



Shrimad Bhagavata Sandesh, Talk 05  
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*nigamakalpatarorgalitaṁ phalaṁ śukamukhādamṛtadravasamṛyutam |  
pibata bhagavataṁ rasamālayaṁ muhuraḥ rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ || (6)  
(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 1.1.3)*

We have seen two verses of *maṅgalācaraṇa* and then a brief introduction of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. After that we have been the blessed recipients of the invitation from Sage Shukadeva to come and drink the Śrīmad Bhāgavata nectar (*pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam*) which is also the ripened fruit of the *Kalpavṛkṣa* called Vedas. This ripened fruit is fully laden with juice, therefore one should drink it incessantly and in its entirety as there is no remnant to discard. We had seen this aspect of the purport of this verse yesterday and today we will see who are the exclusive recipients of the invitation from Shukadeva.

***muhu aho rasikāḥ bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*** certain words comprising the verses are extremely beautiful like the word *rasikāḥ*, which denotes those who eagerly and sincerely await the opportunity to drink and relish the nectarine stories of the Lord (*kathā rasa lampaṭāḥ*). To such *rasikāḥ* seekers, Sage Shukadeva has extended a special invitation and is calling them to come and drink (*pibata*) the the Śrīmad Bhāgavata nectar. The word *ālayam*, which was seen yesterday, and now the word *muhuḥ muhuḥ* both convey that ceaselessly, every moment one should drink this nectar, again and again.

***bhāvukāḥ***: Along with *rasika(s)* (those who are eagerly thirsty), the word *bhāvukāḥ* has also been used, which means people who have emotions (for the Lord).

***bhuvi***: this is a significant word emphatically stating that the Śrīmad Bhāgavata nectar is only available on the earthly plane (*bhuvi*) and is inaccessible in any other realm of existence, including heaven.

The story goes that the *Devatā(s)* came and suggested to Sage Shukadeva to exchange their heavenly nectar (*amṛta*) for King Parikshita with the opportunity to listen to the nectar of Śrīmad Bhāgavata.



Shukadeva simply drove them away in disdain, explaining that they were undeserving to enjoy this divine nectar as they verily crave to enjoy the sensual pleasures, by which they are strongly gripped.

**rasikāḥ:** Herein the word is *rasikāḥ* but there is another word *rasajñāḥ* (*rasam jānāti*) which has come previously and it denotes the experts who are fully informed about a subject and have the expertise to identify and enjoy the underlying nectarine essence. Whereas *rasika* is one who doesn't understand the intricacies and depth of a subject yet enjoys it. For example, in relation to music, not all are informed of literature aspects like *rāga*, *tāla*, *sura*, *laya*, etc. yet they enjoy listening to the music and are therefore *rasika*(s).

So is the case with literature. I have also seen that when we go to supervise the construction of a structure, while we may be praising it to be “very nice”, an architect will look at it altogether from a different perspective. Therefore, sometimes specialists and experts are unable to derive complete pleasure from anything as their vision is geared to finding faults or looking at how things could be made better.

But the Rishi(s) of *Naimiṣāranya*, even after being fully informed experts of the absolute Bliss as well as the extraordinary nectar (*rasajña*), enjoy the same (*rasika*) unlike the usual experts and specialists who keep on finding some or the other fault with everything.

**bhāvukāḥ:** Herein Sage Shukadeva has also included the word *bhāvukāḥ*, which denotes individuals endowed with such emotions for the Lord that when they listen to His stories, they get totally identified and the difference between the listener and the object of listening (stories) ceases to exist.

*vṛndāranyaṁ svapadaramaṇaṁ prāviśadgītakīrtiḥ |*

So when they - *bhāvukāḥ* - hear that Lord Krishna breezes into Vrindavan with His friends and companions - *sakhā*(s) - they completely identify with the story and think of themselves as one of the friends of the Lord in the lot entering Vrindavan. Their pure emotions start manifesting out of love for the Lord, the throat gets choked with emotions, they experience horripilations and tears continue rolling down from their eyes. Some get so deeply identified, established and absorbed in those emotions (*bhāvanā samādhi*) that the story (*kathā*) continues but they are in another realm of emotions, unaware of it.



It is extremely rare to come across someone who is *rasajña*, *rasika* and *bhāvuka* but when there is a confluence of these three in a person, then alone is the real joy (of listening) experienced. To such seekers, Shukadeva is extending the invitation.

Now having completed the introductory verses we will commence with the first message herein from the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. While seeing the introduction to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata we had seen that Maharṣi Veda-vyasa has authored this Mahāpurāṇa to pave the way to liberation for mankind - *niḥśreyasāya lokasya*. The initial messages relating to that will be seen now.

The introduction to the first message is that on the banks of the holy Ganga, surrounded by saints - Rishi(s)–Muni(s) - King Parikshita is sitting, calm and unperturbed even after being cognizant that on the seventh day his death awaits him in the guise of a snake bite by Takshaka. At that time, Sage Shukadeva came there and we heard yesterday that he was renowned as the crest jewel of dispassion and wisdom, because he was constantly on the move. For him it was said that he would only stay at one place for as long as it takes to milk a cow! King Parikshita, being aware of Shukadeva’s dispassionate nature, sought to quickly place the important queries of his mind before the Sage.

*puruṣasyeha yatkāryaṃ mriyamāṇasya sarvathā* (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 1.19.37)

So he said “O Lord, first and foremost, please tell me all that a person should do when death is around the corner.” Generally, no one is aware when death will strike, but King Parikshita considered himself fortunate as he knew that his death was definitely due in seven days. If anyone else was in his place, he would have been terrified.

*yacchrotavyamatho japyam yatkartavyam nrbhiḥ prabho . |*

*smartavyam bhajanīyam vā brūhi yadvā viparyayam* || (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 1.19.38)

He further asked what such a person, who knows his death is around the corner, ought to know and do?

Even otherwise, what should be remembered?

What should japa (repeated thought) be on?

What should be one’s duty?

Whose glories (*bhajana*) should be sung?



What should one listen to and remember? One may listen to many things but what knowledge ought to be heard and acquired and then remembered?

Whose devotion should be practiced?

What should be left?

With the above-mentioned questions, the first canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata concludes.

The next message comes at the very beginning of the second canto of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. It is the sixth verse of the first chapter of this canto. But before that we will see the praise by Sage Shukadeva for King Parikshita. He said, “O King, you have asked a very good question.” What is the criteria to determine whether a question is good or not? The yardstick is whether there is benefit of all. If a question is asked for the welfare of many and not just my limited self, then it is considered a good question. It should be a great question which is in agreement with the scriptures and is further backed by the approval of those who are established in the Self. So Shukadeva praised the King for asking this question.

It is true that there is an endless and varied spread of all that can be heard. But a human being does not live for very long and in this short life, his entire day is spent in earning a living, toiling at his workplace and catering to only transactional, social and worldly interactions and obligations. The night passes away in sleeping or in the enjoyment of sense pleasures. Thus a person remains fully trapped in the web of his household and family obligations and in doing so, uncountable days and nights of a lifetime are being wasted without any inkling of how much time has been wasted. Time lost never returns, but one is totally ignorant of the trap one is caught in. Therefore, Shukadeva answered the King’s question.

Shukadeva says that we are all born and have to live our ordained lifespan. Everyone wants benefits or, as per business terminology, wants to earn profit and achieve success in life, for which they keep on striving. But whether one seeks profit or success, the goal of all our efforts is to gain happiness in life.

Now, what is the actual distinct advantage of this particular human birth? There is a pool of options in relation to what is to be known, enjoyed, done, etc. but that doesn’t imply that one ought to indulge in all of it. One should decipher what is the most important amongst the whole cluster.



Thus Sage Shukadeva shares the first message upfront in response to the question:

*śrīśuka uvāca*

*etāvān sāṅkhyayogābhyāṃ svadharmapariniṣṭhayā | .*

*janmalābhaḥ paraḥ puṃsāmante nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ || (7) (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 2.1.6)*

**śrīśuka uvāca** - Shukadeva says

**etāvān** – I had mentioned previously that when any message comes in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is preceded by the words *etāvān* or *etāvāt*, which mean “only this much” (is to be known). The meaning is to be taken literally, as it is of utmost importance and other than these messages nothing is worth knowing. Thus one word indicates two interpretations.

An individual should have a clear understanding of what bears utmost importance so that the human birth becomes beneficial. Other than that, whatever is done isn't of any importance.

Shukadeva says, “King Parikshita, you mentioned about a person whose death is around the corner. At that time, there comes a moment when a flashback of his entire life plays out in front of him.” He can see his entire life crystal clear in front of him. In business dealings, sometimes there is profit and sometimes loss, but when the balance sheet is prepared the net final figure of total profit is clearly known. Similarly, in one's life, there are lot of gains, losses, joys, sorrows, merits and sins but what comes to the mind at the end moment is the balance sheet of one's life, as it reflects the net final thought(s) which formed the underlying essence of one's life.

*ante yā matiḥ sā gatirbhavet* – as is the mind (*matiḥ*) of the person on the deathbed, so will be the next destination (*gatiḥ*).

**puṃsām** - for the entire mankind, be it a female, male, child, youngster, etc., irrespective of whether one is literate or illiterate, where one lives, what is his Dharma, caste, etc...

**etāvān janma lābhaḥ** - the highest benefit of having attained human birth



**ante nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ** - is when, at the time of death (*ante*), one's mind is absorbed in the remembrance of Lord Narayana (*nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ*). One should definitely chose (*varaṇa*) and aspire for an end (*marāṇa*) endowed with the remembrance (*smaraṇa*) of the Lord, and He alone is worthy of being remembered on one's deathbed.

Who is this Narayana? He is the Self of all *jīva*(s). We have seen His description in the hymn sung by Bhakta Dhruva, wherein he offered prostrations to the *Puruṣa* (*puruṣāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ*) who is none other than Narayana Himself, and having entered our hearts, He enlivens and empowers all conditionings (body, mind, sense organs, etc.). The same attributeless Narayana also assumes forms and attributes and is omniscient, omnipotent and the ruler of all (*Sarveśvara*). Such a Lord alone is to be remembered at the final moment of life and if it so happens then the phrase "all is well that ends well" is verily and aptly applicable. Because by the remembrance of Naryana at the final moment, one has been completely sanctified and is the therefore the most fortunate.

Therefore this is (*etāvān*) the highest gain. This is the response to King Parikshita's question about what one should do when death is approaching fast, what should one remember and what *japa* should be done.

Looking upon it from the worldly point of view, people will say it is important that one must write a will. Even if we consider it as important and justified from the worldly point of view, yet there is no guarantee that later on there will not be any kind of dispute between the children. One phrase of English is "where there is a will, there is a way." But another interesting statement in relation to will is "where there is a will, there is a lawsuit!" The inheritors sometimes say that they will challenge it and contest that will. All these are mere worldly transactional matters.

What deserves to be remembered at the end moment is Lord Narayana alone (*nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ*).

In relation to this, some say that if it is all about the last moment of one's life, then what is the need to do anything from now? When the last moment arrives, at that time I will remember Narayana. Sage Shukadeva could pre-empt this question and therefore he says that remembering Lord Narayana at the end moment cannot happen impromptu unless one has prepared oneself throughout one's life.



There is a simple rule in place - whatever our mind receives, that alone is remembered, so reception takes us to contemplation. What has never been experienced by the mind is impossible to remember. If an unknown person approaches us and says "Do you remember me?" we will be taken aback by the question. Being said on a lighter note, when you are not my brain's member then how can I re-member? When I haven't collected in the first place then how can I re-collect? When something hasn't been cognized then how can it be re-cognized?

So the message is that only that which has been experienced (received) can be remembered.

Another point is that while we are continuously receiving and experiencing all kinds of sense objects, things, people, circumstances and experiences, only what we love will be remembered the most and this remembrance out of love is joy-giving. Sometimes hatred is also the cause of remembrance, but that is not joy-giving.

Thus, sudden remembrance of Lord Narayana at the last moment of life is not possible. In the Bhagavad Gītā, Lord Krishna says that one should remember Him at all times (*tasmāt satatam*) and only then will one be able to remember Him at the final moment. From a transactional point of view, we may need to know, understand, identify, work, etc., but even while doing all of that, we should remember the Lord and do the work as worship of the Lord, with the conviction that this is Lord's work. If one is able to do so then it will be very beneficial and uplifting for the seeker.

### ***sāṅkhyayogābhyām:***

The word *sāṅkhyā* denotes attaining the knowledge of the Self by discrimination between Self and not-Self (*ātma anātma viveka*). One meaning of the word *yoga* is eightfold *yoga* (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*) in which by *āsana* (positions in yoga), *prāṇāyāma* (breathing exercise), etc. one gets established in the state of cessation of thoughts (*nirvikalpa samādhi*).

Then the mind being absorbed in the knowledge of the Self is also *yoga*. Thirdly *yoga* can be inferred as devotion also (*bhakti yoga*). When we love someone, then the identification and sense of oneness with that person is instantaneous. Thus the word *sāṅkhyayoga* encompasses *jñāna yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga yoga* and *bhakti yoga*.



**svadharmapariniṣṭhayā** - following one's Dharma with all faith and determination is *karmayoga*. Now one may say, "I am a great *karmayogī*" or "I am a *jñāna yogī*, devotee, etc.," and this is fine because the main purpose of remembrance of the Lord is being served by it. Therefore, any *yoga* one may undertake is worthwhile if one has been successful in remembering the Lord through it. This is the first interpretation.

The second thing which can be inferred is that if one aspires towards remembering the Lord at the last moment then one should live an austere and dedicated spiritual life, thereby sincerely performing various spiritual practices such as worshipping the Lord, doing *japa*, meditation, etc.

Some seekers have a predominance of emotions for the Lord and, therefore, through devotion they remember the Lord. Some like the path of Vedanta, that is the path of knowledge, and they contemplate upon the attributeless Lord. Some perform all their actions for the Lord (*sarvakarmānupāya*) and through this they remember the Lord. It is fine whichever way one remembers the Lord, as the goal is remembrance of Him at the final moment.

So one may choose to walk the path of knowledge, devotion or action and if our entire life is dedicated towards the chosen path and absorbed in the various spiritual practices (*sādhana*) relating to that path, then the mind will become such that at the final moment, there will be remembrance of the Lord. Don't postpone it to the final moment as it will not happen and, moreover, none of us know when our final moment will be.

So Sage Shukadeva's simple reply to King Parikshita's question is that when death is near, one should remember only the Lord, continuously. Meditate upon Him and remember Him when one knows that anytime soon one's breathing can cease.

I have seen such individuals to whom others suggest that they should take the Lord's name but they bluntly refuse, saying they don't get any joy in doing so. Others are worried about such a person but they are not bothered at all. It is a matter of great misfortune.



In this context, some have fear and ask, “What is the guarantee that if one has remembered the Lord for one’s entire life then, at the final moment, remembrance of the Lord alone will certainly be there in the mind?” They have doubts whether it will so happen or not.

I will give you the response which comes in the Gajendra mokṣa portion of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, wherein the Lord Himself says that those who sing my glories and hymns and remember me like Gajendra did, then in their last moment I give them pure wisdom (*dadāmi vimalāṁ matim*). Now what can be more pacifying and superior than this promise given by the Lord Himself? Therefore, leaving aside all worries, remember the Lord and rest assured. If we did what we could and what we were supposed to, then the Lord will take care of the rest.

Another question people often ask is this - if a person dies in his sleep or while he is in a coma, how can such a person who was not conscious and who had lost his thinking capacity, remember the Lord?

The answer depends on what kind of a life he led. Also, before sleeping or slipping into a coma, he must have had some thoughts. Further, as the Lord has promised that if one has led a sacred and pious life then one need not worry about the final moment. So we should leave it to the Lord and we shouldn’t entertain any kind of worry. Therefore, one may choose any of the paths, be it knowledge, devotion, *yoga (aṣṭāṅga yoga)* or surrendered action, but one should remember Lord Narayana at all times.

So, we saw who Narayana is. He is the one who, having entered the heart, enlivens and empowers all our sense organs, etc. Such a Lord is to be remembered at all times as well as on the deathbed. King Parikshita was like that! His whole life was in remembrance of the Lord and now, at the end of his life too, he has no fear of death. He entertains no other thought other than of the Lord. This means that his life must have been a pious, religious and spiritual life. Therefore, it has been emphatically mentioned here that one should remember the Lord at all times and not procrastinate until the end moment, as it won’t happen then.

Herein, as the paths of dharma, knowledge, *yoga (aṣṭāṅga yoga)*, devotion have been mentioned, the forthcoming messages would be relating to these paths. The very first message is one which can give beatitude and liberation and is indeed beautiful.

Om Tat Sat