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1. Episode Title: Episode 129 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 129)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The Bhagavad Gita as a psychological and philosophical science, the importance of focus and clarity of goals, understanding the nature of the mind and intellect, the process of controlling body, mind, and intellect, the significance of dedicated practice (sa:dhana), and the role of external and internal instruments in achieving goals.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, sa:dhana, Arjuna, Krishna, focus, mind, intellect, body, a:thma (soul), pravrutthi (instincts), buddhi (intellect), manas (mind), indriya (sense organs), Viswamitra, dedication, psychological science, philosophical science

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), We can say the Bhagavad Gita is a wonderful psychological science. We can use it as a philosophical science. It is also useful to us as a psychological science. It clearly explains how we should behave in a particular situation. The second chapter especially is a summary of the rest of the chapters. If we understand the second chapter well, the rest of the Bhagavad Gita can be understood based on that. It says…

To attain anything in this world, one must have fixed clarity of goal and a focused mind. If one has to progress in studies, business, or a job, they need to have a focused mind. Whatever they want to attain, they should have it firmly set in their manas (mind). For it to stay firm in their mind, they should know how to face the hurdles that come in the way. In fact, there is no great necessity to attain anything worldly. If a person develops focus on a:thma (soul) and wants to attain a:thma, i.e., ‘see’ themselves, it is referred to as a:thma sa:ksha:thka:ra (realization of the soul) or a:thma:va:lo:kana (vision of the soul).

In such a case, what is the way to focus the mind? What means should be adopted? What are the obstacles in the way? How can they be modified to be in your favor? Sri Krishna is teaching the above to Arjuna. He termed the state of dedicated practice as sthitha prajnatha (steady wisdom). Every human being must attain this. The Lord explains the process of attaining it in four verses…

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SLOKA WORD -

a:pada:m apahartha:ram da:tha:ram sarva sampada:m

lo:ka:bhi ra:mam sri:ra:mam bhu:yo: bhu:yo: nama:myaham

SLOKA MEANING -

I bow repeatedly to Sri Rama, the remover of all obstacles and the giver of all wealth.

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Describing the first stage, He says whatever we are used to, our pravrutthis (instincts) will follow that. Just because we start something new today, our mind will not be focused on that immediately. Whatever we are used to and have practiced so far, our pravrutthis will follow that. What will pravrutthis follow? Instincts of body, mind, and thoughts resulting from the intellect. All of these will follow them [past habits]. This is what usually happens. Today we want to achieve something new. What should we do to achieve that?

First, our buddhi (intellect) won’t listen to us. Even our manas (mind) will not cooperate. Our body also may not cooperate. If we want to do well in an exam, we feel sleepy as soon as we hold a book. Or we may be sitting but we can’t comprehend a single word. Or all the things we are familiar with in the past come into our mind. With that, even our body doesn’t cooperate with us. Let’s say someone is talking about God. As soon as we sit there, we start yawning. However, if we sit in a movie, we don’t yawn. Even if we are sleepy, we become alert. On the other hand, if we have to do anything related to God, we feel sleepy. Our body is fidgety and we can’t focus on what is there. This is not our fault. It is just that we are not used to it.

Hence, our instincts are according to whatever we are used to. This is what usually happens. However, once you fix a goal, you have to forcibly put your mind towards it. Since the body is essential, we have to first get the body used to working in a proper way. How do we control the body? First, whatever we thought was to be avoided, we shouldn’t allow it to go there. Let’s say someone is addicted to cigarettes. If they somehow get determined in their mind to stop smoking as it is interfering with their work… or because it is spoiling their health, even if they find it very difficult or feel like crying, they should get used to keeping it away from them.

By keeping it away, on the first day, their tongue cries for it. If they still persist, on the second day, it reduces a bit by 30 percent. On the third day, it reduces by 10 percent more. On the fourth day, it reduces 10 percent more. If they persist in keeping it away from them for 7, 10, 15, or 20 days, their attachment to it starts decreasing. They kept the object [cigarette] away from the body and indriya (sense organ). However, they are not sure if their indriya will listen to them or not. The body will be in control as the object is away. But manas and buddhi don’t have that control. Hence, we don’t know if they have turned their back on their previous habits or not, if they have changed or not. Because they are internal instruments, not external.

First, they have to start their sa:dhana (dedicated practice) to make the external instruments work in a proper way. If they stop smoking for a month, they feel a kind of temporary detachment as the object is not there. They feel, “It’s not accessible, it’s okay, what can we do?” When the wind blows away what’s in the hand, it is thought of as an offering to God [because there is nothing they can do]. That is how they feel in the beginning. However, if they see the object, they would want to immediately take it. Like a dog’s tail which is tied to a stick. As long as it is tied to the stick, it appears straight. Once the stick is taken away, the tail comes back to its original position. Similarly, indriya:s too, once they see the object, they go back towards the object. For them not to go back, they have to continue their sa:dhana for a long time. Sri Krishna says this in a verse later…

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SLOKA WORD -

yathathohyathi kaunthe:ya purushasya vipaschitthaha indriya:ni prama:dhi:ni

SLOKA MEANING -

O Kaunteya (son of Kunti), the senses are restless and trouble us greatly.

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Indriya:s trouble us a lot asking us to procure objects. That is one stage. However, if one has fixed clarity of goal and decides to attain it, they have to keep the objects away forcibly if needed. If they do sa:dhana for some time, they might see some change in the external senses. However, what needs to be done for manas and buddhi? We kept the object away from the body, as the body is a visible instrument. However, manas is not a visible instrument. We can’t catch hold of buddhi either. What should we do about them?

Sri Krishna responded to this previously…

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SLOKA WORD -

sruthi viprathipanna:the yada stha::syathi nischala

SLOKA MEANING -

When the mind is steady and focused on what it has heard, it becomes unwavering.

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We have to listen. Whatever we listen to, we have to reflect on it. Whatever you want to attain, you have to repeatedly listen about it. It is one thing to keep the [distracting] external object away from the body. Educating manas and buddhi about the goal is a means to properly tune them [to attain the goal]. Hence, we have to listen. We must continue to listen. Here’s one thing to know about keeping objects physically distant from us. If we do not get knowledge about the desired right goal in a favorable way, keeping the objects away feels very difficult for us. We feel like crying and it is generally impossible for the manas to go towards the goal. Hence, one must be introduced again and again to the desired a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul). It could be about a:thma, God, or something else.

We keep hearing stories about the devotees of Pa:ndu Ranga. Two devotees came to the temple. One person left to give a:ra:thi (offering) to God out of devotion for God. Both of them came for God and they are good friends. After coming midway, because someone needed help, the other person said, ‘I will come after helping this person’. The first person went to the temple. However, since more help was needed, the other person had to stay back. Though he was rendering help, he was feeling bad that he couldn’t go to a:ra:thi and was remembering God. The one who went to the temple was seeing a:ra:thi, eating prasa:dam (blessed food), but he was worrying about the other person thinking how he was, what he must be doing, and why he hadn’t come.

Manas is very crucial. You must keep only the required matter in mind. But whether it will stay with that or go behind other things depends on the company you give it [manas]. In fact, controlling manas is very critical. We have to work for that. How far should it [practice] go? Once there was someone called [sage] Viswamitra who used to get angry very easily. However, because of his sa:dhana, even when encountered with situations demanding anger, he was able to stay calm. He performed penance for thousands of years. As part of concluding the penance, he was about to eat. Indra, king of heaven, disguised as a bramhin (Brahmin), set out to make Viswamitra angry and disrupt his penance. He asked Viswamitra for alms. Indra asked for food just before he was about to eat. Viswamitra saw through this. Though he knew it was Indra who had come to make him angry, he was able to control his manas without getting angry, with the sa:dhana he did. He gave away the food to Indra. He told him, ‘I know you are Indra. Take this food,’ and was able to leave without getting angry.

It takes a long time of dedicated practice to get manas in control. It takes a long time of dedicated practice to get each, the body, manas (mind), and buddhi (intellect) in control. The second chapter of Bhagavad Gita clarifies that sa:dhana is very important. Let’s learn about it gradually and go forward. Jai Srimannarayana!

Jai Srimannarayana!

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