

The heart of the wise person

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Sankhya yoga/Topic of knowledge(Chapter 2...continued)

The second chapter ends with a beautiful description of how a person, who has gained this wisdom, lives his life. It is Arjuna's question, he asks Krishna very specifically: how does a wise person function? It is a difficult question to answer. Well, one has to recognize whether one is wise or not; as long as I have a doubt whether I am wise or not I could do with some more wisdom and rootedness in this knowledge. But Krishna gives an idea of what the a heart of a wise person is like, he says it very simply in this verse in the *Gita* :

apuryamanam acalapratistham

samudram apah pravisanti yadvat

tadvatkama yam pravisanti sarve

sa shantim apnoti na kamakami (70)

Krishna says the heart of a wise person is like an ocean, not like a small lake or a pond. Look at what happens to a pond; if there are no rains, there is no pond left...all that is left is only a dry bed where you can grow cucumbers, and if it rains a lot then the pond overflows and can't be seen. The ocean, unlike the pond, is always full whether there is rain or no rain. Similarly, the heart of a wise person, whether he gains desirable objects or not, is always full.

Remember, once you have discovered you are limitless, this limitlessness manifests in your mind as a certain sense of fulfillment, completeness called *ananda* regardless of whether you acquire the objects you desire or not, whether your life-situations are desirable or not, whether you are going through a joyful experience or a miserable experience. That does not mean that this person is a lifeless, boring, poker-faced person; *he is a fulfilled person, his heart is like an ocean whether it's roaring with waves of laughter or calm as a pond, whether he is sitting quietly in a corner or involved in an activity or facing a difficult situation*. Irrespective of what you are going through your sense of fulfillment or sense of *ananda* is not diminished. This is what a wise person is essentially. The term used in the *Gita* is *sthitha pragyna*.

Swamiji, a lot of people believe that once you gain this knowledge you will have no problems, no problems will come your way.

There is an interesting story here to illustrate this. Gautama the Buddha declares that his student, Ananda, is a realised soul. The expression used is 'flowers are showered for him'. All the other students are intrigued. Buddha, of course, is the great Buddha himself, a realized soul, nobody had doubts about that. The students run to Ananda and ask him, 'Ananda, now that Buddha himself has declared that you are a realized soul, how do you find the world?' And he replies, 'As miserable as ever', and roars with laughter.

The world is not going to change, your problems are not going to cease. If you are in a relationship, the problems of that relationship will be there. If you are in Mumbai, the traffic jams will not open up and make way for your vehicle, the crowds in the train will not disappear. It is not that if you are a wise person no problems will come your way; the world will remain exactly as it is. Your body and mind will also remain exactly as they are. If you have issues with weight, you won't suddenly become slim; if your mind enjoys one thing more than another, that will continue. For example, if you are someone who enjoys music, you will continue to enjoy it; if you enjoy martial art, you will continue to enjoy it even after attaining wisdom.

That is not going to change. *But your happiness is no more dependent on what you have or what you don't have.* You are a fulfilled person irrespective of whether you have problems or not and it is that which makes all the difference. Your heart is full and complete as the ocean, untouched by anything.

In another verse, Krishna says that the wise person moves in this world untouched by joy and sorrow, untouched by its limitation. Does it mean that everything is the same?

vihaya Kaman yah sarvan pumamscarati nihsprhah

nirmamo nirahankarah sa shantim adhigacchati (71)

No, he recognizes that, for example, if someone he knows has lost a loved one he can empathize with the grief because he is also a human being, and if there is a joyful event in another household, he will enjoy the whole process. The joyful event will be enjoyed but, at the same time, it is not that he is happy because of the joyful event. He is already happy and that happiness is manifesting more because there is an event. He is always *ananda*; the *ananda* is either manifest or not manifest. That is the only difference.

And if it is a sorrowful event ?

He empathizes with the sorrowful event, he reflects the pathos of the situation although he is untouched by the sorrow itself.

Let me give you an example. Let us say you are playing a role in a theatre production and the role requires you to shed tears. Suppose you manage to do it without the help of glycerin etc; instead, you identify with the pathos of the situation and manage to cry. As the tears roll down, you feel jubilant within because you have managed to do it without any aid; you are joyful within, there are tears outside. It's a very strange feeling. It's the same here—inside you are nothing but *ananda* and, at the same time, you are reflecting the pathos of the situation and your compassion for the people around you has also moved you. That doesn't impinge on the fact that you are always *ananda*.

So it is not that the wise person will have a fixed norm of behavior. In fact, the Vedas say that this person is even beyond right and wrong because all right and wrong, the question of *dharma*, is only meant for a person's maturity, meant for his growth. How much more can you grow once you have discovered that you are infinite? There is no more growth possible, in that sense. Therefore, you are free from everything.

It shouldn't be misunderstood that you are free do wrong ?

No, it's not that he is free to do wrong. A wrong is done only when you feel the sense of limitation, when you would want something by hook or by crook. Here is a person who doesn't feel the sense of limitation and, therefore, he has no need to achieve that even through normal means. Why then would he try to achieve it through crooked means? A wise person will be spontaneously *dharmic*. While a student has to consciously live a life of *dharma*, the wise person will be naturally *dharmic*.

A lot of people also believe that a wise person is naturally a pacifist. Of course, everyone loves peace, peace makes progress, learning, art, music and all those possible, but that doesn't mean he will step back or run away from a confrontation if necessary. If he sees a woman being harassed, of course, he is going to get involved, he is going to do what it takes to prevent it. Yes, one should try to diffuse the situation without violence, but if violence is the last resort then so be it; the wise person is not uncomfortable with violence when it is used for something good or for something which is right.

That, of course, doesn't mean he is a war-monger; neither Krishna nor Arjuna were war-mongers. Being warriors themselves, they knew the damage that war could cause. They tried to avoid it as much as possible, but if it had to be done then it had to be done. *And they rode into it with the same feeling of ananda as they would if they were going for any other activity like a walk in the woods.* They would have no problems with that.

Does that mean that this wise person will be perfect in his behavior? No, he will have all the follies that any

other person would have, the only difference being that he will not be conditioned or limited by it. E.g. A hundred years ago the evils of smoking were not known and, let us say, this wise person had the habit of smoking—that's a health issue not a moral issue. In spite of his wisdom he may have continued smoking because at that time the knowledge that smoking was bad for health was not commonplace. These type of behavioural issues may be there even after wisdom, but that doesn't limit the person. He may be coming from a different culture, and, therefore, his cultural aspects may not fit in with the demands of another culture, but that's OK, they are only cultural. *He is free in spite of them, he is wise in spite of those limitations.* A North Indian wise person might prefer a paratha and a south Indian an idli. That doesn't mean they are conditioned by their desires, it's only a food habit they have grown up with and these variations will always be there. Thank God for that otherwise the world would be a very boring place.

It is also said that a wise person has no desires....

prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha manogatan

atmanyevatmana tustah sthitaprajnastadocyate (55)

A wise person is not conditioned by a desire. A desire is a symptom of your sense of lack . Desires can be of two natures—one which comes out of your sense of lack within, the other can come because I am feeling fulfilled. Singing in the bathroom is an example of the latter. I am not singing for the sake of pleasure, I am not singing to entertain someone, I feel happy, joyous and a song bursts from my lips. It comes from a paradigm of sufficiency, not insufficiency. Most human desires come from a paradigm of insufficiency; I am insufficient as a being and, therefore, I need to feel sufficient by getting this. A wise person doesn't feel that insufficiency and, therefore, whatever desires his mind entertains is out of fulfillment, out of joy...Because if the desire is fulfilled it doesn't matter, and if it's not fulfilled it doesn't matter. So where is the problem about desires?

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