\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

1. Episode Title: Episode 128 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 128)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The nature of Karma Yoga and its application in daily life, Understanding the importance of controlling the mind and senses, The significance of setting and pursuing goals, The role of dedicated practice (sa:dhana) in achieving success, Examples of King Janaka and other figures in demonstrating Karma Yoga.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Karma Yoga, Arjuna, Krishna, mind control, dedication, King Janaka, self-realization, sa:dhana, sthitha prajnatha, spiritual practice.

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Bhagavad Gita is the best scripture that teaches us wonderful means. How can one control manas (mind), indriya:s (senses), and de:ha (body)? What is the process to establish a goal? What should we set as the goal? How can we progress towards the goal with sa:dhana (dedicated practice)? Bhagavad Gita clearly explains all these aspects.

Especially in chapter 2, with Arjuna as a means, Sri Krishna clearly explains this to all of us. Fix a goal. Start putting in efforts to reach that goal. You won’t be successful right after you start, but don’t stop. Once you fix the goal, continue your journey towards it. There will be a few people who may help you move towards the goal and some who may distract you from it. Don’t lose your energy in praising them or criticizing them.

Irrespective of favorable or unfavorable experiences, continue with your efforts and move forward. However, we can’t be like that. If they do good, we praise them. If they do bad, we criticize them. The reason is that the manas (mind) gets disturbed. After doing sa:dhana for some time, you will be able to control your tongue from praising or criticizing them. However, you will continue to be disturbed in manas. Because of sa:dhana, you will gain control of external reactions but not of the mind.

Because of those negative feelings in manas, you will feel drained. You will feel more drained from the negative feelings than from physical work. Why do you want to waste your energy like that? Hence, even if someone is favorable or unfavorable to you, don’t think much of it. With the help of sa:dhana, if you can maintain equilibrium this way for a period of time, your manas will get under control. Then you can attain whatever you wish, whether it is worldly things, a:thma (soul), or God. This is what Sri Krishna wants to convey.

The Lord is showing an example for this in Bhagavad Gita, terming it as sthitha prajnatha (the state of one with a fixed steady mind). In this sthitha prajnatha, He explained vasi:ka:ra:na (control of the mind) giving Sri Suka as an example. We also deliberated upon Viswamitra as an example. Prior to this, He spoke about the e:ke:ndriya (one-sense) stage. We studied Jada Bharatha as an example for that. The great person, King Janaka, is given as an example for the stage prior to that.

He also started his sa:dhana. There was no one distracting him. Around him, there were a few people favorable to him. However, he would not appreciate or criticize anyone. He would focus on his work of ruling the kingdom. Since he was the ruler, a few people would come and offer him gifts. He wouldn’t praise them. There would be some miscreants. He would punish them, but he would not hate them in his manas. If they pleaded with him, he would become warm-hearted towards them again. Thus, his manas was in his control.

His mind wouldn’t get disturbed because he perfected the stage before that. King Janaka is a disciple of Sage Ya:jnavalkya. He stayed in his Guru’s ashram (hermitage) and studied there. The ashram used to be in a forest next to the kingdom. He was a king’s son, and the palace and forts were visible from there. He used to study along with other students. The Guru always focused on him while teaching. Generally, other students would get angry with that. They used to whisper amongst themselves, “You look at Janaka always because he is the king's son; he might be giving some gifts.”

“Hence, out of love for him, you look at him.” They used to sit in the class with sad faces. However, the Guru never had such thoughts and wouldn’t have such thoughts also. He used to teach everyone, but others used to feel this way. Hence, they couldn’t understand what was being taught as they used to feel bad. They couldn’t have dha:ra:na (retention). If you fill it [manas] with unnecessary things, then what needs to be there can’t get in. Hence, they couldn’t learn.

As Janaka never had any such thoughts, he could retain whatever was being taught. Though everyone was suspicious of him, he wouldn’t have any negative feelings in his heart. The Guru came to know that all other students were having such negative feelings. He had to relieve them of such feelings and make them realize the truth. One day, the Guru used his yogic power to make them believe that the resident quarters or huts of students, which were near the tree under which they were studying, had caught fire.

The lesson was going on. They didn’t even take permission and ran towards their quarters. What is there in those? Not much. They used to wear only leaves, not even clothes. It is fine if they get destroyed. They didn’t have books in those days. Hence, there was nothing of worth there. However, they thought of them as everything; they didn’t even take permission from the Guru who gives them knowledge and ran towards them with the intention of saving them. When they went there, they found everything to be fine and returned back. Without taking permission from the Guru, they sat down and resumed their learning. The Guru observed this.

Janaka’s city is the city of Mithila. After two days, with his yogic power, the Guru made them believe that the towers of Mithila’s fort had caught fire. The Guru was teaching the lesson. Janaka was intently listening to it. He was noting down important points. Other students also seemed to be noting down, but their focus was outside, not on the lesson. When they saw that the City of Mithila was burning, they made a hue and cry about it. The lesson was going on. After the Guru found out the reason for the commotion, he asked Janaka, who was listening to the lesson, “It seems your city is getting burned down. Do you want to go and check it?”

Janaka said, “It is a big city. If it catches fire, there will be people to put off the fire.” mithilaya:m pradhagdha:ya:m na me kinchith pradhahyathe (In Mithila, whatever is mine has not been burnt, though my city may get burnt). “What is mine is the knowledge which you are teaching and which I am carefully preserving in my heart.” Others ran without taking permission, seeing ‘their’ huts burn. However, even after being ordered by the Guru that his kingdom is burning and he should check it, Janaka didn’t go because he didn’t have ruchi (affection) towards it. He didn’t worry about it as he wasn’t attached to it.

Janaka left to rule his kingdom, leaving the gurukula (hermitage), after he came of age. Still, when his Guru had to give an example of one with ripened knowledge in Karma Yoga (Perfected Actions as a Means), he would always refer to Janaka. Other students got upset and said, “You always used to look at him only and teach when he was here.” Whoever has the focus, the Guru will look at only them and talk. They expressed their envy, saying, “You talk about him even after he has left. So many of us are here; you never talk about any of us.”

The Guru wanted to teach them a lesson. He wrote two letters and asked them to hand it over to Janaka in his kingdom. The students traveled to the city of Mithila with the intent of meeting him. There are some protocols to meet a king. They took them inside after fulfilling those. They went to Janaka and sat with him. They were his friends, right? They asked him, “[Disciples] It is said that you are a Karma Yogi whose jna:na (knowledge) has ripened. When you are ruling the kingdom, where do you find time to do sa:dhana?”

[Janaka] “I don’t have time.” [Disciples] “When you are ruling the kingdom, how can you have jna:na nishtta (steadfastness in knowledge)?” Janaka didn’t say anything. He just smiled and kept quiet. [Janaka] “You came so far away and are tired. Take a shower and in the evening, have prasadam (food first offered to the Deity).” There were two disciples who came from Ya:jnavalkya to Janaka’s kingdom. He arranged a luxurious bathroom of marble with showers of gold. Everything in the shower was of gold. They enjoyed those. Next, he arranged prasadam for them. Those who were serving were very beautiful. The items were also very tasty.

The disciples sat and did a:posanam (sprinkling water around the plate before eating). They were about to eat. They were provided with a gold platform to sit on and were served on a gold plate; they didn’t know what to say. Everything was so wonderful. Looking around, they glanced up. There were swords dangling right on top of their heads. They showed the swords to each other. They were tied with very thin threads, and the swords were heavy. They were just 2 feet above their heads. If the threads had loosened by any chance, the tips of the swords would have fallen right on their heads. Since they had done a:posanam, they had to finish what was on the plate. They couldn’t move until they finished. Hence, they were eating, but their focus was on the swords.

They somehow finished what was on the plates and left the dining room. Later, the king arranged nice beds for them. Janaka came to talk with his friends then. [Janaka] “Friends, how are you?” [Disciples] “We are good.” [Janaka] “Did you eat?” [Disciples] “Yes, we ate.” [Janaka] “I got gulab jamun (an Indian dessert) made for you. Did you eat mysore paak, bandar laddu, khaaja (Indian sweets)?” They served all those, and the disciples ate them too. But they didn’t remember what they had eaten. [Janaka] “Friends, I got all those prepared for you. Didn’t you eat them?” [Disciples] “How could we eat? You got the swords placed above our heads. If they had loosened and fallen down, we would have lost our lives. We don’t know what they served; we somehow finished it and came out.”

[Janaka] “Did you finish eating?” [Disciples] “We ate everything. We didn’t leave anything on the plates as that is the rule.” [Janaka] “Friends, just like you ate all the tasty items without focusing on the taste, while ruling I might have to punish someone or have to praise someone or benefit someone, but not caring about the benefits or punishments nor about the praises or criticisms, focusing only on a:thma (soul) as per acharya’s (teacher’s) instructions, I am living my life.” Both the disciples realized their mistake. Janaka never stopped his Karma Yoga. However, he never cared about the benefits or losses; hence, his mind never got disturbed, and his buddhi (intellect) became achala vyavasa:ya buddhi (firm and determined intellect).

Janaka is one of the important ones among those who attained a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ra (self-realization) by practicing Karma Yoga. karmanaiva hi samsiddhim a:sthitha:ha janaka:daya:ha (Through actions alone, Janaka and others attained perfection). Sri Krishna says this in chapter 3. This is what we should attain. Arjuna, you should also work similarly. You should wage war just as Janaka ruled his kingdom. Those favorable to you might get hit by arrows. You can probably protect a few. Many things will happen. But your goal should be to fulfill your duty. Can you do that?

[Arjuna] “Looks like my manas is not that mature yet.” [Sri Krishna] “What should we do now? You asked me to tell you about sthitha prajna (one with a fixed steady mind).” [Arjuna] “You told me, but it doesn't look like I have reached that stage also. Please tell me about the stage before that.” Sri Krishna felt he had to tell Arjuna because He owned him, so He started describing the stage prior to sthitha prajna in verse 2.58. Let’s try to learn about it in detail. Jai Srimannarayana!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*