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1. Episode Title: Episode 37 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 37) - The Wheel of Life - Part 3

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Analysis of the cycle of life (food, rain, yajna, karma, body, soul); Understanding the meaning of yajna, both ritualistic and internal; The role of the sun and natural elements in the cycle of existence; Interpretation of the term "Brahma" in the Bhagavad Gita; The teachings and commentaries of Ramanujacharya on the Bhagavad Gita; The importance of performing actions as yajna for universal well-being; The connection between human actions, feelings, and natural phenomena.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 37, The Wheel of Life, Chakra, Yajna, Karma, Brahma, Akshara, Atma, Soul, Body, Food, Rain, Parjanya, Sun, Adithya, Homa Dhuma, Mundaka Upanishad, Ramanujacharya, Gita Bhashyam, Pancha Bhutas, Prakriti, Krishna, Spiritual guidance, Vedic knowledge, Cycle of existence, Oblation, Feelings, Consciousness, Dharma.

3. Main Content:

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

There are great pu:rva:cha:ryas (practicing spiritual masters), who properly analyzed knowledge bestowed by God. They graced the same unto us in an easily comprehensible way. Those great souls graced the teachings applicable to those times for the people then. Perhaps, people were thus inspired by them. However, when the desire is to show a universally qualified path for all times… Observe the teachings of the a:cha:ryas (spiritual teachers) that appropriately correlated the preceding and the following. Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja A:cha:rya Swa:mi (Ramanujacharya Swami), through such qualified commentaries for God’s instruction, Bhagavad Gi:tha (Bhagavad Gita)… Bestowed to us a wonderful reconciliation, and flawless order for the process instructed by Sri Krishna. Observe chapter 3 where… He [Sri Krishna] presented a wheel saying… e:vam pravarthitham chakram (thus the wheel is set in motion). He [Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya] showed the reconciliation for it [the ‘segments’ of the ‘wheel’]. We are currently learning how that is done.

We are all called bhu:thas (beings), a being with body and soul. We are all growing because of food. Food is the [supporting] cause for us. How is the food produced? Bhagavad Gi:tha (Bhagavad Gita) verse 3.14 explains this. Food is produced because of parjanya (cloud). It is produced because of the rains from the clouds. How are the rains showered? How are the clouds formed? Yajnas (sacrifices) cause the formation of clouds. yajna:th bha:vathi parjanyaha (from yajna comes rain). How can a yajna (sacrifice) form a cloud? Ve:da (Vedas) answered this.

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SLOKA WORD -

agnou pra:stha:husthisamyak a:dithyamupathishtathe:

a:ditya:th ja:yathe: vrustihi vrushte:rannam thathah praja:ha

SLOKA MEANING -

Oblations properly offered into fire reach the sun. From the sun comes rain. From rain comes food. From food come living beings.

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agnou pra:stha:huthihi (When an eligible person offers an oblation in a bonafide process into fire using right ingredients at the right time), It releases ho:ma dhu:ma (smoke from that offering). That is very powerful. Only such [ho:ma dhu:ma] will become impactful. If some kind of an odd person simply lights fire and drops something into it some random way, It will release pollution into nature. If it is performed in an order, what does it do? a:dithyamupathishtathe: (It’s not stating that the [smoke] goes to the sun. It states that it brings the sun's power to us). Sunrays are always all surrounding because we are in the solar system. We are in the family of the sun. We come under the control of the sun. All the planets that revolve around the sun are controlled by the power of the sun. Our earth is the third planet [from the sun]. We are also happily under the influence of that sun. It does not matter if it is day or night, we are living under the control of the sun. When oblation is offered into the fire… Ho:ma dhu:ma (sacred smoke) released adds special power to the rays traveling from the sun controlling the earth. a:dithyam upathishtathe: (prepares sun to be pleased with us). Water that gets evaporated by the heat from those powerful sun rays forms into a parjanya (rain-bearing cloud). Otherwise… The sun is always there. Water is always there. Clouds should have always been forming. They should always be there. It should always be raining. Earth should always be filled with water. That’s not the case. This is the aspect we must pay attention to. How that happens is a different topic. However, it is the ho:ma prakriya (process of havan and ho:ma dhu:ma (sacred smoke)), that energizes the sun rays. It is those sun rays which form the rain bearing clouds. It is those clouds that go all around because of the movement of air and rain here and there. It is there that the crops yield. a:ditya:th ja:yathe: vrustihi (That is why, it rains only because of the sun). vrushte:he annam (It is because of rain that any beings needing to eat grow, the same goes for plants and trees). thathah praja:ha (Eating that, living beings take birth and the journey of life continues). Ve:da (Vedas) explains this.

Therefore, we must first know how to perform activity as yajna (sacrifice). We alluded earlier that… One type of yajna (sacrifice) is where ho:ma dhu:ma (sacred smoke) is brought out by offering ghee into a havan kunda (fire pit). The mere dhu:ma (smoke) has a kind of power. The power of that dhu:ma (smoke) can get rid of all do:shas (faults) in nature, like viruses or anything else. If we can perform large scale yajnas (sacrifices) properly, we can reap benefits of that kind. That is why, we planned the Ra:ma:nuja Sahasra:bdi event to host 1035 yajna kundas (fire pits). Using pure desi cow ghee derived from churned yogurt etc., we are moving forward accordingly. It will clean nature. It will empower the sun rays. It will enable all the clouds forming in the future to give good water. This is there [in nature].

Now [the other type of yajna (sacrifice)]... All the work we do every minute brings out waves of bha:vana (feelings), which affect the sun rays. In the process of ho:ma (fire ritual), it is the power of manthra (sacred chant) and the smoke. Here within us, it is the releasing of bha:vana: tharangas (waves of feelings). For example, cooking for someone. If you feel compassion and that it is righteous to pacify someone’s hunger… Then the resulting effect is one type. If you see that person as a manifestation of God, and what you did was an offering to Him… The resulting effect of that wave of feeling is different. This will empower the sun rays. Whether the power results from a dravya (substance) being offered, or a human being, it empowers the sun rays. This is called yajna (sacrifice). yajna:th bha:vathi parjanyaha (from yajna comes rain). Sri Krishna states this in verse 3.14. How is a yajna (sacrifice) formed? [yajnah] karma samudbhavaha (yajna is born from action). The bha:vana (feeling), a feeling you have, is classified as one type of karma (action). The bodily act of giving or taking something or changing something is another type of karma (action). kri:yathe: (it is done). You are doing it. That act becomes karma (action). What is the basis for doing karma (action)? karma brahmo:dbhavam viddhi (know that action is born from Brahma).

He says that karma (action) should happen because of bramha (Brahma). This is where it becomes tricky. Many people think Bramha (Brahma) here means Ve:da (Vedas). Ve:da (Vedas) talks about yajna (sacrifice) and ya:ga (ritual) etc. So, that is the karma (action). karma brahmo:dbhavam (action is born from Brahma). [It was interpreted as] Karmas (actions) came from Ve:da (Vedas). Karmas (actions) are defined in Ve:da (Vedas) but it is not the reason for karma (action). Karmas (actions) are not created by Ve:da (Vedas). Yajna (sacrifice) is creating the clouds. Food is created by the clouds. Beings are being created by the food. Ve:das (Vedas) did not create karmas (actions). Karmas (actions) are only explained by Ve:da (Vedas). Hence, there is no cause-and-effect relation between karma (action) and brahma (Brahma), i.e. Ve:da (Vedas). Therefore, it does not fit in to refer to bramha (Brahma) as Ve:da (Vedas). Additionally, no work is being done by Ve:da (Vedas). Someone studying Ve:da (Vedas) will be doing karma (action) [not Ve:da (Vedas) itself]. If something has to be done, it must be done through the body. Therefore, bramha (Brahma) [here] means body. If the body does something, then karma (action) is being done. Whatever karma (action) it is - giving something or taking or changing or making or building. All of this is the work that we do. That is done by the body. The work is done through a living body. If life is not in the body, it is called sthitham (still). Like when bodies are placed into a box. sari:ram thathra sthitham (the body is lying there). The dead body is lying there. Whatever ‘happens’ with the dead body is not called yajna (sacrifice). Yajna (sacrifice) is something that is done by someone. That someone should be a living being. If one is living, then the work is being done. That living one is the body. Therefore, bramham (Brahma) means sari:ra (body).

We may feel, “Do we just interpret the way we desire?” “No, we are not saying whatever we wish to.” Ve:da (Vedas) declares it. “Is it said anywhere that bramha (Brahma) also means body?” Yes, in Mundako:panishad (Mundaka Upanishad). Even in further sections of Bhagavad Gi:tha (Bhagavad Gita), God Himself declares the same. What is the body made of? It is made of pancha bhu:thas (five elements), the five elements of Nature. Our body is the product of the pancha bhu:thas (five elements). Isn’t it? Not just our bodies, every body is made of pancha bhu:thas (five elements). The body is made of the mixture of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. It is a union of the five elements. Hence, it is also nature. This is a micro form of prakruthi (nature). Everything around is the macro form. It is clearly specified that God is creating this.

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SLOKA WORD -

thasma:th e:thath bramha: na:ma ru:pam annam cha ja:yathe:

SLOKA MEANING -

From Him (the all-knowing, all-wise Supreme Being) comes this Brahma (the body, nature), along with name, form, and food.

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Mundako:panishad (Mundaka Upanishad) states… thasmath (from Him). Who is that? yassarvajnaha sarvavith yasya jna:namayam thapaha (Whoever is the knower of everything. Whoever knows about every single thing). sarvajnaha (one who knows everything in general). sarvavith (one who knows everything to detail by each anu (smallest measurable unit)). yasya jna:namayam thapaha (all His thought is filled with knowledge). thasma:th (from Him). e:thath bramha: (emerged this prakruthi (nature), the body which is the manifested form of nature). bramha (Brahma) means bruhathi (that which grows), brumhayathi (wherever it dwells, it grows that entity as well). What is this body doing? It is growing. It is also growing the knowledge of the indwelling soul. Therefore, it can also be named bramha (Brahma). e:thath bramha (The name, form and the food that it (the body) needs to grow [for the body]). All these are… thasma:th ja:yathe: (are coming from parama:thma (the supreme soul), God). Mundako:panishad (Mundaka Upanishad) explains this.

Diving deeper… mama yo:nir mahad bramha: (My womb is the great Brahma). God Himself stated… mahath bramha: (the vast prakruthi (nature)). yo:nihi (the cause for all of this is). mama (my object). He clearly states, “all this prakruthi (nature) is Mine.” Therefore bramham (Brahma) means body. It does not mean Ve:da (Vedas) or anything else. Now [let’s see] how this body is formed? brahma:kshara samudbhavam (Brahma is born from Akshara).

What does akshara (indestructible) mean? Akshara (indestructible) is that which is not kshara (destructible). Many people said it therefore means parama:thma (supreme soul), God. It is true that parama:thma (supreme soul) has ‘Akshara’ as a name. No question about it. e:thasyava: aksharasya prasha:sane: ga:rgi (Gargi, under the command of this indestructible Akshara). It is because of Akshara (the indestructible), the indestructible parama:thma (supreme soul), that everything is up and running. Ya:jnavalka’s (Yajnavalkya's) teachings say so. Akshara (indestructible) means parama:thma (supreme soul). No question about it. However, that is not the context here. The question here is who is the cause for the body. It is the indwelling a:thma (soul). If present, the body functions. A:thma (soul) is akshara (indestructible). It has no kshara (the quality of being destroyed). The indestructible a:thma (soul) and the body, called as ‘bramha’ (Brahma), are together. What do we call the two together? It is called bhu:tha (a living being). i.e, a body and soul together. What forms the bhu:tha (living being)? Annam (food). What creates annam (food)? Parjanya (rain-bearing clouds). What creates parjanya (rain-bearing clouds)? Yajna (sacrifice). What is the cause for yajna (sacrifice)? Karma (action). What’s the cause for karma (action)? The body. What is the cause for the body? A:thma (soul). When the body and a:thma (soul) are in union, it is a bhu:tha (living being). The cause for bhu:tha (living being) is again [annam (food)]. e:vam pravarthitham chakram (thus the wheel is set in motion).

That is the chakra (wheel), the wheel. Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya Swa:mi (Ramanujacharya Swami) wonderfully proved the intended meaning of this chakram (wheel), wheel, to us. Thus, he established the real meaning of Sri Krishna’s words and… [He] graced it to us in his Gi:tha Bha:shyam (commentary of Bhagavad Gita). The direction set by such a great soul, uplifts us. Let’s move forward.

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

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