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1. Episode Title: Episode 137 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 137)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of focus and concentration, Understanding the inner world versus the outer world, The significance of listening to spiritual teachings, The concept of vivaranam (elaboration) and vivarini (seed), The qualities of a decisive intellect, The distractions caused by the senses, The path to attaining unwavering wisdom.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, focus, concentration, inner world, outer world, vivaranam, vivarini, Arjuna, Krishna, intellect, senses, wisdom, a:thma (soul), parama:thma (God), nischaya:thmika (decisiveness), sthitha prajna (steady wisdom)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), the objects which we see around us in the world have a tendency to lose their value. Whether we use them sporadically or don’t use them at all, they get old, change form, or lose their essence. However, regarding the matters of the inner world, there is no such thing as getting old. There is not much left to see or listen to about worldly objects after having seen them or heard about them once.

However, we need to repeatedly listen, ‘see’, and learn about topics related to the inner world. For worldly objects, if we need to taste something a second time, it is called engili or ja:mitha do:sha (contamination). This is usually the case with all external objects. However, if we consider the subjects of the inner world, they don’t have ja:mitha do:sha.

What are the subjects of the inner world? They are the ones related to manas (mind), or a:thma (soul), which makes the body work, or dai:vam (God), which makes the entire universe function. The more you listen to these topics, the fresher they sound. There is a saying [in Telugu] that if you continue eating neem leaves, they start to taste sweet. Similarly, the more you listen to these topics, the more you find a new freshness in them every time.

Hence, in the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita, the Lord said,

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SLOKA WORD -

a:scharyavath pasyathi kaschid e:na

a:scharyavath vadhathi thadaIva cha anya:ha

a:scharyavath chainam anyath sruno:thi

sruthva:pyenam ve:da nachaiva kaschid

SLOKA MEANING -

Some see the soul (a:thma) as amazing, some speak of it as amazing, and others hear of it as amazing. Yet, even after hearing, no one truly knows it.

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Listening about the one running the inner world, a:thma (soul) or parama:thma (God), is forever fresh and new. We can never know about them entirely. Hence, we are still listening to Bhagavad Gita though it was preached approximately 6000 years ago. People have been listening to it since then. The great people who have been teaching it are trying to teach it more and more clearly. Those who have been listening to it are trying to listen more carefully. Those who have wanted to learn it are trying to learn it with more clarity. Those who wanted to put it into practice have been trying to put it into practice. Yet, the scripture hasn’t gotten old.

Not only Bhagavad Gita, there is literature which teaches us good practices and provides us with subject matter to enhance our knowledge, like itiha:sas (recorded history), pura:na:s (legends), and traditional lore, upanishads (quintessence of Vedas), or Vedas themselves (comprehensive texts stating eternal order). There will always be many things to learn from them despite listening multiple times.

The second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is its whole essence. If we can understand the second chapter with clarity, it means we have understood the whole Gita sa:sthra (scripture). It can be understood through whatever topics are described in the second chapter; each of those topics is elaborated in each of the subsequent chapters starting from chapter 3. This is called vivaranam (elaboration). The chapter is known as vivarini (seed). You can think of vivarini as a seed and vivaranam as the tree that emerged from it.

A tree has everything that the seed has, but the seed may have more aspects than the tree. That is called vivarini. What does vivaranam do? It magnifies and makes those aspects visible which remain hidden in vivarini. In fact, the tree doesn’t get any new aspects. It only has those that are already in the seed. However, we can’t ‘see’ them in the seed. Why? Because they are in a highly subtle form there. We see the trunk, bark, leaves, flowers, fragrance, nectar, and fruits in the tree. All these are in the seed. However, they are in a very subtle form. We call this vivarini. Once they emerge, we can recognize each of them separately. Hence, we term this as vivaranam.

Our Elders, the Wise, gave a beautiful definition to it. What is it? Teaching about those aspects that reveal further knowledge about the concepts in vivarini,

uktha ardha visadhi:ka:ra yuktha

ardha:nthara bo:dhanam matham vivaranam thathra

mahitha:na:m manishi:na:m

Whatever was already described in vivarini, vivaranam elaborates it with more clarity, adding more details in such a way that whatever it taught in the past [in vivarini] gets imprinted in the heart.

uktha ardha (what was already taught)

visdi:karana yuktha (in order to learn it with more clarity)

ardha:nthara bo:dhanam (use different aspects for strengthening the understanding of the same topic)

You must not bring any new topic into the picture. This is called vivaranam.

In chapter 2 of Bhagavad Gita, the Lord preached to Arjuna covering all concepts, leaving nothing to be told. We have discussed them many times in the past. Let us now conclude chapter 2, taking a bird’s eye view of it. In chapter 2, Lord Sri Krishna enlightened us on many concepts. He advised that we should first learn to concentrate our buddhi (intellect) [on one goal].

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SLOKA WORD -

vyavasa:ya:thmika buddhihi e:ka

avyavasa:ya:thmika buddhhihi apara:

SLOKA MEANING -

The intellect that is focused on one goal is called vyavasa:ya:thmika buddhi (decisive intellect), while the intellect that is not focused is called avyavasa:ya:thmika buddhi (indecisive intellect).

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He said this in the beginning. Decide to attain a specific goal and to make the necessary efforts for it. An intellect with such a firm decision is called vyavasa:ya:thmika buddhi. People who don’t have this determination run behind whatever they see. Their buddhi goes behind whatever is favorable to their indriya:s (senses).

One person started from his home to go to his office. He met one of his friends and went with him. Then he met someone else who asked him to go somewhere else. He started for his office but did not reach his actual destination because he went with whoever he met on the way. The one who doesn’t have nischaya:thmika (decisiveness) or has avyavasa:ya:thmika (indecisiveness)…

In Telugu, vyavasa:ya means farming. In Sanskrit, it is different. Vyavasa:ya means nischayam (decisive). Vyavasa:ya:thmika buddhi is a decisive intellect. One should always aim for one primary goal, a single target. To attain that one goal, you can take as many means as you want. If you don’t have a goal, there are hundreds of means in the world which will take you to a hundred directions. And you will be lost. The Lord started by saying this.

Based on how firm your intellect is, it is called chala (moving), achala (unmoving), or nischala (steady). It should be so firm that however much you disturb it, it remains unwavering. Whoever has such a firm intellect is called sthitha prajna (steady wisdom). This is a beautiful technical term. What is the person with sthitha prajna like? How does one attain this? He described the four stages in the process.

What is it that stops us from being focused? What do we need to stay focused on? Arjuna asked this question. The Lord clarified that it is the indriya:s (senses) which distract the focus. Eyes keep seeing, ears keep listening, nose keeps smelling, tongue keeps tasting. The body keeps feeling different sensations. These senses encourage us to go behind them [sensory objects] saying, ‘this is very nice, this is better, attain this’. They distract our attention towards them.

These are prathyaksham (perceived directly). Hence they are more powerful. E:ka:gra buddhi (focused intellect) is internal and hence, less powerful [in attracting us]. What should be our goal? An unwavering mind [engrossed] in a:thma (soul) and parama:thma (God). We should attain a:thma jna:na (knowledge of the soul). It should lead us to parama:thma smarana (contemplation of God). Then, we should turn our physical activities towards that. That should be our goal.

However, these indriya:s take us in all directions. In the three verses starting with, dhya:yatho: vishaya:n pumsaha sanga sthe:shupaja:ya:the… the Lord says if the mind goes behind them, then we will forget the actual goal completely.

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SLOKA WORD -

buddhi na:sha:th pranasyathi

SLOKA MEANING -

When the intellect is lost, one perishes.

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He completely forgets what he started for. He met someone in between who could be favorable or unfavorable. If favorable, he certainly wants to attain it. If unfavorable, he declares, “I’ll take as many births as needed to eliminate it! This is my goal!” He wastes many lives going behind such things. He loses his actual goal.

Arjuna got a doubt then. “Sri Krishna, it is true that such a situation exists. However, I am living amidst all these. What do I need to do to stay focused on the goal?” The Lord gave a means and an answer to this question in verse 2.61. What did He say?

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SLOKA WORD -

yuktha a:si:tha math paraha vase:hi yasysa indriya:ni

SLOKA MEANING -

If you want to travel on your own, it is your wish. I am not responsible for where you go. However, I can steer you as I am qualified and capable. Leave the responsibility to Me.

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Then, there is no doubt about attaining unwavering wisdom. This is the key point in chapter 2. The essence is to submit to Him. We have heard this in the second chapter. Let’s try to internalize this. Learning it with further clarity, we must move ahead and conclude chapter 2. Let’s do that. Jai Srimannarayana!

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