

Taking Decisions: Swamiji Special Talk for New Years 2024

Taking decisions is an important exercise which a human being should do all the time. Our very future depends on the types of decisions we make in our early years. Even fatalists should make a decision because the fate does not indicate the future before it happens. After the event, we can attribute it to free will or fate, but before that we have to make a decision. This makes us wonder whether this faculty of making decisions is good or bad.

Decision making is not easy because there are many obstacles:

1. **Wavering mind:** Wavering mind makes serious decisions difficult. It also makes one change the decisions often. Lord Krishna criticizes people with wavering mind. Such people will have difficulty in making great achievements.
2. **Doubts:** When there are so many options, we are not sure which one to choose. All options have advantages and disadvantages. Doubting person avoids impulsive decisions, but he is also indecisive. Even wrong decisions are often better than indefinite indecision. Doubting people also will have difficulty in making great achievements.
3. **Fear:** Fear to make a decision, because the mind always sees one risk or another. Risk-free decisions do not exist. Our choices are between wild risk and calculated risk. There are people who discourage the decisions we make. If our decisions happen to fail, they are prompt to point out the failure.

In Bagawad Gita, Lord Krishna gives some important guidance to Arjuna, and by extension, to humanity. Lord Krishna gave these guidelines for moksha or liberation, however, these guidelines are also useful to us, here and now, whatever our goals in life are. Four important factors given by Lord Krishna are:

1. Self-confidence: Never look down upon yourself; never have low self-image. Never have an inferiority complex. Lord has given us the powers to make decisions on time:
 1. Jñāna sakthi: Power to know the goals and the means to achieve that),
 1. Icha sakthi: Choosing power, which culminates in making a decision) and
 1. kriya sakthi Power to do things.

Our scriptures have given various meditation processes to cultivate and use these powers. Build up self-confidence every day. When you have self-confidence, you become your own friend.

- Self-integration: We have many layers of personality – physical personality, sensory personality, emotional personality, intellectual personality. All these personalities must be healthy and perform in a coordinated form. Katha upanishad provides the example of a horse drawn chariot:
 - The body is compared to a chariot,
 - The horses are compared to the sense organs.
 - The mind is compared to the reins directing the sense organs. The mind must be calm and equanimous all the time – when I am doing an action and when I am getting the result.
 - Intellect is compared to the charioteer or the

driver. The driver must know the destination and the route.

Every organ must be healthy, and they must work in coordination with each other. When you are working on a goal, first fix the goal then fix the means. After this focus on the means and not on the goals. Because our attention is required for the means and not for the goal. Goal should be in the subconscious mind, but not at the forefront of our mind and action.

The result may be a success or failure because of many other factors including our karma from previous jenma. Don't lose equanimity either in success or failure. Don't react to the results, because a reacting mind can't learn from success and failure. Spiritual success is nourished by all experiences including unpleasant experiences. Non reacting mind is learning mind. Look upon failure as a brief pause for more refinement and the continuation of effort until the goal is reached. Failure of current jenma will become prodigy of next jenma – we will get back our remembrance in next life. Success is definite in one jenma or another.

- Self-surrender: Faith in God, devotion to go and surrender to God. Surrender to God is required for humility. It is difficult to differentiate between arrogance and confidence. One of the best methods to handle arrogance is to surrender to God. You don't even need to go to the temple, because the lord is in our heart. Close your eyes and surrender to the power within you and charge your mind. The most powerful obstacle to success is fear of failure. Surrendering to God will remove the fear and give courage to start the journey.
- Self-effort: The first three factors are launching pad;

self-effort completes the task. Many stories of purana illustrate the importance of self-effort.