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1. Episode Title: Episode 60 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 60)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The discussion centers on the importance of authentic spiritual practice and devotion, contrasting it with the modern ideology that "anything is better than nothing." It delves into the scriptural basis for understanding God and proper worship, emphasizing the hierarchy of authentic texts from Vedas to Puranas. The episode highlights the significance of Yajurveda and Purushasuktam in identifying the Supreme Being as Lakshmi Narayana. A key theme is the need to encourage correct spiritual progress and guide beginners, rather than condoning misguided or harmful practices. Krishna's teachings to Arjuna on performing duties perfectly and attentively are also discussed.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 60, devotion, bhakthi, dhya:na, meditation, worship, authenticity, scriptures, Vedas, Puranas, Ithihasas, Dharma Shastra, Yajurveda, Purushasuktam, Lakshmi Narayana, Krishna, Arjuna, karma, spiritual practice, encouragement, correct path, spiritual guidance, dharma, mumukshu, Ke:sava, de:vatha, a:gamas, rushis, yajna, srusti-sthithi-laya, a:thma, manasu, daivam, jo:shaye:th, a:ra:dhana, jna:na, Vande guruparamparam

3. Main Content:

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

These days, we hear an ideology. People say… “All that matters is that one is devoted. It doesn’t matter what devotion. It should be within.” “He is worshiping - It doesn't matter what. Isn’t it better than not having any kind of practice?” We hear this from many people. It sounds very good and seems logical. Isn’t it? [People say…] “Isn’t doing something better than not doing anything?” There is a saying in English. “Something is better than nothing.” But, nothing is better than nonsense. Can we say it is better that someone is doing something? However, if that something he does is corrupting, then what? Doesn’t that ruin the entire thing? It is better to do nothing than create nonsense. In the name of doing something, you may create disturbance or problem for the whole. Isn’t this [not doing anything] better?

The reason we are discussing this topic is that… These days, we see many ‘methodologies’ in the name of bhakthi (devotion), devotion to God and dhya:na (meditation). When it comes to whom and how to worship… Scriptures have properly clarified what the right thing is to do and what is not necessary. They clearly described what a growth-seeker should do? They clearly described what a mumukshu (a seeker of freedom from karma) should do? It is only one thing. What is it?

Any mantra establishes the same. There is an example used to explain this. Every river flows, and flows ultimately reaching the ocean. Similarly, it doesn't matter who we worship, reaches… ke:savam prathi gacchathi sarvade:va namaska:raha ke:savam prathi gacchathi (Whomever we worship, the prayers reach Ke:sava, right?) In that case, “Why can’t you happily worship Ke:sava?” “Why go somewhere else and then come here?” “Is anyone stopping you from worshiping Ke:sava directly? Is there any problem with that?” “No.” In that case, why don’t you happily do it? Just because you know a language, you construct some verses. “Everything is the same.” “Everything is good.” “Whatever you do, everything reaches the same destination.” People made up many such statements in the world today. We see that many people are in such a direction these days.

In earlier days, people constructed a temple specifically for a de:vatha (a divine power in the administration of God). Services are offered to the de:vatha accordingly. All worshippable entities have a respective procedure of worship - including Vishnu, Siva, Sakthi, Ganapathi, and other local de:vathas (divine powers). That’s the way it’s been forever. There are set procedures for worship. There are methods set for practicing those procedures. Despite all these in existence, people these days began certain trends. New methods emerged approx 60 or 70 years ago. What are they? All the de:vathas (divine powers) are ‘assembled’ and made accessible at one place. A shopping mall has everything in one place. Similarly, God ‘malls’ are where you find whoever you are looking for.

Neither you nor I know what God looks like. Neither you nor I have seen what God looks like. We learnt about God from scriptures. We add something extra to what we heard from them and talk. If we really have faith, we must believe only what the scriptures have stated and practice it. Scriptures also have been given the authenticity level based on their stage. A:gamas (scriptures) are scriptures that describe God. That a:gama (scripture) is authentic when it does not conflict with Pura:nas (ancient texts). Pura:nas (ancient texts) discuss many topics. That pura:na (ancient text) is authentic when it does not conflict with Ithiha:sas (epics). Ithiha:sas (epics) are authentic when they teach a practice that doesn’t conflict with dharma sa:sthra (scriptures on righteous conduct). When do dharma sa:sthra (scriptures on righteous conduct) become authentic? Dharma sa:sthra (scriptures on righteous conduct) is authentic only when they don’t conflict with what their source, Ve:das (Vedas), say. Top-most priority is given to Ve:das (Vedas). When one practices in alignment with Ve:das (Vedas) and down to the scriptures, then it’s authentic. Anything conflicting keeps it out of the authentic set. This is what our rushis (sages) established.

What do the Ve:das (Vedas) say? Amongst the Ve:das (Vedas), Yajurve:da (Yajurveda) is important. thasya yajure:va siraha (Yajurveda is the head) Don’t we say the head is the main part of the body? Only if it’s there, does the rest of the body work. Similarly, Yajurve:da (Yajurveda) is the head of all Ve:das (Vedas). Why? If the part of the system that rectifies any deficiency is in proper condition, then we can say that the system is fine. Isn’t it? If there is any deficiency in knowledge, then the process of filling the gap is yajna (sacrificial ritual). The part that declares the process of Yajna (sacrificial ritual) is Yajurve:da (Yajurveda). It clearly elaborates on Yajnas (sacrificial rituals). It allows for ways to regain anything that’s lost. Hence, it is the main one.

It is said that in Yajurve:da (Yajurveda), Purushasu:ktham (Purushasuktam) is the sira-stha:na (the head of the whole). Purushasu:ktham (Purushasuktam) is the primary part. What does it say? He is the sahasra-si:rsha-purusha (the ‘1000-headed being’). He is the one executing srusti-sthithi-laya (creation-sustenance-dissolution). That is how it starts. It is because of the one who does srusti-sthithi-laya (creation-sustenance-dissolution) that all of existence has taken form. Moving and non-moving - every entity that exists. That’s good. Now, how do we know who that is, what that thaththva (ultimate reality) is? How do we recognise it? When it details further, it’s said that whoever has Lakshmi sambandha (the divine bond with Lakshmi), He is the sahasra-si:rsha-purusha (the ‘1000-headed being’). hri:schathe: lakshmi:scha pathnyow (Hri and Lakshmi are your wives) If we realize that Purushasu:ktham (Purushasuktam) is paramount, and believe in it… If we believe in Ve:das (Vedas)…it says… The one with Lakshmi sambandha (divine bond with Lakshmi) is who executes universal srusti-sthithi-laya (creation-sustenance-dissolution). It is thus properly spelled in there. Various other parts of Ve:das (Vedas) clarify in many ways, in many instances, that He is Na:ra:yana (Narayana). The one with Lakshmi sambandha (divine bond with Lakshmi) is Na:ra:yana (Narayana). Hence, that thattthva (ultimate reality) is Lakshmi Na:ra:yana Thaththva (the ultimate reality of Lakshmi Narayana). Any other name also relates to Him through its meaning. Ve:dam (Veda) explains all of this.

Yet, because one has a few ‘followers’, can he establish himself as God and make a deity of himself next to Lord? What does that mean? If purushasu:ktham (Purushasuktam) is chanted ‘addressing’ him, his deity also receives abhishe:ka (ritual bathing) with milk and all full honors… There are many who sit there and have a deity of themselves receive abhishe:ka (ritual bathing). Should we praise them or question them? We must know this. We should never encourage anything that deviates us from the correct path, ultimately making us ignorant. We should encourage those who are facing difficulties practicing the right path. We should properly make note of the two. Encouragement does not mean you encourage anything one practices.

Assume someone is thirsty. What does he need to do? Drink water. Coconuts have water. Rivers, wells and taps supply potable water. Drainages also carry water. Would anyone recommend them though? Can we say that it’s okay as long as he is drinking something? To quench thirst, someone drinks alcoholic drinks. Do we say “what’s important is he is drinking, not what he is drinking?” Do we encourage him by saying that he is drinking very well and that should go for 1, 2, 3, 4 more?! Think about it. Or if he is drinking from a drain somewhere to quench his thirst… Do we encourage him by saying “at least he is drinking something?” Encouraging means to give him healthy potable water as not to risk contamination. COVID times require us to be even more careful with all these rules. We should avoid touch and be extra vigilant. If he can’t drink without touching the glass to his mouth, that’s good. Because he is drinking potable water, you can tell him it’s okay. However, we cannot condone someone who is drinking drain water. You must stop him. It’s not important to drink just anything. It’s important to drink something healthy. Even when drinking healthy, there is a recommended process. He may not drink the entire glass at once, perhaps sip by sip. That can be encouraged.

When having a meal, you must sit with folded legs - with a leaf, and glass of water next to you. You must do parise:chanam (purify and fortify the meal with sprinkled water), and only then eat. A child may not know yet. He doesn’t know how to eat without dropping the food. He may end up rubbing it on and around his mouth and stomach. Because he is trying to eat, encourage him. Teach him in gradual steps. If he is eating from the drain or dust, do we encourage him by saying at least he is eating something? No. Likewise, a beginner being taught to write, he will simply scribble the alphabet. It’s okay. Elders teach writing curves so they can be fit into the alphabets. For some time, they are taught curves on one side. Afterwards, they are taught curves that turn the other side. That is how we are taught. They did not let one keep on scribbling on the slate saying that he is at least writing something. In that case, he would not have learnt writing the alphabet throughout his entire life. If one lacks perfection or completeness in the prescribed process, no need to be critical or angry. Give encouragement for what’s been achieved so far. When one is doing weightlifting, if he succeeds in lifting them only half-way through, encourage him. However, if he is jumping up and down on the weights, do you claim he is jumping well? If one does even a fraction of what’s to be done, encourage him. That will enable him to reach perfection and completeness. The same goes for a:ra:dhana (worship), and jna:na (knowledge).

The authentic process must be stressed, as they are not topics that are easy to understand. We need not stress authenticity with things that can be readily seen. Our surroundings support our understanding of all that is visible. However, one must follow authentic standards in things that can’t be easily understood such as… a:thma (soul), manasu (mind), daivam (God), bhakthi (devotion) One may not do them as perfectly as the authentic standard prescribes. Jo:saye:th (encouragement), encouragement to beginners for any process must be done by one who has attained perfection in their practice... One must be encouraged to step up gradually.

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SLOKA WORD -

jo:shaye:th sarvakarma:ni

vidva:n yukthaha sama:charan ||

SLOKA MEANING -

A wise one, despite no necessity, must practice his duties perfectly and attentively like any beginner should. That way, he must encourage others towards that stage.

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It’s the same with you. It is for that same reason I am practicing karma (action) despite not having any necessity. Arjuna! You must also attain perfection in that. You should not relinquish karma (action). You must only continue to practice them. Enlightening Arjuna this way, Sri Krishna takes him forward in chapter 3, verse 26.

Vande: guruparampara:m (I bow to the lineage of gurus) Jai Srimannarayana!

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