

Bagawat Geeta, Class 19

Greetings All,
Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka #24:

“This Self cannot be cut, burned, wetted or dried. Eternal, allpervasive, stable, immovable and ever lasting is It.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that Sri

Krishna wants to help Arjuna get out of his sorrow as well as help him stand up and fight the war. He teaches from three angles. They are Philosophical, Dharmic and Laukika approaches to life.

In philosophical approach he describes Atma Gyanam from Shloka 12 to 25. In the first few sholkas Sri Krishna pointed out that our real nature is Consciousness or Caitanya svarupam. Our physical, emotional and intellectual personalities are only incidental features. None of them is our real nature.

Discussing Atma he points out that Atma is Nityaha, Satyaha, Sarvagathaha, Apremeya, Akartha, Abhokktha and Nirvikaraha. Atma has no papam or punyam, hence it is also called Karma Phala Athithaha. Discussing Nirvikaraha, Swamiji says, descriptions such as, the highest state of consciousness or lowest state of consciousness means

it is subject to change. Consciousness does not have such attributes. As such, it is only a state of mind. A Sattvic mind is highest, a Rajasic mind-very active, is in the middle, while a Tamasic mind is the lowest state of mind. Consciousness does not have different states of existence. So Sri Krishna concludes: Arjuna, you are the Atma, so are Bhishma and Drona. There is no question of any Atma killing or being killed.

Shloka #25:

“This Self is said to be unmanifest, imponderable and immutable. Knowing It to be such, you ought not to grieve for It.”

In Shloka 25 Sri Krishna concludes Atma Swaroopam by telling Arjuna that he should not grieve nor should he shed his duty.

Shloka 26:

“Even if you think the Self is perpetually born and perpetually dies, still, O hero, you ought not to grieve for It thus.”

From Shloka 26 onwards Sri Krishna is giving a hypothetical argument, in case Arjuna does not accept Vedanta's teaching. Swamiji says the student has to be convinced and he must accept; there is no question of imposing the teaching. Sri Krishna says: You may conclude that there is no such thing as an Atma as one cannot see it. You may think it is an imagination. There are other systems of thoughts that don't accept the concept of an eternal Atma. Some systems believe that Atma is in the body and that it changes from birth to birth. In effect, they believe in a perishable Atma. Another system called Charavaha , closer to modern science, asks for proof of mind, intellect and Atma. According to Charvaha philosophy, body alone is Atma. They do not believe in reincarnation. They believe “ I am the body”. They believe in the temporary body with a temporary Atma. If you believe in this, even then you cannot get out of your duty. If you are born and if you die even then death should not be a source of sorrow. You should not grieve.

Shloka: 27:

Death is indeed certain for one who is born; and for one who dies; birth, too, is certain. Therefore, as regards, this unavoidable sequence, you ought not to grieve.

Swamiji says this is an important sholka. Sri Krishna is

giving some very practical advice.

Suppose, Arjuna, you are one of those who don't believe in the Atma, but believe you are the body. This body is born on a particular day and whatever is born will die one day. Everything born will die one day. And from simple common sense experience you know that as well. Learn to assimilate this; whatever is born will have to die one day. Just because I close my eyes, the fact is not going to be different. You cannot make the world dark by closing the eyes.

And that anything born is subject to death is proved by three pramaṇas. Pratyakṣha pramaṇa tells me that from daily reading of the newspaper, in obituary column, somebody or the other is dying. Therefore, I know that there is no difference between the body of that person and this particular body that I have; or the body of my mother; or the body of my father; etc. All of them are Panca bhutatmas; and if one is dying; that means every one of these bodies also has to die. This is pratyakṣa pramaṇam.

Whatever has a beginning should have an end. Whatever is a product will have an end. Therefore, logic also tells me this body, Bhishma's body and everyone else as well, will have to die. This is inference or Anumanaha Pramana.

Scriptures say anything born out of Karma will die. Karma is like oil in a lamp. Once oil is depleted the flame dies out. Similarly the oil of Karma is getting depleted. Meditate on this fact. Assimilate this fact. We are aware of this law but when it comes to us or one's near us we forget the philosophy. Assimilation means applying it in life. This is wisdom.

