

# Bagawad Gita, Class 166: Chapter 13, Verses 2 to 4

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'.

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, in the beginning of thirteenth chapter Arjuna introduced 6 technical words and wanted to know what they meant. The six terms that Arjuna wanted to know about are, Kshetram, Kshetragna, Prakrti, Purushah, Gyanam and Gneyam. Answering Arjuna's question, Sri Krishna takes up two of the six words first, viz., Kshetram and Kshetragna and since these two terms are closely connected, he deals with both of them simultaneously in Shloka's #2 -#7.

**Kshetram:** means entire

objective universe that we experience; it is the external world of objects of my experience. Body and mind is also an object of my experience. These three together are known as Kshetram.

The only difference among these three is that the world is a little bit away from us, as it were, and the body and mind are intimately associated with me, the observer and therefore, the body and mind appear to me, to be my integral part. I have given you this example before: When somebody asks, what are the things in front of me, I enumerate various things, all of you, the mike, the book, the clip, the watch, the desk, this cloth on the desk, I will enumerate everything and I forgot to include one thing which is very much different from me, which

is in front of me, which is very much an object and which is generally not enumerated, viz., my Spectacles. The spectacle is very much part of this world, I have got it from the shop, but once I put on this spectacles and once it becomes an instrument of Observation, the instrument is generally included in the subject itself. From this we come to know, an important law, **"An object which serves as an instrument, is generally taken as the subject itself"**. An object, which serves as an instrument, is integrally connected with the subject and therefore generally we consider the spectacles as a part of the observer himself. But the fact is, it is also an object alone. In the same way, **Vedanta says, the body is also another instrument for my observation of the world, the mind is also another instrument for the observation of the world, but both of them are objects different from me, because instrument is different from the one who is behind the instrument.** And that is why when I am using the body and mind, during the waking and dream states, I experience the external world, **while** when in deep sleep state, I am no more operating through the body mind complex, when I do not experience the world. So body is one spectacle as it were, mind is another; when both of them are used, I experience the world; when both of them are kept aside, like during sleep state, I do not function through them, then there is no world of experience. **And therefore Vedanta says: body is also an object, mind is also an object, but both of them serve as an instrument and therefore they appear to be an integral part of the subject.** And since body is also an object, mind is also an object, both of them should be included in Kshetram, the objective universe. Thus Kshetram consists of three portions, the world, the body and the mind. And of these three, Sri Krishna enumerates the body alone in this shloka, because our identification with the body is stronger and therefore Sri Krishna highlights the body in this shloka. Later, he himself will elaborate on the Kshetram, which will include the mind as well as the external world. And therefore, here is a brief on Kshetram in this shloka and Kshetram is elaborated upon later,

in shloka's No.6 and 7 respectively.

So, he says, the body is Kshetram, and He also pointed out Kshetragnya is something which is different from the body, which pervades the body and which makes the material body a live, living being. And that invisible principle, like the invisible electricity, which makes the fan go around, which makes the bulb bright, that is the electricity principle; in the same way, behind the physical material body, the invisible principle is the chaitanya tatvam. And that invisible chaitanya tatvam is called Kshetragnya; the gnya means the awareness principle, the experiencing principle, the observing principle, sentient principle. And therefore, the first job of Vedanta is to provide an understanding that the individual is a mixture of two things, the body and consciousness. Just as recognizing the fan is a mixture of two principles, one is the visible fan part, and the invisible electricity part.

Similarly, the functioning individual, the live individual is neither the mere body, nor the mere consciousness. Consciousness by itself cannot transact; body by itself, cannot transact, the transacting entity is a mixture of body and Consciousness. And here Sri Krishna calls them Kshetragna and Kshetram; in the 2nd chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, they were called deha and dehi. This Deha and Dehi are also called Atma and Anatma, as well.

And not only that, by using the word atma, the scriptures convey an important idea. Generally we tend to identify with the body only. I am the body is my general approach, because the date of birth of the body, I take as my date of birth, the growth of the body I take as my growth; therefore generally the word I is used for the body and after the study of Vedanta, what we generally say is that, now I know that I am the body and behind me there is a eternal consciousness. We would not have said that earlier.

