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1. Episode Title: Episode 48 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 48)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The discourse emphasizes the importance of following proper practices for the well-being of society, highlighting that one's actions serve as a guideline for others. It differentiates between the path of action (karma yoga) and the path of knowledge (jnana yoga), asserting the necessity of continuous action while in the body. The teachings stress the significance of observing and emulating the conduct of wise elders, illustrating how even mundane activities can be transformed into acts of worship and spiritual knowledge through proper execution. The episode also explores the profound impact of leaders and respected individuals on societal behavior, as explained in Bhagavad Gita 3.21, and cautions against blind imitation without understanding the underlying context or spiritual state of a wise person. Ultimately, it underscores Krishna's teaching on dedication to one's responsibilities (kartavya nishta).

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 48, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Dharma, Righteous Conduct, Role Models, Elders, Angi Karma, Anga Karma, Aradhana, Brahma Vidya, Responsibility, Kartavya Nishta, Arjuna, Krishna, Sankara Bhagavathpada, Imitation, Spiritual Practice, Daily Routine, Self-improvement, Societal Well-being, Sloka 3.21, Wise Conduct, Leadership, Ethical Living, Spiritual Discipline, Vedic Teachings

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

(Remover of all obstacles, bestower of all wealth, the beloved of the world, Sri Rama, I bow to you again and again.)

In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3, verses 20 and 21, we explore a crucial question: Why should we follow proper practices? Why can’t we simply say, “I will behave as I like – why do you care?” Krishna provides a profound reason for this. He explains that people around us tend to imitate our behavior. Therefore, if not for ourselves, we must follow proper practices for the well-being of at least those around us.

We must abstain from claiming, “I have attained everything, I don’t need to care about anything else.” This concept distinguishes between practicing karma (action) and practicing jnana (knowledge). It is appropriate for everyone to keep working. Dear ones, it’s not allowed for one to be in jnana yoga (the path of knowledge) in a way that implies doing nothing. There is no way you can say that you don’t do anything. As long as you are in this body, there is no question of "doing nothing." You will be breathing in, breathing out, opening eyes, closing eyelids. You will be getting up, sitting, sleeping, and so on. We will have to do different kinds of activities with the body. If you say that you will remain still as if in a coma, you will get bed sores! You will trouble the ones next to you. Therefore, we must continue to do work while in the body.

When working, we must take the activities of Wise Elders and their ways as a guideline. The Veda (sacred texts) clarifies this. There is wonderful teaching from a teacher to a graduate student. As part of many aspects covered in it, the teaching states:

yada:rthe: thathra vartha:ram thatha: thathra varthe:ttha:

thathra thathra yatha:

(whatever they do there, you should also do there, in those places, as they do)

The teacher explains that whatever process the elders followed, you, dear one, should also carefully observe and follow the same. They would wake up early. They would sit up and chant the name of Lord Hari. Then, they would do exercise. They would then take a bath. Then, they would sit and apply tilak. They would then perform their respective appropriate anushtana (practices). Then, they would offer prayers to the deity. They would take prasada (that which is offered to God). They would leave for their daily routine. There is a method to carry out certain work.

yada:the: thathra varthe:ran thadha: thathra varthe: tha:

(Whenever a situation arises, whatever those great souls practiced, try to practice the same way but don’t go against it.)

Don’t cross those guidelines. The teacher also gave another recommendation:

yatha:the: the:shu varthe:ran thatha: the:shu varthe: tha:ha

(When doing an activity, there are certain practices that contribute to completing it. They use those ‘tools’ to do the activity. You should also do the activity along with the ‘tools’.)

What does it mean by ‘along with the tool’? If undertaking a primary activity, there are certain basic activities to have in place. Let’s consider ‘having a meal’ as the primary activity. It is a primary activity for everyone anyway! What is the process for having the meal? Eating whatever you find, wherever it is, makes one an animal, maybe a monkey. What should a human being do? If you want to eat, you should first clean your body, take a bath, etc. Take a bath. If you eat as soon as you wake up, that is the nature of Kumbhakarna. He is a rakshasa (demon). You are not a demon. You are a human being. Therefore, the first step is to clean your body. To clean your body properly, you will need to finish your morning routine. Complete morning routine. Finish taking a bath.

Additionally, remember that you are not consuming food just for the body. You are consuming it to secure energy at four levels – body, senses, manas (mind), and buddhi (intellect). Veda states that the food you consume breaks down and transforms to energize all four levels. Therefore, clean all those too. Like we clean the body, we must also clean the inner layers, i.e., manas and buddhi. To clean manas, perform something like mantra japa (chanting of sacred sounds). To clean buddhi, perform something like worshiping God. These activities clean them. Now, offer the food to God so it can be cleansed as well. Then, give it [to the body] for the purpose of providing nutrition to them [body, senses, manas, buddhi].

