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1. Episode Title: Episode 53 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 53)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of fulfilling one's responsibilities without seeking shortcuts. Understanding Karma Yoga as performing duties with proper understanding of how and why. The example of King Janaka, a great jnani, who diligently performed his duties despite his high spiritual attainment. Krishna's own example of performing duties even when he has no personal needs or responsibilities. The significance of seeking guidance from elders and serving them for personal growth and success. Arjuna's journey from seeking Krishna for practical help to eventually seeking spiritual guidance.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Karma Yoga, Janaka, Krishna, Arjuna, responsibilities, duties, jnana yoga, Videha, elders, guidance, spiritual growth, Mahabharata, Dharmaraja, Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Sandipa, guru dakshina, selflessness, action, knowledge, dharma, leadership, example, devotion, service.

3. Main Content:

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

Human beings are born with responsibilities. They should never ignore them. Whatever society decides as appropriate responsibilities based on his position and birth, we must always follow those without any deviations. Shortcuts are not allowed. This is what Sri Krishna is teaching us in chapter 3. The name of chapter 3 in Bhagavad Gita is Karma Yoga (path of action). We must perform our responsibilities in proper order. What does proper order mean? What am I doing? How am I doing that? For what purpose am I doing that? If you develop the right understanding of these and then do them, that becomes yoga (union). It becomes Karma Yoga. Summary is that it is not only important to do the work, but also to do it with an understanding of the how and why.

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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 bow again and again to Sri Rama, who removes all dangers, bestows all wealth, and delights the world.

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To enlighten Arjuna with this, Krishna presented examples of those like Janaka who was already a popular figure in history. King Janaka was a great jnani (person of knowledge), a person of higher knowledge. Not just a normal jnani (person of knowledge) but a great jnani (person of knowledge). In those days, Elders would continue to reach Janaka and pay obeisances. His meetings always hosted discussions on scriptures, Vedanta (essence of Vedas). Great avadhanis (experts), like Ashtavakra also would participate in those. He emerged as a great jnani (person of knowledge) naturally for having completed studying with Yajnavalkya Maharshi. History tells this. Despite being a great jnani (person of knowledge), he never compromised on his duties even a bit, at any level. That is why, recognizing him specially, Krishna says:

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SLOKA WORD -

karmana iva hi samsiddhim a:stthitha: janaka:dayaha

SLOKA MEANING -

Having qualified for jnana yoga (path of knowledge), he took up karma yoga (path of action) as the right course of action.

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Such a great person himself decided that it is essential to do his duties and not abandon them. What should we say about common people? In fact, he is not attached to the body. His lineage itself is of this nature. The name of the lineage is Videha (without body attachment). They are all Videha (without body attachment) kings. Videha (without body attachment) are those whose raga (attachment), with deha (body), has shed. Attachment with the body has left them. Their interest towards catering for bodily needs, bodily well-being is limited to basic necessities. Their primary focus is taking care of responsibilities while meeting the purpose of their life. Such is his lineage. They are fully qualified for jnana yoga (path of knowledge). Yet, they practiced karma yoga (path of action). It goes without saying, that those who are not at that level will need to practice [karma yoga (path of action)].

Krishna is clarifying this to Arjuna. He adds, “Put aside others, look at Me.” He is giving Himself as an example.

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SLOKA WORD -

na me: pa:rtha:sthi karthavyam thrisulo:ke:su kinchana:

SLOKA MEANING -

I do not have any needs or responsibilities.

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We discussed it earlier. I don’t incur any loss or gain any benefit by doing anything. Yet, I also am properly practicing the responsibilities as per My lineage. Aren’t I? Sri Krishna is declaring Himself as an example.

Regarding fulfilling our responsibilities, it is recommended that we follow practices of the Elders. Summary is that we also must follow the Elders. To follow the Elders, we must first approach and serve them. Arjuna was somehow in the right mood and so he asked:

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SLOKA WORD -

sishyasthe:ham sa:dhima:m thva:m prapannam

SLOKA MEANING -

I am your disciple, please guide me, who has surrendered to you.

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He was able to look at Krishna as the Elder and bow down folding hands. Therefore, he approached and sought guidance from the Elders. However, there was a reason for why Arjuna approached and sought guidance from Krishna. He needed an able charioteer to fight in the war. He asked Krishna to take on that task as he knew of His abilities. He didn’t approach Krishna for being uplifted by Him.

Earlier in an instance where a great person was losing his child soon after the birth, every single time. He sought help from Arjuna telling him how he has no idea what is happening to the fetus. He said that he had tried many times and that not a single child could be saved. He sought his help. Arjuna promised the person that he would take care of it and asked him to let him know when it's time. When the person’s wife was in labor, he informed Arjuna. Arjuna created a wonderful protective layer of arrows. He built it so well that nothing can sneak in from any side. He was also guarding in person. However, they said the child took birth and immediately vanished. Arjuna felt ashamed. He felt extremely sad for not being able to keep his word. He created an agnihotra (fire altar) and got ready to end his life. Looks like he has the habit of making promises, and would jump into fire if he misses. If something like this happens, His sister Draupadi will be the one who will experience grief. Unable to see the sister’s sorrow, Sri Krishna would watch out for them and protect them. For the sake of Draupadi, He kept protecting the Pandavas. He would be the one keeping the promises they make. Seeing Him backing them up, they kept going as per their wish. Akin to some people who show off looking at their leader.

Arjuna promised that great brahmin (priest) that he would protect his child. The child could not be protected and so he decided to jump into the fire. Krishna had to look after him again! He asked him not to attempt to jump into the fire. He said that He would bring the child to him before sunset. He invited Arjuna to join him if he wanted to keep himself up to date. He took Arjuna along in the chariot to somewhere beyond all the planets. He went in there and brought back the child. We all know that it takes a week to go from the earth to the moon using rockets. He took off in the morning, traveled outside of the solar system past many constellations, got the work done, and came back by evening! All this while, Arjuna did not experience even the slightest turbulence. After witnessing this, Arjuna felt that all this while he thought that our Krishna only knew how to steal butter and lie! Arjuna realized how great a charioteer He is! He then desired for Krishna to be his charioteer in the upcoming Mahabharata war. He had the desire to win the war utilizing the proficiency of Krishna’s charioteering. He sought Krishna with this desire. Looking at the history, it looks like he sought Krishna out of this desire and not faith. So, Arjuna sought Krishna that day. At any other time, he did not feel the desire to approach Him.

Unless one seeks the Elders, one will not know the intricacies in carrying out ordained responsibilities. It is said that Dharmaraja is known to be a manifestation of dharma (righteous conduct). Even he made it a responsibility to approach, serve and learn from the Elders. Dhritarashtra is his father’s brother, i.e. uncle. He is the reason for all the difficult times they faced. From their childhood till after the Mahabharata war concluded, he kept trying to harm them till the last minute where he tried to kill Bhima. Even for such a person, after the Mahabharata war concluded, Dharmaraja arranged a proper place for Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. He would go there everyday, pay respects and seek blessings. Why? Because there is a reason for that.

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SLOKA WORD -

nithyam vruddho:pase:vinaha abhiva:dana si:lasya chathva:rithasya vardhanthe:

SLOKA MEANING -

Those who serve the Elders, bow their heads and express their interest in them will grow in 4 ways.

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Longevity, fame, wealth, younger generations of the family. They will live longer. They will attain fame and name. They will attain wealth. Their lineage will continue. Shastra (scripture) declares that one will see growth in all the four. That is why, in spite of [Dhritarashtra] being harmful, Dharmaraja had respect for him. Summary is to seek guidance from Elders. Only then, we will know the recommendations. One will then know how to conduct ourselves.

Arjuna! I am also not deviating or compromising in serving and seeking guidance from Elders. I have also served Sandipa. I did what he asked for. I served him for 64 days and learnt 64 arts. As guru dakshina (offering to teacher), I did fetch them their kids. Didn’t I? I also have never compromised nor turned back on the responsibilities. When I am doing these even when I don’t need to, what about someone like you who needs to be doing them? Because you have the desire to rule the kingdom. You desire to have all the relatives. You desire to enjoy the royal luxuries with them. Earlier, didn’t you express sorrow that you wouldn’t be able to enjoy without all of them? When those who have no desires are practicing their responsibilities properly, it does not make sense that you, having desires, think of abandoning responsibilities. Saying so, Sri Krishna is presenting His practice as an example.

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SLOKA WORD -

na:n ava:ptham ava:pthavyam vartha e:va cha karmani

SLOKA MEANING -

I have nothing new today that I need to attain, yet I am practicing karma (action).

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Presenting His practices as an example, He is moving Arjuna ahead, inspiring him to practice his responsibility.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!