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1. Episode Title: Episode 16 – The effect of Prakruthi on Jiva:tma (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3, Episode 16)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Arjuna's query regarding the necessity of action and the desire for a hassle-free life. Lord Krishna's explanation of the inescapable influence of Prakriti (nature) and its three Gunas (qualities) on all beings. The impossibility for any living being to remain inactive, even for a moment, due to the compelling force of nature. The role of Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance) in generating attraction (raga) and repulsion (dvesha), which drive all actions, both righteous and sinful. The concept that actions are not entirely within one's control, as Prakriti compels beings to act. The importance of performing one's prescribed duties (dharma) as a means to please the Lord, cleanse past sins, and achieve a purified mind. The unique ability of Lord Narayana to liberate individuals from the bondage of karma and the necessity of following His guidance. The analogy of dreams to illustrate the lack of control over internal processes and the mind's activities. The path to achieving a cleansed inner instrument (anthahkarana) and an established state of knowledge (jnana nishtta) through divine grace and adherence to duty.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 16, Prakriti, Jivatma, Soul, Nature, Gunas, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, Karma, Action, Inaction, Duty, Dharma, Raga, Dvesha, Attraction, Repulsion, Divine Grace, Narayana, Lord Krishna, Arjuna, Mind, Consciousness, Samskaras, Dreams, Liberation, Sin, Punya Karma, Papa Karma, Anthahkarana, Jnana Nishtta, Bhagavan, Brahma, Pitr Loka, Viswam, Bhu:thas, Avashah Karma, Akarmakruth, Ka:ryathe:hi, Sarvah, Prakruthijaihi Gunaihi, Nithya Karma, Naimittika Karma, Kamya Karma, Bhagavadbandhus, Vande Guru Paramparam

3. Main Content:

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

Based on what Lord Sri Krishna explained earlier, Arjuna raised a doubt in Bhagavad Gita’s chapter 3, verse 4.

The activity one does, whether it is of type nithya (daily), naimittika (occasional), or ka:mya (desire-driven), and experiencing fruits or hardships resulting from that work, by striving to accomplish it or not quitting halfway, why is there a need to do any work at all? Why can’t one be hassle-free and live peacefully somewhere? “I won’t do anything. I won’t act for any reason,” stated Arjuna.

Sri Krishna began to respond in verse 5.

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SLOKA WORD -

na hi kaschith kshanam api

ja:thu thishttathy akarmakruth |

ka:ryathe::hi avasah karma

sarvah prakruthijair gunaihi || BG 3.5

SLOKA MEANING -

No one can remain without performing action even for a moment; for everyone is helplessly made to act by the qualities born of nature.

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The ji:va (soul) is in the middle with prakruthi (nature) and parama:tma (God) on either side. Prakruthi (nature) is quite enticing, and the ji:va (soul) is with it. Parama:tma (God) is observing him from the other side. Because the ji:va (soul) is engaged with prakruthi (nature), he will perceive various materialistic experiences. It is therefore foolish to assume that he will not be influenced by prakruthi (nature).

How does it sound if someone desires not to get wet while sitting waist-deep in water? How ignorant one looks, if they are immersed in neck-deep water but does not want the water to touch or trouble him? Is it smart to expect not getting smeared with grease while sitting on an oil-covered floor? No. How can one expect not to taste sand if he is eating food in a sandy area? If he is sitting on sand, the food leaf is resting on the sand, food is served on it and consumed, then how can one expect not to taste sand? Is it possible?

You are in prakruthi (nature). It is comprised of three gunas (qualities) together:

satthva (goodness), exhibited in one’s constructive nature

rajas (passion), exhibited in one’s active and passionate nature

thamas (ignorance), exhibited in one’s inactive and destructive nature

These cause ra:ga (attraction) and dve:sha (repulsion). Due to these ra:ga (attraction) and dve:sha (repulsion), one indulges in various righteous activities and sinful activities, punya karma (righteous actions) and pa:pa karma (sinful actions). The senses move about and act accordingly. You are ‘sitting’ inside these. How ignorant is it to say that I am not related to or I should not be affected by any of these!

na hi kaschith kshanam api

ja:thu thishttathy akarmakruth |

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kaschith (everyone)

Sri Krishna has not exempted anyone! Anyone that is born into this prakruthi (nature), kshanam api (even for a moment), one cannot stay idle, even for a sub-second, even for the duration of a blink.

ja:thu thishttathy (always remains)

ja:thu (always)

In measuring time, imagine the biggest unit there is. A sub-second is the smallest unit. We know that a few sub-seconds add up to a second, a few seconds to minutes, a few minutes add up to an hour, a few hours to a day, a few days to a month, a few months to a year. 4.32 million such years become chaturyuga (4 eons). 1000 such chaturyugas equate to the daytime of Lord Brahma. Another 1000 chaturyugas equate to His nighttime. So, 2000 chaturyugas equal to His full day. Such days make up Brahma’s one year. Those superior to him have their own one-year unit of time in their timeline called para ka:lam (supreme time). The units of time thus range from our sub-second to this paraka:lam (supreme time). Various types of ji:va:s (souls) exist that experience each of these units. There are small microorganisms that have a lifespan in sub-seconds. We humans can experience only seconds, hours, months, and years. Olympic athletes’ performance may be tracked to 100th or 1000th of a second and are rewarded first or second prize accordingly. That is, humans are capable of subdividing time to that level. There may be others such as microorganisms that can experience further smaller units of time. On the other hand, our one year apparently would equate to a day for those in the pitr lo:ka (the world of ancestors). There are those in the realms above them, and there are realms even further above. We alluded earlier that 1000 chaturyuga:s (eons) and another 1000 would equate to a day for Lord Brahma. Such a timeline works for his realm. The timeline here works for our level. The ji:vas (souls) exist from this realm to that. Viswam (the universe) we refer to encompasses all these realms. All of them together are categorized as bhu:thas (beings). No one from these can exist without doing some activity at every moment.

