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1. Episode Title: Episode 141 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 141)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The analogy of the ocean and its lessons for life, Understanding the nature of the mind, The importance of wisdom and knowledge, The balance of sensory experiences, Krishna's teachings on maintaining inner peace amidst external influences

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, ocean analogy, Krishna, mind, wisdom, sensory experiences, peace, dharma, Na:ra:yana

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), In Chapter 2, Bhagava:n (Lord) shared a beautiful analogy of how a human should lead life. The ocean! It teaches us a very important lesson. Lord explains to us what it teaches about. What is it? Thousands of rivers perpetually flow into the ocean from various directions and merge into it. But the ocean never crosses its limits and flows over.

We know that the percentage of water on the earth is higher than that of land. While the land comprises around 27%, water is spread around 73%. If any water body overflows, then this 27% of land mass would be totally submerged. But does that ever happen? Our irresponsible conduct results in small typhoons, etc. Thus, there is a certain intensity of pressure on the land occasionally. If an extremely forceful wave hits, imagine the plight of that 27% landmass on earth. But that is not happening anywhere.

We must learn something from this phenomenon. What is it? No one knows how much water from many rivers flows into the ocean, perpetually. To fill a large water tank, we run the water pump motor for several hours to fill it up. Then we stop the engine once the tank gets full. Do the rivers only flow into the ocean similarly, for just a few hours per day? No. Or do they dump water for only so many days or months? No. They send huge amounts of water into the ocean 24x7, non-stop.

This happens on one hand. On the other hand, the Sun with its rays is continuously evaporating from the ocean all the time. We do not know if the inflow and outflow are proportional or not. But we know that this process is happening perennially. We imagine… the ocean never overflows (from inflow of river water) nor shrinks due to the sun’s evaporation. We imagine that it is because these inflow and outflow are probably proportional. Whether this is accurate or not, we don’t know. Why?

The inflows are usually water. Sometimes it’s pure water and sometimes it’s impure. A portion of water coming in from rivers is probably pure. Fascinatingly, no matter the amount of river water inflow, the ocean will not change its characteristics. It simply merges. It will alter the qualities of the inflowing water and make that consistent with its existing nature. Afterward, water from rivers like Ganga (Ganges), Sarayu, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Tungabhadra, or Penna will not be known by their river names. Once merged, the ocean water has a quality of being salty. Any water from any river with any color or quality will be transformed into ocean water. The ocean will ensure that its quality is imbibed by any water inflow, but not the other way around.

[Sri Krishna says to Arjuna] You must learn this. The mind is like an ocean. This ocean must be filled with wisdom. What type of wisdom? The knowledge of thaththva (reality), that is the cause for your presence here. That knowledge is what we should aspire for, isn’t it? Anything without this knowledge is useless. Imagine a person working in an office. He needs to have knowledge related to that office work. If he has other knowledge that cannot be applied to this work, then he is not qualified to be there. He is not just disqualified but he can turn out to be dangerous to that office.

So, depending on which department he works for, he must possess appropriate knowledge as long as he works there. It is immaterial what knowledge he will possess once he leaves that work. It is also immaterial what knowledge he had before joining this office. He may have knowledge of his home, relatives, or knowledge related to various other things. Fine. He arrives at his office at 9:30 am and leaves work at 5:30 pm. During that period, he is expected to use only knowledge of work, nothing else. This is a fact we know.

For everyone, the ‘office’ is the world we live in. We arrived in this ‘office’ the moment we were born. We will leave this ‘office’ when we take our last breath. So what should we have, as long as we are in this ‘office’? Who had arranged all of this for us? How and why was this arranged? What is your responsibility in all this? As long as we are in this ‘office’, we must have this know-how. We are incapable of finding out on our own who the root cause is behind all this. So, we are extricating that detail from the scriptures. We are asking the Ve:das (Vedas).

Vedas told us that all of this is bestowed to us by Na:ra:yana (Lord Vishnu). Na:ra:yanaha Param Bramha (Narayana is the Supreme Absolute). This was told clearly by scriptures, ve:da:s, itiha:sa:s (historical texts), pura:na:s (ancient texts). Therefore, we must learn about Him! Without knowing Him, learning about anything else is futile. So we must be made aware of Him and fill our mind with this. This is the ‘water’ that it (ocean of mind) should be filled with. The knowledge of a soul's thaththva (reality) which realizes God. The knowledge of a soul's thaththva that contemplates upon God. This is what the mind must be full with.

When we live here, ‘rivers’ are flowing in [to the mind’s ‘ocean’]. Eyes are open, various visible forms are a type of ‘river’ that is flowing in. Ears are open, various audible sounds are a type of ‘river’ that is flowing in. Tastes, odors, touch are all different types of ‘rivers’ flowing in. Yes. Many such rivers from the external world are making their way into our mind. After coming in, they should not influence us. Whatever indwelling ‘water’ you have, the external ‘rivers’ should merge with it. Your ‘water’ should not alter its characteristics to suit the incoming water. That is why Bhagava:n used the ocean as an example.

Once the river water merges with the ocean, that water is also called ocean water then. No matter what river it is, its water automatically acquires the ocean’s color and taste. Even if you pour a bucket of milk into the ocean, it will only become ocean water. It won’t stay as milk. The bucket is just an example. It doesn't matter what quantity of milk we pour in, all that will turn into ocean water. As you pour, you may see it as milk for that moment but very quickly it turns into ocean water. This is why He [Sri Krishna] gave this example.

When you are here, it’s ok to enjoy them. He did deny this. That is why He gave the example of the ocean. Should rivers be allowed to flow into the ocean? Today, we apply ‘intelligence’ and build dams everywhere blocking rivers due to inter-state politics. The water is not allowed to flow into neighboring states nor into the ocean thereafter. We want all the water [in our state]. What happens then? When there is a deluge, all the villages around are flooded. Then the leaders realize. They repent. ‘We built these unnecessarily. Perhaps we should have let the rivers naturally flow.’ This doesn’t occur often however, only on occasion. Any state that built excessive dams has experienced this already, and will continue to do so. You are inhibiting natural behavior.

Rivers must flow. Similarly, the mind must experience sensory objects. Eyes must see, ears must listen. Same with taste and odors. All these must happen. He did not ask to stop these. In verse 2.70, He said…

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SLOKA WORD -

a:pu:ryama:nam achala prathishttam samudram …

SLOKA MEANING -

The ocean that is constantly filling and stable.

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Sensory experiences are streaming in, 'waters' are flowing in continuously, so the senses must be at work continuously. See things, but ensure they don’t disturb your mind. Hear things, but do not let them affect your mind. Sometimes after seeing some things our mind is constantly distracted by them, imagining them continuously. When we hear something, we get immersed, ignoring our duties. When a tuning fork is hit, it resonates and a humming sound echoes continuously. Similarly, the mind constantly dwells on something we see or hear, completely ignoring the intended goal of action. This should not happen!

You should not be driven by them. They must come into the mind, let that happen. This is one view of the metaphor. A second view – Water is evaporating from the ocean, isn’t it? Similarly, after you experience some things, some flow out as well. You cannot stop them either. The influx and outflow will need to happen. You should not be affected by them. Whoever can keep their mind stable in such a way… only he can…

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SLOKA WORD -

sa sa:nthim a:pno:thi na ka:ma ka:mi

SLOKA MEANING -

Only that person attains peace who is not driven by desires.

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If the waters of [material] knowledge spill out, it’s dangerous. When ocean water outflows, it drowns villages. It should not happen that way. Ocean and land should maintain their states. For us to recognize this, [Sri Krishna says]…

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SLOKA WORD -

… sa sa:nthim a:pnothi …

SLOKA MEANING -

Only that person, into whom sensory experiences enter in this manner, attains peace.

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Sri Ra:ma (Rama) is therefore cited as an example. In Ra:ma:yana (Ramayana), speaking of Ra:ma it was said,

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SLOKA WORD -

…samudra iva ga:mbhi:rye:…

SLOKA MEANING -

His mind has the depth of an ocean.

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Ra:ma never stopped doing His duty. He never refrained from any of his prescribed duties. While in the palace, He ruled the kingdom. In the forest, He helped its inhabitants. In Lanka, He fulfilled His duty there. Near the ocean, He carried out His actions there. He was never inactive. He always did His duty without causing any harm to Himself or others around Him. He stayed steady. This is needed for every human. This is the quality one must strive to achieve.

[Sri Krishna] gave the example of the ocean to teach how one must be tranquil while experiencing things. If this behavior persists, then one will have no qualms to let go of them [worldly experiences]. Worldly things are experienced to make them favorable to that [knowledge of God], not just to experience them. The reason we allow the water to flow into the ocean is because they won’t pollute the ocean. Imagine if that new waters were to kill whales, prawns, fishes, etc. Similar to the devastation caused by the oil spilled by Arab countries causing black clouds. If the water inflow caused such damage, then it must be restricted.

Therefore, He gave the ocean as an example when one is experiencing materialistic things. How can one keep one’s mind stable and lead a peaceful life? What is it like when that [experience of materialistic things] is given up? Sri Krishna ends chapter 2 with the last 2 verses discussing this. Let’s try to understand that. Jai Srimannarayana!

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