

# Bagawad Gita Class 180;

## Chapter 13 Summary

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said today,

I will give you a summary of chapter 13. This chapter is the beginning of the third

shatakam of the Gita. The first shatakam highlighted Karma Yoga; the second

shatakam, from chapter 7-12, highlighted Upasana Yoga. Now in the third

shatakam from Ch.13-18 we are in Gyana Yoga. Specifically Chapters 13,14 and 15

provide us the essence of Gyana Yoga as well as essence of Upanishads. Even among

them, Chapter 13 is very important from a philosophical point of view. This

chapter begins with a question from Arjuna; some books show this question,

while others do not. In first shloka Arjuna asked for clarification on six

technical terms used, namely: Prakrti, Purusha, Kshetra, Kshetragnya, Gyanam and Gneyam. On scrutiny we

find these six terms can be reduced to three, as some are repetitive. Thus

Kshetragnya, Purusha and Gneyam all three words are really discussing the One

Atma. Similarly, Kshetram and Prakriti imply Anatma. So, Atma is one topic and

Anatma the other; finally Gyanam is the third topic; so we have reduced six

topics to three. These three topics were discussed from shlokas # 2 to # 24.

**Anatma:** is also known

as Kshteram and Prakriti. Sri Krishna says, whatever I experience in front of me will come under Anatma; so, anything experienced is anatma. Even heaven falls under anatma as it can be experienced or it is objectifiable. So, the world is anatma. Our body is also an object of experience; as I experience it very closely including intellectual condition. Thus, World+ Body + Mind+ All other conditions=Anatma.

What is nature of Anatma?

1. Anatma is Achetana swarupam. It is jadam in nature. It is inert matter. Even body's sentiency is non-intrinsic; it is borrowed; hence, at death, the body becomes insentient; hence it is not sentient. Extending this idea, mind is also material, made up of subtle matter.
2. Sagunam: Anatma is full of attributes.
3. Savikaram: Anatma changes from moment to moment.

And because of its changing nature, it will not remain in this visible condition all the time. Because of its changing nature, it will broadly go through two conditions; one is called the manifest visible condition; in Sanskrit called karya-avastha or vyaktha avastha; vyakatha means manifest or visible condition and very same thing will at the time of destruction it will go back to karana avastha or avyaktha avastha.

**Just as when you boil the water, the visible water is gone but**

you know the water is not destroyed; but what has happened to water? The visible vyaktha-jalam has become avyaktha. Similarly, this cosmos also has got vyaktha avastha called prapancha and it has got an avyaktha avastha, also known as maya. Therefore, maya is also an unmanifest form of matter only. So manifest matter is called universe; unmanifest matter is called maya. So, therefore, maya or the universe, including the body, including the mind, all of them come under anatma; which is achetanam, sagunam, and savikara tatvam. So this is the description of anatma.

### **Atma:**

The next topic is Atma. Kshetragnya, Purusha and Gneyam all three mean Atma.

What is Atma? If whole universe is an object of experience, it presupposes presence of an experiencer (subject). Without subject, no object is possible. The subject can never become an object. An object is never possible without a subject. Subject cannot be objectified.

If I am seeing different colors and forms in front of me, the perception of every form, the perception of every color, presupposes the existence of the eyes, but the unfortunate fact is that the eyes themselves are not Perceivable. But even though the eyes are not perceivable, I can never doubt the existence of the eyes, because the very perception is possible because of the perceiver alone. Thus, extending this principle, we can say, **the entire experienced object proves the existence of the experiencer; but the experiencer himself cannot become an object of experience. And this unobjectifiable experiencer principle is called Atma.** The unobjectifiable experiencer is called Atma. And since Atma is

the unobjectifiable-experiencing-principle, it will be necessarily a chetana tatvam. – If every object is achetanam, the subject has to be Consciousness principle only. And who is that experiencer principle? Who is experiencing the world?

You

will say. I myself am experiencing. **And therefore Atma is I, the consciousness principle, which objectifies everything but which itself is not available for objectification. This is the atma.**

The

five features of Atma:

1. I, the observer consciousness principle, am not a part, product nor property of the body.
2. I, the consciousness, am an independent entity that pervades and enlivens the body. It is like the electricity that pervades and enlivens the fan.
3. I, the consciousness principle, am not limited by boundaries of body. It is like electricity which is not located in fan alone; I am the all pervading Atma. The Sanskrit root word for Atma is Aap (to pervade) like in Apnoti.
4. Then what is the next point, we had seen. That I the consciousness principle, will continue to exist even when the body, the manifesting medium collapses or dies; I will survive and therefore, mortality is a feature of the body; but not of me, the consciousness, pervading the body. So I am sarvagatah, I am nityaha; Atma sarvagataha, Atma Nityaha.
5. And fifth and finally, we have to remember that if the body medium dies, I, the consciousness will continue to survive, but that I will not be available for transaction; not because I am absent but because the medium for transaction is not there. It is exactly as it happens in deep sleep state; the body is not

functioning, resting, the mind is not functioning, resting; transactions have ended; but I have not ended. While sleeping, are the transactions ending or am I ending? Thank God, only the transactions are ending and not I; the transactor continues to survive.

And that I is the atma, the chetana tatvam and to conceive of this consciousness principle, Sri Krishna gives two beautiful examples later, which we can remember in this context. What are the two examples; consciousness is comparable to akasha, the space-principle, and to the Prakasha-tatvam. So, if you want to conceive of consciousness, we have to see the features of these two examples then we will get a better picture. And what are the features in these two. Both are ekam. Akasha is one. Surya Prakasha is one. Sri Krishna says consciousness is also one, Ekatvam.

And then, Akasha is achalam; Akasha cannot move from place to place; everything moves in Akasha but Akasha itself does not move; similarly, Surya Prakasha also does not move. Even this Prakasha in the hall, the light, does not move. My hand moves in light, but the light itself does not move. Exactly like that, the consciousness principle itself is achalam.

Like Akasha and Prakasha, Atma is achalam.

Next feature is akandha. Space is indivisible. You cannot apportion space. The earth can be divided. Water can be divided and we have quarrels also between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, but the space itself cannot be divided. Similarly, Prakasha also cannot be cut and therefore both of them are akhandam; Similarly atma the chaitanyam is akhandam. So Achalam, it is akhandam, it is Ekam.

Next, akasha is assangam. Space is everywhere but it is never contaminated by anything. Space is uncontaminable. It is unpollutable. Water can be polluted; earth can be polluted; everything else can be polluted; vayu can be polluted, but not space. Similarly Prakasha, the light is also asanga. It cannot be contaminated by anything. Shankaracharya says whether the light falls on dirty coovam water or Ganga water, the dirty water cannot pollute the light. And therefore asangatvam is the next feature.

And Akasha is sarvadharam. It is the support of everything and similarly, consciousness is the support of matter. Not vice versa. We think matter is supporting consciousness but Sri Krishna says, it is not so. Consciousness is not located in brain rather all the brains are located in one all-pervading consciousness. And if it becomes a dead brain, Einstein's brain is preserved it seems; not because consciousness has departed or gone away; what has happened is that the capacity of the brain to manifest the consciousness is lost. The medium has lost the capacity like a fused bulb; power is very much there; but the bulb has become fused. So, therefore, it is not the absence of electricity but absence of a functioning medium, which can manifest. And therefore consciousness is sarva adhara, like Akasha and finally, consciousness like the Surya Prakasha, the light of the Sun, it illumines everything, because of the presence of consciousness alone; things are known; and therefore, sarva adharaha and sarva Prakasha, is that atma and that atma I am.

So this is called atma-anatma viveka Gyanam, discriminating between consciousness and matter and claiming that I am the consciousness principle who is functioning through the body but I myself am not the body. So the medium comes, the medium goes, but I never come and go. So these are the features of atma.

Anatma and atma, two topics are over. And now we go to Gyanam.

**Gyanam:** has a unique meaning in Ch.13 and it is not knowledge. All the virtues required to gain gyanam are called Gyanam; or a Dharmic way of life. Thus, ethics and morality enter Vedanta. **Only an ethical and moral mind can receive gyanam.**

Twenty values are enumerated. They are required to transform us. Thus Study+Value=Transformation; while Study-Value=Information. Sadhana Chatushtaya  
Sampathi: The Four Ds. Discrimination, Dispassion, Discipline and Desire.

### **Discrimination:**

Discrimination means the understanding that God alone can give Purnatvam and security in life. Fullness or peace or security can come only from one source and that is nitya vastu, the Ishvara tatvam. And the world; however wonderful, beautiful it might be, you can experience it, enjoy it, you can possess it, you can handle it, but the world cannot give peace, security and Purnatvam. This understanding is called Discrimination.

### **Dispassion:**

God as priority is called spiritual desire, world being lesser than that is dispassion.  
Dispassion is, after this understanding, changing the priorities of life; between God and World; which one is primary and which one is subservient. With regard to this,

I have to do some reshuffling and in that reshuffling, when world becomes subservient and secondary, that attitude is called dispassion,

**Desire:**

And when God or Brahman or Nitya vastu becomes the top priority, it is called spiritual Desire. God as priority is called spiritual desire with world being lesser than that; this state is called dispassion.

