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1. Episode Title: Episode 117 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 117)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of a stable mind and its characteristics, Understanding the qualities of a sthitha prajna (one with a stable mind), The importance of performing one's duties, The process of learning and understanding spiritual teachings

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, sthitha prajna, Arjuna, Krishna, knowledge, duties, karma, understanding, spiritual guidance

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), We are discussing the question posed by Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita verse 2.54. Arjuna wanted to find out details of a sthitha prajna (one whose mind is stable with proper knowledge). He wanted to know how a sthitha prajna looks, how he talks, what kind of thoughts he has, and what kind of activities he does.

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SLOKA WORD -

sama:dhistthasya sthitha prajnasya bha:sha: ka:

SLOKA MEANING -

What is the speech of one whose mind is stable with proper knowledge?

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One whose mind is stable with proper knowledge, i.e., a person who is equipoised. His swaru:pa (form/nature) is known by the words which describe him [bha:sha]. What words describe his swaru:pa?

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SLOKA WORD -

kim prabha:she:tha?

SLOKA MEANING -

How does he speak?

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Prabha:she:tha means talking. Hence, he wanted to know the way he speaks.

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SLOKA WORD -

kima:si:tha?

SLOKA MEANING -

What is his mental state?

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One becomes stable in mind only if one constantly reflects. Hence, Arjuna wanted to know what his attitude is.

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SLOKA WORD -

kim vraje:tha?

SLOKA MEANING -

What kind of activities does he do?

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Vraje:tha is movement. What kind of activities does he do? Please let me know what kind of activities he does in his lifetime.

As a response to those questions, the Lord described his swaru:pa in the next verse 2.55 that begins with the term prajaha:thi. Next, Arjuna asked what his mental state is, right? It will be udve:ga rahitha (without any disturbances).

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SLOKA WORD -

dhu:ke:shu anudvijna manaha

SLOKA MEANING -

One whose mind is not disturbed by sorrow.

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Next, Arjuna asked how his activities would be. The Lord said yada: samharathe: cha:ya:m in verse 2.58. He asked, how does he talk?

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SLOKA WORD -

na abhinandathi na dve:shti yassarvathra anabhi sne:haha

SLOKA MEANING -

He does not rejoice or hate; he is free from attachment everywhere.

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He responded in proper order in these four verses. He explained comprehensively the nature of a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ra (realization of the soul) in these four verses. How would one who attained it be? What would he do? How would he talk? The Lord explained it as Arjuna had asked, but we don’t know what he understood.

Once a guru gave a lecture in school about cows. He said a cow is a domestic animal and gives milk. It has four legs, a tail, and horns. He finished the lecture. Two students who were friends came out of the class and started walking on the road.

[First boy] It is a cow.

[Second boy] Are you crazy? That is not a cow, that is a bull.

[First boy] You just heard in the class. Didn’t you understand anything from Guruji’s lecture?

[Second boy] Forget about me. What did you understand?

[First boy] I understood. Guruji said a cow gives milk. See, someone is milking it.

The animal was there. There was a farmer there who started milking it.

[Second boy] It is giving milk. It has four legs, a tail, and horns. It is also eating grass.

[First boy] Till yesterday, you called it a cow. Today after listening to the lecture, you are calling it a bull. You have to understand what Guruji says. It has all the qualities of a cow which Guruji described.

[Second boy] No, it is a bull. How can you call it a cow?

It has all the qualities which Guruji described. However, on what basis are you calling it a cow? The first boy was unable to explain. Both of them went to Guruji. Guruji understood that the boy had heard the lecture but didn’t understand anything. Guruji had to describe the qualities of a cow. He recapitulated them.

You folks can tell what a cow is. Is it an animal which gives milk? Dogs also give milk. Is the one which ‘moos’ a cow? Even a cassette would make that sound. We can’t call it a cow.

On what basis can we say an animal is a cow? There are two identifications. One is the skin which hangs loosely under its neck. What’s it called? It’s called ganga do:lu (in Telugu). The second is the mu:porum (hump) on its back. If these two identifications are there, it is fine if there is no tail or horns. Even if it loses a leg by accident, we can call it a cow.

Sometimes, its milk might be exhausted or maybe it hasn't started giving milk yet. Just because of that, we can’t say it is not a cow. Hence, the quality by which to recognize a cow is called asa:dha:ra:na lakshana (identifying quality), which should be exclusive to that, i.e., not in any others.

If we call it an animal, there can be many animals. It need not be a cow. If we say one which gives milk is a cow, there are many animals which give milk. They need not be cows. If we say one which makes sounds is a cow, all of them make sounds. We cannot identify an object with qualities that are the same as with others. We can only identify it on the basis of an exclusive quality. Only then can we properly identify that object. Not otherwise.

First, we have to listen to the lecture. After we listen, we have to repeatedly reflect on it in our mind. We have to persevere till what we are reflecting on appears as if it is in front of our eyes. That happens when you start listening to the Guru first. It happens when you start thinking about what you heard. When you think, you will get some doubts.

If Guruji is preaching for hours and if the disciple is just staring at him, it means that whatever he is listening to is not getting through to him. We also don’t know how much Arjuna is understanding what Sri Krishna is saying. If Sri Krishna is saying something, he may be understanding something else.

Do your karmas (duties). As you keep doing them, the va:sana:s (instincts) from our past lives get controlled and finally get eliminated. All the va:sana:s should be eliminated. Only then will you have clarity of knowledge. Past karmas must be removed. Karma gets removed with karma.

That is why the Lord clearly stated earlier, karmaye:va:dhika:rasthe: (you have the right to perform your duties), you have to definitely perform karmas. Arjuna feels like renouncing karma and going somewhere else. However, Sri Krishna said that performing karmas is the first step and you should definitely do it.

What is the benefit of doing your duties? Actually, you should do them without expecting anything. However, you also get a benefit out of it. What is the benefit? Old karmas will get eliminated. Dirt on a stone gets eliminated when you clean it with another stone. Same with wood also. Hence, first, they should be eliminated. They are like darkness. Once that recedes, we can see what is there.

Once we see it, we feel like hearing about it. As we listen, we feel like thinking about it and get favorable thoughts about it. We feel like preserving it in our heart. We want to ensure that it stays in our heart despite being disturbed. It is a whole process.

Why should we do all these? As Arjuna had the intention of renouncing work, though Sri Krishna has been telling him to work, it is not getting through to him. Even Sri Krishna can see that Arjuna is unable to understand anything as he is not responding. Like one-way traffic, it is only Sri Krishna who is doing the talking. It is not clear if Arjuna is understanding anything or not.

But he had an expression as if he was understanding everything. If you don’t understand, a different facial expression would come. However, Arjuna is not changing his expression. Sri Krishna is feeling as if he is wasting his energy with all the explanations. All of a sudden, Arjuna asked a question, ‘who is sthitha prajna, how would he be?’ That’s not a question to ask as Sri Krishna explained about it clearly. However, Arjuna is asking about it again.

Sri Krishna feels happy that Arjuna is understanding something as he is questioning him. Doesn’t matter if what he is asking is right or wrong, but at least he is asking something. Sri Krishna gets easily pleased. He feels happy if anyone asks him for anything.

Once a Guruji was giving a lecture and said, ‘All of you have been listening for so long. How come no one has any question?’ One disciple felt bad for the guru. Since Guruji said to ask questions, he felt he should ask something and stood up.

[Disciple] ‘Guruji, I have a question’.

[Guru] At least one person felt like asking something. Please ask.

[Disciple] Why is the size of the nose only this much?

Guru thought he would ask something from the lecture.

[Disciple] Why did God put it here? There is so much place in the back of the head, he could have put it there. We have mouth, hair, ears, and eyes on the front side of the face; it is so congested.

We can imagine how Guruji must have felt. He might feel exasperated and feel like hitting him. Arjuna is currently in that stage. When Sri Krishna said that one must first stabilize knowledge in his mind, Arjuna immediately wanted to know about it and attain it, keeping all other things aside.

Arjuna should have asked how to perform karmas or how many aspects are in karma. However, he asked, ‘How can one become and how to recognize a sthitha prajna? How does he talk? What are his activities and mental state?’ If you tell me about those, I will adopt that first.

A child asks a mother for a mango.

[Mother] It is not ripe yet.

[Child] What do you mean by ripe?

[Mother] It has to become soft.

The child goes and squeezes it, makes it soft, and brings it to mom. Is that ripe? If you want to be a police officer, you need discipline. What does a cop look like? He has a nice cap on his head and wears a uniform. The boy goes to the market, buys and wears those things, shows his mom, and says, ‘mom, I am a cop’.

The way Arjuna is questioning is similar.

[Arjuna] Tell me about sthitha prajna, I will see how to attain that.

[Sri Krishna] At least you asked a question, I will answer you.

Thus, Sri Krishna is answering him wonderfully in two ways in four verses. Let’s try to understand them. Jai Srimannarayana!

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