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1. Episode Title: Episode 22 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 22) – Will Karma Yoga Burn Present and Past Karmas? One Simple Step, Two Great Benefits

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The discourse explores the nature of karma, differentiating between prarabdha, sanchita, and agami karmas. It emphasizes the importance of consistent effort and patience in spiritual practice, likening it to nurturing a plant or teaching a child. The body is presented as a crucial tool for spiritual progress and attaining liberation (moksham). Krishna's teachings on Karma Yoga are highlighted as a powerful means to eradicate all forms of karmic bondage, leading to a smooth life journey. The vastness of accumulated karma from past lives is discussed, along with the method of its annihilation through dedicated action.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 22, Karma Yoga, Karma, Prarabdha Karma, Sanchita Karma, Agami Karma, Moksham, Liberation, Spiritual practice, Sattvic, Rajasic, Tamasic, Wisdom, Jnana, Krishna, Arjuna, Kuresa, Bhagavad Ramanujacharya, Upanishad, Thiruppavai, Goda Devi, Dharma, Bondage, Body, Soul, Yama, Chitragupta, iCloud, Brahma Kalpa, Chathuryuga, Effort, Patience, Spiritual journey, Action, Duty, Self-realization, Enlightenment, Sin, Purity, Attachment, Aversion.

3. Main Content:

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

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

Some activities yield results quickly, while others take time. The duration of time depends on the type of activity and the desired result. When a seed is sown in earth, it won’t immediately produce flowers followed by fruits. Wanting to pluck those fruits immediately after sowing the seed is impractical. Also, one must carefully protect it from any harm, until it is time for the tree to yield results.

[Some might say] ‘Why should we toil now for something that gives fruit 4 or 5 years later?’ If you don’t take care of it now, then it will not bear fruit later. ‘There is no benefit now for the hard work being put in. Isn’t it?’ Yet, you still need to work hard! The tree must be carefully fenced, watered, protected from every possible harm and allowed to grow. If a protective environment is set up, then it will yield the flowers or fruit it is supposed to at the right time.

There are certain plants such as bramha kamalam… When the seed is sown, it won’t sprout for several years. Even more… there are certain lotus plants, another type, not bramha kamalam… when sown, it takes approximately 13 years for it to yield flowers! Even after 13 years, it only flowers between 3am and 5am. Within that time, the flowers bloom and even wither by 5 am! It flourishes only in that duration! If we desire to witness it, we must take care of that plant carefully and nurture it all the prior years! We cannot look down on it because it is not giving results, nor ignore it. It should be guarded against any chance of animal exposure. Only then, that result can be witnessed.

If you would like a baby to be able to write fluently when he is born… As soon as he is born, if you hand a slate and chalk and ask him, ‘Hey! Write now!’ What will he write? He cannot write anything. Initially, he must be taught alphabets such as A, Aa, E, Ee, either in sand, on ground or on a slate or book. He must be taught to write there. It must be ensured that his hand can work to write and practice it. After this is accomplished, sometime later in grade school when he moves to either 7th or 9th or even higher grades… he will be able to write anything comfortably, even with his eyes closed. To gain this capability, he must strive hard during the early years. Isn’t it?

The body is given as a tool to practice something. To be able to undertake our designated practice, the soul is provided with this amazing tool. We must use this tool carefully. What will the result be then? It will help eradicate the bondage from karma and attain moksham (liberation). We alluded to moksham (liberation) earlier, as… ‘soul attaining the pinnacle by overcoming obstacles.’ This everyone desires. That is, to attain the last stage of joy! This we all desire. To reach there, we use this [body] as a tool. As a tool, it must be utilized carefully. As soon as we gain conscience, we should not demand, ‘when will we get it [moksham (liberation)]?’

For a baby you cannot feed crunchy snacks or spicy food as soon as he starts on solid foods. He will get sick otherwise. He must be allowed to incrementally progress to other items, then this tool he used called ‘food consumption’.... will help him build a strong body eventually. Similarly, as long as the body exists it should be used as a tool to do its duty properly with dedication. If it is used properly, then every activity will turn into an amazing tool to remove the obstacle of karma bondage. For how long? That is impossible to predict. Because our activity needs to be good.

After a seed is sown, if we desire the plant to grow well… then it must receive sufficient water, with clean air and adequate sunlight and be sown in a fertile environment. If these help, then the seed will have a chance to take the shape of a plant and later as a tree. Similarly, in the case of a body one of the first activities it needs to do is select to consume only sattvic (pure) food. Also, to set aside rajasic (passionate), and tamasic (ignorant) activities. When we lean towards sattvic (pure) activities, the characteristics such as raga (attachment), and dvesha (aversion), that arise from rajasic (passionate) and tamasic (ignorant) natures, will subside. Once they subside and as we do sattvic (pure) activities our wisdom grows.

sathva:th sanja:yathe: jna:nam (from goodness, knowledge arises)

Right knowledge leads to right thoughts and they lead to right acts. Right acts are those that do not burden us further.

thath karma yanna bandha:ya: (that action which does not bind)

We must do an activity that erases our bondage. If new bondages result due to current acts… If a current activity ends up requiring to lift 10 additional kgs, then that is not [good] work. Sage Parasara told us,

yanna bandha:ya: … thath karma! (that which does not bind… that is action!)

Therefore, the acts we do, must result in enhancing sattva (goodness)! Until then, our life journey must progress smoothly.

