

Baghawad Gita, Class 177: Chapter 13, Verses 24 to 27

Shloka # 24:Through meditation some realize the Self in (their) intellect with the help of the internal organ; others through Sankhya-yoga, and others through Karma-yoga.

Continuing

his teachings Swamiji said, with the 23rd shloka Sri Krishna has completed the topic of Purusha and Prakriti. He discussed this topic from shlokas 20-24. While concluding, he said this is a liberating knowledge.

A person who knows that the body-mind complex is Prakrti and also knows that I am the Purusha, that very wisdom releases him from the cycles of janma-maranam; because birth and deaths are only incidents happening in the plane of Prakrti. The physical body is Prakrti; the mind is also Prakrti, the mind and the body coming together is called birth and the mind and body separating is death. So when an individual dies, the mind, which was occupying the body, quits the physical body and the body becomes an evacuated house as it were and therefore the body perishes. The separated mind goes in search of another physical body and gets the body at the right time according to the Karma and the association with the new body is called janma. So sharira-mana samyogha janma; sharira-mana viyoga maranam.

Shariram

is also Prakrti, manas is also Prakrti and therefore their samyogaviyoga;

Samyogam means association, viyogam means dissociation, all are happening at the level of Prakrti. And the Gyani is one who has recognized

the fact that I am the Purusha, in which there is neither samyoga

nor viyoga and therefore where is the question of even one birth itself? And

when one birth itself is not possible, where is the question of re-birth, the

second birth? And therefore Sri Krishna concluded he gets mukthi or freedom

from this cycle. And with this Sri Krishna has completed all the six topics

that Arjuna wanted to know: Kshetra, Kshetragnya, Gyanam, Gneyam, Prakrti and Purusha.

And therefore Sri Krishna's task

is over now. And he now wants to wind-up the discussion in the following shlokas

from 25 up to the 35.

In these 11 shlokas, 25 to 35, Sri

Krishna deals with Gyana sadhanani and Gyana

phalam. So what are the preparatory disciplines that will lead a person to self-knowledge and what are the benefits

that this person will enjoy?

First, Sri Krishna emphasis the

ultimate goal of all spiritual sadhanas

is self-knowledge alone. Let there not be any doubt in that.

Because the

all-pervading atma is

available within one's own body-mind complex and therefore I need not identify

the atma elsewhere.

I have to discover the atma in myself. Therefore, atmani means within oneself.

So the first atmani refers to the hrdaya akasham; the second atmanam refers to satchidananda atmanam. Thus, a seeker has to recognize the atma, in his own hrdayam. And with what instrument should a person gain the knowledge? The instrument of knowledge is atmana. So 3 atma's are referred to; atmani, atmanam, atmana; 7th case atma, 2nd case atma, 3rd case atma. 7th case atma means within one's own hrdayam; 2nd case atma means satchidananda atma and now we have to see the 3rd case atma, what is the instrument? The instrument is one's own buddhi. Atmana here means buddhya. Because only through the instrument of buddhi is every knowledge is acquired. There is no other instrument, which can gain knowledge. So body cannot get knowledge; Of course atma by itself cannot get knowledge; any knowledge has to be through the instrumentality of buddhi; But what type of buddhi? A refined buddhi; aided by, supported by guru-shastra-upadesha. Such a refined buddhi has to gain the knowledge. Shankaracharya says: With the help of the mind, which is supported by gurushastrupadesha. So with that mind, one has to gain atma-Gyanam. And if this atma Gyanam is the culmination, the ultimate sadhana, the question is how many preparatory stages are there for reaching this climax? So what are the preparatory steps a person has to go through for

the climax of self-recognition through the mind within oneself. And here five fold stages are presented. A person has to go through five stages to reach this culmination. In each stage one gets rid of one obstacle for self-knowledge. Each stage helps in removing one, one obstacle. What are the five stages and what are the obstacles

removed? I have dealt with this in the 12th chapter as well as in some other context; I will remind you of those five stages.

1. The **first stage** is called Karma yoga stage, wherein the mental impurities are removed. In Sanskrit it is called mala-nivrithi. Malam means dirt; so, what are the impurities? Raga, dvesha, kama, krodha, lobha, moha, madha and matsaryam. Thus Karma yoga helps in the removal of malam and it refines the mind.

2. **Second**

stage: Then the next stage of sadhana is called Upasana or meditation upon saguna

Ishvara; the Lord with attributes or glories. And this upasana helps in

the removal of the next obstacle called Vikshepa; otherwise called bahirmukhatvam.

The restlessness of the mind, the extrovertedness

of the mind is the 2nd obstacle and upasana helps in the mind's focusing capacity. It integrates

the mind. It harmonizes the

mind. It gives the focusing power; and thus the extrovertedness, the outgoing

mind, is withdrawn. So therefore the 2nd sadhana is

called upasana. What is the obstacle removed? Therefore

Vikshepa nivrtti, means removal.

3. **Third**

Stage: And the third stage is called Vedanta Shravanam. Systematically and consistently studying the upanishadic or Vedantic scriptures under the guidance of a competent Acharya, which is called Shravanam, which will help in the elimination of agyanam or self-ignorance. So the third obstacle is aGyanam, which is removed through shravanam.

4. Fourth Stage: Then the fourth stage is called mananam. Asking myself whether I am convinced of the teaching given by the teacher and the scriptures. Am I intellectually satisfied, because any knowledge should convince the intellect? As long as there are doubts or reservation, that doubt is an obstacle. A doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance and it needs to be cleared by raising all questions and finding out the answer, either by my own enquiry or with the help of the Acharya. Therefore, the 4th stage is mananam and its benefit is Samshaya Nivrtti. It is converting knowledge into conviction. It is removal of the intellectual obstacle.

5.

Fifth Stage: And then comes fifth and final stage of sadhana called nidhidhyasanam, which is meant to remove my habitual reaction; the removal of vasana, because of my regular unhealthy responses in life, I have developed a habit. And habit is

developed in-time and habit can go, only in time. This is a deliberate

invocation

of the Vedanta so that I

can get rid of unvedantic reactions

in life. Every disturbing reaction is unvedantic

reaction. So anxiety, frustration, self-pity, sense of insecurity, fear,

attachment; all of them are unhealthy vasanas.

This vasana nivrtti or

viparitha bhavana nivrtti is

the fifth and final stage and is called nidhidhyasanam.

And

every body has to go through all the five stages. These are not optional

stages. They are compulsory for all. But suppose, a person has gone through the

first two or three stages in this life, and then without completing the journey

he dies. Each stage takes a long time. And if a person dies without the

completion, the advantage is in the next janma, the journey need not begin with

Karma yoga; and

therefore, depending upon a person's spiritual evaluation, a person should

start either from karma yoga,

or from upasana or any

other one of the five stages.

And in the case of spiritual prodigy, he is one who has gone through the first four stages in the purva janma. So in this

janma, the prodigy has to go through only the fifth stage.

Even from early stage, they feel that they have gone through these stages. But seeing those people I should not argue that

I would start doing like them. Everybody is a spiritual

prodigy.

In this context, Aithareya Upanishad talks about a Rshi Vamadeva, who declared, Aham Brahmasmi while still in his mother's womb. How come the mother herself does not know Aham Brahmasmi? And in the mother's womb itself; how can Vamadeva declare when he cannot do shravanam in the mother's womb, how does it happen, if you ask, 95% of the job is over in purva janma.

Here,

what ever little was left out and the spiritual prodigy, gets it through nidhidyasanam. So, depending upon my level, I have to take to five, four, three, two or one of the levels of sadhana.

Shloka 13.25:

Others, again, who do not know thus, take to thinking after hearing from others; they, too, who are devoted to hearing, certainly overcome death.

So here Sri Krishna points out that **Vedanta Shravanam need not necessarily have to be the study of the original scriptures themselves.** We do not insist that one should study Upanishad only; Gita only; Brahmasutra only; we do not insist upon the text; we insist upon the teaching part only. Therefore if there is a guru who does not teach the Gita or Upanishad or Brahma sutra or Panchadashi etc. but he takes the essence of all these books and presents in a different language; without touching any of these books, in his own language, maybe English, may be vernacular, may be Russian, may be

Chinese, Vedanta does not refer to the actual language, Vedanta refers to the content of teaching. As Dayananda swami says, You are the Whole, this teaching is Vedanta, whatever be the language. You are the Whole.

Sri Krishna says there are some people who do not have access to the originals but still they gather the teaching from other people; from the Gurus, the Gurus themselves have the knowledge of the originals. Even if I do not know the original, it does not matter; I can gain moksha, even if I am taught in any language.

