

Bagawad Gita, Class 167: Chapter 13, Verses 3 to 8

Note: My Gita book has only 34 shlokas in Ch.13, while swamiji's book has 35 shlokas. Thus, the numbering of shlokas is different.

Shloka # 3:

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.

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, in the beginning of thirteenth chapter Arjuna asked for clarification of six words or technical terms. They are: Kshetram, Kshetragnya, Prakrti, Purushah, Gyanam and Gneyam. Sri Krishna is now talking about Kshetram and Kshetragnya starting from Shloka # 2 till Shloka # 7.

Kshetram is the physical body and any objects experienced in creation. Kshetragnya is the Experiencer, the subject, thus, I am Kshetragnya and I am experiencing Kshetram.

And having defined Kshetram and Kshetragnya, now Sri Krishna wants to give a simple elaboration of these two words; for which he gave the introduction in the third verse.

Arjuna

may you know what is objective universe, may you know what is the nature of the objective universe. May you know what are the products belonging to the

Objective universe, and May you also know the various causes, which produce these effects. And therefore what is Kshetram, what is the nature of the Kshetram, what is that part of the Kshetram which is called effect, and what is that part of the Kshetram which is called the cause, and from this we get a corollary that all the causes come under Kshetram and all the effects also come under Kshetram. 0

Arjuna, I am going to briefly elaborate on Kshetyragnya, May you learn carefully.

In

shloka's # 2 and # 3, the knowledge of these two words alone is considered liberating knowledge. Now Sri Krishna wants to enter the elaboration. However, before that he wants to glorify this topic again.

Shloka # 4:

It has been sung of in various ways by the Rsis, separately by the different kinds [The different branches of Vedic texts.] of Vedic texts, and also by the rational and convincing sentences themselves which are indicative of and lead to Brahman.

This

topic is so important that all scriptures have talked about it. Kshetram is the material universe and Kshetragnya is Consciousness; or we can say, it is about

matter and spirit. If both these words are understood, you have an understanding of whole creation. Science claims it is working on a Theory Of Everything (TOE) that is still eluding scientists. Vedanta says this TOE is matter and consciousness.

All Rishi's have sung about this topic. All Vedic mantras (chandras) also deal with this topic. All sciences such as astronomy, physiology, biology etc come under Kshetram. Science has not yet been able to understand the relationship between matter and consciousness.

Vedanta, however, has distinctly talked about it. Consciousness is satyam; matter is mithya and I am the consciousness principle. Brahmasutra, written by Vyasa, is where all Upanishads have been analyzed. Purva mimasa provides a logical analysis of ritual aspects of sutras. Upanishad portion of Veda is called Vedanta; it is also known as Vyasa Sutra. A sutra means it is an aphorism, a brief, packed, idea statement.

Nyaya shastra says consciousness is a property of matter. Sankhya philosophy says, consciousness is separate from matter. Thus, Brahmasutra has 555 sutras, 16 sections and 192 topics. Shankaracharya has written an extensive commentary on Brahmasutra with many lower level commentaries from many

others, as well. The topic is large and takes a long time to study and they talk about Kshetram and Kshtergnya.

Shloka # 5:

The great elements, egoism, intellect and the Unmanifest itself; the ten organs and the one, and the five objects of the senses;

Here

Sri Krishna talks about Kshetram. All philosophers in our tradition have analyzed and categorized the topic into divisions called Tatvani. It is like science has been categorized into electricity, magnetism, organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry etc.

And

therefore in all the philosophies, we have got mainly 12 branches of philosophy in our tradition; all of them try to categorize the universe into various tatvams;

Vaiseshika philosophy, has divided the whole creation into seven tatvas. Nyaya philosophy has divided into 16 tatvas. Sankhya philosophy has divided the whole objective universe, into twenty-four tatvas.

And here Vyasacharya temporarily borrows from Sankhya philosophy and he categories the universe into 24 tatvams. And what are those 24 tatvams? In Tatva bodha also, when we talked about the creation, this categorization is present. There is no rule that the category should in a particular manner; it can be

categorized

according to our convenience. Suppose I want to categorize the whole class into

groups. I can divide into two groups, male and females; or I can divide based

on qualification, graduates, postgraduates, non-graduates; according to mother tongue

etc. Here we are borrowing the categorization of Sankya philosophy

and they talk about the evolution of the universe in four stages; gradually

increasing the number of tatvams.

First

stage: was Prakriti, a beginning-less principle or basic matter or condition,

just before the big bang.

Prakrti does not have origination. Prakrti is basic matter. If you want to understand in scientific language, it is the condition just before the big bang. Then they say, the Prakrti evolves partially and the first stage of evolution is called mahat tatvam. Prakrti, then mahat; so Mahat is total matter in the first stage of evolution.

Then

from Mahat, the next stage of evolution occurs, they call it ahamkara. Ahamkara, is the name

of total matter; we are not talking here about the individual ego. Individuals

are not yet born, this is even before the birth of the individual, the total

matter has evolved into Mahat and the next one is the Ahamkara, let us call

it cosmic ego. Prakrti to Mahat, is stage No.1, mahat to ahamkara is stage 2.

In

stage 3, from ahamkara,
15 tatvams originate or
emerge; and what are the 15 tatvams?

No.1

is the cosmic mind; Manah;
not the individual mind of yours or mine; we are talking about
the cosmic mind,
Manah.

No.2

then dasha indriyani; the ten
sense organ principles or powers of perception, dasha
indriyani; one plus 10;
eleven,

And

then, panchca sukshma bhutani, 5 subtle
elements, come up. So in the third stage 16 principles come;
Prakrti, mahat and
ahamkara total to 16.

And

then in the fourth stage from the subtle elements, the five
gross elements
come.

Thus:

Prakrti, mahat, ahamkara,
the 16 principles, and then at the 4th and final level, five
gross elements all
add up to 24 Tatvams. And all these twenty-four tatvams put
together is Kshetram, the inert
material objective universe. And consciousness is not the
nature of any one of them.
All of them are matter and therefore Sri Krishna enumerates
them.

The

shloka says:

In the first line, you see the avyaktham, which represents Prakrti, the topmost one; then buddhi means the mahat tatvam, the second stage; buddhi here is not the individual intellect, but buddhi is the cosmic intellect, the mahat tatvam, and the second stage, then ahamkara, is the cosmic ego the third stage; avyaktham, buddhi, ahamkara, (three) and then from ahamkara 16 items; they are the mahabhutani, the 5 subtle elements: akasha, vayu, agni, apaha, prithvi; space, air, fire, water and earth; in their subtle form; subtle form means invisible form. In Tatva bodha we have dealt with this. And then indriyani means the ten sense organs. Sri Krishna himself says: ekam means the mind, mana tatvam, the cosmic mind; so mahabhutani, dasa indriyani, ekam, these are the 16 tatvas at the third stage;

And then comes the fourth stage; means the five gross elements; thus 1+1+1+16+5; this is the addition; If you add it will be 24 tatvams; all of them come under Kshetra. And not only that, these 24 tatvams do not remain changeless; they constantly undergo change and as a result of their change and interaction, various properties are generated. And they are called the various gunas or vikaras of the Kshetram; and what are the generated properties? Sri Krishna enumerates them in the next shloka.

Shloka # 6:

Desire, repulsion, happiness, sorrow, the aggregate (of body and organs), sentience, fortitude- this field, together with its modifications, has been spoken of briefly.

Now

we have a material universe with 24 Tatvani and our physical body is also a part of it. Mind too is in it. Now, Mind is peculiar form of

matter. While it is an inert matter, it appears as though it is sentient. Citing example of electricity, when it passes through water, nothing happens; but the same electricity passing through tungsten filaments, makes them glow; the glow is due to nature of Tungsten. Similarly, Wood does not allow electricity to pass through it, another property of wood.

Mind is like the Tungsten filament; it is able to absorb Consciousness principle and then reflect it; then the reflected consciousness (RC) looks sentient. This borrowed sentiency is called Chetana.

