

Baghawad Gita, Class 199: Chapter 16, Verses 1 & 2

Shloka # 16.1:

16.1 The Blessed Lord said Fearlessness, purity of mind, persistence in knowledge and yoga, charity and control of the external organs, sacrifice, (scriptural) study, austerity and rectitude;

Greetings,

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, as I said in the last class, Sri Krishna is dealing with the way of life that a spiritual seeker should lead, so that it is conducive to the reception of spiritual knowledge; as well as the assimilation of spiritual knowledge and this way of life, Sri Krishna calls Daiva marga. And this daiva marga, the spiritual path, the satvic path involves the observation of certain virtues in daily life, and Sri Krishna enumerates those virtues in these verses, which the Lord calls Daivi sampath. In the first three verses, we are getting the list of these virtues. We were seeing the first verse in the last class; abhayam, satvasamshuddhi, Gyanayogavyasthiti. Abhayam means spiritual courage; to cross all the hurdles which come in the way of my spiritual path; the inner courage, satvasamshuddhi is the purity of mind. Then Gyanayogavyasthiti, which means, Vedanta sravana manana nidhidhyasanam. Gyanam, means sravana, mananam, and yoga means nidhidhyasanam. So Gyana plus yoga is equal to sravana manana nidhidhyasanam, I have talked about this before, I hope you remember. And this one is the primary sadhana which should go along with the others, without Gyana yoga any amount of virtues will remain incomplete. Without morals, Gyana yoga is impossible, without Gyana yoga, a moral life is incomplete. It can never lead to liberation;

therefore, they are complimentary; therefore, they should be given due importance.

Gyanayogavyasthiti; the word vyasthiti means committed pursuit. It is nishta, it is a sincere and serious and pursuit therefore he uses the word vyasthiti; commitment.

Danam:

Now we will go to the second line; danam or charity is another important virtue highlighted in the scriptures. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad enumerates the three virtues of Yajna, danam and tapas as the most important disciplines and Sri Krishna himself highlights these three virtues again. So danam means charity and why do we say danam is a very important virtue and also a very difficult virtue; we can follow everything else but danam is difficult. Why do we consider this important?

Danam has significance from different angles; the first benefit of danam is that it serves as a remedy for a very serious mental problem called lobha. Lobha is a very serious mental problem; which is caused by the sense of insecurity. One fundamental human problem is continuous sense of insecurity.

This insecurity, continues all the time. And we do not know why the insecurity is caused; and the generally we have a misconception that this sense of insecurity will go away if we hold on to external possessions. We think that possessions are the only remedy for the problem of insecurity; even though there is no truth in that conclusion. Because there are people who have lot of possessions and continue to be insecure. And there are many people who do not have any possessions and they have full sense of security. From this it is very clear people with possessions continue to be insecure while people without

possessions feel secure; from this it is very clear, that the possessions and the security have no connection; but even though this is the truth; we have got the strongest moha that the insecurity will go away as we increase our possession. And this sense of possession is so strong; and this alone is called lobha; and this lobha or sense of possession expresses in two-fold ways; one way is, it wants to grab more and more; get more, get more, get more. The other expression is: whatever you get, you very carefully hold on to and never give away.

Therefore, get more and give less. This is lobha. In English we translate it as greed and miserliness is equal to lobha and this greed miserliness problem, lobha, is because of the misconception that the greater the possession, the greater the security.

And this lobha leads to several problems in life. The first problem is that a person wants to grab more and more; and therefore, unknowingly he begins to compromise with dharma; because beyond a limit; greed will force a person to cut corners to comprise with dharma. Thus, it will lead to adharm; it will lead to papam; it will lead to himsa; thus, lobha is a very serious mental problem. and not only this is the problem, this person with lobha begins to suspect every human being who comes near. Because we do not know whether he is coming for me for whether he is coming for my money. Whether he loves me or my money? Thus, the eye of suspicion will be there all around, even I look at my family members differently.

Thus, lobha is a serious problem and the only remedy for lobha is gradually developing the sense of charity. Danam is the only remedy for lobha disease. And therefore, danam is important.

And the second significance is, if danam is not there in society, a person goes on amassing and accumulating without

sharing, there will be a big disparity between the rich and the poor and when this gulf increases, then that society will have lot of problems like crime etc. Most of the crimes, economic crimes like kidnapping for ransom; murdering for gain, burglary, all these things will happen when there is a big gulf between the rich and the poor. And when we read such news items more and more in the newspapers, the rich person will feel, more and more insecure than secure. The irony is that he has got lot of money for security; the very same money has thus caused insecurity, because of the fear burglary, kidnapping and all those things. And therefore, a healthy social order requires people who are willing to able to share with one's who need. Therefore, danam takes care of social order.

And the third significance of danam is that it is the only touchstone to find out whether I have detachment or not. If I do not have detachment, danam will be the most painful affair; even though for social purposes, I give, it will be with a lot of heart burn. If I have got inner detachment, danam will be the happiest discipline or sadhana that I practice. Therefore, danam becomes a test for my detachment. And therefore, danam is significant.

And fourthly, danam is considered a very important prayascitha karma. We all have acquired lot of papams; durithams; for which we have to do prayaschittams and varieties of prayaschittams are mentioned in our Shastra; and one of the prayaschittam karma is danam and that is why at the time of death; or immediately after death; varieties of danam are given. In fact, we are supposed to do that before we die; but we will not have that mind; we will rather lose our life rather than loosen the purse. So, Danam is a very important prayaschitta karma. This is the fourth significance;

And fifthly and finally, danam is a beautiful sadhana, which

makes our death peaceful; because death is an event in which everything that I have carefully earned will be taken away from me. Whether it is house or bank balance; anything I have earned, everything including my physical body; after death, I cannot even own my physical body; everything I have to give back to the World, God or Lord, as you look at. This release of all my possessions should be comfortable to me, I should have practiced danam in my earlier days; and if I have enjoyed danam in my life; I will look upon death also as a form of danam.

Till now, I held on to every possession and then Yamadharmaraja snatches them away and I die painfully.

Death will be peaceful for a person who has learned to enjoy giving away. **Therefore, danam is a very, very significant spiritual sadhana.** Initially at least we should give away what we do not want.

They say, among a hundred persons there will be one Suraha, courageous person; there will be one scholar at least among one thousand people, among one lakh people, at least you can find one good teacher. Even though they are rare, a real giver is very difficult to find. It is difficult, but we have to practice as I said, start giving what you do not want; and thereafter we can find whether we can give even those things that we want. If it is useful for somebody else more. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, danam.

Damaha:

Damaha means indriya nigraha or sense control. Sense control does not mean suppression of sense organs; we never encourage suppression, because any form of suppression is an oppression. It will lead to depression, we never encourage.

By damaha, what we mean is voluntarily directing the sense organs which is born out of my conviction. I decide what is good for me for my spiritual growth and I decide what is not good for me; and with conviction, I myself turn away the sense organs. It is called mastery over the sense organs.

But when I turn the sense organs away; because of somebody else's enforcement. then it is called suppression.

The difference between suppression and mastery is, when I do it for another's sake, it is suppression, when I do it out of my own conviction, it is never a suppression; It is called indriya jayaha. It is victory. Suppression will lead to mental health problems; mastery will lead to mental growth. Therefore, damaha is mastery of the sense organs.

Yagnaha:

Then the next virtue is yagnaha. Yagnaha literally means worship of the Lord. Yaj means to worship; yagnaha means the practice of worship and our scriptures talk about two forms of worship; one is the regular ceremonial worship, in the form of puja and homas or puja in the temple etc. which is the regular ceremonial ritualistic formal worship. And there is a second form of worship which is conversion of all our activities themselves into a form of worship. As the well-known saying goes; work itself is a worship and this conversion is brought about by a change of attitude which is called karma yoga attitude; **I look upon every karma as an offering to the Lord and therefore I cheerfully do all the karmas; Enthusiastically**

wholeheartedly, sincerely, cheerfully, I do, whether it is mundane action or the most important action. And that is called Ishvara arpana bhavana and more importantly I prepare my mind to face any consequences that will come out of my action. This is called prasada bhavana; Ishvara arpana bhavana with regard to karma; prasada bhavana with regard to karma phalam will convert every karma into a yagna.

And therefore, formal external puja is a must and in addition to that, we also require second type of puja, of converting every action into worship. Karma yoga rupa puja; and in this yagna itself, in the third chapter, I talked about pancha maha yagna.

Svadhyaaya:

svadhyaaya means scriptural study. So, this is waning from our society; previously these things were there; but slowly we are forgetting that; this was called in the third chapter, we named it Brahma yagna. All part of the Hindu society; it was all part of vedic karma. So therefore, scriptural study is called svadhyaaya. This study is two-fold, one is called parayana. Parayana means recitation, which is considered to be a beautiful kavacham against any type of evils, including materialism. In fact, whether ghosts are there or not, I consider the most powerful ghost is materialism. It is catching up fast with our society and our culture is eroding; Everybody may not or need not know sandyavandanam; some prayer chanting is a must. It is called shabda avriti. And there is another type of svadhyaaya; which is artha avriti; dwelling upon the meanings of the scriptures. So, first one is shabda pradhana, the second one is artha pradhana, the first one is simple recitation, even without knowing the meaning, the recitation will bless the home; This is svadhyaaya.

Arjavam:

Then the next virtue is Arjavam. Arjavam means integrity.

Uprightness, enjoying a harmonious personality; we have talked about five layers of personality in Tatva bodha; annamaya, the physical body; pranamaya, the pranic personality; manomaya, the emotional personality; vignana maya, the rational or intellectual personality; all the different layers of my personality, which is normally expressed as the thought, the word and the deed; all of them should be harmonious. So harmonization, integration, concordance of all my personality is called Arjavam; all my personalities are in one line. I do not have a crooked personality; There is no hypocrisy. A hypocritical person says one thing but does something else. They lead a very stressful life. Hence Arjavam is essential.

