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1. Episode Title: Episode 121 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 121)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Understanding the nature of ego (Ahanka:ra) and its role in human suffering (samsa:ra). The distinction between the soul (ji:va) and the body, and the misconception of identifying with the body. The hierarchy of control: senses (indriyas), mind (manas), and intellect (buddhi). The importance of controlling the senses and mind to achieve spiritual progress. Krishna's teachings on surrendering actions to God and overcoming desire (ka:ma). The destructive nature of desire (ka:ma) on knowledge (jna:na) and discernment (vijnana). Practical advice for spiritual discipline, including fasting and cultivating patience (thithiksha).

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 121, Ahanka:ra, ego, samsa:ra, cycle of birth and death, ji:va, soul, body, indriyas, senses, manas, mind, buddhi, intellect, control, Krishna, surrender, ka:ma, desire, jna:na, knowledge, vijnana, discernment, pa:pa karmas, sinful acts, e:ka:dasi, fasting, thithiksha, tolerance, dharma, spiritual guidance, self-realization, Bhagavad thatthva, 3.30, 3.41, 3.42, Ramanujacharya, Benjamin Franklin, chariot analogy.

3. Main Content:

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

Bhagavad Gita is a great upade:sa granttha (scripture), bestowed by God to mankind. It is not only worth listening to, but also useful to practice. This is Bhagavad Gita.

An essential objective goal for humans is to develop nirahanka:ra stthithi (an egoless state). Ahanka:ra (ego) is a quality that mars humans. Ahanka:ra (ego) is named as samsa:ra (cycle of birth and death) by our sages. What does it do?

ana:thman a:thma buddhihi (identifying the non-self as the self)

asve:svamithi ya: mathihi (thinking what is not mine is mine)

It raises these two. It is a natural do:sha (problem) obtained from prakruthi (nature). Whatever is not ‘I’, it makes you feel that it is ‘you’. Whatever is not ‘mine’, you feel that it is ‘yours’. In fact, it is the ji:va (soul) who is ‘I’. But, the ji:va (soul) does not want to self-identify as ‘I’. He wants to know himself as his body.

Body is a means that he got. It is a tool. Ji:va (soul) got it as a tool to do some work. What is the work to do and how to do it? That is declared by the scriptures. He [soul] is not the tool. If we are holding a pen, we are not the pen. The pen and we are different. We should use it. We should use it appropriately. We don’t need to be suitable for it. Body is also a tool. It is a tool that is obtained to use for our purpose. To make it suitable for us, there are indriyas (senses), manas (mind) and buddhi (intellect). While carefully taking care of them, we should use the tool for our purpose. We should then enter a state where we are not forced again into this cycle of birth and death. We should act in such a way that we need not repeatedly enter the cycle of birth and death. This is the goal.

However, we don’t feel as if we need to reach there. Our natural state is jna:na (knowledge of realities). What does that jna:na (knowledge) say? “There is Someone driving me from behind the scenes.” “I belong to Him. He gave these tools to me so I can take that path.” “I must realize that I belong to Him and do everything as His service.” “As a result, I should reach there.” This is the natural jna:na (knowledge) that he has. But, that is not the jna:na (knowledge) he realizes. What jna:na (knowledge) is he understanding?

Firstly, he identifies himself as the body. Hence, he identifies as male or female. He assumes age, color, caste, race. Firstly, he is tying himself with the body.

an:thmani a:thma buddhi (identifying the non-self as the self)

The body is not the soul, it is only a tool. So, it is called ana:thma (not the soul). He is thinking ana:thma (body), as a:thma (soul). He is concluding that he is the body. He says, this [the body] is how I am.

Second is the jna:na (knowledge of realities). He does not realize that jna:na (knowledge) belongs to him. He thinks that everything related to the body is all his.

asve:svamithi ya mathihi (thinking what is not mine is mine)

Once you think ‘I am the body’, everything related to the body becomes ‘mine’. All the nutrition for the body has become for him. They became the priority for him. He started using his jna:na (knowledge) for their nourishment. Because of that, he is facing a downfall. The ana:thma nischayam (thinking that he is the body), is called samsa:ra (cycle of birth and death). It is that which needs to be shed. It’s not the body nor the surroundings that we must get rid of. The change should come in that nischayam (attitudinal decision). If that happens, the rest becomes straightened out.

But, such a difficult change! It is a very hard change. Indriyas (senses) drive you for their happiness. Manas (mind) becomes driven by indriyas (senses). Buddhi (intellect) keeps strengthening the manas (mind). We run behind everything that indriyas (senses) desire. Our mouth wants food. The eyes want a form. Ears want sounds. Body wants touch. We chase them. Indriyas (senses) are chasing them. They are also dragging the manas (mind) with them. In fact, manas (mind) is their leader. It should regulate them as a leader. It becomes delighted with them and follows them.

A ruler must make efforts to keep the residents happy. He should instruct them with what is right for them. But, in the name of democracy… If they declare that someone or some group is seeking or wanting something, and therefore they do the same… Such governments are in the state of decline. If the indwelling ji:va (soul) makes his manas (mind) run behind satisfying the indriyas (senses)… He will get stuck in a path like falling in a pit of thorns. They are the same.

Indriyas (senses) may desire various things. But, if you are wise, if you are a jna:ni (knower of truth)… You will first consider whether they are proper or not, worth it or not. If something is not worthy, you must first instruct the manas (mind). Prior to that, you must instruct the buddhi (intellect) that it is not right. If buddhi (intellect) decides, then it will control manas (mind). If manas (mind) is controlled, then it will control indriyas (senses).

Indriyas (senses) are horses. Horses are kept in control by reins. Reins are controlled by the driver. The charioteer should hold reins and steer the horses. Horses shouldn’t be running wherever they want, taking the reins along with them, followed by the driver. If they are 4 or 5 horses, he will also break into that many pieces. He will get destroyed. Or he will have to leave them all and perish. We know that.

There are five senses. Think of them as horses. There is manas (mind). Think of it as reins. There is buddhi (intellect). Think of it as the driver. We are traveling in it. What is it we should do? Whatever is our goal, the driver should steer the vehicle towards that. To enable him to steer that way, he should hold the reins accordingly in his hands. The horses should abide by the reins and run accordingly. If that happens, you will reach the planned destination. Otherwise, if they are running as per their wish… If the reins are with them, then the driver will have no set direction. You will fall somewhere. We know this.

Samsa:ra (cycle of birth and death) is that buddhi (intellect) which has no control, leading to destruction. What does it do to him?

sam (whatever are supposed to be looked at separately: horses, reins, path, etc. are seen as the same)

sar (deciding actions accordingly)

Meaning, he is getting destroyed in it. The path is good. The horses are well. The reins are strong. The driver is able. You are also good. However, the control is not with you but went under the control of horses. And thus, you will die.

Firstly, make the driver a proper one. Then, he will hold the reins properly. Then, he will steer the horses properly. The paths will be right. You will be able to reach the destination. So, you should first put indriyas (senses) in control.

Sri Krishna explains this in verse 3.41:

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SLOKA WORD -

thasma:th thvam indriya:ny a:dau

niyamya bharatharshabha! |

pa:pma:nam prajahi

jna:na vijna:na na:sanam ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, first control your senses.

Give up this sinful desire, which destroys knowledge and discernment.

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First, put indriyas (senses) in control. Don’t succumb to all their demands. Think of them as animals. Think of all the experiences as plants. You can take the horses to the plants. If these are not the right plants, and they eat them all, leaving nothing remaining… If you can first let the plant grow strong and then take the animals there, you can tie the animal to the tree. There won’t be any problem. The tree will be there as is. The animal will be there independently. You can work by yourself.

Think of jna:na (knowledge) as the growing plant. Firstly, you must put a good fence around it so the animal doesn’t reach it in its sapling phase. Let it grow. After it grows fully, then take the animal there and tie it to the tree. There will be no problem.

thasma:th thvam indriya:ny a:dau niyamya (Therefore, you must first regulate the senses)

Firstly, you must regulate the indriyas (senses). [Regulate] the body through indriyas (senses). Don’t let it go wherever it wants. Pull it back a little. When they are in a stage where they will listen to you, then you can let them travel ahead. To do so, where will you pull them to? Through whom will you pull them back? Can you even reach them? That is why, He asked you to leave that to Him.

In the same chapter, verse 3.30…

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SLOKA WORD -

mayi sarva:ni karma:ni

sannyasya…

nira:si:r nirmamo: bhu:thva:

yudhyasva vigatha jvaraha ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Surrendering all actions to Me, with your mind fixed on the Self,

free from desire and possessiveness, fight without any fever of the mind.

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Why do you bother? I will take care of them. I will put them in control. I will take care of how the reins should be. I will keep the driver in check. Don’t take the responsibility into your hands. This is what He said.

First, indriyas (senses) - and then the manas (mind). What does manas (mind) do? Manas (mind) makes resolutions. Making resolutions is its work. Logic. Manas (mind) always uses logic to make statements and conclusions. It thinks of what’s right, what’s wrong. Buddhi (intellect) makes decisions. Manas (mind) makes resolutions. Indriyas (senses) work.

If indriyas (senses) want something, you end up giving. Kids tend to run behind whatever they see on the roadside. The wise mother or father gives them what is suitable for them. They will deny what’s bad for the kids by either consoling, or caressing, etc. We know this.

When indriyas (senses) seek something, manas (mind) tends to use logic to conclude that they are fine to have. We might have heard examples from history. Despite knowing that it is not right, manas (mind) will think ‘Yes, this is fine. Let’s do it’. We think it was Benjamin Franklin who once decided to be a vegetarian. He decided he should not eat non-vegetarian food. He was traveling from Philadelphia to Florida on a ship. Back then, it would take a month or so. Considering the length of the journey, there was a need to eat during the journey. There was food arranged but whatever was suitable to him soon ran out. What can he do? They had to get food from the ocean! What do you get in the oceans? Sea food, like fish, etc. Everyone else was eating those. He decided not to eat them but how long can he starve? It had been 3 or 4 days. He was feeling hungry. What should he do? He thought, “I have to live. I need to eat to live. It’s inevitable that I will eat them.” Gradually, he brought his manas (mind) to arrive at a suitable logical conclusion, and he began to eat. This is what he wrote in his autobiography. He knew that it was not right for him. When the underlying ka:ma (desire) to eat, influenced him to act, he devised supportive logic. Meaning, he made his manas (mind) accept it. After that, the buddhi (intellect) joined in. Then, he proceeded to eat.

Even before a burglary, a thief’s manas (mind) will use some logic to decide if it is necessary or not. “Yes. God gave me a family. Because it's my primary responsibility to take care of them…” “I have to take care of my family. So, I have to do something. Now, I am presented with burglary as an option. I must do it.” He makes a resolution with his manas (mind). Then, he makes the decision with buddhi (intellect). Then, buddhi (intellect) inspires manas (mind). Manas (mind) inspires indriyas (senses). Indriyas (senses) put him into action. There is activity in all these places. Therefore, it is indriyas (senses) that are primary tools for anything. They are the ones that act. But, buddhi (intellect) and manas (mind) help them. So, it is very important that you first regulate the indriyas (senses).

thasma:th thvam indriya:ny a:dau niyamya (Therefore, you must first regulate the senses)

If you want to qualify jna:na (knowledge), you must first clean the indriyas (senses).

We are told, “You must fast on e:ka:dasi (a fasting day).” You did not have breakfast or lunch. By 3 or 4pm, you will feel starved. By evening, it will grow even more. If you can make it through the night as it’s already evening, then e:ka:dasi (fasting) is achieved. Otherwise, if he moans and complains… In fact, nothing will happen if he doesn’t eat. He won’t die. There is no loss if one fasts for a day. However, if he can cross the ‘painful’ state and remain in control, he will easily succeed. But indriyas (senses) don’t let him be that way. They will trouble him. Because there is a state that holds you during that difficult phase. We talked about this earlier. Just as Tena:li Ra:makrishna utilized the goat or cat appropriately, there must be some effort to control indriyas (senses) to some extent, restricting them from every desire. The same is described in chapter 2.

vishaya:n indriyaischaran (the senses moving among sense objects)

If manas (mind) is logically looking for ways to conclude that they are suitable and worth eating, or doing, you must show it something better.

