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1. Episode Title: Episode 120 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 120)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Understanding the origin and nature of desire (kama) as a dangerous internal enemy. Krishna's explanation of the abodes of desire (senses, mind, intellect). Strategies and allegories for controlling the senses and overcoming desires. The importance of recognizing and resolving to eliminate negative internal forces.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 120, Kama, Desire, Indriyas, Senses, Manas, Mind, Buddhi, Intellect, Control of Senses, Dhruva, Prahlad, King Krishnadevaraya, Tenali Ramakrishna, Spiritual discipline, Self-control, Internal enemies, Rajas, Karma, Vasana bijas, Krodha, Moha, Lobha, Mada, Matsarya, Spiritual guidance, Krishna's teachings

3. Main Content:

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

Jai Srimannarayana!

Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord),

If we want crops to grow well, we carefully pluck the weeds that block their growth. To keep our home clean, we block the openings where rodents or flies enter. Sometimes plaque forms on teeth or things get stuck in between causing the mouth to smell bad. If one knows where it's emitting from exactly, one can brush properly and fix the situation. Meaning, if we know the path dirt is taking, we can get rid of it.

Where do desires in us originate? Where is the place of kama (desire)? Arjuna did not understand this. Sri Krishna said kama (desire) developing within is very dangerous. Some of it emerges from within and some of it is from outside. What emerges from within activates due to the influence of rajas (passion). It will destroy us. Even a great jnaninaha (knowledgeable person) is not spared; it doesn’t hesitate in destroying even such a person. Sri Krishna explained this in verse 3.39. He also said that it has two names, dushpura (insatiable) and anala (never satisfied).

Arjuna became a bit egoistic. “You said it [kama (desire)] burns everything. I will burn it fully. I will clean it up.” If we know our hair has become dirty, we can properly oil it and then shampoo, or use shikakai (herbal hair wash) and get it fully cleaned. Because we know where it is. Arjuna thought it was within and therefore he could clean it up. Perhaps using a brush, bath powder, shikakai, herbal powder, acid, etc… “Whatever it is, I will clean it up.”

Krishna: “At least you developed a resolve to get rid of it. That's a great thing. Most people don’t even want to get rid of it. What happens if it’s there or whichever way we are? At least, you have the desire to clean it/eliminate it because it is bad, and it is the [internal] dirt. I am happy about it. I will tell you where all it exists. Try it.”

Arjuna: “Go ahead. I will definitely try.”

This is still egoistic. “I will eliminate it. I will eliminate it with my effort.” Both of these are very wrong. What is dangerous is: ‘I’ and ‘My effort.’ It does not happen with our efforts. It is not something that can be eliminated by our efforts. It works as per His instructions. So, it is not such that we can get rid of it by ourselves.

We spoke about this earlier. If you enter a new house guarded by dogs and you try to control them, they will tear you apart. It is better if you seek the owner, he will instruct them what to do and how to behave. Similarly, the Nature you are in is akin to a new house. This body, for this soul, is a new home. We entered this. In fact, this is not our home. Our home is there (the higher abode)! We left that place and entered this place. Due to the effect of karma (actions), we got this body. We are staying here for some duration of time. There are guards for this [body] like sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), tamas (ignorance). Additionally, there is the activation and rise of previously acquired vasana bijas (seeds of karmic imprints). Accordingly, the resulting kama (desire), krodha (anger), moha (delusion), lobha (greed), mada (arrogance), matsarya (envy) are like the ambushing dogs. These are nitya shatru (constant enemies) who can attack and suppress even the highly knowledgeable people. We are living amidst them.

We have seen many stories from puranas (ancient scriptures) and itihasa (historical accounts), history of great people who had set out to achieve high goals… Performed tapas (penance), but turned away from their goals due to the effect of various desires. We rarely see those great people who have been steadfast with them. Dhruva performed penance only for 6 months before attaining darshan (vision) of Lord. The intensity of penance was so great that God graced him asking what he wanted. He started the penance for a reason. He wanted to sit in his father’s lap, but his step-mother did not let him. No matter what was required of him, he wanted to do that and committed to tapas (penance). However, as he performed the intense penance of 6 months, God appeared and asked what he wanted. Because he was wise, he said…

kacham vichinvan samavapya ratnam (though looking for a piece of glass, I found a diamond worth crores)

“I was desiring something temporal but I got You. You are the tattva (ultimate reality), who is not easily accessible even to Brahma or other great souls. I got You. What other desires [can I ask for]?!”

swamin varam nayache krutardhosmi (I have completed the work I started, I have no other desires)

But, can everyone be this way? Will others be this way? History says No. Despite Prahlad being a great devotee, when his grandson Bali Chakravarthi was in trouble, he also worked against God. This puranic (ancient scripture) reference exemplifies how kama’s (desire's) effect can destroy even the greater beings.

