

# Bagawad Gita, Class 165: Chapter 13, Verses 1 & 2

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, in last class I said, Ch. 12 ends the Madhyama Shatakam of the Gita. Gita has three Shatakams. Shatakam means group of six, in this case group of six chapters. Thus, we have three Shatakams in Gita. In each Shatakam, certain topics are highlighted.

## **Prathama Shatakam:**

includes Chapters 1-6. It highlights:

- 1) Jivaswarupam or the Tvam in the saying Tat Tvam Asi; Jiva is the Tvam.
- 2) Karma yoga; importance of individual effort or Prayatna is pointed out. Sri Krishna points out that, everything is not willed by God; you also have free will; so, fatalism is not encouraged. Fatalism means, fate alone contributes in our lives. Vedic approach is that fate is just one of the contributors of our future; in addition to fate, another important factor is free will or prayatna. So one has to contribute one's effort; one has to work for one's uplift; or as the Tamil saying goes: Taan Padi, Daivam padi.

## **Madhyama Shatakam:**

Chapters 7-12: Here topics highlighted are:

- 1) Ishwara swarupam

or the Tat in Tat Tvam Asi; also called Tat Padarthaha.

2) Ishwara upasana

yoga; this can be as Ishta devata upasana also called abhyasa yoga; and Vishwa

Rupa upasana; Meditation

upon the Lord, looking upon him as the very universe itself.

In fact, the

entire 11th chapter is training for Vishva rupa upasanam.

3) Ishwara Kripa or

Ishwara anugraha.

While human effort is

important, it fructifies only with Ishwara Kripa. And of course, Ishvara anugrah is always

there, flowing, but we have to learn to tap the Ishvara anugraha, which is there just

as a waterfall has got electricity in potential form, but the electricity will

be useful to us only when we learn to tap the electricity by the appropriate

project. Similarly, solar energy is there all the time, but we have to tap that

energy. Similarly, Ishvara

anugrah also, we have

to learn to tap and **every prayer is like**

**a hydroelectric project, it is Ishvara anugrah project.** In

fact, we start the Bhagavat Gita with a prayer;

it is only to tap anugrah.

And therefore, never underestimate the role of anugrah.

Generally

people think advaitins who are committed to dhyana yoga do not have bhakthi at all, they think, they are all

intellectuals, they are rational people, they think. But remember even the

greatest advaitin, values the role of Ishvara anugrah and therefore Ishvarakripa or

anugrah is the third topic in the madhyama shatkam. So, three topics are covered: Ishvara svarupam, Ishvara dhyanam, and Ishvara anugrah.

### **Charama Shatakam:**

Chapters 13-18

Now we are entering the Charama shatakam of the Gita. Three topics highlighted here are:

1) Jiva Ishwara Swarupa aikyam: The essential oneness of Jiva svarupam and Ishvara svarupam, which is technically called Asi padarthaha. In the saying, Tat Tvam Asi, if you rearrange it becomes, Tvam Tat Asi; here Tvam is Jiva svarupam, Tat is Ishvara Svarupam and Asi is Jiva Ishwara svarupa aikyam. And by using the word essential oneness, we indirectly convey that there is a superficial difference between Jiva and Ishvara. And that is why we are using the word essential oneness and to understand this essential oneness, we generally take the example of a wave and the ocean. Wave and ocean are superficially different, that is why it is called a wave, and ocean is called an ocean. Definitely there is a difference. Ocean is vast, while wave is small; Ocean is cause, wave is effect; ocean is relatively eternal, wave is ephemeral. Thus, between wave and ocean, differences do exist, but all these differences are only superficial differences. If you find out the essential nature of wave, it is nothing but Water. If you take the wave, it is nothing but water, H<sub>2</sub>O, Satchidananda. Similarly if you analyze the essential nature of ocean, it is nothing but water alone. In fact there is no wave other than water, there is no ocean other than water, there is only one water behind the wave and one water behind the ocean and if you shift your attention to the water aspect, if you shift your focus to the water, then you can say wave and ocean are essentially one and the same. Similarly, Vedanta says, Jivatma is essentially atma. That is why it is called Jivatma. Jivatma

is essentially the atma, the chaitanyam. Paramatma is essentially the atma, the chaitanyam. Even though superficially they are different; essentially both are one and the same atma, the chaitanyam alone. This understanding, by proper enquiry, is called Jivatma paramatma svarupa aikyam; otherwise called Asi padarthah. This is topic No.1 of the Charama Shatkam.

2) Gyana yoga: Then the second topic is Gyana yoga, that is a sadhana meant to discover this essential oneness, known as Aham Brahma Asi. Imagine the wave is a living being and the wave says that I am nothing but water. And the moment the wave understands I am water, the wave can say I do not have birth, because water does not have birth, I do not have death, and I am all pervading throughout the ocean. And this discovery is Aham Brahma Asmi, which is gathered through Gyana Yogah. Gyana yoga is process of understanding this Mahavakyam; in English we call it the great equation. So the concept of equation is very beautiful. When do we have an equation?