**Discipline:** is the integration of the entire personality. Physical body, the 10 sense organs, organs of action and organs of knowledge, the mind, the intellect, all of them when they are disciplined and organized and instead of I, becoming their slave, I become their master. Then I am the master of my sense organs; when I master my mind, self-mastery; self-integration it is called discipline.

Discrimination, Dispassion; Desire and Discipline; these four are called sadhana chathushtayam. Sri Krishna has expanded these four alone, into 20 values.

So 20 condensed is four. Four diluted is twenty. So in the summary, we will see four. The expansion we will see 20.

So sadhana chathushtaya sampathi is here called Gyanam. With this, Sri Krishna has covered all the six topics from shloka No.2 to 24.



In

shlokas 25-35 Sri Krishna concludes the chapter with Gyana Sadhanani and Gyana

Phalam, the stages to obtain knowledge and the benefits of knowledge.

Five

stages to knowledge are:

1. Practice of Karma yoga to remove impurities of mind.
2. Practice of Upasana meditation on a God with attributes to remove extroverted-ness and bring tranquility; and focus to the mind.
3. Sravanam: consistent systematic study of Vednatic scriptures under a competent Acharya for a length of time. It removes ignorance.
4. Mananam: After study of vedantic scriptures I raise my doubts. During Sravanam doubts are not raised. So, removal of all doubts is mananam.
5. Nidhidhyanam: is dwelling upon the teaching because I have to change my perspective of how I see myself. Because all the time I have been looking upon myself as the body. The body orientation is the most powerful vasana. And therefore, whatever happens to the body, I take it as happening to myself and therefore, the response is different; that is called samsara and therefore I have to spend some time and tell myself, I am not the body; but I am functioning through the medium of the body. In sleep, I have dropped all the transactions but I continue to exist. Similarly in death also, the body may end, but I continue to survive. And therefore, I am not a mortal one is the shift of self-perspective. **And when I change my opinion about myself, my opinion about the world also will change. And this process is called Nidhidhyanam or meditation to remove old orientation. Otherwise we can also call it deconditioning.**

Thus after completion of five levels of sadhana's: karma, upasana, sravanam, mananam, and nidhidhyasanam, I own up to the fact that Aham Nithyah Chaitanya Rupa Atma Asmi. So these are the sadhanas.

## **Benefits**

### **or Phalam:**

1. Sarvatra Samadarshanam: Perspective changes from Anatma to one underlying Atma. In and through all transactions I am aware of Atma. Practical benefit is freedom from Raga( attachment), Dvesha (aversion); the cause of Samsara.
2. **Amrtatva prapthihi**: When I took myself as the anatma-body, I concluded I am mortal. When I know I am the atma, now I claim I am immortal. When the wave thought that it is a wave; it was afraid of its mortality. But the moment wave shifted the vision, and claims I am the water, the wave is not afraid of mortality; because as water, it does not die. Therefore, amritathva prapti, immortality is the second benefit.
3. Akartrtvam and Abhoktrtvam: I am neither Karta nor Bhokta, but in my presence, illumine everything but I am not tainted by anything.
4. Brahmatvam: Aham Brahma Asmi or limitlessness. Once I know I am water, I can claim I am everywhere. This is Jivan mukti.

Sri

Krishna says, so gain this knowledge, Arjuna, to make a difference in your life from bondage to liberation.

Sri

Krishna concluded Chapter 13, named as Kshetra, Kshetragnya Vibhaga Yoga.

## **Take Away:**

**Maya:** Just as when you boil the water, the visible water is gone but you know the water is not destroyed; but what has happened to water? The visible vyaktha-jalam has become avyaktha. Similarly, this cosmos also has got vyaktha avastha called prapancha and it has got an avyaktha avastha, also known as maya. Therefore, maya is also an unmanifest form of matter only.

The experienced objects proves the existence of the experiencer; but the experiencer himself cannot become an object of experience. And this unobjectifiable experiencer principle is called Atma.

And therefore Atma is I, the consciousness principle, which objectifies everything but which itself is not available for objectification. This is the atma.

Only an ethical and moral mind can receive gyanam.

And when I change my opinion about myself, my opinion about the world also will change. And this process is called Nidhidhyasanam to remove the old orientation. Otherwise, we can also call it deconditioning.

**With Best  
Wishes,**

**Ram Ramaswamy**