na hi kaschith kshanam api

ja:thu thishttathy akarmakruth |

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akarmakruth (it is impossible to exist without doing some activity)

Do you say that everyone does an activity constantly?

ka:ryathe::hi (work continues to get done)

Can anyone be adamant and not do any activity?

avasah karma (it is not in their control)

As alluded to earlier, imagine someone sitting in the path of a large water flow. If he decides not to move, the next big wave can easily blow him off from his place. Some time ago, there were floods [in a city]. So, many parked and secured their cars inside their houses. But the powerful flow of the flooding water swept away the cars, carried them, rammed them into each other, and carried other cars off as well. We’re not sure where they eventually ended up. Primarily, the cars were neither in their own control nor was anyone driving them. The way they got carried away by the water flow, every life or being in this universe, ka:ryathe::hi avasah karma (work will continue to happen through them).

Is everyone doing an activity constantly?

sarvah (Yes, everyone!)

Why do you say so?

prakruthijaihi gunaihi (due to the effect of qualities of rajas and thamas formed by prakruthi).

In Chapter 18, Sri Krishna mentions this. After listening to the entire Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna says, ‘I won’t do it. I will control prakruthi (nature).’ Lord smiled and said, ‘O! fool, you may be determined about not waging war, prakruthihi tva:m niyo:kshathi (this nature will entice you into doing an activity and you will not be able to resist). You may be forced to wage war then. Be aware! If you follow now, I’ll be next to you for support and help you. Else I will step aside, and the flow of prakruthi (nature) will make you tread in whichever direction it chooses. Then neither you nor anyone else can determine the path it takes.’

Why is it so? Only one is able to release us from the bondages of karma (actions) – that is Na:ra:yana (Lord Narayana). Only Bhagava:n (the Lord) is capable. Whoever has His grace, eme:va e:shaha vrunite: the:na labhyaha (He makes it suitable only for those who He is pleased with but not for others). How is one able to please Him? Simply follow His directions. What did He ask of us? As He sent us forth, He assigned certain duties to everyone.

[For example] A government officer or any employee is sent to another office on a business trip. He will then be expected to accomplish the assigned work in the duration of his visit. If he is unable to complete it in that duration, he can request for an extension of time. If given 3 days, he could ask for it to be extended by another day or two. But the work he was sent to that office to accomplish must be completed. Otherwise, he will not be able to keep that job! This body is like our job. We are situated here [in this body] and working in this job. Since He gave this ‘job’ to us, we should ‘work’ as He pleases. Is it right if you say that you will ‘work’ as per your whims and desires? He [The Lord] will regulate ra:ga (attraction) and dve:sha (repulsion) in us, only when we ‘work’ as per His pleasing. Only when they are regulated, the gunas (qualities) – satthva (goodness), rajas (passion), and thamas (ignorance) – can be controlled. He will reduce rajas (passion) and thamas (ignorance), and ensure the growth of satthva (goodness). Your senses will be in your control, and your activities will go on properly. You do not need to wrestle with them. Let the senses do what they are accustomed to. However, you need to alter the attitude behind the activity.

… prakruthijaihi gunaihi (due to the qualities born of nature) …

sarvah (everyone) .. avasah (helplessly)…

…kriyathe: (is done) …ka:ryathe: (is caused to be done) …

Therefore, prakruthi (nature) affects everyone. It is the most powerful entity of all. ‘I made the prakruthi (nature) compatible to you and merged it with your body. Along with that, you were assigned some duties as well. [With this body] You now have an opportunity to cleanse all your prior sins, by acting on this duty. Isn’t this a nice thing? Where is the need to give up your prescribed duty? How can you claim to give this up and sit idle? You cannot do that either. Following up on the prescribed duty yields a favorable outcome. If you go against it, you will end up facing hard challenges.’

He [Sri Krishna] clarified this concept in the 5th verse. By following His guidance, we get liberated from the heap of sins. Then, the anthahkarana (inner instrument) or manas (mind) becomes nirmala (cleansed of ‘dirt’). A nirmala anthahkarana (cleansed inner instrument) leads to jna:na nishtta (an assimilated and established state of knowledge) that is needed to be attained. We will then achieve that which we are supposed to.

As alluded to earlier, we carry samska:ras (impressions) from prior lives. Those, however, cannot be managed by us. We cannot predict when any of those will arise to influence us. We can learn the dynamics of dreams to understand them. We do not need a sa:sthra (scripture) or veda:ntam (Vedanta philosophy) to know about them. While sleeping at night, do we get dreams that we wish for? No, we do not. If one wishes for a dream where he feasts on a sumptuous meal, he might instead get a dream where he is suffering from starvation. If he sleeps wishing for happy dreams, he might have a nightmare where he is lost in a forest with a tiger or a wolf or a lion chasing him, or where he is drowning in a deluge. Do we get dreams as per our wishes? On the contrary, we get quite the opposite. It means, we do not have control on the aspect of dreams in our lives. We are explaining [the topic of dreams] for that reason. We do not have control on whatever is going on inside [the body]. On the external body, however, we have limited authority. We can make it adhere to our wish to some extent. However, activities by mind are not something we can dictate. They follow His order. We will be in a comfortable state if following the path He advises.

Chapter 3, verses 6 and 7 clarify this concept for us. Let us chant those slo:kas (verses) and try to listen attentively to Sri Krishna’s divine message.

Vande: guru parampara:m (I bow to the lineage of teachers)

Jai Srimannarayana!

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