So they go to some acharya, who has studied the original and who is capable of paraphrasing, arranging and systematically communicating, in any language that the student can grasp. That is why in India you can find that in every State, Vedantic wisdom is there in vernacular language.

Even in the folk songs there is Vedanta. Whether you take Malayalam, one lady sang a lullaby, to put the baby to sleep in some traditional song. And she sang those songs, in which the avastha thraya sakshi, etc. are described. And the lady also did not know what it was and of course the baby also. And after attending the class, she says I never knew that even in the songs to put the babies to sleep, there is Vedanta. Similarly in Hindi and all other languages. Similarly take Abhangas of Tukaram, Namadev, etc. and you will see Vedanta is there. You gain the knowledge through any source. **Source is not important, the content is important.**

If a person knows the content without studying the Upanishad,

he is liberated; on the other hand, fill up the blanks. Another person, who has gone through all the Upanishad, but does not know the content, he is not liberated. Therefore, Sri Krishna says: Even those people who are not exposed to the words of the scriptures; they do not know; but they are committed to the words of the guru; means guru vakya shravana parayanah. Here shruti does not only mean Veda. Here shruti means the Guru vakya Shravanam.

Such committed students also certainly cross Mortality; Finitude; otherwise called samsarah. That means that they will also attain moksha. And therefore even if in the olden days Veda was not accessible to all people. They kept some of the scriptures secret for some reasons but even though the originals were not accessible to all; the content of the scriptures were accessible to all people at all the times. Whether a person is Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, Sanyasi, male, female, Hindu, Christian, or Muslim, anyone, whether the originals were accessible or not; the contents in one form or the other was accessible. What liberates is not the veda, but the content-the teaching in the Veda. **Even if one does not study Vedas, one can get liberation, Sri Krishna declares.**

Shloka # 13.26:

O scion of the Bharata dynasty, whatever object, moving or non-moving, comes into being, know that to be from the association of the field and the Knower of the field!

In the previous two verses, Lord Krishna pointed out that everybody has to go through all the stages of sadhana and also he said all the sadhanas should culminate in atma

Gyanam.

The purification of the mind through karma yogah can be accomplished through different types of activities; we have choice; may be japa, may be puja, may be social service; one has a choice here; but everybody ultimately

has to go through the door of Gyanam. That is why Swami Dayananda beautiful says, a temple might have four doors, but the grabha griham has got only one door; thus there is only one door to the Lord.

Similarly, for preparation many doors are there, but for moksha, there is only one door, Gyanam. This Sri Krishna mentioned in the previous two shlokas. Naturally we may raise a question, why do we insist on Gyanam. It looks as though we are adamant, as though we are fanatic; why are we so insistent? Sri Krishna says, it is not fanaticism or adamancy, but it happens to be the fact. If I say darkness can be removed only by light; it is not fanaticism; I do not to comprise or consider that you can remove darkness by broomstick; it is not possible; I cannot afford to accept many paths, not because I am narrow-minded, but the fact is that the darkness goes only by light. So if still you charge me with fanaticism, Dayananda Swamiji says: Better I be a fanatic rather than a lunatic.

And why do we say that it is a fact. Sri Krishna says, because samsara is caused by ignorance and error. What is the ignorance and what is the error? I am the Purusha, I am ignorant of this fact. Purusha, the one who is Chetana, nirguna, nirvikara, sathya, chetana tatvam, Purna Purusha Aham; this fact I am ignorant of. This is called the ignorance problem.

And this ignorance has led to an error; and what is that error?

Since I do not know I am the Purusha, I have chosen to identify myself with Prakrti. When I do not know I am atma; I mistake myself to be anatma. This is what is happening in dream also. When I forget this body of mine during sleep, the ignorance of this body leads to my identification with the svapna shariram.

Why do I identify with the dream body; Because, I am ignorant of this body which is lying on the bed. And that is why the moment I wake up to this physical body, automatically, I decide to dis-identify from the dream body. And thus, Purusha Agyanam has led to Prakrti abhimanam. Similarly, KshetraGna abhimanam has led to kshetra abhimana. Abhimana means identification. Atma agyanam has led to anatma abhimana. Or in English self-ignorance has led to body identification.

And therefore Sri Krishna says, because of this misidentification we miss the original.

I miss the Purusha and take the Prakrti as myself.

Shankaracharya, in his famous introduction to Brahma Sutra, writes a bhashyam called adhyasa bhashyam that is just half a page long. But others have commented upon this Bhashyam extensively. The Bhashyam briefly says that I, the Chetana tatvam, take myself to be the material body; I, the consciousness, take myself to be the matter. But we successfully manage; not only we manage, we successfully perpetuate also; I am the body; i am the body because of the deha abhimana. Thus, there are two problems; the first problem

is: I, the immortal Purusha, mistake myself to be the mortal body. Therefore, mortality, I take to myself. Finitude I take to myself. And once finitude comes, I cannot withstand the limitations in life and therefore start the grabbing project. Bring to me, Bring to me, give me; I grab, so that I, the finite can become, the desire is to get rid of finitude. And therefore apurnathvam leads to kama; Kama leads to karma, karma leads to punya papam, punya papa leads to sukha dukha, and later to punar janma. In fact entire cycle of birth and death is due to deha abhimana.

And therefore Sri Krishna says, every living being is born; goes through the cycles of births and death; sthavarajangamam, whether it is a non-moving living being; like the trees; the trees are called sthavara prani; and all the other animals humans are all called jangama satvam. So all these go through birth and death because of the fundamental mistake they make of identification with the body.

Arjuna you must understand that this body identification is a mistake and every mistake is born of ignorance. Every error is a product of ignorance. And therefore if an error has to be eliminated, you can never attack the error directly, you have to attack the cause of the error. And what is the cause? Sri Krishna says, it is Agyanam. If you have to destroy a tree, cutting the branches would not accomplish that; you need to cut the root out.

And that is what is indicated through Ravana vadham also. Rama destroys the heads of Ravana. The heads indicate the errors. And Rama keeps on cutting the heads, the head keeps coming back. And then Rama is frustrated. Then Sage Agasthya comes and gives the upadesha of Aditya Hridayam, which is the essence of Vedanta. And the brahmastra is meant to strike the Hridayam deshnam. Do not cut the head which is an error; but in the Hridayam, ignorance is there; by tatvamasmi brahmasmi, destroy the agyanam here. Then the heads will not come again and again. And therefore Gyanam destroys agyanam and agyananam

destroys error or adhyasa. With that problems are solved.

And therefore Arjuna in all yogas Gyanam alone destroys Agyanam. Thus;
there is only one remedy, Gyanam.

Shloka

13. 27:

**He sees who sees the supreme Lord as existing
eally in all beings, and as the Imperishable among the
perishable.**

So from this shloka onwards, Sri Krishna talks about the benefit
of this knowledge gyana phalam. There are several benefits and
Sri Krishna enumerates
a few of them:

1. First benefit is Seeing one atma, seeing means not with the physical eye rather through the eye of wisdom or Gyana chakshu. **Being aware of the changeless atma which is in and through all the changing anatma. Body changes; mind changes; thoughts change; all these change; but in and through all of them, the caitanya tatvam, the consciousness does not undergo a change.** Just as there is one water permanent water; in and through the changing impermanent waves and bubbles; in and through the changing bodies and mind; there is the changeless atma; this, the wise person does not lose sight.

Therefore, he says: While the
body mind complex are innumerable. Just as waves are innumerable, there are
innumerable and different (physically,
mentally, intellectually), thus there are
difference all through; and amidst the different innumerable perishable bodies,

there is one imperishable thing. You
call it either Sat principle, the existence, or you call it

Chit principle, the consciousness, that Sat Chit atma is called parameshvara. Here Sri Krishna says that parameshvaram is not somebody sitting above

the clouds. If so, who is this parameshvaram; He is the very changeless atma, in everyone. The Wise person is one who does not lose sight of the Lord while transacting. So at the level of the conscious mind, I am aware of the impermanent and changing bodies and mind, but in the background, the wise person does not lose sight of the atma, the permanent one.

And if I am aware of the permanent one, I will not depend upon the impermanent for security. If I am aware of the permanent one, I will handle the impermanent but I will not depend on the impermanent one. One who does not lose sight of this atma; that is one who has got sama darshanam, advaita darshanam, abheda darshanam and he alone has got the right vision and he is called a seer.

A sage is called a seer because he is one who sees that thing that is to be seen.

Take away:

Vedanta

Shravanam

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With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy