insatiable) means not enough. It never makes you feel enough. Even when one is full and is offered something delicious, he doesn’t refuse. He says, ‘later.’ He would say, “You should have brought it earlier.” He will ask for it to be saved for later in the evening. He won’t say ‘no’. He will not want to say ‘no’. This is the nature of kama (desire). Therefore, it is named anala (insatiable). Anala (insatiable) also means agni (fire). It also means that which is never satisfied. It cannot be ‘filled’. It is a constant enemy. Sri Krishna named it… dushpu:re:na anale:na ka:ma rupe:na kounthe:ya (O Arjuna, in the form of desire, the insatiable fire, the unfulfillable). jnanam avruthyaa thistathi (it covers knowledge).

Can we say kama (desire) is bad? It is said that there is nothing better than kama (desire). There was a great poet scholar named Amudanar, also called Srirangamrutha Kavi. Eulogizing Ramanuja, he said… semanar vidum porulum tharumamum siryanar kamamum ennivai nangenbar (Dharma (righteous living), artha (wealth), kama (desire), moksha (liberation) are the four objects of human pursuit). Are these four good objects? Yes, all four are good. However, kama (desire) is utthama purushartha (the best object of pursuit). Really? When? When it is directed towards the object that it should be directed to. nanginam kannanukke:a:madu kamam (if one develops desire towards God, there is no better human pursuit than this). aramporul vididarkennurai than (dharma is whatever practice that aligns with that [divine] desire). Artha (wealth) is the supporting means to carry on with [practices]. Moksha (liberation) is the liberation from all other things. Therefore, when kama (desire) is about God, it becomes the best object of pursuit. The other three purusharthas (objects of human pursuit) will support it. This is what Ramanujacharya graced. When kama (desire) grows, it’s called moha (fascination). When fascination intensifies, it’s called vyamoha (deep desire). Ramanujacharya has a great deep desire for something. Do you know what it is? Gold! Isn’t that unfair? He is a sannyasi (one who has renounced), one who has surrendered to the Lord in all respects. How could he have a desire for gold? It’s not the usual gold. It’s gold that won’t get destroyed in any way. He has a great deep desire for the undestroyable gold. It is also called twin-gold. What is that twin-gold? It is explained in a eulogy about Ramanujacharya as follows… yo nithyam achyutha pada:mbuja yugma rukma vya:mo:hathaha (who is always intensely desirous of the twin-gold lotus feet of the imperishable Lord). rukma (gold). yugma rukma (twin-gold). What is it? achyutha pada:mbuja (God’s lotus feet). achytha pada ambuja yugma rukma (the twin-gold lotus feet of the imperishable Lord). If it is the usual gold, there is no sowgandhya (fragrance) and sowkumarya (softness). If it is the usual lotus, there is no permanency. Gold has permanency and radiance. Lotus has beauty, softness, and fragrance. Both such sets of qualities are in those divine feet. Similarly… nithyam (forever). With no break even for half a second… That is why, like mother Lakshmi says she cannot stay away from Lord’s heart… yo nithyam achyutha pada:mbuja yugma rukma vya:mo:hathaha (who is always intensely desirous of the twin-gold lotus feet of the imperishable Lord). Because of the intense deep mad desire… tadithara:ni thruna:ya me:ne: (he considered everything else as a blade of grass). This is also kama (desire) but this is utthama kama (the best desire), the best desire. It is kama (desire) worth having. This is kama (desire) that can be desired for. So, kama (desire) is not wrong. But if it is selfish or against the Lord, it becomes destructive. We always worship alwars (devotee saints). Because the kama (desire) they have is towards the Lord. That is why we always worship them. The state is such that God also runs after their songs.

We spoke about Prahlada. He also sought God for a desire. When God appeared in Narasimha Swami avatar (incarnation) and destroyed Hiranyakasipu (a demon king)..., He asked [Prahlada] if he wanted any boon. “Swami, like some people have a craving for sensual pleasures, please grace me with such desire for your divine feet.” “I want that kama (desire).” He wished for it. He became a model for us. So, kama (desire) is good - but if directed away from God, it becomes a constant enemy. It becomes a great enemy. It can cause destruction to the lowest levels in many ways. It will not let you have any ujjivana (upliftment) in life. Hence, it is dushpura (unfulfillable). Don’t say, “I can eliminate it with my efforts. Not to worry, no need for Your help. I am not stupid. I have power and skill.” Don’t we feel like this at times? We are also like Arjuna. We all have immense belief in our strength, knowledge, power, intelligence. With this belief, if we say that we will get everything done… “That is stupidity! That won’t work.” Teaching this in verse 3.39, Sri Krishna further explains… Where does kama (desire) exist? In what ways does it intensify? He proceeds - let us also try to know.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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