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1. Episode Title: Episode 9 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 9)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: This episode introduces Chapter 3, "Karma Yoga," by delving into Arjuna's profound questions to Krishna regarding the superiority of intellect (buddhi) over action (karma). It explores the nature of a sthita prajna (person of steady wisdom) and the importance of performing one's duty without attachment to results. The discussion also highlights the proper etiquette for a disciple when seeking knowledge from a guru, emphasizing humility and genuine curiosity over an accusatory tone, and illustrates this through examples from Ramanujacharya's life and the sweetness of God's name.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Karma Yoga, Arjuna, Krishna, Sthita Prajna, Buddhi, Karma, Duty, Dharma, Guru, Disciple, Humility, Knowledge, Vedanta, Yamunacharya, Ramanujacharya, Thirumalai Aandan, Goshti Purna, God's name, Spiritual guidance, Questioning, Steadfast intellect, Liberation, Brahman, Devotion

3. Main Content:

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

We are entering the 3rd chapter of Bhagavad Gita, named “Karma Yoga (path of action).” It begins with a question from Arjuna. Arjuna questioned in the first two verses. It's customary to refrain from sharing information about good things unless specifically asked.

na aprushtaha kasyachith bru:ya:th (one should not speak unless asked)

If you inform someone without their asking, then it is not valued as much. When someone inquires, that means there is curiosity. When revealed to such a seeker, he will listen attentively to satiate the curiosity. Therefore, there is a rule that Vedanta (end of the Vedas, philosophical system) is to be disclosed only when specifically asked for. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna initially and again in the 2nd chapter during the explanation of the state of sthita prajna (person of steady wisdom).

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SLOKA WORD -

sruthi viprathipanna: the: yada: stthasyathi nischala: |

sama:dha: vachala: buddhihi thada: yo:gam ava:psyasi ||

SLOKA MEANING -

When your intellect (buddhi), which is bewildered by the Vedic texts, becomes steady and unmoving in contemplation, then you will attain yoga (union).

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You need two types of buddhi (intellect/understanding) - achala (unmoving) and nischala (unwavering). Krishna said you need to possess these two. Arjuna really liked this. Buddhi (intellect) will turn stable (sthita) if it is nischala (unwavering). We need good buddhi (intellect), so it becomes prajna (wisdom), which turns to sthita prajna (person of steady wisdom).

Arjuna asked for a response immediately as to how a sthita prajna (person of steady wisdom) is? What does he do, how does he talk? “I want to check if I belong to that category or not. If so, I can also leave this war and turn towards that.” In response to Arjuna’s question, Krishna explained the four different stages. And said folks in all these four stages, always do their duty.

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SLOKA WORD -

yas sarvathra:nabhisne:haha thath thath pra:pya subha:subham

na:bhi:nandathi na dve:shti thasya prajna: prathishttitha: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

He who is without attachment everywhere, who neither rejoices in obtaining good nor hates obtaining evil, his wisdom (prajna) is firmly established.

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He does the duty and there will be results, yet he stays unconcerned about them. Thus [Krishna] consistently emphasizes matters concerning performing duty. Concluding, he even says…

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SLOKA WORD -

a:pu:ryama:nam achala prathishttam samudram a:pah pravisanthi yadvath |

thadvath ka:ma: yam pravisanthi..

SLOKA MEANING -

Just as the waters enter the ocean, which, though ever being filled, remains unmoving and firmly established, so too desires enter the person...

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By taking an example of an ocean, He said, a sthita prajna (person of steady wisdom) also performs duty and he also reaps results. At first, He mentioned that buddhi (intelligence), intelligence, is paramount - He said we need nischala buddhi (unwavering intellect) and achala buddhi (unmoving intellect). And that we should do that alone.. He was talking about buddhi (intellect) all along. But then, why is He mentioning karma (action) again at the end? Even in the last verse he says,

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SLOKA WORD -

e:sha: bra:mhi: sthithih pa:rttha! nainam prapya vimuhyathi |

sthithva:: sya:m anthaka:le::pi bra:mha nirva:na mruchchathi ||

SLOKA MEANING -

This is the brahmi sthitih (state of Brahman), O Partha! Having attained this, one is not bewildered. Remaining in this state even at the hour of death, one attains brahma nirvana (liberation in Brahman).

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He called it as brahmi sthitih (state of Brahman), meaning he is asking us to perform karma (action). At first, He said buddhi (intellect) is better. Now, He is asking to perform karma (action). This is Arjuna’s doubt.

When someone is asking a question, the person who is being asked should not feel that he is being tested. He should be asked so that he feels like answering. It should feel like the one inquiring is passionate about knowing the answer. The inquirer shouldn’t ask as if he is forcing or investigating. Although Arjuna is a good person, the way he is inquiring is somewhat surprising, which makes us ponder why he is asking in such a way. Look at the verses that are in the beginning of chapter 3..

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SLOKA WORD -

Arjuna uva:cha

jya:yasi: che:th karmanas the: matha: buddhir jana:rdana!|

thath kim karmani gho:re: ma:m niyo:jayasi ke:sava! ||

SLOKA MEANING -

Arjuna said: If, O Janardana (Krishna), you consider intellect (buddhi) superior to action (karma), then why, O Keshava (Krishna), do you urge me to engage in this terrible action (karma)?

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This is the question.

jya:yasi: che:th karmanaha (if it is superior to action)

karmanaha (more than the karma, which is performed)

buddhihi (knowledge)

the: matha: (in your mind)

jya:yasi: che:th (if at all it is great)

thath kim karmani gho:re: (the one which is insignificant, far away and inferior)

karmani (the performance of karma)

That too it is so disagreeable, so much work, such chaos, also diverting us in different directions,

kim karmani gho:re: ma:m niyo:jayasi (Why are you pushing me to perform such karma?)

He didn’t stop there. He went into a harsher state.

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SLOKA WORD -

vya:misre:na iva va:kye:na buddhim mo:hayasi:va me:

thad e:kam vada nischithya ye:na sre:yaha a:pnuya:m

SLOKA MEANING -

With seemingly confusing words, you are bewildering my intellect (buddhi). Therefore, tell me decisively that one path by which I may attain the highest good.

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vya:misre:na iva va:kye:na (The words which cause restlessness and confusion.)

buddhim mo:hayasi:va (It feels as though you are confusing me.)

Although Arjuna is talking cautiously, because of anger, his words are sounding accusative.

buddhim mo:hayasi:va (It feels like you are accusing me.)

thad e:kam vada (Please don’t combine this and that, tell me in such a way that it is not confusing,)

…and such that I don’t have to think twice about it.

nischithya ye:na sre:yaha a:pnuya:m (After you brief me, I don’t have to evaluate if it is this or that. And I should be able to receive the appropriate benefit.)

In olden days, when classes were conducted in person, not online… When students actually went to the teacher for classes in person… In those days, the teacher would teach lessons to students, then assign them practice at home, called ‘homework.’ In modern days, homework is not recommended! Whatever needs to be taught needs to be done at school itself. Whether you make them memorize or anything else, it all needs to happen only during class. Once they leave the classroom, the student is not supposed to touch this subject! This is the new approach. This is actually not new, it’s what Arjuna asked. He requested, “this is the type of class I want.”

thad e:kam vada (Don’t confuse me and say some of this and some of that. Just tell me the conclusive essence. Just tell me only that.)

nischithya ye:na aham sre:yaha a:pnuya:m (It should be in such a way that it dispels my illusion, allowing me to affirm your statement and effectively implement it to reap the benefit.)

Arjuna asks “why are you confusing me in so many different ways?” When someone asks in such a manner, even those who are willing to share may hesitate to do so! They might say, “Your wish, go study wherever you want.” “Go! Why should I teach you?”

In Ramanujacharya’s history, there is someone named Thirumalai Aandan. When he was learning the commentary of Thiruvaimozhi, Ramanujacharya used to say, “Swami, it might be better if you teach it by correlating like this instead.” For this only, guruji used to get angry and say, “if you had to interpret it yourself, why do you need me?” The guru stopped teaching the lessons to him. After that, the noble Goshti Purna arrived there and said… “Whatever Ramanuja said is correct.” “I remember our guru, Yamunacharya, teaching it exactly the same way.” After hearing both versions, he affirmed that whatever Ramanuja interpreted is accurate and said, “We are just fortunate that we get to teach Ramanuja.” “We are just lucky that we are his gurus. Ramanuja is not any ordinary person.” “Ramanujacharya is the noble one who came to uplift the entire world.” “He is Yamunacharya’s ekalavya disciple.” “He is only coming to abide by the protocol of the scriptures.” He is not coming to us because he doesn’t know, or because of his ignorance. You reap good results only if you listen via a guru. The knowledge you get from a guru is the only knowledge which is worthy.

sa:ishtam pra:path (Only to make this true, he is coming to us. It is our fortune.)

“Let’s teach him well and uplift ourselves. Therefore, do not stop the lessons.” Thus, Goshti Purna encouraged Maladharadhira to teach Ramanuja.

What did Ramanuja say? “You are explaining one way, but it might be better like this or that.” Here is an example. Whenever I am listening to or saying God’s name, I feel like I am drinking honey, milk, sugar, kalakand. If we drink honey separately, it is good. Freshly drawn milk is very tasty, right? Jaggery is also tasty, right? Similarly, just like all these are tasty individually, God’s name is also tasty. Once Ramanujacharya listened to this, he said… “This is good, however, mix honey in milk, add kalakand and others in that mix.” “Why can’t we relate it to the enjoyment of taste in that combination?” It’s impossible to reject this. Honey is good, but after a few drops it is astringent in taste and we don’t feel like drinking it, though it is sweet. The same goes for jaggery. This is in olden days. Now it is difficult to eat that as well. Amrutham (nectar of immortality) was obtained by God churned out a small vessel of it for devatas (demigods). Even today, it is not depleted. Nobody knows how much has been consumed, as we don’t know how many devatas (demigods) exist. But it seems it is not a tasty drink. Thus, each item might taste great. However, enjoying it after mixing them all together…

Kennum, thenum, palum, kannalum, amudam, uththe: (Honey, milk, jaggery, sugar, and nectar)

Whatever is the taste of enjoying the drink after mixing all the items together… God’s name gives such a taste! We can say that this is how alwar (saint) might have felt. It sounded nice, however, he was denied. Guru thought, “Hm, self-preaching. Okay, whatever!” Guru thought that Ramanuja was trying to be one-up on him! But he didn’t comprehend how well Ramanuja interpreted the essence. Even when asking humbly, if Guru thinks it is outside of his teaching, he is angered. But in Arjuna’s case, he asked…

thath kim karmani gho:re: ma:m niyo:jayasi (Why are you pushing me to do this horrible karma?)

In addition, he said…

vya:misre:na iva va:kye:na buddhim mohayasi (I feel like you are deceiving me with your confusing statements.)

I am getting lost. Just properly tell me what one good thing is. Does anyone share if asked this way? However, this is how Arjuna asked! God has more love for us than any mother. God wants our well-being more than any father. God is a better well-wisher than any Guru who wants us to be uplifted. He is hitaishi (well-wisher). Therefore, he thought, at least somebody simply asked, which itself is really great! It’s okay! It seems like he didn’t understand well, so let’s teach him again so it can be understood better. So, He received the question favorably. [Arjuna] asked in an accusing tone. However, [Krishna] took it in a way when someone asks inquisitively. How does someone ask with inquisitiveness? Let’s learn about this and move forward.

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

Jai Srimannarayana!

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