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1. Episode Title: Episode 39 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 39)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The discourse clarifies the distinction between spiritual means (sadhana) and the ultimate goal (sadhya), emphasizing that while the goal is attained after leaving the body, one must diligently perform duties in the present life. It details the four stages of human life – student, householder, forest dweller, and renunciate – outlining the specific responsibilities and focus for each. The teaching highlights that action (karma) is essential throughout all life stages, correcting the misconception that one can simply abandon actions. Instead, it advocates for "thrividha thya:ga" (threefold renunciation), which means giving up the sense of doership, attachment to results, and the feeling that actions are solely for personal benefit, rather than giving up the actions themselves. The episode underscores the practical importance of Atma Jnana (knowledge of the soul) as the foundation for understanding one's duty and purpose.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Karma, Dharma, Sadhana, Sadhya, Moksha, Bramhaikya, Paramapada, Bhagavad Kainkarya, Ashramas, Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa, Vana, God's qualities, Kalyaana Gunas, Karma Acharana, Karma Tyaga, Naishkarmyam, Trividha Tyaga, Atma Jnana, Atma Sakshatkara, Arjuna, Krishna, Yajna, Duty, Renunciation, Attachment, Spiritual stages, Life cycle, Self-realization, Action without attachment.

3. Main Content:

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

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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 entire world.

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To attain something, there will be a means to do so. The means for attaining something is different from the attaining object or the result. We refer to them as sa:dhana (means) and sa:dhya (goal). In Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna did not know who he was and who were the ones around. He was not able to realize who they were. That is why he forgot his duty. There is a supreme prescribed means [for everyone]. Being born as a human being, one must fulfill their responsibilities. He forgot that. He forgot the ‘means’. However, he felt he had the sa:dhya (goal) in his hands.

What is it that one must attain for being born as a human being? tharinchaali (to cross over/attain liberation). This word is explained in many various ways. Some say - it means to attain mo:ksha (liberation from bondages). Some say - to attain bramhaikya (to become one with the Supreme Being). Some say - to attain paramapada (the supreme state). Some say - to be doing bhagavad kainkarya (serving God). Some say - it means to have nothing to do. Whatever we think it is, they are all what happens after one leaves the body. It could be Vaikuntta (Vishnu's abode), Kailasa (Shiva's abode), Bramhaikya (oneness with the Supreme Being), Kainkarya (service), etc. All these are something you attain afterwards.

What should we do while here, however? You are in this body for a certain time period. While here, one must do all the duties that came with the body without any compromise. This uncompromising duty orientedness is applicable to everybody. What does everybody refer to? In the world, all human beings are divided into four categories. What are the four?

vidya:rtthi dasa (stage of a student)

ga:rhasthya dasa (stage with responsibility of family)

va:naprasttha dasa (stage with focus on learning about the Supreme)

yo:ga dasa (stage of a realized person)

Irrespective of country residence or anything else, every person has the following four states in life. First - ba:lya dasa (stage of a child). Or vidya:rtthi dasa (stage of earning vidya, education). It is named as bramhacharyam (celibate student life). After a certain period in this stage, one becomes gruhasthu (householder). He takes up the responsibility of the dharma (righteous duty) of passing forward his activities to his children. It is named ga:rhasthya stage. This will go on for a certain period of time. There are some rules around how long it should last. That responsibility should last only till your children practice the good lifestyle you learned from your elders and passed on. The responsibility does not encompass the prosperity of grandkids, and great grandkids. This [gruhasttha stage] goes on for sometime. It is the responsibility of a gruhasttha (householder) to take care of the child until they grow and are able to stand on their feet. Afterward, he shouldn’t make himself responsible for anything related further. He should be accessible to give any advice or to offer any inputs but not to take any responsibility. He should start thinking about his own well-being. What does it mean by well-being here? Not just bodily well-being, but what is essential to do for the well-being of the indwelling ji:va (individual soul).

What should one do? Keeping aside the bodily responsibilities, learning what the soul’s responsibilities are. Focusing on that [learning], and using the body for whatever time period God graces the body as a means. This stage is called va:naprasttha (forest dweller/retirement stage). Earlier days, they would go to vana (forests), and live there. There are no forests these days. It’s all concrete jungles. Even if one goes to forests, he would need a concrete structure if he wants to live comfortably. Va:naprasttha (forest dweller/retirement stage) is a beautiful word that denotes what one should be thinking about. ‘Vana’ is the name for God. Va:namu (that which is related to Him) is that which is related to Him, i.e. His supreme qualities benefit us all. He created this world. Isn’t He benefitting us? Without even asking, He is giving us abundant air, water, sunlight, etc. He is giving this Earth the power to produce whatever we need as food. All these did not come into existence because we desired for them. They came into existence because of God’s ‘work’. There are the utthama upaka:ra gunas (supreme beneficial qualities), supreme qualities that are favoring us. Kalya:na gunas (auspicious qualities) are those that present us with…

subha (good outcomes),

baagu (state of well-being),

ujji:vana (better life/spiritual upliftment).

He has the abilities to give us these. They are called gunas (qualities). How many such gunas (qualities) exist? bahavo: kalya:na guna:ha (many auspicious qualities). There are so many that it is impossible to count. That many kalya:na gunas (auspicious qualities), qualities blessing with all that is good. They are named so. This is not our interpretation. Ve:das (Vedas) says - swa:bhaviki: jna:na bala kriya: cha (His inherent knowledge, strength, and action). His form is also kalya:na maya (full of goodness). etthe: ru:pam kalya:na thamam thath the: pasya:mi (Let me witness that divine supreme form of Yours that graces ultimate good to everyone). Veda taught us the prayer, ‘Let me witness that divine supreme form of Yours that graces ultimate good to everyone.’ What it means is that God has both qualities and a form that are beneficial to the world. That is called vana (God).

[During va:naprasttha stage], one remains sttha (focused) on that [vana]. In fact, a human being should be habituated to reflect and focus on God’s divine qualities. Even during gruhasthu (householder) stage and for everyone throughout. It should be in that habit for everyone, however, there is no chance to spend full time on that in earlier stages. Either one is busy with children, or studying, or fulfilling family responsibilities or acquiring many social abilities. Therefore, it would be possible to stha (focus) on vana (God), only to a certain extent [during those stages]. Now [during va:naprasttha stage], there is nothing new to be learned. What you have on your plate now is only to recollect that which has already been learned. Family related activities have subsided because kids are grown and living independently. When you involve excessively, voluntarily taking responsibility and giving advice, [the kids] could get upset and put you in an old-age home. A wise man will not involve too much, simply rather letting them be. That’s when both sides will be comfortable. Therefore, he won’t have those responsibilities either. Thus, because he can now [in va:naprasttha stage] concentrate deeper on his ujji:vana (spiritual upliftment)… Reflecting how he was molded to what he is now by vana (God), and His divine qualities and form… One can dedicate more time in pra - sttha (highly focusing) at the right time on vana (God).

Thus, one should not confirm another job soon before retirement. And continue to find and eventually confirm another job before retiring from the next one post the first one. Continuing to find another job to earn and repeat when that is done… simply working and earning until their last breath, not even able to use that wealth before they leave. Yet, some other person will take away all those earnings and enjoy it all. After leaving a portion to his children, a wise one should use the rest of his earnings for the remainder of his life. He can spend time reflecting on God, and to the extent that he can, take part in service and activities related to God. If he can do that, it is referred to by another stage/part-journey of life.

There are four semi-journeys in life - one is bramhacharya (celibate student life), second is ga:rhasttha (householder stage). The third one as discussed now is va:naprasttha (forest dweller/retirement stage). One travels in this journey portion for a certain period of time. Using whatever earning or sa:dhana (means) in this va:naprasstha (forest dweller/retirement stage) portion… He will step into the final phase called yo:ga (spiritual realization) or sannya:sa (renunciation) where he works on sa:ksha:thka:ra (realization), realizing that sa:dhana (means). Thus, the 4 stages are - bramhacharya (celibate student life), ga:rhasthya (householder stage), va:naprasttha (forest dweller/retirement stage), and sannya:sa (renunciation). For everyone who is in any of these four states, there are certain things to do.

Interestingly, some think karma a:charana (performing actions), being in action, is only necessary to a certain stage in life. They think, after crossing that stage, one can do karma thya:ga (giving up activities). Sa:sthra (scripture/guiding orders), that literature which has guiding orders, never accepts karma thya:ga (giving up activities). Through the entire Bhagavad Gita, we never see that Sri Krishna accepted this. There will be activities. When one is bramhacha:ri (celibate student), he will need to beg for alms, and submit them to his teacher… Accepting whatever his teacher gives him as food, learning what is to be taught by the teacher. These are karmas (actions/duties), activities, of a bramhacha:ri (celibate student). As gruhasttha (householder), there are quite a few karmas (actions/duties) such as daily activities, etc. There is karma a:charana (performing actions) then too. Even after entering the va:naprasstha (forest dweller/retirement stage), he enjoys God’s divine qualities and corresponding teachings. So, there are certain types of activities one takes up. Lastly, even as sannya:si (renunciate), one must conduct work giving up the doership (sense of being the doer), results, and attachment. This is known as naishkarmyam (action without attachment to results). naishkarmyam a:chare:th (one should perform action without attachment). This is what mo:ksha parva (chapter on liberation) of Maha:bha:ratha (Mahabharata) states.

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SLOKA WORD -

abhayam sarva bhu:the:bhyo: datthva: naishakarmyam a:chare:th

SLOKA MEANING -

Having given fearlessness to all beings, one should perform action without attachment.

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If one can stop activities, why would it state a:chare:th (to do/perform)? We don’t say practice quitting activities, do we? Therefore, he will give up something with respect to the karma (action). “I am doing the work”, “It is because of me that this is happening”, “All this is for me”. These three bha:vanas (feelings/attitudes) exist. One must give up these feelings, not the karmas (actions/duties), activities, themselves. This is called thrividha thya:ga (threefold renunciation), giving up the three types of attachment with the karma (action). Remember it is not the karma (action) you are giving up. It is to give up the inherent bha:vana (feeling/attitude) when performing karma (action). Eat food. But change the bha:vana (feeling/attitude) from eating to satisfy your stomach, to honoring prasa:dam (sacred offering), offering to Lord within. Sannya:sis (renunciates) also perform karma (action). No one is permitted karma thya:ga (giving up activities).

However, Arjuna is thinking that if he becomes a jna:ni (enlightened one), then there is no need to do karma (action). The prescribed karma (action) for him currently is to fight in the war, suppress the bad, encourage the good. That is why the stage is set for war. He and others have assembled. If he is now wishing to quit, it means he lost a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul) revealing who he is, and why he is here. Therefore, he must be made aware of a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul). Sri Krishna felt responsible to teach him a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul), accordingly enlighten him of his duty, and motivate him to take it up. During this teaching, Arjuna thinks he does not need to do any karma (action). That is not allowed. This is a cycle. It is a life cycle. He starts at anna:th bhavanthi (from food, beings are born). And [ends at]... e:vam pravarthitham chakram (thus the cycle is maintained). This is a life-cycle. No one is exempt from it. Everyone must take part in the cycle, everyone in any of the four stages must live through this cycle. If one must live through it, Arjuna felt… yajnah karma samudbhavaha (sacrifice is born from action), karma brahmo:dbhavam viddhi… (know that action originates from the Supreme Being), thasma:th sarvagatham bramha nithyam yajne:... (therefore, the all-pervading Supreme Being is eternally established in sacrifice). Everyone’s life should be led as yajna (sacrifice). He already wanted to give up karma (action), why yajna (sacrifice) now?! He asked, “Therefore, can I not give up [karma (action)] now?” Yes, it can be done. However, Lord made it clear on who can. It’s not possible for those living on this earth. If there is anyone beyond earth they can give up karma (action). He tells this to Arjuna and makes him aware of a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul).

The reason we are reflecting on this is because… We think a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul) is not practical for life. We think it is not necessary for us now. However, that is not true. A:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul) is to know clearly who you are. A:thma sa:ksha:thka:ra (realization of the soul) also means the same. This is the purpose of Sri Krishna’s [teaching]. For that purpose, Lord is revealing who must do karma a:charana (performing actions) and who is eligible for karma thya:ga (giving up actions). In chapter 3, He is thus taking Arjuna forward. Let us also move along with them.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!

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