Before

Vedantic study, I  
am the body alone is the understanding; and after Vedantic  
study, I  
add one more statement, I am the body and in me there is an  
atma. Sri Krishna  
says even this is not the right approach. You should not say  
that I am the body  
and in me there is atma;  
rather **you have to train your mind,**  
**through nidhidhyasanam, over a period of time, remembering**  
**that, I am the conscious**  
**principle and body is an incidental medium through which I am**  
**transacting with**  
**the world.**

Therefore  
instead of saying **I am the body with an atma, I should**  
**learn to say I am the atma with an incidental body.** And since  
the  
body is only an incidental medium, I am willing to accept the  
fact that this  
medium is bound to go back to the Kshetram, the external  
world. It has come from  
the world, I am using it temporarily, and I have to give it  
back to the world  
and even when I give the Kshetram back to the world,  
I the Kshetragnya the  
invisible consciousness will continue to survive. This shift  
of the  
identification from Kshetram to Kshetragnya is  
called aparokshagyanam. **As long as I say that I have an atma,**  
**it is**  
**called parokshagyanam, the moment I say I am the atma it is**  
**called aparokshagyanam.** This is the essence of the 2nd shloka.

**Shloka # 3:**

**And, O scion of the Bharata dynasty,**

**under-stand Me to be the 'Knower of the field' in all the fields. In My opinion, that is Knowledge which is the knowlege of th field and the knower of the field.**

Now

Sri Krishna goes to the next step of knowledge that takes years to assimilate.

The steps are:

1. I am the body
2. I am body  
backed by Consciousness.

3. In fact I am not the body with consciousness, but I am the consciousness with an ( keep practising saying it as 'incidental body') incidental body/borrowed body; so that we will not have ownership; Bhagavan has allowed me to use it, he can take it away anytime; so, therefore, the third step of knowledge is I am the consciousness with an incidental body.

4. Now we are going to the fourth step, a very important step. I have now known and hopefully assimilated that I am the consciousness behind this body. So body is the container, I am the content, the tenant, and the invisible consciousness. If I look upon myself as consciousness within my body, what should you be? If I am Consciousness within my body, what about you? You are also the consciousness in your body; So Rama is the consciousness in Rama shariram; Krishna is the dehiconsciousness in Krishna shariram. Lakshmi is the consciousness in the Lakshmi shariram; mosquito is the consciousness within mosquito shariram; in fact, each one of us, is, nothing but, the consciousness in the respective body.

Now the question is: How many consciousness's are there?

Generally our conclusion will be that each body has a consciousness; therefore, within my body there is one consciousness; and within your body there is another consciousness. Therefore, as many bodies are there, as many consciousness's also must be there. This will be our general conclusion. It is not only our conclusion; this is the conclusion of certain philosophers like Sankhya philosophers who say, each body has one atma.

And

therefore how many atma's are there? As many bodies are there, as many atmas are also there.

Here,

however, Sri Krishna says, there is a difference. He says, while the container

bodies are many, the Consciousness within, is the same in everyone. The bodies

are many, but the dehi,

the Kshetragnya, the atma, the

consciousness, is the same in every one. And **not only is the consciousness present in every body, we should also**

**know that the consciousness is present even in between two bodies.** The only

thing is that consciousness is recognizable in the body because life is

manifest. In between bodies, consciousness does exist, but is not recognizable.

The reason is that bodies are not there in between to manifest or recognize the

consciousness. Like electricity is recognizable in fan No.1, and in fan No.2,

however, in between, in the cable carrying the electricity, I do not have any

instrument to recognize that electricity.

Or

to give you another example, you can recognize the light on my first finger and on my second finger but between the two fingers, is there light or not?

Here

doubt comes up. Suppose I keep a finger between the two fingers, you will recognize the light. Above my head also light is there, the moment I keep my hand you can recognize it. Now Vedanta says that consciousness pervades everywhere, wherever bodies are there; consciousness is manifest as life principle, where bodies are not there also consciousness exists but is not manifest. And therefore, there is only one all-pervading consciousness, which is manifest in some places, and which is not manifest in other places; manifest or unmanifest, the consciousness is sarvagathaha.

This

is the challenge of science also. What is consciousness? Where is consciousness?

Vedanta gives the

answer; consciousness is different from matter and pervades all over; matter is

only a medium for the expression of consciousness. When matter goes away,

consciousness does not die, but its expression dies.

The

Fifth step:

Even

though this consciousness is all pervading, this Consciousness is known by two

different names, based on the angle from which you look at the consciousness.

Just like one member of the family is known by different names based on the

angle from which the person is seen. Your own child will call you parent;

whereas your own parents will not call you parent; they will call you child; so

thus person remaining the same, one person looks at this person as husband,

another as brother, another as son, another as father.

Similarly, consciousness

has two names, based on the angle from which it is looked at.

**When the consciousness is looked from the standpoint of an individual body, it is called jivatma.** This consciousness looked from the standpoint of the individual body, enlivening my body, my mind and experiencing my surroundings, is called Jivatma.

Whereas

the very same consciousness looked at from the standpoint of all the bodies, otherwise

called the samashti, the total,

the very same atma is called Paramatma. So from my

microcosmic angle, the consciousness is called jivatma, from macrocosmic angle, it is

paramatma.

And

suppose you negate my microcosm and macrocosm then it is neither jivatma nor paramatma. Then it is

just atma.

Therefore, jivatma is atma, paramatma is also atma; both are essentially one and the same; this recognition is called jivatma paramatma aikyam.

So, my knowledge now is: I am the atma; When I, the



consciousness, am functioning through an individual body, I am called a jiva and the very same I, the consciousness, manifesting through the whole creation, I am called the paramatma and when I forget the body, and forget the world also, I am just atma. So this is called jivatma paramatma aikya Gyanam.

And the example we generally give in the shastra is like seeing, the essential oneness of the wave and the ocean. When water is looked at from the standpoint of a small name and form, it is called a wave; when the very same water is looked at from the standpoint of total name and form, it is called ocean, but remove the wave name and form, remove the ocean name and form, what is the essence; wave is water; ocean is water; there is only water. This is called jivatma-paramatma aikya Gyanam.

And in this third verse, Krishna is revealing this fact and therefore this verse is called a Mahavakya shloka; a very important verse. Shankaracharya wrote a very elaborate commentary running into many pages, and the sub-commentators wrote even more elaborate commentaries. **What is the definition of Mahavakyam? Any statement, which reveals the essential oneness of jivatma and paramatma is mahavakyam.**

Now look at the shloka. Sri Krishna says: Arjuna! carefully understand and assimilate that the jivatma, that is the consciousness obtaining in a body, is Me; here the word Me means the Paramatma.

May you know the Kshetragna jivatma as Sri Krishna paramatma. The containers are different; but the content consciousness is one and the same. The bulbs are different but electricity behind them is only one.

And

where is the paramatma,  
the Consciousness in all the other bodies? From body's

standpoint, I cannot say. My body is different, your body is different; from mind standpoint I can never say; my mind is different from yours; my own emotions are different from yours, from intellect standpoint also I cannot say, my knowledge and ignorance are different from yours; but when I come to the experiencer-consciousness, I can say I am you and you are me. Saha aham asmi and Aham saha asmi.

That is the well-known soham mantra. Soham Aham Saha. That is why it got the name, hamsa mantra. Hamsaha means Aham Saha, I am that paramatma; I am Brahamasmi; is the revelation.

And

then Sri Krishna says: this knowledge is very useful knowledge and therefore this is the real knowledge to be acquired by all people. All other types of knowledge can be acquired but they are really worthless; because they do not improve the quality of life; previously miserable BA; now previously miserable MA and now miserable Ph.d. The degrees go on changing; the misery, however, continues to be same. Thus, this alone is 'the real knowledge', which changes the very quality of your life.

Therefore

Krishna says this knowledge, regarding the kshetra and kshetragna, that alone is the real

knowledge. In Mundaka upanishad this knowledge is called para vidya and all other types of knowledge are called apara vidya. And Shankaracharya tells elsewhere, all other forms of knowledge are as good as ignorance only.

Now the question is how does this knowledge bring about a quality change in life. How does it change my life? Again go back to the example. Imagine there are two waves, both of them are, like waves; imagine they are living being waves, they can know, they can talk, and one wave, knows I am a wave, whereas the other wave knows I am water. What difference does this knowledge bring about in the second wave? You try to imagine. As long as the first wave considers that I am a wave, its thinking will be, I am just born out of the ocean, and I am growing, because the wave becomes bigger and bigger, and as even the wave is growing, it is also aware of the fact that I am going to towards the shore, where, as a wave, I will be destroyed. Therefore, I am a mortal, finite, entity; is the thought that the wave will have as long as it thinks of itself as a wave. As long as there is a conclusion that I am mortal, the insecurity feeling is unavoidable. The wave, as long as it thinks it is a wave, it can never get out of insecurity and all its actions are driven by the sense of insecurity. In the same way, as long as I am going to think I am the body, I am a mortal individual, every moment of my life is driven by the sense of insecurity. In fact, the very admission to the school and my education is based on the career opportunity and all the counseling are based on how I can earn more; if possible with minimum work or no work. I never bother about which subject I like. I do not want to take a course that I will enjoy. Enjoyment is not the consideration, my inclination, is not the consideration; all my activities from KG class onwards are based on this consideration of what will give me a good job, with a six-figure salary. Even after I get a job, I keep looking for better ones; and therefore loyalty, relationships all these I do not care, only consideration is which will give

me better retirement benefits. So even before joining the job, I am seeking security.

