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1. Episode Title: Episode 120 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 120)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The characteristics of a stable mind (sthitha prajna), understanding desires and their impact on the mind, the importance of managing the mind, and the relationship between the mind and self-realization.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, sthitha prajna, Arjuna, Krishna, desires, mind management, self-realization, spiritual practice

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Sri Krishna explained to Arjuna the characteristics of a sthitha prajna (one with a stable mind and proper knowledge). We can learn how He does it by going through the four verses starting from Bhagavad Gita 2.55. One who has attained a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ra (self-realization) is called sthitha prajna.

First, He has to describe such a matured person, one who has perfected his sa:dhana (dedicated practice). Sri Krishna is explaining this to Arjuna in verse 2.55.

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SLOKA WORD -

prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n

sarva:n parttha! mano:gatha:n |

a:thmany e:va:thmana: thrupthaha

stthitha prajnas thado:chyathe: ||

SLOKA MEANING -

When a person gives up all desires that arise in the mind and is satisfied in the self, that person is called sthitha prajna.

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Who is called sthitha prajna? The one whose manas (mind) is happy and filled with a:thma (soul), and nothing else. He learns about ji:va (soul), its characteristics, its form, and thinks only of what gives him bliss, not other things. He thinks all others are there to facilitate this knowledge of the soul, but they are not his goal. His goal is to attain the a:thma svaru:pa jna:na (inherent knowledge of the soul). That person is sthitha prajna.

When will that happen?

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SLOKA WORD -

prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n

sarva:n mano:gatha:n |

SLOKA MEANING -

When desires are given up, then the mind will develop interest in the soul.

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We need to observe an aspect here. What is He asking us to leave? Prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n (giving up desires). Ka:ma:n (desires) means desires, not objects or the experiences with the objects. I will not eat, drink, or breathe. I will sit somewhere and close my nose. Sri Krishna is not telling us to do this. He is not calling such a person sthitha prajna.

Right now, He needs to make Arjuna wage war; He needs to make him work. That is the goal. But when you work, there is an underlying desire. That needs to be removed. That is ka:ma (desire). You have to work. But thoughts such as ‘I am doing it. It is happening because of me… whatever comes from this work is mine alone’ are defects for the task being performed. These thoughts have to be given up.

How should they be given up?

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SLOKA WORD -

purammunda:na patthu kala:yi adaya va:sa:na yo:de vidugayyum

SLOKA MEANING -

Whatever is other than the soul should be completely left behind so that they never return.

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Says Pillai Lo:ka:cha:rya, a great person in the lineage of Sri Ramanuja:charya. Actually, where do these va:sana:s (instincts) reside? In manas. Our manas is a huge store room that has all these. So we have to remove them from manas. We have to empty the manas. If we want to do some work, what stops us? Our manas, not the objects.

Let’s say someone wants to go to a temple. Someone sitting next to him might say, ‘Why do you want to go to a temple? You will be wasting your efforts and money.’ Instead of that, we can go play or do something else. It feels as if going to the temple is useless. Where are you feeling? In manas. Why? By the words of the one sitting next to you. After listening to the one sitting next to him, manas thought about it. Manas is the one that decided the recommended activity as something wrong. Manas is the one that also made you do the prohibited bad deed. Hence, the one that is dangerous and the reason for everything is manas.

We have discussed this many times previously.

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SLOKA WORD -

mana e:va manushya:na:m ka:ra:nam bandha mo:kshayo:

SLOKA MEANING -

The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation for a person.

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The one that can suffocate a person is manas. One which can make him enjoy freely is also manas. Manas is very critical. If this is favorable to him, nothing can stop him in the world. If it is not favorable to him, whatever one does will not make him happy. Manas is so powerful. Great personalities like rushis (sages) are also very careful with manas, knowing its dangerous nature.

Even the great a:lwa:rs (saints) who became famous for receiving divine knowledge directly from God,

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SLOKA WORD -

nenjame: nallai nallai unnai peththa:l en seyyo:m ini ennakurai

SLOKA MEANING -

Oh mind, you are so good; if you are favorable to us, there is nothing unconquerable in the world.

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Pay obeisance to the manas. Nallai nallai - they are patting its [manas] back, saying it is good. Why are they saying that? Unnai peththa:l en seyyo:m (if you are favorable to us, there is nothing lacking for me in this world). We can observe how wonderfully a:lwa:r is managing the manas, a personality development process.

Once we praise the manas, ‘Who is greater than you in the world? What is not possible if you desire?’, the manas which was so stubborn before starts melting. Anyone becomes happy if you praise him a little. Who will be happy if you scold them? If you praise them a little when they are doing a task, they feel like taking on more tasks. Praise is necessary.

However, if you speak of things that aren’t true, such as praising a one-eyed person that his eyes are beautiful or wide like lotuses, it is lies. You shouldn’t lie to praise. But if you recognize the actual hard work of someone and praise, if you hired him for one task, he will do ten more tasks. You might see this in a few people. There might be someone who is arrogant and uncooperative. However, if you could win him over somehow, he can do anything for us.

Manas is also like that. Hence, we should never fight with manas. We should never scold it or hurt it. At the same time, we shouldn’t give it whatever it asks and spoil it. Whatever we need, we should tell it in a way conducive to the manas. A:lwa:r says, nenjame: nallai nallai, he praised the manas saying, ‘you are very good’. Whatever opposition manas had towards him has gone now. Previously it used to feel whatever a:lwa:r thinks, I have to do the opposite of it. Our manas is usually like that.

Try to do some good things with manas and see. You might feel you always do good deeds. We don’t mean that. Just sit in front of God and ask your manas to see God in your manas for just five minutes without any other thoughts. Forget five minutes; it would be great if you can think of God for just one minute. Think that in that one minute you shouldn’t remember a monkey or peacock. The minute we close our eyes, we will see a monkey [in manas]. Whatever we don’t want, that is exactly what enters the mind. Whatever way we don’t want, that is exactly the way things enter the mind.

However long we sit, that half minute or quarter minute, we end up thinking of only the monkey. The more you want to avoid it, the more stubborn it [manas] will get. There was a Brahmin.

[Brahmin] I can’t bear my wife. She doesn’t do a single task in spite of me telling her repeatedly. I ask her to arrange puja (worship) items; she makes sure there is nothing there. His friend thought about it and gave him good advice. He told the Brahmin, whatever you want her to do, tell her not to do it. He thought of giving it a try. He told her, ‘Don’t clean anything near the deity; throw the deity away.’

[Brahmin’s wife] Who are you to ask me to throw the deity away? She nicely cleaned everything near the deity.

[Brahmin] You can’t get water.

[Brahmin’s wife] I will get it.

It is her nature to do whatever he asks her not to do. He liked his friend’s advice. Whatever he wanted her to do, he would tell her in a negative way, not to do it, and she would nicely do the same. The next day was Brahmin’s father’s thithi (annual death ceremony). He wanted to make her perform it.

[Brahmin] I am not going to perform father’s thithi tomorrow.

[Brahmin’s wife] You have to perform it.

[Brahmin] I won’t do it at any cost.

[Brahmin’s wife] Why won’t you do it? I will make you do it.

Brahmin was happy.

[Brahmin] I won’t offer curries or pickles on that day.

[Brahmin’s wife] You have to offer four types of curries and pickles.

[Brahmin] I won’t offer vadas (fried lentil balls), fried foodstuff.

[Brahmin’s wife] I won’t cook regular vadas; I will cook spicy vadas and sweet vadas.

Brahmin was happy his trick worked. His wife cooked curries, vadas, sweet rice, and offered everything.

[Brahmin] I won’t call any priests.

[Brahmin’s wife] Let’s call four priests.

She went and invited the four priests.

[Brahmin] I won’t serve food to these priests or give water to wash their feet.

She made him wash their feet and serve food to the priests. Brahmin was extremely happy. He forgot the secret trick. The secret is to say what needs to be done in a negative way. In his over-excitement that everything is going so well, he forgot the secret trick. The leaves in which the priests ate should be thrown in water or thrown in a pit; dogs shouldn’t touch it. He forgot about it and said, ‘Dogs shouldn’t touch it, so throw them carefully.’ She took all the leaves and put them near the dogs. Our manas is four times more powerful than that. It never does what we ask it to do. Whatever we prohibit it to do, it wants to do only that.

Hence, after going a little further in the ninth chapter, Sri Krishna says,

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SLOKA WORD -

a:thmaivasya:thmano: bandhuhu

a:thmaiva ripura:thmanaha

SLOKA MEANING -

The mind is both our friend and enemy. The mind can be our friend if we make it favorable to us; if not, it becomes our enemy.

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Manas is our friend and enemy too. If you make it favorable to you, it becomes your friend. If not, it becomes your enemy. There are no friends or enemies outside of us; all that is nonsense. The actual friend and enemy is within us. Thus, the Lord asks us in the ninth chapter to be careful. This manas is very critical. Hence to make it favorable, Namma:lwa:r says, nenjame: nallai nallai - hey manas, you are so good; unnai peththa:l en seyyo:m - if you are favorable, what is impossible to achieve in this world? If you are favorable to me, there is nothing lacking for me in this world.

We should make manas do what’s necessary for us, like making a stubborn child work [by making him a friend]. Hence, manas is very important. We have to remove unwanted thoughts from manas; we have to transform them there. Ka:ma:n prajaha:thi, the Lord says in verse 2.55. Let’s learn how Sri Krishna is asking us to do it. Jai Srimannarayana!

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