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SLOKA WORD -

vishaya: vinivarthanthe: nira:ha:rasya

de:hinaha rasavarjam

raso:pyasya param drustva: nivarthathe:

SLOKA MEANING -

Sense objects turn away from an abstinent person,

but the taste for them remains. Even that taste departs

when one experiences the Supreme.

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Whatever pain that he is feeling will come down only when you can show something better. Drawing a longer line makes the first line shorter naturally. The same goes for a third longer line compared to the 2nd. Only if you can show the unique Bhagavad thatthva (truth of the Lord) that is different from the worldly objects… Only when you can teach them to act for the Lord… Indriyas (senses) will come under control.

We all know - we don’t like to enjoy things without those that we like. Despite liking it or despite it being right next to you, or despite you being hungry… When your child is not next to you, you will have the sahanam (patience), to wait until he arrives. It is called thithiksha (tolerance). Similarly, change the pravrutthi (tendency) of thinking that all activities are by you and for you. “This is for Krishna’s. It is meant for Him. This is because of Him.” If we can instill this bha:vana (feeling/attitude), the intense speed of the indriyas (senses) will reduce. If you practice this and improve on it gradually, the manas (mind) will come into control. You must make a firm decision on it. Thus, you are responsible to give the same to buddhi (intellect). Whatever it is, it is the indriyas (senses) that put you into action.

thasma:th thvam indriya:ny a:dau niyamya bharatharshabha! | (Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, first control your senses!)

pa:pma:nam prajahi (give up this sinful desire)

pa:pma:nam (sinful desire)

the ka:ma (desire) that makes us do all kinds of wrong things

Ka:ma (desire) causes one to perform pa:pa karmas (sinful acts) inspired by the attitude of ‘I’, ‘by me’, ‘for me’, ‘mine’.

prajahi: hi (you must definitely win over them)

What does it do?

jna:na vijna:na na:sanam (destroys knowledge and discernment)

ka:ma (desire) destroys jna:na (knowledge)

What jna:na (knowledge) does it destroy? It destroys the jna:na (knowledge) that we are different from the body.

vijna:na na:sanam (destroys discernment)

There is jna:na (knowledge) that is vivichya (which allows one to discern). Objects are not bad. Activities are not bad. The body is not bad. The ji:va (soul) is not bad. If you link them to ‘I’ instead of linking them to God, then they become bad [for you]. So, what we do should be inspired by Him, as a service to Him…

bhagavatho: bale:na (by the Lord's strength), bhagavatho: vi:rye:na (by the Lord's power)

bhagavathasthe:jasa: (by the Lord's radiance), bhagavathaskarmana: (by the Lord's action)

bhagavad karma ka:rayishye: (I will perform actions for the Lord)

When you are doing it for Him, they won’t bind you. Otherwise, they make you undertake pa:pa (sinful) acts.

vijna:na na:sanam (destroys discernment)

That is ka:ma (desire). So, learn to control indriyas (senses) first. Start the journey from there.

What is most important to regulate? It is essential to know this. Where should we start control? What is the most intense one? What is the most dangerous one? Most commentators on Gita have interpreted this incorrectly. Ramanujacharya Swami gives a wonderful explanation on verse 3.42.

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SLOKA WORD -

indriya:ni para:nya:huhu

indriye:bhyah param manaha |

manasas thu para: buddhihi

yo: buddhe:h parathasthu saha ||

SLOKA MEANING -

The senses are superior to the body;

the mind is superior to the senses;

the intellect is superior to the mind;

and that which is superior to the intellect is the Self.

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indriya:ni para:ni (senses are very powerful)

indriye:bhyah param manaha (mind is stronger than senses)

manasas thu para: buddhihi (intellect is even stronger than mind)

yo: buddhe:h parathasthu saha (that is stronger than intellect)

What is it that is stronger than buddhi (intellect)? Many of them said it is God and linked Him to it. It is ka:ma (desire) that is stronger than buddhi (intellect) and is harder to bring into control.

saha ka:maha (that is desire)

Saying so, he moves ahead. Let’s learn.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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