Even children, are viewed as in the hope that they will take care of me in the old age. We are always running after money, remember, money is seen as an equivalent of security. Money and security are synonymous for an ignorant person. Ignorant here means Vedantically ignorant person. Vedanta calls a person a samsari; a samsari is defined as one, who sees money as security. And I will see the money as security because, now I am insecure and I am insecure, because I am the body.

Whereas imagine the other wave, the enlightened wave, the jivanmuktha wave. It is not bothered because this wave is nothing but a name and a form name and form are subject to destruction; nobody can hold on to that; I am not attached to the incidental nama rupa, I know I am water, I will be water, I was water, and I the water am not destroyed. Even during summer, when it is evaporated, I exist in the form of steam and in the form of water vapor. And therefore, the difference between knowledge and ignorance is: the difference between security and insecurity.

And according to Vedanta, this knowledge alone will give security; other than this knowledge whatever you do, there will be the lingering sense of insecurity. All others will give a false sense of security, a fake sense of security; therefore if you want security; gain this knowledge. If you think that there are other sources of security, Vedanta does not want to contradict you; Vedanta tells try: Just go and have a merry go round, either through money or status, or position or possession or relationship. Try all of them, and then when you know and you are convinced that none of them will give you real security, then you come to Vedanta.

So, Sri Krishna says this is the knowledge, which removes the sense of insecurity. Does Vedic knowledge remove sense of insecurity? Does it give me security? Vedanta says, it does

not give security; rather it reveals that you don't need security. Thus, Gyani or Sanyasi does not have anything and as such should be the most insecure people. But you look at those Gyanis; they are more secure than all the others with possessions. In fact greater the possession, you require more security guards. Therefore Sri Krishna says: this knowledge of the Kshetra and Kshetragna is the real knowledge. And this is called Atma Gyanam.

#### **Shloka # 4:**

**Hear from Me in brief about (all) that as to what that field is and how it is; what its changes are, and from what cause arises what effect; and who He is, and what His powers are.**

Sri

Krishna says, that in the previous two shlokas, that is the 2nd and 3rd, Arjuna,

I have briefly defined Kshetram and Kshetragna, but it is too brief and therefore I will elaborate on these two topics a little more.

And therefore, Sri Krishna gives an introduction in the 4th verse. O Arjuna,

listen to the following:

What

exactly is the Kshetra, which we have seen as the objective physical body?

Now he says I will give you a comprehensive list of what includes the Kshetram. What all are included in Kshetram? What is the nature of Kshetram, the objective universe? Kshetram, you can roughly translate as the objective universe, as different from the subjective experiencer. So what is Kshetram, is the first topic.

Second

topic is, what is the nature of that Kshetram.

What are the causes out of which various effects are born; so, the details regarding the causes, Karanam; and what are the effects born out of various causes.

One

refers to the cause and the other to the effect. The idea is the whole objective universe consists of cause-effect chain only. If you take any individual, I am the effect and my parents are the cause. And the parent themselves are the effect, and their parents are the cause. Thus anything you take, it is an effect of something, and it is the cause of something else.

Therefore

what are the causes, and what are the effects? What is Kshetram? What is its nature? What are the causes included in the Kshetram and what are the effects included in the Kshetram; all these are details of the Kshetram.

And

not only that, Sri Krishna also wants to give details of Kshetragnya. What exactly is the kshetragnya? What are additional features of kshetragnya? What is kshetragnya, the consciousness principle? Previously Sri Krishna has only briefly defined it as consciousness, the experiencer of the universe.

This is a very brief definition. Sri Krishna wants to give more details regarding consciousness. Therefore, what is consciousness or awareness? What are the glories, the features, and the great features of the Kshetragnya? We will

see later that consciousness is indivisible, consciousness is beyond time; consciousness is beyond space, consciousness is not subject to change; all these are different and important features. In fact, one scientist beautifully says: Consciousness is that, which is not subject to the laws of the creation. All the physical and chemical laws of the creation cannot influence the consciousness principle. And he says it cannot be located, because it does not have a location, which means that it is beyond time and space. Those features, I will give you later, says Sri Krishna .

### **Take away:**

Vedanta says, the body is also another instrument for my observation of the world, the mind is also another instrument for the observation of the world, but both of them are objects different from me, because instrument is different from the one who is behind the instrument.

When the consciousness is looked from the standpoint of an individual body, it is called jivatma.

Instead of saying I am the body with an atma, I should learn to say I am the atma with an incidental body.

Definition of Mahavakyam: Any statement, which reveals the essential oneness of jivatma and paramatma is mahavakyam.

Vedanta says: body

is also an object, mind is also an object, but both of them serve as an instrument and therefore they appear to be an integral part of the subject.

**With Best Wishes,**

**Ram Ramaswamy**