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1. Episode Title: Episode 126 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 126)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of a steady mind (stitha prajna), understanding the importance of focus and duty, the impact of emotions on behavior, the story of Jada Bharatha and the king, the stages of mental states leading to spiritual growth.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, stitha prajna, Arjuna, Krishna, focus, duty, emotions, Jada Bharatha, spiritual growth, karma, meditation.

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Arjuna desired to know about stitha prajna (one with a steady mind). Sri Krishna is in the process of explaining the swaru:pa (nature), ru:pa (appearance), and pravruththi (attitude) of a stitha prajna. He is detailing the ripened state of stitha prajna and what he would be like in this exalted state.

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SLOKA WORD -

prajaha:thi yada: ka:ma:n

SLOKA MEANING -

When one gives up all desires

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For one to be elevated to this state, one needs to go through the prior stage of eke:ndriya dasa (state of single-minded focus).

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SLOKA WORD -

duhkhe:shv anudvigna mana:ha

sukhe:shu vigatha spruhaha |

vi:thara:ga bhayakro:dhaha

stthithadhi:hi munir uchyathe: ||

BG 2.56

SLOKA MEANING -

The one who is not disturbed by the dualities of happiness and distress, who is unbothered by desires, fear, and anger, is called a sage with a steady mind.

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It means he is focused on his goal and not distracted by anything his body experiences nor the surroundings. He continues to work on accomplishing his goal. Because he is a karma yo:gi (one who performs duty), he continues to do his karma (duty). However, he is not affected by anything his body experiences.

In general, it is impossible to ignore the experiences the body undergoes. Firstly, the body undergoes transformations. Secondly, the mind goes through changes as well. The body experiences happiness and sadness when those emotions are evoked due to circumstances. He may cry, bawl, and bite others when he does not like what is happening. These are changes related to the body.

Regarding changes in the mind, when he cannot do much with his body, he would think, “He should suffer in some way. How can he do this to me?” especially if the other person is of higher or greater stature, then he would curse them in his mind. We observe such deviations in the mind. Why did these happen? If he does not want to perform an activity with his body but feels obligated to do it as a duty, then he does it while cursing in his mind. He gets angry. He is interested in his body; he is forced to perform an activity that was asked by another. What can he do? He will do it crying. But he cannot appear to be disinterested; otherwise, he will be fired from the job. Therefore, in his mind, he would curse while working.

If anyone is told to work beyond normal working hours or to work during lunchtime, what will he do? In his mind, he will be unhappy, but being forced to work, he will work. He will experience a type of agony. This happens while he is working. Behaviorally, however, a fear sets in on seeing a snake. In fact, the changes in mental state are a result of identifying yourself as a body as you notice the other being/object. Otherwise, these do not occur. Snakes are not always fearful.

Imagine little children who are below 1 year old. An infant is lying down. A snake comes in, crawls onto him, and slithers away. The snake will not hurt the baby in any way. Why? We’ll elaborate on it later. When it comes onto the baby, the baby is just moving its limbs and babbling various sounds nonchalantly. The snake would ignore the baby and move away.

If a baby’s guardian sees the snake, then they will scream in fear. Then the snake turns around, tries to attack this adult. They then grab a stick for protection. The snake then evades the stick, jumps onto the adult, and bites them. Or they are able to hit the snake and kill it. Why did the snake not bother the baby earlier? Ever wondered about it? Why did it react only after the adult screamed? Ever thought about it? Because the baby never felt that the snake would hurt him! The baby does not have any mental reaction to it. As the baby never felt threatened, he never tried to attack the snake. He never feared, felt anger, hostility, or acted vengefully. Since the baby never felt these emotions, the snake too did not need to counteract. It ignored the baby as the baby ignored it and moved away from one side.

However, the guardian had a reaction, thinking that it could harm them. Or since he likes the baby, he thinks it would harm him, causing a loss. That he would lose something he loves. That the snake came here to cause him that loss. Therefore, to save the baby, he wanted to cause grief to the snake. To cause that grief, he has to do something. Hostility. We defined what anger is earlier. Based on such reaction of the adult, the snake has a counter-reaction. It attacks, and a fight ensues. The snake is just an example here. There are people who are more dangerous. The harm can come from them. There are many objects that are even more dangerous. The harm can come from them too.

Whatever it may be, when a soul indwells, it spreads the waves of reaction or knowledge through the body. Such waves permeate everywhere in the world. These waves are felt and cause a counter-reaction. If waves of anger are emitted from him, then others also exhibit anger. If waves of affection emanate from this end, then waves of affection also come from the other side. If compassion is shown, then compassion comes from others. Jealousy causes jealousy. Aggression leads to aggression.

Earlier, in sages’ ashramam (hermitage), wild animals used to freely wander around without harming anyone. Even today, we sometimes see a snake and a mongoose moving around together. A cat and a rabbit are also known to move together. Lions and other animals move about together. So do fawns and other baby animals. When they are babies, they have no such feelings! However, as they grow, issues arise. Among animals, they are caused as they search for their food. Among humans, they are caused by attachment, greed, anger, and jealousy. Apparently, in sages’ ashramam, they did not harbor such emotions. Hence, no reactions and counter-reactions resulted. Everyone is focused on performing their assigned service diligently and nothing else.

The reason we have such reactions now is due to greed and anger that are evoked by karma va:sana:s (instincts formed from past actions), which the soul carries. Due to that, we are unable to fulfill our duty as well. We must therefore recognize this and tune our life such that each activity is performed as a service to God. Only then can enough strength be garnered to erase the deeply rooted feelings of jealousy, attachment, anger, frustration, fear, etc. That too, only if we concentrate on getting rid of these. Some say they are reduced to an extent by meditating on su:nyam (vacuum). Maybe so. No matter what, there is a need to disassociate oneself from these feelings. One must turn away from these and develop focus on one thing. You can set your focus on vacuum, soul, or God. Focusing on any of these, one can divert the unessential efforts on and attachment to the body and turn away from it.

When one can reach eke:ndriya dasa (state of single-minded focus) or achieve e:ka:gra dasa (state of concentration on the target), only then can one be relieved from the clutches of these feelings. This is something we should be aware of. The mind should be devoid of these feelings. To demonstrate, a wonderful example is given. In Bha:gavatham, Sage Vyasa mentioned this.

There was a well-educated king named Rahu:gahna. He desired to learn Ve:da:ntha (the essence of Vedas). He wanted to approach Sage Kapila for the same. Being a king, he wanted to exhibit his grandeur. They traveled through the forest in a palanquin carried by bearers. They covered some distance in the forest. One of the bearers got hurt when a thorn pricked his sole and he was unable to carry it further. He had to move aside. It got difficult to carry the palanquin with three bearers where four are needed. They searched for a new bearer nearby. They found a person at a distance sitting under a tree. This person’s name is Jada Bharatha. He was the great king Bharatha in his previous life who was well-respected and loved by people from all regions and who named their region (currently known as India) after this great king’s name.

This great emperor Bharatha, who earlier ruled the entire region, is from the Rushabha dynasty. Due to this great emperor Bharatha, everyone in every continent used to claim that they belong to Bharatha! If someone is well-endowed with riches or in a venerable position, then many will try to associate with him, right? Similarly, these people claimed that since they belong to Bharatha, they are Bha:ratha:s, that they are related to Bharatha, hence they are Bha:ratha:s. Bha:ratha:s became Bha:rathi:ya:s. Everyone in the world used to think that they are Bha:ratha:s or Bha:rathi:ya:s. Later on, over a period of time, based on a region’s customs and lifestyle, people changed and they forgot. Everyone in the world at one point belonged to Bharatha.

In a subsequent life, this king was born as a deer based on his prior karma. During the final stages of the king’s life, he became deeply attached to his pet deer and dedicated himself to it. Due to that, he took re-birth as a deer in the next life. But due to the good influence of his previous life on him, he was born into a Brahmin family in his subsequent life. Even though he was educated from Ve:da:s, he did not have any interest in any of the rituals or activities. His only interest was in the knowledge of the soul. Because he was oblivious to all the activities around him, he was mocked as jada (useless). His name now too is Bharatha, so he was known as “Jada Bharatha,” Bharatha who is useless.

The king’s bearers found this person under a tree. They called him out, but he did not respond. He just stared at them instead. Since he is at least in the shape of a human being, they decided to grab him by his shoulders and forcibly move him up to the palanquin and make him pick it up. They dragged him to it, yet he did not respond and said nothing. He felt nothing in his mind as well. They brought him so he went. They put him under the palanquin and asked him to carry it forward. So he moved ahead. But he was unable to move in unison with other bearers as is required. He was just walking casually like he normally would. Hence the palanquin would not stay balanced; it wobbled. The one inside, i.e., the king, got upset. He said, ‘Why is this wobbling? Keep it steady!’

They responded, ‘We are walking properly, but this new bearer is not!’ The king got curious, opened the veil, and took a peek at him. This youth is handsome-looking and fine, but not walking properly. The king fumed, ‘Are you famished? Have you been carrying it for long? Tired? Why can’t you carry this properly?’ the king screamed. He [Jada Bharatha] kept quiet. He continued to walk the same way with a smile on his face. The king could not withstand this, could not withhold the anger, and admonished him. Yet he didn’t respond. ‘Hey! Carry me properly!’ said the king. Then Jada Bharatha decided to respond.

[Jada Bharatha] ‘Me? Carry you?’ said he. [King] ‘Are you not carrying me?’ [Jada Bharatha] ‘Who are you?’ [King] ‘Me!’ [Jada Bharatha] ‘Are you this chest and body?’ [King] ‘It’s me!’ [Jada Bharatha] ‘Are you the head?’ The king jumped out of the palanquin, kicked the ground, and said, ‘It's me!’ [Jada Bharatha] ‘Are you the leg?’ The king was puzzled by his questioning in this manner. He could not figure out what this bearer was speaking about. The king thought, ‘His words seem different. Even when I abuse him, he is not responding. His questions intrigue me. Could he be the Sage Kapila that I am seeking?’ Having thought thus, he fell at Jada Bharatha’s feet. Bharatha said, ‘Without learning who you are, why did you venture out to learn Ve:da:ntha?’

He then taught the king about the knowledge of the soul. Bharatha did not get excited just because the king fell at his feet. Bharatha was not bitter with sadness though the king was angry with him earlier. He is beyond these two feelings. Because the king’s appreciation or anger are both meant for his body. ‘They are not meant for me.’ He even said, ‘I am in this body. The palanquin is bearing you. The palanquin is borne by its legs. Those legs are borne by the earth. How are we connected? I am in this body, and you are in that one,’ he said. He is well-versed in what he is supposed to know and has good knowledge of it. So he ignored the impact on his external body and focused on what he should be doing. This is his state of eke:ndriya dasa.

Not being carried away by bodily impacts and not holding back on performing his duties, he focused on the indwelling soul, with e:ke:ndriya drishti (single-minded focus). Jada Bharatha is the best example of the one who attained the stage just before that of stitha prajna (steady mind), e:ka:gra drishti (focused vision) or e:ke:ndriya drishti. Lord Krishna asked, ‘Hey Arjuna! Are you in that state? Are you a stitha prajna?’ ‘No, I am not.’ ‘If not, then you should try to become a stitha prajna.’ ‘I probably won’t be able to get there. But is there any prior [easier] states than this one?’ ‘Ok, I will share that.’ ‘What is that prior state?’ ‘The state prior to eke:ndriya dasa is vyathire:ka dasa. I will teach you this. Listen.’ Saying this, Sri Krishna began to explain verse 2.57 to Arjuna.

Jai Srimannarayana!

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