

First of all I wish a happy healthy peaceful prosperous new year 2024.

Topic of this year is “Taking Decisions”. Taking decision is an very important exercise. Every single day one has to continuously take major or minor decision, from waking up onwards till one retires to bed. In fact our very future is decided by the type of decisions we make in the early life.

Sometimes we have to make very tough decisions and we will wonder whether this faculty of decision making is a good one, is it a blessing or a curse? In adult age one may have issues like carrier related, marriage, relocation, joint or single family, children schooling issues, for which decisions are to be made. In the old age whether we have to live alone, live with children or go to senior citizen homes. Tough decisions we have to make in old age. Whether some serious treatments are to be taken or not. Issues are many and varied. In short, adults up to death every day we have to take decisions. There are several obstacles in arriving at appropriate decision.

Obstacles in the decision making:

1. Wavering mind.

One obstacle is a wavering mind. There are some people who have got by nature a wavering mind. They are not able to take any serious decisions nor stick to the decisions made. Such people will find it very difficult to have any great achievements. Perhaps they have to do some special prayer or yoga and meditation, so that the mind becomes steady.

2. Doubts in exercising options.

The second problem is doubts. When there are so many options to choose from I do not know which particular option should be chosen. All options have got equal number of advantages as well as disadvantages. When I am about to make one decision then other one appears attractive. When I choose that and about to conclude the other option seems to be better. One will be going round and round with various options, like in a musical chair. One will never be able to crystallise and come to a firm decision.

Doubting person avoids impulsive decisions. The other problem is indefinite. Impulsive decision is a problem, so too indefinite indecision, because indecision means no effort can be put forth. Continuous doubts leading to indefinite indeci-

sion is a serious problem. Impulsive decision is often seems to be better than indefinite indecision. One should fix a firm cut off date for avoiding such indecision.

If in the mean time, one cannot make a firm decision, one can take help of somebody. Or one can take help of god also. Write all the possible options in a paper, put it in front of altar of God, pray and choose one of the papers. Whatever comes, is God's decision. Thereafter one should not have further doubt. That *śraddhā* in God makes decision making easier.

In Bhagavad gītā it is said (4.40)

अज्ञयश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः
ajñayaścāśraddhānaśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanah

One who has no discrimination, and who has no faith in sastra, and who has a doubting mind perishes. Because, for the one with doubting mind, this world is not there, nor the world beyond, nor happiness

Such doubting Thomases will perish without achieving anything in life because they do not decide anything. They did not do anything. They do not achieve anything neither in this world, nor in the hereafter

3. Fear of risk in taking decision.

And last obstacle is fear -- fear to take decisions, because always mind sees one risk or the other. Every decision in life is associated with one risk or the other. Risk free decisions do not exist. Real choice is between wild risk and calculated risk. But both are risks only. Calculated risk means one take enough precautions. Perhaps one has an alternate or plan B. Having got that, one has to plunge into one decision or the other. Many people are all the time afraid of risks involved.

Fear about the various obstacles that may come. Fear about failures. Fear about adverse consequences. Fear about other's comments. All the time worried about what others will comment. Doubting Thomas have fear of (Didn't I Tell You) DITY Peters. Whatever decisions you make they (Peters) will promptly come and discourage talking about risks involve, quoting examples of various people. If you ignore their discouragement and plunge into action and succeed, they will not come. Suppose your decision ended in failure. These people are waiting. They

will promptly come and tell didn't I tell you . One can even face failures. Facing DITY people is difficult.

So fear is a real problem. Only way to overcome obstacles and is to take decisions, stick on to that and put forth the effort until one achieve success.

Bhagavad gītā shows the way.

Being *mokṣa śāstrā*, it has in mind the *sādhanā* to achieve the *mokṣa* goal. Nevertheless it is equally applicable in the life of a entire humanity, more so for the *karma-yogī*.

Bhagavān śrī Kriṣṇā, in Bhagavad gītā talks about four important principles to achieve any *dhārmik* goal including *mokṣa*. They are:

- ◆ The first one is self-confidence.
- ◆ The second one is self-integration.
- ◆ The third one is self-surrender.
- ◆ The fourth one is self-effort.

All these are important for taking decisions, implementing the decisions and achieving success.

Self confidence:

Bhagavān says that never look down upon one-self. Never have a low self image. Never encourage inferiority complex. Human being are endowed with *jñānaśakti*, *icchāśakti*, *kriyāśakti*, meaning they are capable of knowing possible goals, means required to achieve them, called *sādhyam sādhanam*. *Sāstra* presents *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa* as desired goals - *sādhyam* and means – *sādhanam*, for achieving them. Thus covering entire pursuits of human beings.

By *jñānaśakti* one can know the means and ends. And thereafter with *icchāśakti* one can choose both short terms and long term goals, which has to culminate in making a decision. And then the will power, *kriyāśakti* gets activated.