When two things are totally different we can write an equation. When two things are explicitly equal there is no need for an equation. But when two things are seemingly different but essentially one, then equation is useful.

Thus:  $4+3=9-2=7$ .

While both sides appear different; one has a plus sign while other has a minus sign; our eyes show them as different. But difference is superficial and both are "Seven" swarupam.

Similarly, when you look at the Jiva, and when you look at the Ishvara, they are very different. One is omniscient; another does not even know the spelling of Omniscient. Sarvajnah, alpajnah; Sarvashaktiman, Alpashaktiman. Sarvajnh means

omniscient. Alpajnah means with limited knowledge. Sarvashaktiman means Omnipotent and Alpashaktiman means with limited power. Sarvagathah means omnipresent and Alphagathah means limited pervasion. So Jiva and Ishvara seem to be totally different; even different is not the word, diagonally opposite. One is creator, the other is created; one is master, another is servant. But the Upanishads say that the difference is only superficial like  $4 + 3$  and  $9 - 2$ . If you make an enquiry and arrive at the essence of Jivatma, and also arrive at the essence of paramatma or Ishvara it is called Tvam pada sodanam, and Tat pada sodanam respectively; sodanam means vicharah. You do Jiva svarupa vichara and Ishvara svarupa vichara on the lines taught by the teacher. Just as the mathematics teacher drives home the equation to the student. Similarly, Mahavakya upadesha karta guru has to help the student enquire into the Jiva svarupa vichara and Ishvara svarupa vichara. Then the thrilling discovery is Aham Brahma asmi. And this is called Jivatama-paramatma aikyam. Otherwise called Asi padarthah. And this enquiry that you make to arrive at the oneness is called Gyana yoga; otherwise called Vedanta sravana manana nidhidhyasana. This topic is elaborated upon in Chapters 13, 14, and 15.

3. **Satguna** or importance of values. Noble virtues are important to absorb the teaching. Only a dharmic mind can absorb Vedanta. If mind is not dharmic, it is not prepared for Vedanta and teaching will not enter the mind. So, one has to prepare the mind. These are the virtues enumerated by Sri Krishna in chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17. In Dharma shastra these virtues are called Atma Guna or we also call it Sadhana chatushtaya sampati.

Now we enter chapter 13.

In this chapter, in

some Gita books there are 35 shlokas and in some 34. The chapter starts with a question from Arjuna. This question is not shown in some books, hence 34 shlokas in the chapter. We will, however, discuss Arjuna's shloka as well.

### **Shloka # 1:**

**13.1 Arjuna said I wish to learn about Nature (matter) and the Spirit (soul), the field and the knower of the field, knowledge and that which ought to be known, O Kesava.**

Arjuna's question: In this shloka six technical words are used; one can even call them technical jargons; like the word inflation used in economics is different from inflating a tire. So, Arjuna asks for clarification of these six terms. The terms are: 1. Prakriti; 2. Purusha; 3. Kshetram; 4. Kshetragya; 5. Gyanam and; 6. Gneyam. Usually Prakriti and Purusha are paired; Kshetram and Kshetragya are paired; and Gyanam and Gneyam are paired.

### **Prakriti and Kshtram:**

mean material universe or experienced objective material universe.

Even though there are subtle differences, at this moment, we can take them as almost identical. And when I say material universe, it includes the invisible energies also, because even scientifically energy is another form of matter only. Matter can be converted into energy and energy can be converted into matter; that is why we have  $e = mc^2$  equation. Therefore, when I say this matter, it means the whole

creation, in visible and in invisible form. And according to Vedanta, it includes our mind also, because according to shastra, mind is also a product of the subtle five elements. Therefore mind is also a form of matter only and that is why matter influences the mind. When there is a change in biochemistry, when there is a change in hormones, it changes your mind and emotions; from that it is very clear that mind is also another form of subtle matter. Therefore, prakrti or kshetram includes the world, the mind and also the body; all of them are called prakrti or kshetram. Sri Krishna will himself elaborate on that later. Here for our convenience we can remember them as matter.

**Purusha, Kshetragya and Gneyam**, all three are synonymous. All three mean consciousness principle or chaitanyam or chetana tatvam.

**Gyanam**, the popular meaning is knowledge. In Chapter 13, however, it means Satguna's and there are 20 of these virtues. These are topics Arjuna wants to know about. So Sri Krishna answers Arjuna's question.

**Shloka # 2:**

**13.2 The Blessed Lord said O son of Kunti, this body is referred to as the 'field'. Those who are versed in this call him who is conscious of it as the 'knower of the field'.**

Sri Krishna answers.

When we write an answer to a question, we answer the ones we know first and keep doubtful ones to the end. Sri Krishna answered Arjuna in a different order from the one in question. Even though Arjuna's order was, Prakrti, Purusha, Kshetram, Kshetrajna, Sri Krishna starts with the third item, Kshetram.

**Kshetram:** O Kaunteya, this body that you experience so intimately, is called Kshetram. Why use word Kshetram? Shankaracharya gives several meanings for the word kshetram; Out of that we will see two meanings, which are relevant and beautiful.

First meaning is, that which is subject to decay and destruction; that which disintegrates, that which decays and ultimately dies. In fact, the very word shariram also means the same only; that which is decaying every moment.

All the words used for the physical body indicates that it is decay and destruction. And even the word deha, is because that which is burned by, afflicted by, tormented by three-fold sorrows; it also means to burn, not in the physical sense, but in the figurative sense.

What are the three-fold tapas. One tapa is rising from inside in the form of varieties of diseases etc. that is, it is internal. And the other type of tapa, are coming from the outside or the environment, like dust pollution, noise pollution, carbon monoxide pollution, any tapam coming from the surrounding is one type of suffering; What comes from inside is adhyatmica tapam; like BP, sugar, etc. And the third one is that which is not caused by external or internal, that which is caused by the nature or the karma.

Supernatural forces like thunder, lightening or floods cause Adhi daivika tapam; all these



things are the third ones.

Through

these three fold tapas

the body is constantly tormented. And while living the three fold tapas are

burning, and after death also, the body is burned, by another type of fire

called fire of cremation.

Therefore

while living also it is burned, after death also it is burned therefore it is

called kshetram. This is

meaning No.1 given by Shankaracharya.

3) Agricultural land

is also called Kshetram. Physical body is compared to a field.

We can convert

seed to plant by sowing seed on land; similarly we have performed punya and

papa karmas in past lives. They are like seeds that fructify into Phalam.

Their conversion requires a medium and medium is the physical body. Only

through body can we reap punya and papa Phalam. Therefore Shankaracharya says,

Kshetravat Kshetram.

In kshetram there are two more ideas to keep in mind; the mind is also kshetram; external world is also kshetram. Whatever you experience is kshetram. The world is experienced by me; the body is experienced by me. Do you have any doubts? When the mosquito bites, you will know whether you experience the body or not. The body, pain and pleasures are experienced; the world is experienced. In the same way I experience the mind intimately. I know the arrival of every emotion and I know their departure. I know the emotional problems. That's why

counselors are having a gala time. So, therefore, all the three are objects of experience and all of them are matter, made up of matter; world is made up of matter; body is of course made up of matter; mind also is made up of matter. All the three are objects. All the three are matter. And then all the three are subject to constant change also. The world changes all the time. There is nothing that is changeless. Some of them may change faster. Some of them may change slowly, but the change is the law of nature.

Therefore

the world is savikaram,

body is savikaram. What about

the mind, it is the fastest changing thing; Thank God the mind changes. I keep

on talking and your mind remains still. What use. Nothing happens in the mind. What

a terrible lot will be mine? So I am expecting my words to enter your mind,

Thus,

kshetram is object; kshetram is matter. kshetram is subject to change.

Even though kshetram consists of body and world, Sri Krishna here focuses upon the body only, because we have got maximum attachment to the body matter. World is also matter; body is also another lump of matter. Even though the world is also mud, body is also mud, unfortunately, our identification with this body is so deep and therefore Sri Krishna wants to specifically remind that the body is also an object of experience. So topic No.1 is temporarily over. Sri Krishna will elaborate later.

Then the second topic is Kshetrangyaha; whatever illumines or experiences the kshetram. If the kshetram is an experienced object, every experienced object presupposes an experiencer, a sentient subject. If my eyes are perceiving all of you, the

very perception of every one of you pre-supposes the existence of the perceiver, the I. Even though the eyes themselves are not perceived by me; I do not see my eyes, even though the eyes themselves are not perceived; there is no doubt regarding the perceiver eyes, because without the perceiver eyes, there cannot be perceived forms and colors. Like every photograph that you see pre-supposes a photographer or at minimum a camera.

Every

photo presupposes a camera, even though the camera is not in the picture.

Similarly the entire kshetram consisting of the world, body and mind is an object of experience, it presupposes a sentient, experiencer, illuminator, conscious principle. And that conscious principle is called the subject, which is called the illuminator, the enlivening principle, and Sri Krishna calls it Kshetragna.

Taking an aside, what

is nature of consciousness? All are struggling to understand this

consciousness. As per Vedanta, consciousness has following features:

1. It is not part, product or property of this body. It is an independent entity.
2. It pervades inert body and makes it sentient.
3. It is not limited by boundary of body.
4. It will exist even when body perishes; thus it is eternal.
5. The surviving consciousness after death, is not recognizable, as there is no body through which it can manifest itself.

**With Best Wishes,**

**Ram Ramaswamy**