In BG 3.8, Sri Krishna explains why one must do karma yoga (path of action)…

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SLOKA WORD -

sari:ra ya:thra:pi chathe:

na prasidhye:th akarmanaha ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Even the journey of your body would not be possible without action.

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Just like how our acts done by this present body should not yield any karmic bondage… there is onus on us to not add to the burden either from past lives’ bondage or being accrued for the future. This body is the tool to protect from these as well. It therefore must be properly used, until the end of its life span. As we use it, we cannot specifically assess the timeframe from which the accumulated karmas will be erased. We do not know how long [the body] needs to be used. However, we must use it in the present human life with its available limited resources.

The karma burned by a body in this life is called prarabdha (karma being experienced now). We are experiencing it now. However, this only amounts to a tiny amount of the whole, which is allocated to the present body. We still do not know how much more karma there is. That remaining karma is called sanchita (accumulated karma). This is manifold. Imagine a snowy glacier, only its small peak is visible in the sea but is actually quite large under the water surface. That peak is referred to as ‘tip of the iceberg’. Similarly, the amount of karma experienced through this body is like only the smallest tip of an iceberg. This body is attained with the allocation of only a tiny amount of karma. The body comes with all the responsibilities. If we use this body properly now, then it implies we are disposing of the top part of karma allocated. However, there is a lot more karma left in your account. Even if you exhaust this body in the process of disposing of the allocated portion of karma, … there is no doubt that you need another body to dispose of another small portion. When that is done, you need one more body and so on. There is plenty of stock left in its account! All of that remaining karma is called sanchita (accumulated karma). We do not know how much is left! We even do not know how many lives we need to burn it all!

One of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya’s disciples is the great Kuresa. He mentioned this in a sthothra (celebratory praise).

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SLOKA WORD -

yad bramha kalpa niyuta:nyanubhave:th pyanasyam

thath kilbisham srujathe: jantu riha kshana:rthe:

SLOKA MEANING -

The sin that a living being creates in half a minute here is such that it cannot be exhausted even by experiencing it for millions of Brahma Kalpas.

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He explains about the amount of karma we accrue even in half a minute is enough for a number of lives. You might remember we spoke about chathuryuga (four yugas) earlier. According to our timeline, a chathuryuga (four yugas) comprises 43,20,000 human years! A day in Brahma’s life equates to 2,000 such chathuryugas (four yugas). Imagine a year in His timeline. Assume his life span is approx 1000 of His years, a Kalpa in His timeline. Kuresa says that many such Brahma Kalpas are still not enough time to burn the karma accumulated in half a minute! Why did He speak of this? To give us an idea of the amount of karma we have accumulated from past lives. We do not know the accumulated quantity nor the place where it’s stored.

Generally speaking, if anything is in excess supply, it would appear somewhere. However, lately, there is a new technology available in the field of computers. If you have several terabytes or petabytes of content, you do not need to store it on your computer. Instead, you can safely store it in ‘the cloud’. No one knows how much it will allow, however, it is saved there reliably. It is called iCloud. Our accrued karmas, designated as sanchitas (accumulated karmas), are stored somewhere safely on its iCloud! In Lord Yama’s Naraka Lokam (netherworld), Chitragupta oversees this department, with countless assistants. Overall, it is said that everyone’s karma is properly maintained in their account over there. That karma is known as sanchita (accumulated karma).

Apart from that, karma done in this life now in the present body will act like seeds sown for the future! We are preparing now so there is enough for the next lives! They are ready. Such karma is called agami karma (future karma). We do not know how long that karma will last. Therefore, there are sanchita karmas (accumulated karmas) on one side and agami (future karma) on the other side. In the middle which we are being endured now are prarabdha (karma being experienced now), like a tiny drop in an ocean.

The fascinating thing is, if you can transform the karma done in this life as a yoga (spiritual discipline). If this karma, that is classified as niyatha (prescribed) karma can be transformed into yoga (spiritual discipline)... then it will not only erase your sanchita karma (accumulated karma), but your agami (future karma) as well! It will also arrange in such a way that the current prarabdha (karma being experienced now) do not cause any bondage. Upanishad has established this!

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SLOKA WORD -

yada: ishi:kato:lam agnou pro:tam pradu:yata:

e:vam ha:sya sarve: papma:na pradu:yante:!

SLOKA MEANING -

Just as a tuft of cotton thrown into fire is completely burnt, so too are all his sins burnt.

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Cotton balls are very soft to touch. If dropped into a blazing fire, they are annihilated with no trace left to be found. Similarly, if the acts done by this body are transformed into yoga (spiritual discipline) and executed properly… it will annihilate all three sanchita (accumulated), agami (future) and prarabdha karma (karma being experienced now), that we endure presently, without any remainder! In Thiruppavai, Goda Devi sings,

…thi:yanil thu:su a:gum… (like cotton in fire)

Therefore, we must do karma yoga (path of action) properly as it yields two benefits! One, it wipes out sanchita (accumulated) and agami karma (future karma). Second, the journey of current life goes smoothly. This body is something we are used to. All the while it exists, the journey must continue. If restricted, it will ensure you suffer. Therefore, to make life’s journey smooth, as water slides on a downward slope… let the body continue on its acts that it’s used to, but do them as yoga (spiritual discipline). With that, the life journey continues smoothly.

…sari:ra ya:thra:...prasidhye:th … (the journey of the body... will be accomplished)

Sri Krishna thus moved further by expounding on the benefits of executing karma yoga (path of action) in chapter 3, verse 8. Let us also move along.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!

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