One has to make regular auto suggestion to oneself, that I am capable of taking decisions, implementing them, and achieving the goal. Bhagavad Gītā says '*uddharedātmanātmanam*' - may one lift oneself by oneself. One need to uplift oneself by consistently entertaining thoughts of self confidence and self courage.

Our scriptures have got several mediations upon various glorious faculties human beings have. All are there to develop respect towards ourselves.

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद् भृगुवल्ली 10.2 - क्षेम इति वाचि योगक्षेम इति प्राणापानयोः कर्मेति हस्तयोः गतिरिति पादयोः

taitirīya upaniṣad bhṛguvallī 10.2 - kṣema iti vāci yogakṣem iti prāṇāpānayoḥ karmeti hastayoḥ gatiriti pādayoḥ

Each organ has got fantastic faculty and endowed with great power. It is in one's hand to utilise the capability of the organs and derive self confidence.

As a part of the daily *pūjā*, there is *ātma-pūjā* and the *kartā* worships oneself

देहो देवालयम् प्रोक्तो जीवो देव सनातनः

त्यजेत् अज्ञान-निर्माल्यम् सोऽहम् भावेन पूजयेत्

deho devālayam prokto jīvo deva sanātanaḥ

tyajet ajñāna-nirmālyam so'ham bhāvena pūjayet

The *bhāvanā* is - the body is temple, *jīvā* is none other than Bhagavān himself. And I have got all the powers. To achieve anything in life *tyajet ajñāna-nirmālyam*, one may give up ignorance that I am a miserable *jīvā*. Develop the idea I am a powerful divine being. This is building up self confidence.

Every day one has to remind oneself - I can decide. I can implement. I can achieve. Thus build up the self confidence.

For the one who has self confidence Bhagavad gītā 6.5

आत्मा एव हि आत्मना बन्धुः *ātmā eva hi ātmanā bandhuḥ*

On the other hand for the one who lacks self confidence, self diffident,

आत्मा एव रिपुः आत्मनः *ātmā eva ripuḥ ātmanaḥ*

One's own self become one's own enemy because it will block all progress.

Self-integration:

What is meant by self integration? Humans have got so many layers of personalities -- physical personality, sensory personality consisting of sense organs, emotional personality, intellectual personality etc. All these personalities must be healthy. They all must function together in a coordinated form, as a team they need to work. Then alone any achievement is possible.

In the *kaṭhōpaniṣad* there is an chariot imagery (*ratha-kalpanā*), where in the driver (charioteer), owner, the horses, the destination etc. are compared to various

parts of human. With a informed driver in place how the destination can easily be achieved is also depicted.

Chariot is the very **human body**.

Sense organs (Five) that are drawing the chariot are compared to **five horses**.

Mind is compared to **reins**, which will direct horses /sense organs.

Intellect is compared to **charioteer/driver** who holds the reins. The driver must be informed. He must know the destination . And he must know the route also. End also must be clear route also must be clear. There must be firm decision on the part of driver. In Bhagavad gītā language driver should have *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*.

Rathasvāmī is the **owner**.

Kaṭhōpaniṣad 1.3.6 further continues to describe:

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति । युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।

तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि । सद्श्वा इव सारथेः ॥

yastu vijñānavān bhavati | yuktena manasā sadā |

tasyendriyāṇi vaśyāni | sadaśvā iva sārathēḥ ||

The one who is with discrimination and always with disciplined mind, his sense organs, like controlled horses, will be under his control.

Thus, when there is a good driver and reins are under control, horses are also good, the chariot will have smooth journey to its intended destinations.

Kaṭhōpaniṣad 1.3.9 makes this explicit:

विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनःप्रग्रहनान्नरः

सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमंपदम्

vijñānasārathiryastu manaḥpragrahanānnaraḥ

so' dhvānaḥ pāramāpnoti tadviṣṇoḥ paramampadam

Thus it is very clear that every organ must be healthy, they must work in coordination. A healthy, fit and focussed mind which does not get distracted is needed. Sufficient attention span of the mind in the work, whether one is doing pūjā or listening to discourse is also important.

Healthy mind is one which according to Bhagavān in Bhagavad gītā (2.48), has *samatva-buddhi*, mind which is calm, poised, balanced and equanimous mind.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate

Oh Dhananjaya, remaining steadfast in *yogā*, perform action abandoning attachment and remaining the same in success and failure. This evenness of mind is called *yogā*.

A mind which enjoys permanent equanimity, *samatvam*, at all time, as a *kartā* or *bhoktā*. Above *ślokā* 2.48 clearly says, having fixed up the goal and the means to achieve the same, once one has started working, let hundred percent mind be focussed on means alone. Do not think of anything else, including the goal. Because once goal comes to mind, then mind gets distracted whether one succeed or not. *kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā, phale saṅgaṁ tyaktvā*. Its called mindful *karmā*. One following sequentially the steps involved in the *ṣoḍaśopacārapujā* (16 step puja) gets trained in mindful action, *samatva-buddhi*.

Next is *samatvabuddhi* in *karmaphalam*, in the results. This again is said in Bhagavad *gītā* (2.45)

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान्

traiguṇyaviṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavāṛjuna
nirdvandvo nityasattvastho niryogakṣema āatmavān

Oh Arjuna, Be one who is free from the hold of three-fold qualities, from the clutches of the pairs of opposites; be one who is ever established in *sattva-guṇā*, who is free from anxieties of acquiring and protecting, and who master of oneself.

While one may execute the *karmā* with *samatva-buddhi*, its results is not under one's control all the time. There are so many variables which are beyond the *kartā's* scope. Irrespective of the results being favorable or unfavorable, one need to develop *samatva-buddhi* in facing it -- *siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate*.

Success or failure, non-reacting mind is required. Derive inspiration from success

and learn from failures. With more information and refinement, one can again continue with more and better effort.

According to scriptures all experiences of life, will refine one's personality. In fact unpleasant experiences will polish more than pleasant ones. Arjuna discovered kṛṣṇā as guru, only in the battlefield when he faced intense problem of life or death.

Thus non-reacting is really a learning mind. If there is integration of various personalities resulting in a mind which is capable of learning, then journey can continue until goal is reached. As per *sanātana-dharmā*, since *jīvā* can continue with next birth, *mokṣa* as ultimate goal can be achieved eventually. *Śāstrā* guarantees this. Self integration is thus a wonderful *sādhana*.

Self surrender:

Surrender to the Lord is very important. Faith, devotion and surrender to god is very important in our culture whether your goal is secular or sacred. Surrender to god brings in humility and avoids self conceit/arrogance. Otherwise arrogance becomes serious obstacle. Arrogance can be best handled by resorting to faith in god and surrender. Bhagavad gītā says (18.61,62)

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति

भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया

īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hṛddeśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

Oh Arjuna, *Īśvara* remains at the seat of the intellect of all beings, causing all beings to move, revolve by *māyā*, like in a revolving machine.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्

tameva śaraṇaṃ gaccha sarvabhāvena bhārata
tatprasādātparaṃ śāntiṃ sthānaṃ prāpsyasi śāśvatam

Oh Bhārata, Surround to Him alone with your whole heart.

By His grace you will gain absolute peace, the eternal abode.

All pervading *Īśvara* is there in every one's heart. Invoke Him every day and while doing any action. He will bless one's endeavor. By constantly remembering Him, He will reside in one's subconscious mind. Thus obstacles, if any in one's

effort will ward-off. Fear of failure will vanish. One gets self courage by His blessing. one will be humble. This is Self surrender.

Fourth and main is Self effort:

The first three are the launching pads, like in the stages of a rocket. Now with the self confidence, self integration, and blessing from *Iśvara*, upon self-surrender, one works for one's goal.

We have so many stories to show this success, confidence, integration etc. One story is of Bhagīratā . How he brought Gangā from heaven and rescued his forefathers, this story has all these parameters. *Samudra-mathanam*, churning of Ocean, by Deva and Asurā is another example. In spite of various impediments, including emitting of *hālāhāla* poison by deadly Vasuki snake, they succeeded. Rāma *namā*, the inspiring Lord for Añjaneya, was responsible for him to overcome various obstacles in crossing over to Sri Lanka, locating Sītā and successfully return to inform Rāma about the whereabouts of Sītā.

Thus all these Puranic stories indicate the importance of these four lessons. One, with self confidence, self integration and self surrender, enthusiastically endeavour in self effort to achieve success.

If these four are there, this New Year will be with the blessing of the *Iśvara* and will become successful. I pray to Him to bless us all for us to achieve our own respective goals of life. *Om Tat Sat*

Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam, Vedapuri, Nagpur - Kumbhabhishekam

By the grace of Lord Dakshinamurti and Pujya Swami Dayanandaji, Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam is cordially inviting you to participate and support the project of the renovation and re-consecration of our temple.

The temple was constructed in 2007, adhering strictly to the guidelines of our ancient scriptures, the Agama Shastras. The project of the renovation started on 31st of January with the Balasthapanam, and it will be concluded with the Kumbhabhishekam.

We invite you to participate in the Kumbhabhishekam from **March 27-29, 2024**, and receive the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurti.

With heartfelt gratitude,
The President, the Chief Acharya and the Trustees
Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam, Vedapuri, Nagpur.

How to Contribute with the Kumbhabhishekam?

You can contact us via email (online.avg.nagpur@gmail.com) or phone/WhatsApp (+91 98902 93641 – Mr Swapnil Jatkar).