When the primary activity is to eat food, all of these are the anga karmas (prerequisite activities). The primary karma is called angi (primary activity). The prerequisite activities are called anga karmas (auxiliary activities). They are auxiliaries. That is the main, i.e., the prime activity. There are also activities to be done after the prime activity. Wiping off with a towel and leaving that place is something that an animal would do. After eating, you must wash your hands and feet properly. You must also perform achamana (sipping of water along with chanting of mantra) three times. Just as you use two sheets to sleep, one under and another on top, similarly, if consuming food is a good means to provide nutrition for yourself, the prerequisite cleansing activities are like the sheet that is spread on the bottom. Now, consume the food. Clean your mouth and hands. Then, the post activities such as achamana, are like the blanket on the top. It’s called astharana (blanket). If you follow this process, then having the meal doesn’t become an act of eating to fill the stomach. It will become a proper, pure activity that will nourish the soul. It becomes aradhana (an act of worship). Eating a meal is also aradhana. It’s not simply aradhana, it is a brahma vidya (knowledge of the Absolute Truth)! Veda says. Eating a meal is a brahma vidya. If you know how to have a meal, consider yourself an expert in a brahma vidya. What an easy way! Meaning, the normal life you lead can become the best means for upliftment. This is what we must remember. In this example, the activity of having a meal is called angi karma (primary activity). The [pre and post] activities are anga karmas (auxiliary activities).

yada:the: thathra varthe:ran thadha: thathra varthe: tha:

(When consuming the meal, follow that same practice, Elders have practiced.)

They would sit properly and eat. They would sit facing east or north. They would sit on a slightly raised stool. They would eat on a leaf. They did not eat at a table. Sitting that way gave them good health. Thus, it is one karma.

yatha:the: the:shu varthe:ran thatha: the:shu varthe: tha:ha

the:shu the:shu

(While performing a primary activity, whatever anga karmas they practiced with expertise, you should also do the activity along with those ‘tools’.)

Meaning, before having a meal, setting up a leaf, washing hands, worshiping God, taking tirth (sacred water), performing anushtana, taking bath, etc. All of these are anga karmas. You must practice these anga karmas properly. You must practice angi karma properly. You must observe, right? It is highly essential to observe Elders. “Why should I follow them? Why should I look at them?” “They had patience and did those activities.” “I will practice my own way.” You should not say that. You have the responsibility to observe Elders and walk on the path they set. Therefore, Sri Krishna explains whatever Vedas explained about how to perform any activity. He clarifies this in verse 3.21.

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SLOKA WORD -

yad yad a:charathi sre:shttaha thath thade: ve:tharo: janaha |

sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: lo:kas thad anuvarthathe: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Whatever a great person does, others follow. Whatever standard (including the auxiliary practices) he sets, the world follows.

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yad yad a:charathi sre:shttaha (whatever primary activities the Wise one practices), thath thade: ve:tharo: janaha (the world always observes them). Additionally, if one gains popularity, it implies he is sitting in a glass box. Because he is seen from all corners and angles, the world will constantly observe him. “Whatever he does, I will do the same.” “Whatever he doesn’t, I won’t.” “If Elders have stopped doing it, why should we? Let’s not do it.” This is how the world takes you. It takes you as a role model for spoiling and for abandoning. It won’t take you as a role model for upliftment.

There is a wonderful incident in Sankara Bhagavathpada’s life. It’s said in his history that Sankara Bhagavathpada’s disciples watched him and thought they wanted to be like him. He noticed that. “They are thinking they will do whatever I do.” “Innocent people. It’s important to teach them,” he thought. It was afternoon, and time to beg for alms. There was a goldsmith who made ornaments out of molten gold. The goldsmith put gold in a crucible. It melted and turned into molten liquid. He [Sankara Bhagavathpada] took that fluid and simply drank it! The followers watched him. They were planning to do whatever he did. Forget about drinking it. It was burning hot to even touch. They were scared to even go near it. Therefore, oh dear, don’t say that I will do it because ‘he is doing it’. We don’t know the reason why ‘he is doing it’. We don’t know what state he is in while doing that. So, if we take them as a role model and try something, we will drown midway. If we don’t want those that see us to drown, we must first follow the rule.

So, yad a:charathi sre:shttaha (whatever primary activities the Wise one practices), the world observes them. sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: (whatever measurement of quantity and quality is observed by them). This is a very beautiful word. Generally, it’s understood as “whatever scriptures are taken as authentic ones…” No. yath prama:nam (whatever measurement of quantity and quality is observed by them). Meaning, when one is performing an activity, whatever angas (auxiliary practices) he is practicing, to perform an activity, whatever they are practicing as part of the preface, you also observe them. sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: (whatever measurement of quantity and quality is observed by them), yadangathaya: karo:thi (whatever angas he is following to carry out an activity), you must also observe and practice it along with the angas. If you think that your practices are a guideline to others and you desire their well-being, then practice what is appropriate for their prosperity, despite it not being a necessity for you. So, you must do karma acharana (practicing activities) for their sake. Whatever is ordained responsibility to you, you must observe it. Hence, it is not right to say that you will take the path of jnana because you are eligible for it. Thus, Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna kartavya nishta (dedication towards responsibility) in chapter 3.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!