

Baghawad Gita, Class 168: Chapter 13, Verse 8

Shloka # 8:

**Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury,
for-bearance, sincerity, service of the teacher, cleanliness,
steadiness,
control of body and organs;**

Upto shloka # 7 Sri Krishna

dealt with Kshetram and Kshetragnya. Kshetram and Kshetragnya
are also known as

Atma and Anatma; and also called Deha and Dehi in chapter 2.

One is matter

principle while other is Consciousness principle. Sri Krishna
was clarifying

the six questions raised by Arjuna.

Now from the 8th shloka, which I introduced in the last class,
up to 12th shloka, in five verses, Sri Krishna is now dealing
with Gyanam, which is the third topic. In this shloka, Gyanam
means the group of mental virtues required to enjoy a fit mind
for gaining spiritual Knowledge; or spiritual-knowledge-
friendly virtues.

If knowledge is given to an

unfit mind, such a mind will resist it and it will not be
assimilated.

Unassimilated knowledge, like unassimilated, undigested food
can become a

poison. Now these virtues are also known as Dharma. Dharma is
the steppingstone

for moksha. Many virtues are enumerated in the Gita and
shastras. Brthhari

wrote the Niti Shatakam a book of 100 virtues. Sri Krishna is

introducing this
topic now and each of 20 virtues will be discussed.

Amanitvam: Manitvam

means self-glorification; thinking I am a great person, while Amanitvam is

freedom from self-conceit or the humility. Why is self-conceit a big obstacle?

When we accomplish something, society admires, recognizes and rewards.

It

often starts with the family itself; the parents admire when we do even a small

thing. When we listen to this glorification, admiration of others, generally

our tendency will be, to easily join that group, and along with the society, we

also start enjoying admiration of ourselves. When the society admires or

rewards, it is the duty of the society and it is perfectly OK, but unknowingly

we also start, like others, admiring ourselves. This self-admiration is the beginning,

the seed for self-conceit.

What is the problem due to

it? Vedanta says problem of self-admiration is a very big trap for spiritual

seeker. **Once we start self-admiration,**

it causes addiction to it and we look for more and more of it.

Once addicted,

we want it all the time; and when deprived of it, it causes great disturbance

in us. Like

a smoker, suffers deprivation symptoms when he quits smoking, like a liquor

addict suffers when he tries to stop it; once we get addicted

to the glorification of others, the deprivation causes lot of problems and therefore, just as any other sense addition has to be carefully avoided,

Similarly, admiration addiction also one has to carefully avoided. Therefore the first problem is that it causes addiction.

Second problem with self-admiration is that I get so excited about it that I get carried away and my discriminatory powers get robbed by name and fame. Once this is lost, we get delusional. I forget important facts of life. What are these important facts of life:

1) Whatever be my accomplishments, I can never take full credit for it, as there are many other factors as well. This forgetfulness is caused by excitement. So, most of the credit goes to many others. Whatever be the accomplishment, my contribution is only one of the factors; for every accomplishment, there are innumerable people involved, innumerable factors involved, I can never take full credit, but in excitement, I do lose sight of this fact and I claim and feel that "I", with my full power, I have accomplished that. This is the forgetfulness caused by excitement. I should remember that whatever be the name and fame I get, 99% of the credit goes to many other factors; I can perhaps take a little credit. This is first fact that is lost sight of by a conceited person.

And the second fact that is forgotten in self-conceit is, even if I have contributed something for an accomplishment; whatever it be; may be music; may be education, may be sport; according to the Gita which we have seen, even that little contribution from me, is really speaking, not my contribution.

I find I am born with that talent; that talent is a gift from the Lord, which is a fact, revealed in the 10th chapter of the Gita, called Vibuthi yoga: I do not enjoy any credit, any glory, it is a grace of the Lord's glory, which is expressing, manifesting through me, and therefore, the so-called limited contribution too, I cannot claim. That is the fact; but in self-conceit, I forget this fact also. I forget others' contribution; I forget Lord's contribution. Thus, self-conceit is an obstacle to devotion. Self-conceit and bhakthi cannot co-exist, because a self-conceited person forgets Lord's contribution, which is the only contribution.

Third, however great I am,
I can never claim I am greatest one; in world there are people, there will be people, who will be greater than me.

It is a world of sadishayatvam. It is a beautiful word used in shastra. Sadishayatvam means anything can be bettered. Anything can be improved.

Anything can be improved, say the shastras. Self-conceit robs me of this fact. I can never appreciate another person who is greater than me. When I come across such a person my self-conceit does not allow me to admire. I alone want to be center of admiration. I develop jealousy, anger etc. In its extreme, I can even tend to eliminate the other person from the field.

A way to test my self-conceit is to ask if I can comfortably admire glory of other people? This will tell me how self-conceited a person, I am.

In our village, there was a temple nagaswaram person. He used

to play in the temple rituals, daily. It is told that he was so self-conceited, he thought that he is the nagaswaram vidhwan. And just to tease him, somebody asked him: Hello Sivarama, how is Karikurichi Arunchalam? He was one of the nagaswara vidhwans. How is he?

And you know what was his answer: Ah.., he will also blow air'. He cannot accept others' greatness. That is the indication of self-conceit. And once this self-conceit comes, the door of devotion is blocked; and without bhakthi, Gyanam is never possible.

So one has to develop humility. Puranas have many stories related to manitvam. Every self-conceited person will be humiliated at some point or other.

Humiliation is called humbling experience. Every conceited person will be humiliated at one time or other; what do you mean by humiliation; **a lesson in humility is humiliation. Humiliation means humility creation.** And all our acharyas you find in any field, they all were embodiments of humility. They were all great in their field and they were all embodiments of humility. If you read the works of Kalidasa, he has written, (he is supposed to be, or the greatest Sanskrit scholar) several poems and several dramas.

In all of them, he writes an introductory verse. In all of them, you can see how humble he is. And not only he expresses his humility, he teaches humility to others.

All Acharyas were embodiments of humility. From this we come to know how much importance is given to humility. And in one of the works, known as shatpadi

sthothram, Shankaracharya's first prayer is: O Lord remove my self-conceit; make me humble. Humility is required in all fields; humility is particularly required for Vedantic seeker, because without humility bhakti cannot come, and without bhakthi Gyanam cannot come.

Adambhitavam:

Dambhitvam means physical expression of self-conceit. Here I want admiration at physical level as well. I want an attractive body, attractive dress, a head turner, through my walking, attention seeking expression and all forms of pretensions. Thus, Adhambhitvam means unpretentious, simple, inconspicuous, even though he is great. Hence the saying empty vessels make noise.

Ahimsa: It

means non-injury to other beings. Like different weapons to hurt others, we already have three weapons to hurt others. They are: Kayika, Vachika, and Manasa; the very body is a weapon, which can cause injury to others; hands and legs, which bhagavan has given with good intention, but we use it terribly. And similarly vak is another instrument; animals do not have this instrument; therefore, animals cannot verbally injure; human beings are the unique ones who have this most wonderful instrument. It can be used or it can be terribly abused; verbal abuse you know is worse than physical ones. So there is a saying that the wound caused by the tongue will not heal

easily. And the third instrument is mind, anthakaranam; and mentally also himsa is possible, through thoughts. Mentally cursing others and remember thoughts are powerful forces and therefore kayika, vachika, and manasa are three forms of himsa.

In the Ten Commandments, Ahimsa is the first commandment. It is a major vow for a spiritual seeker.

I should not do what I do not expect others to do, to me; is a very simple law. I do not want any living being to injure me, even mosquitoes. And if I do not want others to hurt me, it becomes a universal law and it is an instinctive expectation; nobody teaches this; it is instinctive and natural expectation; what is my expectation; nobody should hurt me, which means everyone, else has got the same instinctive expectation that I should not hurt him or her and therefore this becomes a universal law and therefore only when I follow a Universal law, as Dayananda swami says, only when I do not rub against universal law, I can have peace of mind. Any time I am violating a universal law, also called dharma, I am hurting myself.

Dayananda Swamiji used to say, the Tamarind tree has a rugged bark and if you rub yourself against the tree, the bare body can be hurt. Dharma is like a Tamarind tree; nothing happens to Dharma; I hurt myself.

Second: Whatever I perform in world remains as a deposit and that alone I can take back. If I contribute Himsa, I will get back Himsa from world. If I give love, I get back love. If I

don't want injury from world, I should not injure.

Third: The tendency to hurt others is natural and impulsive. We have a lot of expectations from family, friends, neighbors etc. Raga Dvesha, which, when fulfilled, I am happy; but when others behave according to their own free will, most of my expectations are then not met and if that expectation is not fulfilled I get into a rage. When expectations are not fulfilled, the natural consequence is that I am hurt. Non-fulfillment of expectation is bound to hurt me. And once I am hurt, the immediate reaction is attacking that object which is the cause of my hurt. The object means, the person who did not behave, and the set up which was not up to the mark; a hurt person, reacts causing hurt to others. So the psychology is hurt person hurts others. An injured person injures others. And there is no gap between my injury and my causing injury to others; it is so impulsive.

If this should not happen,
it can occur only in one condition, my mind should be sensitive to feel the pain of the other person. Once I feel the pain of the other when I hurt the other person in impulse; I also go through the pain. I also go through the pain like the mother who beats the child; and afterwards the mother is never comfortable because the mother goes through the pain, which the child goes through.

So for a sensitive person hurting another person is like a self-injury. I don't want to hurt myself, so I don't hurt others.

I go through sleepless nights when I hurt another. My mind registers others pain. So, my mind has to be sensitive (empathic) to follow Ahimsa. Vedanta

requires a sensitive mind. Even reading newspaper and reading about pain should hurt me. Crime itself becomes punishment for a sensitive mind.

Kshanti: This word has several meanings. One meaning is mental immunity, where mind is not disturbed when my expectations are not met. I need to develop the immunity to weather, economy, people etc. Just as a person has physical immunity, I can have mental immunity as well.

Take away:

Ahimsa:

I should not do what I do not expect others to do, to me; is a very simple law.

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hurting another person is like a self-injury. I don't want to hurt myself, so I don't hurt others.

A lesson in humility is humiliation. Humiliation means humility creation.

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With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy