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1. Episode Title: Episode 20 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 20): The Five Great Yajnas

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The discourse emphasizes the importance of ethical earnings and dedicating one's life as an offering to God. It provides a detailed explanation of the Pancha Maha Yajnas, or five great acts of worship, which include Nru Yajna (service to humans), Bhuta Yajna (service to all beings and nature), Pitru Yajna (service to ancestors), Deva Yajna (service to nature and its powers), and Brahma Yajna (study of scriptures and understanding divine reality). The teachings highlight how these acts transform daily life into worship when performed with the right understanding and intention. The discussion also touches upon the connection between pure food, a pure mind, focused thoughts, and ultimate liberation, concluding with the importance of Karma Yoga and avoiding inaction.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 20, Pancha Maha Yajnas, Five Great Yajnas, Nru Yajna, Bhuta Yajna, Pitru Yajna, Deva Yajna, Brahma Yajna, ethical earnings, service to God, dharma, karma yoga, consciousness, mind purity, liberation, Krishna, Arjuna, scriptures, nature, ancestors, beings, humans, daiva, Brahma tattva, atma, Paramatma, sattva, rajas, tamas, a:ha:ra suddhau satthva suddhi hi, dhruva smruti hi, sarva grandhina:m vipra mokshaha smruti lambe, vyavasayatmika buddhireka, sharira yatrapi cha te na prasiddhyet akarmanaha, worship, spiritual guidance, righteous living, environmental care, family values, self-realization.

3. Main Content:

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

As long as we live, we should spend wealth that is earned ethically. The goal for every human is to recognize that such earnings are God-given, and to live a life exclusively as an offering to Him. Bhagavad Gita enlightens us on this. One should not just earn by any means. The earnings must be legal and obtained by rightful means.

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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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Because only when such earnings are spent on activities to benefit oneself, his family, the society he lives in, or to offer to God, then every act he does becomes a yajna (act of worship). Such acts are categorized into 5 types. They are named as pancha maha yajnas (the five great acts of worship). The journey of life must be undertaken only to perform these five great yajnas. [Some might ask] ‘How can I manage to do these so-called pancha maha yajnas (five great acts of worship)?’ [The answer would be] ‘Whatever you do, perform it as a yajna (act of worship)!’

What are these pancha maha yajnas (five great acts of worship)? The first is Brahma yajna (worship of the divine reality). Second is Deva yajna (worship of nature/deities). Third is Pitru yajna (worship of ancestors). Fourth is Bhuta yajna (worship of all beings). Fifth is Nru yajna (worship of humans). These are the names of five yajnas (acts of worship). What do they entail?

Nru yajna (worship of humans) means providing for the needs of humans who we engage with. So simple! Anyone can do this, isn’t it? Recently when we were hit with Covid, many had to migrate from their current living areas. Several facilities were opened at many places to provide food for them. They served thousands of people then. This is an act of Nru yajna (act of worship for humans). It is an act of identifying the needy and providing food to serve them. What is this called? If one does it with a feeling that he is the reason for others’ welfare or that he is superior to the needy, it is called something else. However, if one recognizes that God has given this opportunity to serve others, and the act is done to please God who is also an indweller of the needy, then such an act becomes a Nru yajna (act of worship for humans). He is merely serving food to others. But if it is done with the right knowledge, then it is called a yajna (act of worship) and it becomes Nru yajna (act of worship for humans). It is when dealing with humans.

However, are humans the only beings in our universe? ‘Serve all beings as service to God’. Isn’t it? One must serve all beings as service to Madhava (the compassionate Lord). All the beings that exist around us are called Bhutas (beings) – such as flies, ants, various micro-organisms. They support humans in their ‘life journey’ and help us in many ways. We get excited when we see a house-fly, ignoring its function, why and how. When we see them fly around in our home, we feel like we are home! When ants are roaming around, we feel our close friends are nearby. Mosquitoes do bite us occasionally. But they are also part of our life experience! Why did God create them? Maybe He did it, so that they become part of lizards’ food cycle. There are many beings around us. Those that move about and those that do not, such as trees and bushes. All of them are called Bhutas (beings). They all must survive well. Some might say, ‘How can we live if ants, flies, mosquitoes over-populate?’ No, no! It does not mean that. They must live within their scope.

Someone recently asked us, ‘Swamiji! You are calling this a service to God. It means we have to serve all. Then, why do we put birds in a cage?’ The devotee’s kids are holding their pet birds and animals in cages. However their mother does not like it. So, she wrote us a letter. “My kids are not heeding the advice of not restricting their pet animals. They say, ‘Even this should be treated as a service to God?’. What should I say?” That is true. If someone says, ‘Everything is a service to God and God is there even in a Lion’ and then bring a lion home, you will not survive even a day. Similarly, by saying ‘Service to God’ if you get a venomous snake to sleep with you, it will bite you and go on its way. Serving Bhutas (all beings) means letting them live in their preferred and conducive environments and serving them to facilitate their existence. Knowing that they are also an integral part of God’s creation and helping in their existence, then that indicates a true service to God. That becomes service to Madhava (the compassionate Lord)! As an example, let the captive snake survive in its basket or in its snake mound. Let a lion roam freely in the forest or allow it to survive in an enclosed habitat. If you can aid a lion in roaming in those spaces undisturbed, then you would have served God. Then you would have served many beings. You would not be serving God if you captured these beings, making them serve you or torturing them. In the case of pet dogs, it’s ideal if they stay in their places in your home. Instead, if you feed the dog from your plate while you eat or you eat from the same animal’s plate that you feed him from, this is not good! Because that is not even hygienic! It’s a health hazard. Due to the effect of Covid, everyone understands it well now. Whether it be animals, birds, micro-organisms, water or something else, everything in this world has a place and exists in an order. If you adhere to the rules of their specific existence and serve them as a service to God, then that is called Bhuta yajna (worship of all beings)! This can be done, right? It is not a bad thing either. These are Nru yajna (worship of humans), Bhuta yajna (worship of all beings).

There’s also Pitru yajna (worship of ancestors). Your mother and father are the reason for your existence in this world. Your mother has her own mother and father. As does your father. There is a long lineage of forefathers prior to you. It is only because of their grace that you exist today with this form and are able to live in this body. Think about the kind of favor they had bestowed upon you. Whether you get to see them or not, you must not do anything that displeases them. It means, serve your surviving parents and their elders well in a way that pleases them. In case they have expired, perform activities on their behalf that would bestow them noble realms. If you believe in them, perform rites for them as prescribed in scriptures. We call this as Pitru yajna (worship of ancestors). Ensure there is continued lineage to do these. This is called Pitru yajna (worship of ancestors).

Then, we have Deva yajna (worship of nature/deities). When we say devatas or Deva (nature's powers or deities), it refers to the Nature around us. Nature that dons a supporting role for all the beings is known as Deva (nature's powers or deities). It has varied powers. It can give heat, cold, wind, wetness, moisture, etc. These are named Deva shaktis (powers of Nature). You must take care so that these powers of Nature exist properly. Recently many concrete jungles are being formed. Those areas lack dampness all around. Nature is devoid of moisture there. Existing wetlands are getting flattened. This is a type of harm done to devatas (nature's powers or deities). We observe during severe thunderstorms how villages get inundated. It is not that the villages received large inflows of water. In fact, the villages were built where a flow of water exists. Regardless of why those villages were built there, whether by a politician to further his fame, or middle-men misusing his name to occupy that area to build, that is secondary. By occupying an area which existed to support water, the constructed houses got submerged when there was a water inflow. Then, the citizens complain to the Governing authority. Do not harm nature’s water, land, wind, and light entities. Do not trouble the entities that can affect the climate. Our scientists also reiterate the same! They issued warnings that if the current climate change crisis continues, life for humans will become unbearable by 2050. You must show sufficient interest in safeguarding nature. This is called Deva yajna (worship of nature/deities).

The fifth is called Brahma yajna (worship of the divine reality). There is a divine energy inside all beings that sustains life. It is called Brahma or Para Brahma (divine energy or supreme divine reality)! It is immaterial whether you can physically see it or not. No one needs to wonder, whether atheist or otherwise, if there exists a hidden force behind life. All must believe in that force’s existence. Because without any effort on our part, we leave our body (at death). Many other things happen without our effort. He is able to do many other things. Therefore, there is something called daiva (God). It is Brahma tattva (the reality of God). There are scriptures which expound on His impact. There are Vedas (scriptures) and other scriptures that you should study well. Help others read them, encourage them and try to decipher what has been written. Do not simply reject them. Rather, try to grasp their embedded meaning. Firstly, study everything, then if you are able to condemn it, that's when one can 'discuss it'. Then that is called Brahma yajna (worship of the divine reality).

So the five yajnas (acts of worship) are Brahma yajna (worship of the divine reality), Deva yajna (worship of nature/deities), Pitru yajna (worship of ancestors), Bhuta yajna (worship of all beings) and Nru yajna (worship of humans). This life of ours is meant to perform these five yajnas (acts of worship). These have to be carried out as long as we live. Isn’t it? One must think about it. The name ‘Pancha maha yajnas (five great acts of worship)’ can be overwhelming and performing them might seem like an arduous task. However, like we discussed, it simply recommends one to treat others, surrounding Nature, and other beings well. We must treat this Nature well. Also live your life in accordance with and with a belief that an invisible God exists. How can anyone say no to this? If so, how can he be considered human? One must exist only to carry out this pancha maha yajnas (five great acts of worship). That life must be lived while earning in fair means.

Sattva (mind), here, means manasu (mind). Such food becomes proper food. When it is consumed, the mind becomes pure. Faults in the mind – raga and dvesha (attachment and anger) – get eliminated. This leads to an enhanced sattva (goodness/purity), suppressing rajas (greed/passion) and tamas (ignorance/darkness).

a:ha:ra suddhau satthva suddhi hi (purity of food leads to purity of mind)

if mind becomes pure…

dhruva smruti hi (it leads to focused thoughts)

Work completes successfully with such focused thoughts –

sarva grandhina:m vipra mokshaha smruti lambe (liberation from all knots of karma through focused memory)

sarva grandhina:m vipra mokshaha (liberation from all knots of karma)

If one can act with focused thoughts such that there is…

vyavasayatmika buddhireka (undisturbed focused mind on the set goal)

He will be liberated from karmic bondage. He will then naturally be wise with knowledge of atma (soul) and knowledge of Paramatma (God). Therefore,

sharira yatrapi cha te na prasiddhyet akarmanaha (even your bodily journey would not be possible without action)

It is wrong to stop doing Karma Yoga (path of action), stop doing any activity, and shut everything off in life. Your journey of life and your duty of fulfilling pancha maha yajnas (five great acts of worship) will be affected as well. You will then become a culprit and a sinner. Don’t quit the rather simple, easy, healthy, and that which helps you attain a higher state. If you resort to those that are unnecessary, unfamiliar, and something new, then you are simply inviting trouble. Therefore, Karma Yoga (path of action) is always beneficial to follow. Sri Krishna thus explained to Arjuna in verse 8 and gradually moved further with His guidance.

Vande guru paramparam (I bow to the lineage of teachers)

Jai Srimannarayana!

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