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1. Episode Title: Episode 50 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 50): The Two Essentials - Activity and Process

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of living an ideal human life, exemplified by Rama's incarnation and his adherence to dharma. Understanding the concept of "yadartha acharana" (real practice) through Rama's actions and daily routines. The significance of performing daily duties (nithya karma) and rituals (Sandhya Vandanam) with diligence and proper procedure. Krishna's teachings on the necessity of proper action and setting an example for others in society. The distinction between prime activities (angi karma) and supporting activities (anga karmas), including preparatory and post-completion tasks. The importance of meticulousness, care, and proper procedure in all actions, from planting saplings to daily chores. The role of exemplary individuals in guiding society through their actions and the standards they set.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 50, Karma Yoga, Rama, Valmiki, Ramayana, Viswamithra, Dasaratha, Sita, Mithila, Balakanda, nithya karma, daily activities, Sandhya Vandanam, shastra, Vedic scriptures, Krishna, Arjuna, yad acharathi shreshtaha, pramanam, anga karmas, angi karma, maryada purushottama, ideal human being, role model, Janaka, loka sangraham, welfare of the world, proper action, meticulousness, spiritual guidance, dharma, avathar, incarnation, yaga, astras, pra:thassavanam, sandhya:di upa:sana.

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 world.

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From among the many times God descended on earth, the specific purpose of one such appearance was to show how a human life should be lived. That is Rama avathar (incarnation). Some say Rama is God. Some say Rama is a human being. According to [sage] Valmiki, Rama is a human being. In Valmiki Ramayana (epic poem),

a:thma:na:m ma:nusham manye: (I consider myself a human)

...he clearly states that Rama says (that he is human) without any doubt. The summary is that we must look at Ramachandra only as a human being, as per Valmiki. Only then, whatever Rama did in life becomes yadartha acharana (real practice). Otherwise, it becomes a put on act in order to cheat others. In fact, nothing in Rama avathar (incarnation) is acting. He demonstrated by doing all that a human being can and should practice. We refer to Rama as the incarnation focused on acharas (practices).

Ramachandra, after turning 12, ventures into the forest with the great sage Viswamithra. Viswamithra convinces king Dasaratha, the father, and takes the son, in order to protect the yaga (ritual sacrifice) being performed. We know the story. He takes him and instructs him to protect the yaga (ritual sacrifice) for 6 days. Before that, he teaches all the astras (divine weapons) that would be needed. After completing that protection, Rama is taken to Mithila and is married to Sita. Until this point, Viswamithra is seen in history. This is what we see in the story.

There is an unnoticed aspect in this flow of the story. It is that we see that Ramachandra carries out his responsibilities throughout the day. Every morning, he does prathassavanam (morning routine). Every evening, he practices sandhyadi upasana (obeisances to the natural forces all around). We can observe in Balakanda (first chapter of Ramayana) that Valmiki gives this detail for every portion of the day. There is no loss if Ramachandra’s Sandhya Vandanam (daily ritual) detail is not given. However, Ramachandra was very clear about performing his responsibilities properly. This would be ideal for others who can observe and rectify their lives. That is why Valmiki Bhagavan (Lord/revered one) shows this. If Ramachandra performed his nithya karma (daily activities) without any discount or second thoughts… We need not explicitly state anything about how important these practices are for common people. Meaning - one must perform them [nithya karmas (daily activities)].

What should one practice? How should one practice them? We must know these two properly. This is what shastra (Vedic scriptures) establish. God depicts the same decision in [Bhagavad Gita] chapter 3.

yad a:charathi sre:shttaha… (whatever a great person does)

sa yath prama:nam kuruthe: (whatever standard he sets)

We must observe two words carefully. [yad acharathi shreshtaha (whatever a great person does)] you must do the [right] activity. yath pramanam kuruthe (whatever standard he sets). What are the angas (supporting parts/processes), pre and post processes for the activity? While doing an activity, preparatory activities and post activities are also there. We must observe these two carefully.

Consider ‘planting seedlings’ as a prime activity. It does not qualify as ‘planting seedling’ if you bring it from somewhere and simply plant it. There are some prerequisite activities. These are called anga karmas (supporting activities). Planting a seedling is the angi karma (prime activity) here, meaning it is the prime activity. What are the angas (supporting parts/processes) for it? Firstly, we must look for the appropriate soil. If the soil is not suitable, we must add to it or remove from it accordingly. This is the first step. Checking for the availability of the type of soil - black or red. If the place has stones, then soil must be brought in and be plowed. The weeds must be taken out. Stones, and any other waste must be removed. The soil must be cleaned. It must be watered and kept moist. We must add something like cow dung to increase its fertility. Now, the seed or the seedling must be planted. If we don’t do any of these and plant the seedling, it will die within a day or two. We hear program announcements where it is said that some lakhs of seedlings are planted. Shouldn’t we have greenery all around if that many lakhs and crores of saplings are planted? There are many prerequisite activities that must be taken care of. They are called anga karmas (supporting activities). Meaning the way of preparing for the activity, understanding the boundaries of the activity, etc. To plant the seedling, or to till the land, there are many tools required like a plough, rake, shovel, basket, etc. We use all these tools to prepare the land. To water the land, we need a watering can fitted with holes, etc. We take all these, do the work, and plant the seedling.

Now, if we simply wash our hands and leave the place, what’s the use? This does not mean the work is completed. Just like there are preparatory activities, there are also post activities. What are the post activities? After planting, have we built a raised surface surrounding it to contain the water, or not? Have we cleaned all the tools used and put them back in their places, or not? Have we taken care of ensuring that the plant is watered from the next day onwards, or not? If you do all of these, then you can say you planted a sapling. Not simply walking off after planting while a goat walks up and eats the whole thing. This does not qualify for planting a sapling.

Some people bring garlands bought from the market as an offering. Their goal is to garland someone. Indeed, it’s a good wish. They bring it in some plastic cover or a wrapped paper. They reach the person. Then, they take it out of the cover and throw the cover aside. There is a string [holding it together]. They take that out and throw it onto the other side. The garland is drenched in water. They simply take that and put it on the person and leave, thinking the job is done. Is this how one should garland someone? Rather, it’s peaceful for both people if he simply does not garland him at all. He is simply drenching the person in water. If you really want to garland someone, have it properly made and bring it wrapped in a neat cloth. Before reaching the person, take off the cloth and put it in your bag. Now, garland him. That is what garlanding is. Not when you throw a paper to one side, string to another, and something else somewhere else.

Some people felicitate others with a shawl. As soon as it is opened, a paper sleeve drops. They leave the paper there itself, offer the shawl, stand beside the person, take a photo, and leave. He thinks his job is done and leaves the place. For the ‘sin’ of getting felicitated with the shawl, he ends up having to clean up the place. This is not [how an] activity [should be done]. There are a set of activities before starting the work and after finishing it. Those should be observed as well. One is the primary activity and there are pre and post activities as well. A qualified person must continue to practice both of them.

There was a master ji. Earlier, there used to be letters that were written and sent. Nowadays, it’s all in emails. We just read it on the screen, reply there, and the task is done. It’s easy and keeps both sides happy. Earlier though, letters were written and put in an envelope and sent. The master ji would not simply tear the envelope in any way. He would tear it open properly till almost the edge keeping it with the envelope. After reading the letter, he would tear it all the way through. Then, he would put it in the envelope and drop it either in the dustbin or use it some other way. There is a way an object should be used, or the care that it needs.

The same for anything - like cleaning a room. Taking a broom, bringing what’s in the corners to the center of the room, and back to the corners. In the name of cleaning the room… Bringing everything back and forth without considering the direction of the air flow. Making everything messy! This cannot be called cleaning the room, can it? To clean a room, one must take a broom and first observe the direction of airflow. If air is flowing in a direction, and you sweep in the same direction… The dirt blows to your face and on everyone inside. Observing the direction of airflow, accordingly sweep in the correct direction. Then, finish by placing the broom in whatever corner it needs to be kept. Most people put the broom exactly in the east corner. Not sure why, but most people put it there only. It should be put in its proper place. One’s hands should be cleaned properly. Then, on to the next activity. There is a way to do a certain activity. It is a rule.

Earlier when our elders were drying their clothes… They would wash, scrub, rinse again in water, wring out the water, brush off… Then fold them, and dry them on the hanger. The borders and edges would all be neatly set while hanging. After drying, there would be no need to iron them. Taking it off the hanger directly, it would be good enough to fold and place into the cupboard. It would be neatly done. Tamilians do it very well. Maybe they learnt it from their elders. We should learn good habits, wherever they are practiced. This kind of care should be in every activity one does. Waking up, tossing the blanket aside, and the same with the sheet - walking out leaving them as they are…… Instead, fold both the sheet and blanket properly. Place them in some almirah, closet, or wherever they should be. If you spare a second of thought on that activity, it will give you a chance to do it correctly. This goes for everything. If one has interest, he would observe the elders and learn to follow properly.

Rama had that kind of qualification within. That is why he became the ideal human being. He became maryada purushottama (one who behaves knowing the limits). What’s the right way to do a task? This is good for us and for people around us. Arjuna! That’s why it’s necessary for everyone to work in this way. Sri Krishna explains this in chapter 3, verses 20 and 21.

lo:ka sangraham e:va:pi sampasyan karthum arhasi (you should act for the welfare of the world)

Learn the right way of practicing things for the well-being of everyone around you. The process to be followed. The activities to be done. Because, people will look up to you to follow them. For their well-being, try to practice properly.

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SLOKA WORD -

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

sa yath prama:nam kuruthe:

SLOKA MEANING -

Whatever a great person does, others follow. Whatever standard he sets, the world pursues.

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‘Yath pramanam’ (whatever standard) is an important word. Does not mean any worldly or Vedic activity. Yath pramanam (whatever standard). Whatever limits or boundaries to follow, whatever supporting activities there are to do any task… Everyone intends to learn by observing the wise practitioners before us. “You are someone who has reached a key position.” “Thus, you must practice carefully and become a role model for others.” Janaka and the rest practiced the same way. “Why go to Janaka and the rest, I am a famous person too.” “Look at how I am practicing.” Sri Krishna is showing Himself as pramana (means of knowledge), to teach dedication to karma (action). He moves forward accordingly to chapter 3, verse 22. Gradually, let us also move ahead.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!

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