“Whatever it is, you developed a desire for eliminating it, recognizing that it is a bad thing. That’s good! I will explain where it exists. Try it. I must at least tell you where all it lives.”

Verse 3.40…

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SLOKA WORD -

indriya:ni mano: buddhihi asya:ddhi:shtta:nam uchyathe: |

e:thair vimo:hayathy e:shaha jna:nam a:vruthya de:hinam ||

SLOKA MEANING -

The senses, mind, and intellect are said to be its abode. Through these, it deludes the embodied soul by covering its knowledge.

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Dehinam (one with a body). This is primarily aimed at human beings. Despite dehinam (one with a body) meaning every being with a body, we will limit this for humans. Dehinam jnanam avrutya (it takes him over, preventing his knowledge from working freely). E:thair vimo:hayathi e:shaha (leads him astray). Because of whom? Indriyani manaha buddhihi (senses, mind, intellect). What are the places of abode for kama (desire)? First - the senses. Manas (mind) is the place where they reside more firmly. Buddhi (intellect) is the place where they reside even more firmly. Asya adhishtanam (these are the places of abode for kama (desire)).

In a drainage basin, let’s say dirty water is flowing through. Normal water and the dirt flow together. Filters get fitted at specific points to strain out the dirt. The solid waste gets filtered at those points and the finer water flows. Meaning, one type of waste stops at the filter. Afterwards, partly filtered water flows down. The dirty water that is flowing, one channel further down will have finer dirt. Only the visible dirt stops at the filter. The finer invisible dirt does not get stopped at the top-channel. It comes through the filter. There is more dirt at this [lower] channel and it is more dense than the previous one. Meaning, this dirt is denser. It comes down and flows through the channel below. If there is a setup that can filter it too, then another level of super-fine dirt will still pass through it and stay. Let’s say there is another filter after that [second] channel too. If we clean out any drainage, we end up cleaning the visible waste that gets stopped at the filter. We cannot see the dirt that does not get stopped at the filter. It is ‘high-power’ dirt compared to the earlier one. Whatever gets through it is even more ‘high-power’ dirt. We observe this in the drainage. It is easier to clean the top portion of the dirt. It is harder to clean the dirt at second level. It is even harder to clean the third level of dirt that passes through the second stage filter.

Similarly for kama (desire) that gets developed because of the effect of imprints of tastes for objects. Firstly, we experience them through senses. It gets attached to those. Indriyani manaha buddhihi (senses, mind, intellect). These are the places of the abode. Generally, if it is cleaning, washing, or cutting - elimination is done for what is visible. We can see the stick there. We can get a saw and cut it into pieces. We can take a piece away. Are senses visible parts? We know they are there within, and that they are working. However, not a single one is visible. How can we clean them? In what way? When? What you call an eye is a fleshy organ, but it is not chakshurindriya (the sense of sight). It is a door for the flow of chakshurindriya (the sense of sight). Ears are doors for the flow of shravanendriya (the sense of hearing). The nose is a door for the flow of ghranendriya (the sense of smell). They are all parts made of flesh, but not indriyas (senses). That is why they are divided into groups. The visible organs such as hands, legs, and tongue are all called karmendriyas (senses of action). The invisible ones are called jnanendriyas (senses of knowledge). They keep accumulating dirt inside. It gets deposited as finer aspects into deeper levels and piles up. If there is dirt on the skin, we can clean it with soap or other cleanser. If in clothes, we wash them and remove the dirt. But, are senses visible to us? How do we remove the dirt on them? What can we do to control the senses? That is the first place. They tempt one. How do we clean them? To clean them, they must be controlled in their work. How do we do that? If we see certain foods tempting the tongue, we must stop it.

Vishayan indriyaihi charan (indulging the senses with objects). He said this in Bhagavad Gita, chapter 2. If you keep satisfying the senses, they will never listen to you. You can clean them too, but there is a method prescribed for it. What should be done? Indriyaischaran vishayan charan (indulging the senses with objects). Wherever you think there is danger, pull away from it and cage the senses. Then, let them work when necessary. However, if you let them lose, they will not be in a state to listen to you.

We discussed two stories. You might remember but let’s review them again. It seems the rat population grew wildly during the reign of King Krishnadevaraya. Rats! What should we do? Can’t do much… But, he called for an inquiry and arranged a commission. How can we eliminate the rats? There are cats that eat rats. What should we do then? “Let us supply one cat for each house.” It’s a good idea. What is the plan to feed the cats? They are brought in to feed on rats - not sure why there is a need to think of nurturing them! Wise ones think that way. To feed the cats, let’s also provide a cow for milk. What about feeding the cow? There must be a farmer. What should the farmer be given to live? ~5 acres of land. If the king wishes, anything will happen. Every house received 5 acres of land. A cow. Wait! One cow is not appropriate. It should be a set of two. So, a pair of cows, and a cat. The king gave 6 months of time. In those 6 months, the cats should not die. Cows should not starve. Farmers should be safe. Deliver the report.

Six months passed. The enquiry team gathered the update. Cows have grown five-fold. Why? There is 5 acre-land being tilled. The grass is being fed to the cows. The cows are eating well. They are giving milk. The cats are being fed with milk. Cats are growing happily and properly because of being fed with the milk and curd. Rats have grown their families. 1 has become 2, 2 grew into 4, 4 became 16, 16 became 64 and so on. Except in Tenali Ramakrishna’s home. It seems his house did not have rats anymore. What did he do? Cats in his house also are fine. Cows are fine, and the farmer is fine but rats are gone. What did he did? There is not much he did. Normally, he fed cats with cow milk for a couple of days. Cats were happily roaming and were fine. They are playing with rats playing and singing together. Their programs are all going nicely. He thought, if they are all eating everything, then what is there for us? He stopped feeding the cats with milk but cats are not supposed to be starving. So, it shouldn’t look like he denied milk to it. So, what did he do? He boiled milk and brought it to high temperatures. He placed the boiling milk in front of the cat. The cat put its mouth in it and it burnt. The same thing happened the second day too. The same repeated the third day as well. On the fourth day, it got used to running away from anything white in color, out of fear. If it saw milk, it would get scared. But, it should live and so it has to eat. So, it started looking for rats. It would hunt for rats and eat them as food. So, the cat was fine. Tenali Ramakrishna and his kids were having the milk from the cows. The kids were growing healthy. “The cats were growing healthy. Because cats were eating the rats, there were no rats in our home.” “Why are you not feeding the cat with milk?” “What can I do? It is not drinking. No fault of mine because I gave milk to it. It runs away as soon as it sees milk. It is not drinking. It is running after the rats and eating them.” This is what you should do with indriyas (senses). If you give them whatever they want, why will they listen to you? So, if you regulate the way it should be, it will do what it is supposed to.

There is another similar story. How should one be regulated? A king had to select and appoint a minister. What should be the process? An elderly person from those times gave a suggestion. “Announce that whoever can feed a goat to its satisfaction, that person will be appointed as minister.” The king announced. “Not your goats, but whoever can satiate our goats will get the position.” Definitely. All the farmers took the goats from the kings’ farm and started feeding them all through the day. By evening, their tummy would grow big and they would return them back. In the evening, the elderly person who was with the king would give them green leaves and they would immediately open their mouths. They [farmers] would be sent back home saying the goats were not satisfied. They failed. The wise Tenali Ramakrishna took up the task. He took the goat in the morning hours. He didn’t tie it up on a farm. He tied it up on a hard floor. He held a hard rope in his hand. He held green leaves in another hand. He would show green leaves, then it would open its mouth. Immediately, he would hit it with the rope. He would again show the leaves to the goat. It would open wide and he would hit. He repeated the same from morning to night. The goat became accustomed to being beaten on seeing green leaves - so, it would simply jump out of fear. It’s stomach caved in. Earlier, those who took the goats, would bring them back with full stomachs. This goat, however, was returned with a swollen face and thin stomach. He returned it to the king. The King asked if the goat was fed. Tenali Ramakrishna replied “Do your test.” As the green leaves came near, the goat immediately untied itself and ran away. It came to a state where it began running away from green leaves all together. This is the state of being in control. Indriyas (senses) do not listen to you if you keep giving them what they want, just like goats. They will continue to keep seeking the same. So, control the senses. Then, give them what is necessary. That is the first process of cleaning.

However, indriyas (senses) are only the first abode for kama (desire). So, indriyas (senses) must be regulated that way. You cannot keep giving them whatever they want. They will never come into your control. Also, you can’t see them. Regardless of how wise one is… vimohayatyenam (tempts and deludes him). No doubt about that. Avrutya tishthati (does not retreat in covering his knowledge). He said indriyas (senses) are the first place of abode. He explained how to control them. One must not stop them from working. However, they must be streamlined and made to work. This is the first place [of kama (desire)]. The next dangerous [place] is manas (mind). An even more dangerous [place] is buddhi (intellect). Kama (desire) settles in those places in a subtle form. Sri Krishna introduces them and explains how to work with them, while reaching the end of chapter 3.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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