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1. Episode Title: Episode 140 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 140)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of peace of mind, the relationship between wealth and happiness, the role of the mind in experiencing the world, the necessity of guiding the mind, the teachings of Krishna on responsibility and wisdom, the significance of introducing God to the mind, the historical context of Nambillai's teachings, the nature of life and death as explained by Yama.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, peace of mind, Krishna, Nambillai, Yama, soul, karma, divine service, prasad, Vaishnava tradition, spiritual guidance, wisdom, responsibility

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), Everyone desires peace of mind. In spite of great wealth, without peace of mind, one is unable to enjoy it. In spite of many comforts, if that peace is missing, then none of it feels good. One needs that peace of mind. We live in this world surrounded by many objects. Should we experience them or not? When we live amidst them, how can we avoid their ‘touch’? When immersed in water, it’s silly not to expect getting wet. Thus, we have to ‘see’ and experience what we are surrounded with. However, we should not be a slave to them. Instead, they should be in our control. To enlighten us of this, Bhagavan (Lord) Krishna in chapter 2 says…

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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 the Lord who removes all obstacles and bestows all wealth.

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“Put the onus on Me and live peacefully!” If one is able to place the responsibility on Me, then I will ensure he has a stable mind. I will ensure his knowledge transforms to prajna (righteous wisdom). I will ensure that the righteous knowledge remains stable, i.e., sthitha prajnatha (steady wisdom). The Lord then also alludes to a few examples. Earlier, we discussed that change must happen in your mind, not in the surrounding objects. If your mind is pure, then everything will transform to become right. If your mind is disturbed instead, nothing will be of use. Our mind is always considered a prasarana si:lam (nature of expansion) or pravrutti si:lam (nature of activity); it always engages in activity. Therefore, we must always assign it some work.

For example, a crying kid must be given an interesting activity to engage him. But today’s moms are handing out a mobile phone simply to stop the child from crying. The kid is getting introduced to a mobile phone when he is just a few months old! If someone asks, ‘Why are you giving him that? He will be spoiled with it.” They would say, “TECHNOLOGY. The children have to be introduced to the technology!” “Because the world is now run by technology. It's better he gets used to it early.” True, but what will he learn at this age? Just the video games on the phone. If you delay giving him the phone even by a few seconds, the child will throw big tantrums. Is that what we are supposed to do? We should teach him an activity that enhances his life in the future and makes the world a better place. Instead, we want to get him off bothering us or annoying us. So, we resort to getting him habituated to and giving him something that spoils him and makes him run after it. Can we blame him then? Our mind is similar to the child’s. Not giving the mind something that’s beneficial to it is our mistake. It is not the mistake of the mind that drifts constantly to various thoughts. It has to ‘go’ somewhere, so it does. If you try to stem the flow of a river with a barricade, it will either break it and flow onwards or it will flow over such barricades, but it will not stop there. Therefore, we have a duty to guide the river onto an appropriate outlet. Similarly, we have a duty to guide the mind towards an ‘outlet’ that is appropriate and engaging. It will not go on any path you ask it to take.

If you ask a little child to go and sit by a stranger, he won’t obey. He will only approach the one who he is acquainted and familiar with. He is familiar with his mom. Even if she punishes him, he chooses to go to her. He will, however, not entertain a neighbor wanting to hold him. If his mom is not around, he will choose to go to either a familiar sister or a brother or an uncle. He feels comfortable going to someone he is familiar with but will not choose anyone that he is not acquainted with. There is a need to make him familiar with more acquaintances. Similarly, we must introduce God to our mind! As God is great, we must introduce Him first to our mind. Initially, during introductions, our mind feels uncomfortable, but we must persist.

Earlier in Srirangam, there were many great teachers who gave lessons. There were also many preachers who gave discourses. Nambillai is regarded as one of those erudite scholars. He is one of the great scholars from the lineage of Ramanujacharya. One of Ramanujacharya’s disciples is the great Parasara Bhattar. Nanjiyaar is his disciple. And Nambillai is the disciple of Nanjiyaar. There is a pushkarini (temple water tank) in Srirangam known as Chandra Pushkarini. A ponna tree stood on its shore. From under its shade, Nambillai used to give pravachans (discourses). He would give discourse on Bhagavad Vishayam (God as experienced by Nammalwar). On the north side of the temple, there is a large open area. Many would throng in that area to listen to his teachings. It was in those days, approximately 800-900 years ago. At that time, not many had heard about Bhagavad Vishayam or Alwars’ Prabandhas (sacred texts). After hearing Nambillai’s discourses on these, everyone started enjoying them thoroughly.

Srirangam’s temple priests decorate Lord Rangana:tha exquisitely. To give people a chance to enjoy the sight of the beautifully adorned Rangana:tha, the Lord is taken around the prime streets circumferencing the temple. This is done as part of Thiruvidhi Uthsavam (divine procession). The procession is carried out every day for one or another reason. Many used to visit the temple daily just to see this. However, after Nambillai began to give pravachans, devotees started coming for the talks rather than to see Lord Rangana:tha. The teachings continued. Devotees gradually got attracted to these. Their interest grew to such a level that even when the Lord would emerge during the yatra (procession)… Generally, when the Lord approaches, everyone stands in reverence, similar to when elders come by. When the Lord Himself, in Whose premises they were in, is out and about, people are supposed to quickly get up and bow to Him, wait until that yatra moves out of sight, and continue their activity afterward. The deity of Lord Rangana:tha, when taken around the temple for seva (service), is known as selvar. When the deity is in the area, everyone must stand up and show respect. Also, the pravachan must be paused until the Lord leaves the area.

The audience of these pravachans felt that… In those days, pravachans were known as kalakshepam. The current usage of “kalakshepam” is different from those days. We think it means to do something to kill time. An activity to pass time or kill time. But the word did not form to convey that. It is made up of kala (Lord Yama) and kshepam (to drive him far away). What’s manifesting there [Nambillai’s teachings] is a state that drives Yama away. What is that? Apparently, Yama is scared of only One. Yama is not scared of Brahma or Rudra (Shiva) or any other gods. Even they are scared of Yama as well. This was mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam. However, Yama is scared of only One; who is that? He is scared of the One who is known by Omkara (the sound of Om).

There is a part of the Veda known as Katha Upanishad. It describes the history of a boy named Nachiketas. In that, Yama Himself gives a discourse to this boy. The boy asks Yama,

Ye:yaṃ pre:the: vichikithsa: manuṣhye:

asthi:thye:ke na:yamasthi:thi chaike |

etdad vidya:m anushiṣṭhas thvaya: ahaṃ

“Hey Great One! Many in this world have differing opinions about one’s existence after leaving the current body. I am a proof that one exists after the current body is shed. I came all the way here to you after shedding the body. So a jiva (soul) can exist without a body. However, does the soul exist after breaking the bond with karma (imprints from a soul’s past)? Will such a soul then stop existing? I have many such questions; You must clarify those for me.” Yama answers him in various ways. We do not want to go into that history now. However, Yama’s response contains the following. “I also have a Lord who creates, sustains, and recycles all the worlds. He is the One who swallows and holds the entire Universe in Him. The ultimate reality is the knowledge of Him, who is known with the sound of Om.” He summarized it that way. He named it as attha (one who consumes). It’s not the Telugu word attha (aunt), but a Sanskrit word. Attha means one who ‘consumes’.

Yasya brahmacha kshatramcha ubhe: bhavatha o:danaha

Mruthyuhu yasya upase:chanam

[Yama says] “The moving and non-moving material beings of this Universe is the Lord’s o:danam (food).” To consume food, there needs to be something on the side… like a chutney, a curry, or lentils or sambar (a type of lentil soup). Isn’t it? [Yama says] “I am the one whom He uses as sides. I am mruthyuhu (death). Mruthyuhu yasya upase:chanam. The Lord uses me as a side to mix along with the rest and consumes. It is Him that the sound of Om defines. You need to know about this. Om explains in what way and how a jiva (soul) exists and what he does after disassociating with karma and reuniting with God. Therefore… The One who oversees even the devata (deity) of death is Lord Narayana who is the controller of the universe. [Sri Krishna says] That Lord Narayana is Me. Leave responsibility on Me. I exist in you as well. I am the one who can guide your mind in the right direction. Train your mind to dwell on Me.

In chapter 2, Bhagavan (Lord) gave this amazing solution, like a key…

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SLOKA WORD -

yuktha a:si:tha mathparaha |

SLOKA MEANING -

If you are engaged in Me, you will be steady.

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If you habituate your mind towards destructive things, then it will tread only that path, immersing your senses in them. But if you train the mind about Me or teach it to learn My qualities or introduce it to Me, then it will incrementally act towards knowing Me. Only then will your senses settle down. You are not restricting your senses now; instead, you are guiding them. You are not limiting your mind, just showing it the right path. Where are you leading them? Towards Me! This is a wonderful tool. In Vaishnava tradition, this [practice] is deemed as a wonderful means. Temples give an opportunity to perform divine services to God. Use all your senses. Early morning in the temples after harathi (aarti) to God, they serve hot pongal (a rice dish), curd rice, bitter tamarind rice, sweet milk rice, or sweet pongal. They serve everyone with various delicacies there. Since you have a habit of eating, you should eat, but take it as prasad (food first offered to God). Do not just consume it as any food that satiates your hunger. You should train the senses in how an activity must be carried out. While providing the senses activities in which they are accustomed to, similar to how an effective medicine is embedded in a capsule, if you train them properly, I will ensure that they lead you properly towards the desired goal. Only then will your mind be at peace. Lord Krishna clarified in Chapter 2 that the tool to calm the mind can only be obtained when it is surrendered to God. He explained it adding further clarity in the last 2 verses, which we will learn next. Jai Srimannarayana!

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