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1. Episode Title: Episode 99 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 99)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of a focused mind in achieving goals, Understanding the difference between a determined and an undetermined intellect, Krishna's teachings on the pursuit of higher goals versus temporary benefits, The significance of practicing karma yoga.

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Karma Yoga, Arjuna, Krishna, determination, focus, vyavasa:yi (determined), avyavasa:yi (undetermined), swarga (heaven), temporary benefits, moksha (liberation)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), We are now at verse 2.41. Sri Krishna preaches to Arjuna about buddhi (intellect). What is a discerning intellect and what does it do?

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SLOKA WORD -

vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ka: iha kuru nandana ! |

bahusa:kha:hi anantha:s cha buddha:yaha avyavasa:yina:m ||

SLOKA MEANING -

The intellect that is determined is one-pointed, O Kuru's son! The intellect of the undetermined is multi-branched and endless.

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Lord categorized humans into two types - vyavasa:yi:s (determined) and avyavasa:yi:s (undetermined). Vyavasa:yi: is one whose intellect is firm. He sets his knowledge decisively on one subject. Here, vyavasa:yam (determined) doesn’t mean agriculture or growing crops (as in Telugu language).

Vyavasa:ya:ha nischayaha (decisive knowledge), one with nischaya jna:na (decisive knowledge) is single-minded - e:ka (one). On what? iha (in this subject). In which subject? In sa:nkhya (knowledge of the soul). He has only one goal. He is determined to identify a:thma (soul) as it is and attain it.

Lord is addressing Arjuna as ‘Hey, Kuru nandana’ (O son of Kuru).

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SLOKA WORD -

vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ka:

SLOKA MEANING -

The intellect that is determined is one-pointed.

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What’s the other one? Avyavasa:yi:na:m (one who is not determined about anything). How is his intellect? Bahu sha:kha:hi anantha:scha (just as there are many branches of a tree, each one in a different direction). Just like these branches face different directions, his intellect is multi-directional. There is no end to that. He is pulled into different directions. He is not focused, the avyavasa:yi (undetermined).

Let’s take a couple of examples from the world. One is determined to achieve a gold medal in the Olympics. He wanted to win a gold medal in running 200 meters. What does he do? Daily, he wakes up and starts running. His target is to run 200 meters in a minute or less than a minute. To achieve this, he practices running 300 or 400 meters in a minute before he goes to the competition. He continues to work hard for it. He practices in a way that he could run that distance blindfolded.

During his practice days, if his friend comes and asks him to go to a movie, he says he is busy. Or if someone asks him to go on a picnic, he refuses. Or someone asks him to go to a resort or Goa or some islands like Maldives or Mauritius for a week - he refuses. He is not interested in anything else because his goal is the upcoming competitions. His mind is not pulled into anything else.

If he has to go somewhere forcibly, he doesn’t get excited about the temporary associated pleasures. Let's say his friends pressured him and took him along to a resort. They serve him with many tasty foods there. He eats because he has to eat. Yet, he doesn’t pay attention to the taste of the food or the beautiful surroundings. He is only focused on his goal, which is to win a gold medal in the 200 meter race. Even at the resort, if he finds some time, he will start running. Why?

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SLOKA WORD -

vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ka:

SLOKA MEANING -

The intellect that is determined is one-pointed.

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There is another guy. He is a foodie. He doesn’t have any such goals. He goes to the buffet, appreciates all the food items, thoroughly enjoys them, and then wants to sleep. Because he has no goal. Sometimes he gets absorbed in eating. If someone takes him and shows something beautiful, he gets absorbed in that. If someone shows something else - he gets absorbed in that - bahu sha:kha:ha (many branches). Since he is not focused, whichever is favorable for him at whatever time and whatever place, he keeps getting attracted to that - bahu sha:kha:ha anantha:scha buddha:ya (the intellect of the undetermined is multi-branched and endless). Whatever he finds attractive, he thinks that’s good enough.

If another one wants to score 100 percent in an exam, say accounting. What does he do? He studies day and night. If you place a beautiful bed for him to sleep in, he will sleep on that, but he doesn’t care for the comfort of the bed. If you give him something to drink, he drinks it, but he doesn’t pay attention to what he is drinking. Undistracted, he practices to achieve his goal and attains it.

We are familiar with this. Those who desire temporary benefits will attain only those. If we go to a temple and pay obeisances, the priest gives us some prasa:d (sanctified food). Do we go to the temple for prasad or to receive God’s grace after we pay obeisances? As a child, during dhanur ma:sa (a month in the Hindu calendar), we would run to the local temple by 5:30 / 6 am to get pongal or daddyo:janam (tasty rice dishes) from the priest. Devotees of prasa:d! That is also a benefit, but is it the only benefit? That is a temporary benefit at the temple.

If someone gives something else somewhere, everyone runs there. If you have firm belief that when you pay obeisances to God, you will get His grace, whatever temporary benefits that come in between will keep coming even if you don’t desire them. Once you go, the priest will give you thi:rtha (holy water), sata:ri (a ceremonial cloth), and prasa:da anyway. However, if you go, desiring only those, you may or may not get them at times.

Thus, we have to decide if our intellect should focus on temporary benefits or aim for permanent ones. In verse 2.41, Sri Krishna teaches us to become vyavasa:yi:s (determined) and not avyavasa:yi:s (undetermined). Generally, those around us try to make us avyavasa:yi:s, yet you have to become a vyavasa:yi.

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SLOKA WORD -

vyavasa:ya:thmika: buddhihi e:ka: iva:

bahusa:kha:hi anantha:s cha buddha:yaha avyavasa:yina:m ||

SLOKA MEANING -

The intellect that is determined is one-pointed, while the intellect of the undetermined is multi-branched and endless.

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In fact, Vedas also give some examples regarding this. They explain Vedic Shroutha Prakriya, a process defined in Vedas for those desiring swarga (heaven). Swarga is his main goal. Whoever is desiring this swarga should do darsa purna ma:sa (full moon day rituals). Darsa is an activity to be done on ama:va:sya (no moon day). Pu:rna Ma:si is the activity to be done on Pu:rnima (full moon day).

There are three yajna:s (acts of worship) with an objective for each, darsa and purna ma:sa. The 3 yajna:s for purna ma:si are a:gne:yam, agni:shomi:um, and upa:msu ya:ja:m. Each yajna has its own benefits. If you desire those benefits and do that yajna properly, it will give only those benefits. If you don’t desire those temporary benefits and perform any of the yajnas, a:gne:yam, agnishomium, or upa:msu ya:ja:m, this becomes a means for you to attain swarga (heaven).

Swarga is the primary goal, right? We are not desiring the temporary benefits from the yajna:s. You will get those benefits regardless of whether you desire them or not, that’s the irony. If you desire temporary benefits, it only gives those. However, if you don’t desire them, you attain the higher goal and the intermediary benefits as well. We have to remember this.

Similarly, when performing darsa - there are 3 yajnas, a:gne:yam, aindradadhi, and aindrapayas. Veda instructs those desiring swarga to perform these.

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SLOKA WORD -

ya e:vam vidhwa:n amava:sya:ya:m yajathe

ya e:vam vidhwa:n pourna ma:sya:m yajathe

SLOKA MEANING -

Those who perform these rituals on the no moon day and full moon day, knowing their significance, attain swarga.

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What happens if we perform these?

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SLOKA WORD -

e:tha:bhyam darsa pourna ma:sa:bhya:m

SLOKA MEANING -

One attains swarga, the primary result from performing the two yajnas.

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If done only desiring swarga, even when achieving the temporary benefits, the main goal is not lost. If performing them desiring temporary benefits, one attains them but misses the main goal. He needs to have vyavasa:ya:thmika buddhi (decisive intellect) on this. Those who desire temporary benefits are avyavasa:yi:s. Sri Krishna teaches us not to desire temporary benefits.

What are those temporary benefits? When we perform yajnas like a:gne:yam, Vedas list the intermediary benefits we may get. However, whatever yajnas one does, one desires a long life, right? It is said, “if you do yajna, you will get swarga.” Imagine a plane arrives and they ask you to board as soon as you complete the yajna - saying, “This is the result of your yajna, we will now take you to swarga!” One will not be ready to get in, to go to swarga immediately.

If he is taken to swarga via flight as soon as a yajna is complete, others will never discuss this yajna. It gets regarded as poisonous. What does he expect? When does he want the benefit? He wants certain benefits as long as he is alive and desires swarga after he leaves this body. As long as he is alive, he wants a long life, children, relatives, all righteous activities, mansions, and comforts. He wants all these. How can he not want these?

Hence, Veda says ayu:r a:s:a a:sthe (you will get long life). Though you are doing the yajna desiring swarga, you will live long because of performing the recommended yajnas… supraja: twama:tha a:sthe (you will have good children). sa ja:tha vanasya ma:sa a:sthe (siblings and other relatives around you will be happy). utta:ra:m de:va yajya:m a:sa asthe (whatever deeds you do will be transformed into yajna:s, yielding good results). bhu:yo havishkarana ma: sa:sthe: (you will be able to perform such activities like yajnas again). divyam dha:ma:m a:sthe (you will be bestowed with lavish mansions).

You will attain all this. If you desire these, you will get only these. If you do it without desiring temporary benefits, you will get these along with swarga. This is explained in Vedic prakriya (procedures described in Vedas). Whatever activity we do, if we perform it believing it to be a result of God’s grace and as His command, and with the primary focused aim as moksha (release from karmic bondage), we will get that along with other benefits.

If we get attracted to temporary benefits and stop at only desiring those, we may or may not achieve them. Hence, do not get distracted by them. Have a determined mind. Perform each of your tasks single-mindedly. Practice karma yoga. Thus, Sri Krishna preaches to Arjuna about the process of practicing karma yoga in verse 2.41.

Jai Srimannarayana! Jai Srimannarayana!

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