Now look at the sloka. Sanghataha means the body mind complex; and chetana means borrowed sentiency. And if you want another example, imagine you have a mirror in hand and up above the Sun is there during the day time, the mirror is able to reflect the sunlight; and the non-luminous mirror; mirror does not have a light of its own, but with borrowed sun-light, mirror itself becomes itself a luminous and a bright object and what is the uniqueness of its luminosity; it is not intrinsic luminosity; but it is borrowed; whereas the light of the sun is intrinsic but the light of the mirror is borrowed. So, the kshetragnya is like the Sun; mind is like the mirror and borrowed consciousness is like the reflected Sun. And in Vedanta it is called chidabhasa; or cit prathibhimba or prathibhimba chaitanyam.

Chiddabasha, this reflection, exists wherever there is a reflecting medium, the Kshetram. Thus, Reflected Consciousness (RC) becomes a part of Kshetram, while OC (original

consciousness) is not part of Kshetram.

Thus

the mind is able to experience the world, and such, a live mind immediately categorizes the world as:

1. Through Ragaha or Ichha.
2. Through Dveshaha

Thus the

objective world is replaced by my subjective world that is qualified by Raga and Dvesha. Once this division occurs, next comes sukha and dukha. Now, strangely, **both desirable and undesirable things cause sukha and dukha. How does this happen?**

A desirable object produces happiness in me via its arrival; but it also produces sorrow in me, through its departure.

Even undesirable object produces sorrow and happiness. This capacity is not intrinsic in the world. It is "I" who classify this world in this manner.

Thus iccha is Kshetram; dvesha is Kshetram, sukham is Kshetram; sanghataha, the body mind complex is Kshetram; the chetana, the reflected consciousness is also Kshetram.

Then, dhrti means will power. Because once we have classified the world as the cause of sorrow and happiness, then you use your will power to acquire the so-called object of joy, which is called pravrti; I want this, that, etc. you have got an increasing list. And you use your will power to run after those objects. And similarly, you have got of list of objects to be removed, which is called nivrti, one is running towards, another is running away. So pravrti-nivrti-

dhrti or will power. So, Dhriti and all fall under Kshetram.

Padartha means object. Padartha with ragaha and dveshaha gets capacity to hurt or please me hence it is called Vishayaha. So the world is padartha, but it is converted to Vishayaha, an object that can bind me.

Sangathaha
means body mind complex.

Dhriti
means will power.

Nivriti
and Pravriti: Tendency to Desire and tendency to dislike.

The
above list constantly changes and we struggle with this list,
life long. So,
there are the 24 properties of Kshetram.

Shloka # 8:

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

Sri
Krishna now concludes analysis of Kshetram and Kshetrgnya that
started in
shloka # 2. However, there appears to be an incompleteness in
Sri Krishna's
teaching. In shloka # 4 he promised, he will talk about
Kshetram and
Kshetrgnya. In shlokas # 6 and # 7 he elaborated on Kshetram
but not on Kshetragnya.
Shankaracharya gives an explanation for this. He says,

Kshetragnya is identical
with Gneya and Purusha; thus, all three represent the spirit.

Arjuna
does not know this fact; it is like wanting to learn Vedanta
and Upanishad;
both are synonymous.

So
Gneya and Purusha description is description of Kshetranyaha.
But Sri Krishna
feels even though he leaves out kshetragnya now, he is going
to elaborate on
that through the discussion of Gneyam and Purusha later.
Therefore, Shankaracharya says, Sri Krishna has not forgotten.

Now
Sri Krishna comments on the third topic, that is
Gyanam, (shloka's # 8- 11 in my
book.)

Gyanam,
here, has a special meaning. Its normal meaning is knowledge
while philosophical
meaning is spiritual knowledge; but here it means, all virtues
of a person or the
Satgunas. These 20 Virtues are called Gyanam.

Shankaracharya
says if these virtues exist in a person, he can obtain Gyanam
easily; hence it
is called Gyanam.

Take away:

Both desirable
and undesirable things cause sukha and dukha. How does this
happen?

A desirable
object produces happiness in me via its arrival; but it also
produces sorrow in
me, through its departure.

Even
undesirable object produces sorrow and happiness. This
capacity is not
intrinsic in the world. It is "I" who classify this world in
this manner.

Padartha means
object in its original nature. Padartha with ragaha and
dveshaha gets capacity
to hurt or please me hence it is called Vishayaha. So the
world is padartha,
but it is converted to Vishayaha, an object that can bind me.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy