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1. Episode Title: Episode 43 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 43)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: Krishna's emphasis on the profound meaning of every word in the Bhagavad Gita; The distinction between Karma Nishta (devotion to action) and Jnana Nishta (devotion to knowledge); Understanding self-realization (Atma Darsanam) as the ultimate spiritual goal; Characteristics of a self-realized individual who is exempt from the need to perform karma; The unique and contextual commentary of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya Swami on the Bhagavad Gita; The relationship and progression from Jnana Yoga to Bhakti Yoga and Prapatthi Yoga; The importance of avoiding spiritual inaction (nishkriya).

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 43, Krishna, Arjuna, Karma Nishta, Jnana Nishta, Atma Darsanam, self-realization, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Prapatthi Yoga, Bhagavad Ramanujacharya Swami, Yamunacharya Swami, Gita Bhashya, exemption from karma, spiritual practice, dharma, sannyasi, renunciation, meaning of words, spiritual guidance, spiritual duties, action, knowledge, devotion, surrender, spiritual liberation.

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 dangers, bestows all wealth, and delights the entire world.

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In Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna advises Arjuna on his responsibility as a means to instruct us on the best way to live life. Every word the Lord speaks and every instruction He gives is highly meaningful and useful to our life.

Some poets use some words to complete a verse. Examples are thu (and), cha (and), va (or), hai (indeed), sma (indeed). Those words don’t have any valuable meaning. If the verse needs 8 syllables and his text has 7, he adds thu (and) or cha (and) to make it complete. Then, the verse aligns with prosody. There is no harm or loss to the meaning. They are added solely for the sake of only completing a line of poetry. While speaking, some people use words such as ‘did you know…?’ There are certain words that some people are habituated to while speaking. They can’t speak without using those words.

Sri Krishna never added anything extra simply to complete lines. Every letter He used is meaningful…every word. If we know this, we can properly understand His heart. Otherwise, we might conclude that certain parts of text are not useful. If He used thu (and) or something else, there is an intended meaning for it. Our elders say that Valmiki Bhagavan (Lord Valmiki) also composed Ramayana in the same way. If he has used thu (and) somewhere, there is definitely great depth to its meaning. If we observe properly, we will know.

Bhagavad Ramanujacharya Swami is the mahaniya (great soul) who observed Sri Krishna’s heart properly. There are many who gave commentaries on Bhagavad Gita. However, to understand it from the beginning to end without changing the context, and being able to practice it properly, it is given by the mahaniya (great soul) Bhagavad Ramanujacharya Swami. His inspiration came from the mahaniya (great soul) Yamunacharya Swami before him, who set the foundation by composing Gitaartha Sangraha (Summary of the Gita's meaning). Ramanujacharya Swami followed it properly and gave us the summary, verse by verse.

There is one specific verse in it. Not just one verse, we discussed all verses. We discussed this when the wheel was mentioned earlier. A wheel indicates a circle and therefore the ending should land at the starting point. Others did not provide this. Others started at one point and went straight into another direction. How will that translate to a wheel? We discussed earlier about how that translates to a wheel, no need to reiterate now.

Verse 17 discusses who does not need to perform karma (action). We should observe the words properly.

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SLOKA WORD -

yasthv a:thmarathir e:va sya:th a:thma thrupthas cha ma:navaha |

a:thmanye:va cha santhushtas thasya ka:ryam na vidyathe: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

One who finds delight in the self, who is satisfied by the self, and who is fully content within the self, for him there is no duty to perform.

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He is not referring only to Arjuna. ma:navaha (human being). It isn’t about a male, female, child, youth, or elder. He doesn’t leave anyone out of the scope. Whoever it is, has to be of either of the two types. One is karma nishta (devoted to action) and the other is jnana nishta (devoted to knowledge).

One who is karma nishta (devoted to action) keeps carrying out activities as his responsibilities without reflecting much on jnana (knowledge). One who is jnana nishta (devoted to knowledge) works with love knowing who he is, why he is doing it. For example, let’s say that an employee is a karma nishta (devoted to action). Many people say that they are karma yogis (practitioners of action yoga). We lead life by working. The word is a good one, but its usage isn’t right. A karma nishta (devoted to action) is one who claims “this is my duty,” working like an ox pulling a cart. He keeps working while crying about it. He may or may not cry outside. However, he continues to simply go on working. This is one type of karma nishta (devoted to action).

Jnana nishta (devoted to knowledge) is one who also works. However, like a mother who works with so much love for the child, or a husband who serves his wife with so much love (it’s natural for a wife to serve her husband with love, but here it’s like the love of a husband serving his wife), or the amount of devotion and dedication that a disciple has when serving his guru (spiritual teacher), it is the same work. This person does more than what one is normally expected to. He doesn’t need rest, despite breaking a sweat, having worked so hard. He does it happily. He enjoys every second of the work. He relishes the services. This happens when one has jnana (knowledge). He is called jnana yogi (practitioner of knowledge yoga).

Both of them have a purpose. What is the purpose? It is to satisfy the person at the receiving end. If a mother works, it is for the happiness of the child. If a disciple works, it is for the happiness of the guru (spiritual teacher). If a worker does something, it is for the happiness of the owner. He does it yearning for the happiness of the other, with love for him. The leaders of a party also work in the same way, though embedded with a bit of self-interest. The party workers desire to be appointed to a post if they work hard. Such desire does not exist in a mother, father, disciple, or a friend, etc. With a politician, there may be a desire to earn a position. There is service with a desire for some benefit. What we talked about earlier is the one with a desire to see happiness in the recipient. In this case, there is underlying knowledge of the relation between the two. Because this knowledge dominates, there is satisfaction in the service he does.

Who is Sri Krishna talking about in Bhagavad Gita? The one who wants to know about himself, referred to as atma darsana kankshi (seeker of self-perception), or atma sakshatkara kankshi (seeker of self-realization). If we use these terms, it feels heavy on the head. Simply put, it is one who wants to know about the self. We must also understand it though. Atma Darsanam (self-perception) is the goal for everything we do using the body. I am so and so. I am not a body. The caste that the body acquired is not mine. The race that came with the body is not mine. The color that the body has is not mine. The weight or anything else that the body got is not mine. I am beyond all of these. I do not belong to the body or to the relations of the body. I belong to Bhagavan (God). My state is that of being related to God. This is called jnana (knowledge). As this knowledge is solidified, it is called yogam (union/discipline). That is called jnana yoga (yoga of knowledge). This is called karma yoga (yoga of action).

Karma Yoga nishta (devoted to the yoga of action) is a type of sadhak (spiritual practitioner). Jnana Yoga nishta (devoted to the yoga of knowledge) is another type of sadhak (spiritual practitioner). These are the two types of people in the world. What about bhakti yoga nishtas (devoted to the yoga of devotion)? Yes. How about prapatthi yoga nishtas (devoted to the yoga of surrender)? Yes. They also can be categorized into the section of jnana yoga nishtas (devoted to the yoga of knowledge). They are just subdivisions of this. The ripened state of jnana (knowledge) is called bhakti (devotion). When bhakti (devotion) blooms into the state of surrender, it is termed prapatthi (surrender). Because they are all different states of jnana (knowledge), we must remember the two: Karma nishta (devoted to action) and jnana nishta (devoted to knowledge). These two are the means. What we attain with either of them is Atma Darsanam (self-realization). If one attains this, he will happily carry out his responsibilities. He will become kriyashila (an active doer). Otherwise, he will become nishkriya (inactive/a deserter). Arjuna is desiring to become a deserter. “Throughout life, you must never become a deserter.” This is what Sri Krishna instructs. That is why He began [verse 17] with… yasthu (one who)… has already attained self-realization need not do any karma (action).

Who is that who attained it? What would that person be like? One who attained it has no need for anything else. If someone has eaten in full, offering a snack or dessert like gulab jamun, jhangri, jilebi, he would decline at least for that moment. Though he may want it later, he won’t need it at the moment offered. The one who already has self-realization, he would not have any rathi (liking/attachment) towards anything else. He wouldn’t need to attain any satisfaction or joy with anything else. Note that he does not need them. It’s not about not having the desire. Why? Because he has what is supposed to be had.

Assume someone has to travel from one place to a neighboring one. How does he go? Either by foot, cycle, bike, rikshaw, car, or flight. He has to use something. Assuming he owns a car without any issues, what efforts does he need to put in for the car? Why would he desire to attain a car then? If he doesn’t have a car and someone offers a car to him, he would be relieved and satisfied with it. If he has a car for himself, he wouldn’t attain any satisfaction from, desire for, or think about other cars. Because he already possesses a car.

Let’s say someone is looking for a place to live. What does he need? He needs a house. If someone already has built him a 10-star rated building, why would he have any interest in the design or architecture of the building, or the respective engineers? Not necessary, right? He would need them and the efforts if he wants to construct a house and he has the necessary money for it. If he’s already been given a building that cannot be constructed further, why would he have any liking towards anything else? Or, assume someone shows him a small hut, or a small tiled-roof house, or a one-floor home. He would not attain fulfillment from these when he already owns a big nice building. He wouldn’t need any satisfaction that he gets from being in those. He has rathi (liking/attachment), trupti (satisfaction), santushti (full satisfaction) because what he needs is already with him.

Take a person who is hungry. Give him a plate full of twenty-five hot and appealing dishes and tell him all of them are for him. Will he need to think about earning something, or where the stove is, or lentils, grains, vegetables, salt, helpers, etc.? Will he have any interest in all of those? If one has attained the desirable goal, he would not have any interest or satisfaction with anything else. Similarly, one who does not need any special efforts because he has already attained self-realization, that person does not need it (karma/action). Let him be a karma yogi (practitioner of action yoga) or jnana yogi (practitioner of knowledge yoga). For such a person, there is no need to perform karma (action).

There are others who lived prior to Ramanujacharya who gave commentaries on Gita. When they were explaining yaha (who), they did not understand it to mean the one who already has attained karma jnana yoga (yoga of action and knowledge). They thought it to mean the one who abstained from karma (action), having acquired atma jnana (knowledge of the self). They thought it is only they who need not perform karma (action). What they said was whoever is a sannyasi (renounced one) need not perform karma (action). However, they forgot one aspect: naishkarmyam achareth (one should perform action without attachment). They forgot that even a sannyasi (renounced one) has some dharmas (prescribed duties) to practice. sarvato vitha trushnaha sannyasi (a sannyasi who is free from all desires). He also must perform. The clause tasya karyo na vidyate (for him there is no duty) does not apply to him. Therefore, others have given meanings for Sri Krishna’s words and sentences but explaining the meaning requires the knowledge of context too. It is also necessary to observe the background. This is what Bhagavad Ramanujacharya’s Gita Bhashya (commentary on the Gita) so clearly, beautifully, and properly reflects.

Sri Krishna also says another thing about this person [who has no need to perform karma (action)]. naiva tasya kruthenarthaha (for him there is no purpose in action).

Vande guruparamparam (I bow to the lineage of gurus).

Jai Srimannarayana!

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