Shloka # 16.2:

16.2

Non-injury, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, control of the internal organ, absence of vilification, kindness to creatures, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, freedom from restlessness;

Ahimsa:

The next virtue is Ahimsa. This also I have talked about elaborately in the thirteenth chapter; therefore, I do not want to go to the details and we also know its importance. **ahimsa is avoidance of non-violence at the kayika, vachika and manasa level. And the simple rule is what I give to the world, that alone I will get back ultimately. So therefore, it is like throwing a ball against a wall; when I throw the ball, it hits the wall and comes back to me only. And the force of the ball will be directly proportional to the force with which I throw. And therefore, we should remember that the ultimate truth is what I get will be what I give.** From the bank what I can take is what I have deposited in the bank. If I deposit violence in the bank called the world, it will come back to me

alone, if not now, later. And therefore, for my own peace of mind, I have to avoid himsa. Of course, we never say that ahimsa is absolute.

There may be occasions when himsa becomes a necessary evil. And the best example is the Bhagavad Gita itself.

In several places, Sri Krishna talks of Ahimsa, then he asks Arjuna to fight as well. Is Sri Krishna contradicting himself? Here we should remember, ahimsa is a general value, but every value has an exception, including ahimsa, as there are cases when nonviolent methods miserably fail. And when non-violent methods fail, and for the protection of dharma, the only available means is himsa; then there is nothing wrong in taking. In fact, Sri Krishna goes one step further and says: This dharma yuddha will not give you papam, on the other hand, it will give you punyam. And therefore, we should not blindly talk about ahimsa.

Misplaced ahimsa will have very, very negative consequences. Imagine a doctor who does not want to treat the patient, because it is painful. A Doctor has to do that; and therefore, judicious ahimsa is a value.

Satyam:

Then the next value is Satyam. Satyam means truthfulness; or more correctly, avoidance of untruth. Because if speaking the truth is going to hurt a person; then we have to follow the value of ahimsa and avoid speaking the truth; but that does not mean that we should speak untruth; avoid speaking untruth. So therefore, Satyam is equal to asatyavarjanam.

And suppose you have to tell the truth to correct a person, and telling the truth is going to be painful; what to do? We have to tell the truth for correcting the truth; it may hurt; may be your own child, may be your own family members. And what is the method; speak some other pleasant truth; there are unpleasant truths; but there are so many pleasant truths;

therefore, talk about the pleasant truth predominantly and when the person's mind is well-cushioned, speak the unpleasant truth; do not dwell upon the unpleasant truth. Speak more of pleasant truth; dwell upon pleasant truth; Therefore Satyam.

Akrodhaha:

Then the next one is Akrodhaha; akrodhah means learning to handle the problems of anger. Anger is a very powerful emotion; which can hurt the angry person, and which can hurt the people who are around the angry person. And therefore, one has to necessarily learn to handle anger. How to do that? Several methods are there; one of the methods is understanding anger as a form of emotional pain. Understanding anger as a form of expression of mental pain or emotional pain; because anger is the name of a mental condition. Anger is an emotion belonging to the mind; shouting cannot be called anger; Shouting is a consequence of anger. Hitting is not anger; it is a consequence of anger; anger has nothing to do with the body. Others know only the expressions of anger; anger is purely a mental condition; which is a form of pain. And this mental pain is very similar to physical pain. If you understand the role of physical pain, we can understand the role of mental pain or anger.

Any pain indicates that things are not functioning properly; therefore, it is red light. And therefore, management of anger is understanding anger as an internal signal. I should intelligently use it to find out a remedy to the cause of that anger; This is called akrodha; so, management of anger.

Tyaga:

Then the next one is Tyaga that means sanyasa or renunciation. The moment we say renunciation, everybody gets jittery. So the renunciation is two-fold, one is the external renunciation; such as taking taking to a monastic lifestyle; Monasticism is one meaning of tyaga.

And there is another meaning for the word tyaga; which is not external renunciation, but inner renunciation called detachment; so vairagyam or detachment is called tyaga. And what is detachment; it is an appropriate attitude towards my possessions. A right attitude. What is the right attitude towards the possession? It is the understanding that I really do not possess anything; I really do not possess anything; everything belongs to the Lord and Lord alone; and God out of his infinite kindness, has provided me with certain possessions for my use; and growing spiritually; and I am supposed to use them and grow; and it has to go back to the Lord alone; I can never hold on to anything; including my own body. So, everything belongs to the God; and God can choose to take back anything as he wants.

And if God chooses to take away anything from me, I will voluntarily return it to the Lord, with a note of thanks. This attitude is called tyaga.

So, therefore, this readiness to lose anything is called renunciation.

Shanti:

Shanti is next virtue.; Shanti means equanimity of mind. Freedom from violent emotional disturbances. Balance of mind is called Shanti.

Take Away:

Ahimsa is avoidance of non-violence at the kayika, vachika and manasa level. And the simple rule is what I give to the world, that alone I will get back ultimately. So therefore, it is like throwing a ball against a wall; when I throw the ball, it hits the wall and comes back to me only. And the force of the ball will be directly proportional to the force with which I throw. And therefore, we should remember that the ultimate truth is what I get will be what I give.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy