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1. Episode Title: Episode 97 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 3, Episode 97)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS:

\* The importance of self-governance and the challenges of trusting human instincts.

\* Krishna's teachings on surrendering to the Divine to overcome the influence of \*prakruti\* (nature).

\* Understanding the pervasive power of \*prakruti\* (nature) and \*svabhava\* (innate nature) in human actions and desires.

\* The significance of relying on a Guru or the Lord for spiritual guidance and liberation.

\* Illustrative stories (Sage Vishwamitra, the scorpion and the bird, the jackfruit incident, the two hunters, the Panchatantra story) demonstrating human arrogance, the persistence of \*vasanas\* (inner tendencies), and the untrustworthy nature of self-reliance.

\* The concept of \*karthrutvam\* (doership) and the necessity of renouncing it to mitigate the effects of \*karma\*.

TAGS:

HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 3, Episode 97, Krishna, prakruti, svabhava, vasanas, dharma, self-governance, surrender, Guru, Vishwamitra, Vasishta, Panchatantra, human nature, arrogance, doership, karthrutvam, liberation, spiritual guidance, instincts, karma, penance, devotion, trust, Bhagavan, deities, Brahmin sage, pilgrimage, Ka:si, Gaya, jackfruit, hunter, turtle, tiger, bear, untrustworthy.

3. Main Content:

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

Wishes to everyone on the occasion of Indian Republic Day! This year is unique as the country is celebrating 75 years of Independence. Being a Republic means possessing the ability to self-govern. However, the question is, are we really governing ourselves? Trusting that a few will help in self-governing, we choose them via elections. If the chosen one turns out to be inadequate, that will lead to many bad situations. Instead, if the chosen one is capable, the citizens can hold their head high with pride. This we need to remember! If in the eyes of the world we are able to hold our head high and can proudly claim our identity, then that state is prosperous. What is that state?

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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 -

Again and again, I bow to Lord Rama, who removes all dangers, bestows all prosperity, and delights the world.

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Lord Krishna in chapter 3 of Bhagavad Gita says, `mayi sannyasya` (surrender to Me). He said, “Choose Me. Cast your vote for Me!” What should we do? There are only 2 options. One is Me and the other is `prakruthi` (nature). If you choose `prakruthi` (nature), then you would fall so far down that there is no point of return. The country has endured this for the past 70 years. On the other hand, if you surrender to Sri Krishna, He says, “I will bestow enough strength for you to feel proud of your identity anywhere in the world!” Anyone who felt they didn't need help and could self-manage, could not sustain themselves. This we must remember.

Sri Krishna’s question to us in 3.33 was, `nigrahah kim karishyathi?` (what will restraint do?). `prakruthim ya:nthi bhu:tha:ni` (beings follow their nature). It is unavoidable for anyone. We all are aware of Sage Vishwamitra’s story. He thought, ‘I should attain it by myself. I must command this `prakruthi` (nature).’ He put his trust neither on `Bhagava:n` (the Lord), nor on Elders. He felt very competent. Consequently, he traveled to different directions to do `thapas` (penance). First, he gained expertise in the skill of archery. He became very powerful. He tried to leverage it. However, each endeavor he made, in every direction, resulted in failure. He experimented in South, West and North directions. He encountered a different catastrophe in every direction. There, he faced either Menaka, or Sunasvepa, or Thrisanku. Every time, he managed to squander his penance-power in a different way. Since he was wise, he eventually took heed of `de:vatha:s` (deities). He sought blessings from Sage Vasishta and reached the state of `Bramha Rishi` (Brahmin sage). His efforts proved inadequate and he could only attain it with the blessings of Elders. He could overcome it once he realized their value. He could only taste failure when he misjudged his own ability or desired to command `prakruthi` (nature). Once he obtained Sage Vasishta’s grace, he even rose to the stature of guiding Lord Sri Rama! He could make Rama his devotee and his disciple. This story of Sage Vishwamitra is well known.

Some like to sit alone somewhere to meditate. Either on a mat, in an `a:sana` (posture), or in an open ground, or on grass somewhere. Their intent is to sit idle and concentrate. However, they get distracted and use their hands to pluck or scratch or dig up something. They do not do this consciously. `prakruthim ya:nthi bhu:tha:ni` (beings follow their nature) - their instincts drive them to act that way. We know we are not supposed to eat certain items. However, `prakruthi` (nature) degrades one to the point where he can’t resist. That is how a human gets ruined. Isn’t it?

Once a couple of creatures were getting washed away in a river flood. One was a scorpion and the other a bird. The scorpion sought help from the bird, ‘Could you please support me? I need to reach the shore. I am getting washed away and am about to die.’ The bird said, ‘Will you not sting me if I pull you out?’ The scorpion said, ‘You and I are both in danger. We both need to come out of it. You can help here. Why would I sting you? It is also risky for me.’ The bird agreed and allowed the scorpion to climb on top of him. As soon as the bird flew a short distance, the scorpion immediately grabbed the bird’s neck. Its instincts, caused by `prakruthi` (nature) made it grab the bird’s neck. That is his natural behavior. The bird asked, “Why are you stinging me?” The scorpion said, “What can I do? It is my nature.” `svabha:vo durathikramaha` (one's nature is difficult to overcome), `it is my nature’ prakruthim ya:nthi bhu:tha:ni` (beings follow their nature).

Once a man traveled to Ka:si and Gaya (pilgrimage cities in India). The tradition there is to give up something that one desires. He liked jackfruit, so he committed there to give up jackfruit. However, internally he had cultivated a habit driven by `prakruthi` (nature), and had a desire for jackfruit. Now it had been a while since he resolved to give it up. Once he traveled to his relatives' area. He came across jackfruit being sold in the market. The relatives thought about buying it. During the purchase, he was right next to them, watching. He then says to them, ‘Don’t buy those. These are better and delicious. Not those.’ Why should he bother about the fruit? It is because of `prakruthi` (nature), the inner instincts stimulated him. `sadrusam che:shtathe: svasya:ha prakruthe:he` (everyone acts according to their own nature). Though a human is aware of the facts, the accumulated `karmas` (actions/deeds) from previous lives compel him on his chosen path. He gets washed away in its flow, if he chooses the option of `prakruthi` (nature).

Sri Krishna says in chapter 3, ‘`mayi sannyasya` (surrender to Me) – [Instead,] take My support. I will ensure nothing untoward befalls you.’ If you rely on Him, He will control you as well as `prakruthi` (nature). He will help eliminate `va:sana:s` (inner tendencies/desires). What should be offered to Him? `sarva karma:ni` (offer all work done to Him). Your resolve is immaterial. Anyone born as a human has no choice but to submit to `prakruthi` (nature). If one wants to restrain `prakruthi` (nature), it won’t excuse him. What should we do then? Just like how sage Vishwamitra relied on his `guru` (spiritual teacher), Sage Vasishta, we must rely on Him, Who is the universal `guru` (spiritual teacher). It is prosperous for us to depend on Him and trust Him. It is imperative to recognize that He guides us. We must renounce the feeling, ‘I am doing it’, or ‘I am solely responsible’, or ‘it is for my benefit’. Then `karma` (action/deed) gets vanquished and will have no effect on us. Acquired knowledge also aids the `karma` (action/deed) and you get liberated. As He knows the dire effects of `prakruthi’s` (nature's) influence, the great Sri Krishna is advising thus. For anyone, the effects of `prakruthi` (nature) are dire.

Once, a brute hunter, following the advice of a learned one, changed his occupation, became a saint and began penance. Another hunter approached in search of a turtle. He kept on trying to aim for it and catch it. Though he caught it, he couldn’t hurt it however hard he hit on its shell. Seeing this, the first one who was a hunter himself earlier, suggested, “Why do you hit it like that? Striking its shell won’t cause any damage. You must flip it and simply poke the bottom. That’s all.” He spoke because his inner `va:sana` (inner tendency) acted up, stimulated by `prakruthi` (nature). It is buried in deep layers within him. Freshly made `va:sanas` (inner tendencies) are at a superficial level. However, some are deeply embedded inside. Where is the need for the first hunter to speak up? It was not necessary. However, the `ruchis` (inclinations) and `va:sana:s` (inner tendencies) situated inside tend to pop up occasionally. If he depends entirely on himself, they show their effect on him. With arrogance, if he feels he can achieve everything by himself, Sri Krishna says, “It is not advisable. You must put your trust on Me. I‘ll bear the responsibility. I‘ll make sure `prakruthi` (nature) neither causes any catastrophe nor impedes you in anyway.”

However, we are humans. A human naturally has certain faults. As a child, we used to hear a story from Panchatantra. Once a man was roaming in a forest. He suddenly hears the roar of a tiger from behind. He got scared. He immediately ran and climbed a nearby tree. He felt safe then. When he looked up, he saw a bear above him perched on top of the tree. Underneath, there is a wild tiger, whereas above, there’s a bear. He was horrified. He didn’t know what to do. The bear had also gone up the tree, as it was scared of the tiger. Time passed and night descended on the forest. Both the man and the bear felt sleepy. As they are wild animals, they are used to roaming around at night. He began to wonder how to get out of this predicament. Then the bear spoke. “Hey man! Do not worry. We both are in the same situation. We are scared and must protect ourselves from this danger. Therefore, you sleep first and I will keep the watch for us. Later you keep watch while I rest. Let us take turns until the tiger leaves. After it leaves, we can go our separate ways.” Agreeing to that, the man slept first. The bear kept an eye on the danger below. Meanwhile, the tiger below stated, “He is a man. He means danger to us. He will kill you later. Therefore, push him down. I‘ll devour him and leave.” Then the bear said, “I do not commit such heinous acts. No, it is not right to cheat one that trusts us.” The tiger from underneath tried hard to convince. Nothing worked. After some time the man woke up. Since the bear too was sleepy, he asked it to rest and promised to keep the watch. Some time later, the tiger tried again with the man, “Hey, the bear too is a wild animal. Even if I spare you, it won’t. It will attack and kill you later. Therefore, for your safety, push it down. I‘ll eat it and leave. You will be safe then.” He is a human, isn’t it? He is arrogant. His thoughts run wild. The tiger’s words worked on him. He tried to push the bear down from the tree. The bear while sleeping usually holds onto a branch. It woke up. As it was holding onto a branch, it didn’t fall. It stabilized itself quickly. The man was terrified. He didn’t know what to do. Then the bear said, “O fool and an ungrateful one! I saved you and did not push you when you were sleeping. You are not thankful for it. Yet, I will neither sacrifice you nor hurt you. You live as per your whims.” The bear thus established the untrustworthy nature of human. It waited until it was safe and left, saying that it is a sin to even kill such a being. That is how a man is. He is an arrogant one! Hence a man must be taught several times, repeatedly.

Earlier we alluded that a human life is like the 98th step of a 100-step journey. Another 2 steps will put him in a state of liberation. Sri Krishna’s endeavor is to help man attain it. That is also the essence of Upanishads. Sages also resolved to help us. That is why `Bhagava:n` (the Lord) patiently and in multitude of ways tried to elucidate in a detailed way. To safeguard a man, He asked to put `karthruthvam` (doership) on Him, so `prakruthi` (nature) has no impact. He is trying to make us realize this. The essence of His teaching is, “Do not be arrogant that you can do everything by yourself!” He explained in verse 3.33 of the risk of assuming the ownership of an activity or falsely thinking that one can achieve anything because he is the most intelligent! `Bhagava:n` (the Lord) is moving ahead trying to clarify how perilous this risk is.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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