In ancient stories, Rakshasas did Tapas. When asked for a boon they always asked for eternal life. Brahmaji could not grant them that. So, they accepted conditional immortality, such as I should not be killed at night or by weapons etc. Brahma

granted the boon knowing that there is a loophole, if required. Then God takes an Avatara to finish the demon. In other religions death is the end. In Hinduism death is never an end of the individual. Which is why, in Hinduism, capital punishment is possible. You can still redeem yourself in the next life.

Accept life and death as an intrinsic part of physical body. Resistance to this idea, a choice-less situation, is the one that causes grief. With Choice-less situations it is best to accept and surrender. This is a very important lesson of Gita. Accept with maturity, without complaints, and without anger.

If I am not prepared to accept, there is only way out, that is prepare yourselves. First assimilate this fact by meditating on it. By praying to God, increase your psychological immune system and inner power. Thus, strengthen the mind so that you can accept all choice-less situations.

In Life we have many choice-less situations. There are more choice-less one's than ones with choice. My parentage, my education, my family, children, etc. All these are given and are in the past. Accept the past. Whatever I try, I cannot change the past, and it is choice -less.

Present is also choice-less. It is already here. You are in the middle of it. You cannot alter it.

Regarding future, how much choice do we really have? We will grow old; death and subsequent separation are all given. A big part of future is also choice-less. A very small portion of life presents choices to us. Learn to accept choice-less situations.

In some cases, even our fate can be changed. On Nonmbu consider the power of Savithri or power of Markandeya to change fate. Swamiji sayslike for a disease some fates can be changed, some managed and some cannot be changed. Unfortunately, one cannot know fate. Even if there is a remedy

it will take time and until then it is still a choice-less situation.

Therefore, it is important to have an attitude of accepting choice-less situations. So, do not grieve, Arjuna. If there is a choice, Act. However, if it a choice-less situation, just accept it.

Shloka 28:

The beginning of beings is unmanifest, O Bhartha prince! Their middle state is manifest. Their end , too, is unmanifest. In these circumstances why lament?

Here Sri Krishna explains the phenomenon of birth and death. He says once we understand this phenomena their capacity to hurt us is reduced. Ignorance creates projections. Some one has said: Ignorance is the dark room in which all the negatives are developed. The negatives include: Kama, krodha, moha, and lobha.

Really speaking, there is no question of destruction of anything or creation of anything. Total destruction does not exist. Total creation cannot exist. Even according to science, by the law of the conservation of matter, "nothing is created and nothing is destroyed". Bhagavan cannot create even a milligram of matter.

Omnipotent is one who can make everything possible. Creation of matter is not possible, even by God. Then what is birth and death? It means changing from one phenomenon to another. Thus, Tomorrow is death of Today. Water converting to steam, means water dies and steam is born. What is the birth and growth of this body? Destruction of lot of idlis and dosais and sambar is the creation and growth of the body.

All our bodies existed before. But in what form? They existed in a potential form called Prakrithi or energy. Prakṛti means the most rudimentary form of matter which is not even energy.

Energy is at least there in four or five different forms. All of them put together come closest to a definition of Prakrithi. Prakrithi is also called Avyaktam or Maya or Shakthi. Therefore our bodies existed before, but in un-manifest form.

Therefore, everything is changing from one form to another; the previous condition is called un-manifest condition; the present condition is called the manifest condition.

All the physical bodies existed before creation in potential form as Parkrithi. In due course of time the un-manifest body becomes manifestbody for a few years. Again all manifest bodies will have to go back to un-condition.

Un-manifest> manifest (birth)

Manifest> un-manifest (death).

What happens before life or after life is not known.

In between period is known and is called life.

Shloka #29:

One beholds It as a marvel. Similarly, another talks of it as a marvel. Yet another hears of It as a marvel. Even after hearing, none indeed knows It aright.

Sri Krishna now says: Even if you are not able to understand Atma, believe in it and accept it. I can understand it is a very subtle knowledge and needs a lot of preparation. Atma is a wonder. Atma Gyanam is an even greater wonder. Beyond mind and senses the teaching itself is a wonder. Even if you teach it will not be known. This is a secret teaching. We think Atma is some object of creation and then we try to create the concept. Then we meditate upon it and hope to see Atma. All the time, we should remember, Atma is not an object that is being talked about but it is the subject. Therefore looking for the Atma is the basic mistake we make.

The objectification of Atma is the big mistake people make. Whateverwe see is not Atma. When we have negated everything

and we see Shunyam then the teacher has to come in and tell us that Shunyam is also not the Atma.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy